

## **Submitted by: International High School at LaGuardia Community College**

### **Ivandino Zulkarnaen:**

Arrived at John F. Kennedy Airport on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011. On a busy Wednesday afternoon I finally make my first step into the United States. As I walked out from the plane and going to the administration gate for my official paperwork, I am surrounded by 6 feet Goliath wearing Hawaiian shirt, women in tank tops, I felt smaller and colder next to them but I kept on walking and wondering what is this place?. In that chill summer time I spent my three months fooling around in the house. Rarely go outside, don't have any friends and I have never felt that lonely before as I used to live with three sisters back from where I from. Yes, I do not know any English and by the time the school start I felt so lost and got left behind. I have never thought of being an immigrant before not until I felt being isolated in my middle school community because I'm very different from other students. Due to my slow learning in English, communicating with other is very challenging. Language is becoming a barrier in some ways that may affect how I represent myself in the public, and even until now it still a quite a challenge and I assure you that other immigrants who spoke a different language other than English as their native language felt the same way too. Living as an immigrant is tough and very challenging. It is not only a cultural shock that they got once when they arrived here in the U.S. but also the certain kind of challenges and obstacles that slows down immigrants dreams for having a greater life chances in America. As an immigrant myself, our - preferring to all of my fellows immigrants out there - obstacles may come in any kind of ways. For examples there are deskilling, being targeted of police brutality, deportation, and discrimination. It is a huge issue that I and my fellow immigrants have to face in our society. It is very depressing to ever experience it however we kept our quality of being unique as our pride and overall that is what kept all immigrants strong and united.

**Yuli Chavarria:** Most people might not have the same reaction that I had, but for me, coming to New York was a big achievement. I arrived on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013. When I got to New York, it was night so I didn't get a chance to take a view of the city. My first two months or so, were terrible. Most of the time I spent crying or talking to my friends back in my native country, Colombia. However, I never said "I wanna go home", referring to Colombia because I knew I had so many chances of doing things in New York that I didn't have in my hometown. I saw lots of people, new faces. New language, if not "languages" because in New York you can hear every single language in the world. It was frustrating going to the store, which is only one block away from my house, and not knowing how to ask for something. It was simple, if I didn't see it, I didn't buy it. My first year in New York was something I didn't expected. When you think of United States, you think of people going out all day, doing different things every single day. Unfortunately, my experience was much different than that. I spent one entire year trapped in my house, going to a school I didn't like. The only times I got to go out was with my parents, I didn't got much friends back then. Now, I have improve my English skills and get to go to a school where I have friends from different parts of the world.

### **Mahpara Elahi**

My Journey to America began from a very warm night on April 20th 2008. Coming to America in a very young age is a very big challenge. In a whole new country with so many people with

different cultures, religions, traditions, background and languages. Attending school was a big challenge for an immigrant child. Not knowing the English Language leads me to getting bullied in my whole Elementary School experience. It was a tragic time for me not able to understand and or speak English made me not fit in. For me crying and going back to Bangladesh was the only thing I can think about. But I knew America was the place where you are provided with many opportunities and the reason for leaving Bangladesh came up. New York City itself is a very strong culture shock because there are so many people from so many different cultures and backgrounds. Living in New York City, Queens for more than years helped me develop myself as a person and how I think. Knowing English and being able to speak really helps me to stand up for what I believe and respect for example like my religion Islam. Being able to wear Hijab really makes you stand out from the crowd and sometimes getting you treated very harshly. Not having anyone sit next to you in the bus or train and making faces really feels very bad but Hijab is my choice and I'm proud I am a Islamic girl in the city of New York,

### **Azimjon Abdugafforov**

My first spring step in the United States contrasted starkly with the life I left behind in Uzbekistan. I heard all different languages but still some people were speaking Uzbek. My family and I were confused and did not know where to go because my father's friend was supposed to come and pick us up, but his friend could not come to airport to pick us up. Therefore my father found a taxi so we can go to our new apartment. Our new apartment was different from our home back in Uzbekistan, I did not know how but it felt different. When I left Uzbekistan I left behind the place where I grew up and was raised, friends and family. Life has its ups and downs, when I was in Uzbekistan I was a child with little bit of education. My life was great because I never faced any challenges. Even when I did, my mother and my father helped me. In the USA, I started my new life and I faced many challenges. In these life problems there were no one to help me. The reason that there were no one to help me because my mother and my father don't know English and my other families are in my native country. Coming to America has been a great adventure for me. I grew up in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. I lived with my whole family. The environment which I grew up was like New York weather but in Uzbekistan you could grow crops. In Uzbekistan we had a big house which included a big garden. In my country people are friendly, people go to their neighbors' houses to have gatherings, talk in beautiful gardens, and eat some cleaned vegetables from the garden. But in the US you don't even know who your neighbor is.

### **Tamhid Shadman:**

I came to the United States four and a half years ago knowing that I will have a better life here than in Bangladesh. However, after coming to the US, it was completely the opposite. My family did not have a house to live in, my parents did not have any jobs and we did not know anything about the United States. Language was a major issue as well. However, things started to change slowly and my family settled down but I do not know if that's all I ever dreamed of about my life in the US. Life in here is more likely a do or die situation. You literally cannot have anything without money. I have seen how my parents are struggling financially. I see them working really hard to make ends meet and me and my siblings' needs. Living in New York City is quite expensive, especially, when it comes to rent, food and clothing. After paying the rent each month in addition to other fixed expenses, my parents do not really find a way to save any money. My parents have big expectations from me that one day I will solve the economical problems of my

family since I am their eldest child. I hope that I find a good career for myself in the future and pay off all the hard work that my parents are doing for the family. I am another one among all the people that are "living the American Dream".

### **Nasiba.Davronkulova**

Attending a school in NY was not easy for me. When I started attending school, from the first day of school I felt like I was in a box with four sides, I didn't know English. No one communicated with me nor explained anything to me. Since I didn't know English, I couldn't make new friends either. Every time I went into the class, I felt so bad. The only thing I could do was to listen to the clock tick tock for hours. One day I even cried looking at the clock. Tears just drop out of my eyes. It was really hard sitting in a classroom with English speakers. Those days my parents didn't work and it was really difficult to afford the things we liked. Believe it or not, at the end we only had \$8 left in our pocket. It was really a hard time. We always ate pasta, cucumber, and tomatoes. When we went to the store we wanted to buy things that was delicious but we couldn't afford it. We always bought pasta, cucumber, and tomato because this was really cheap.

One special thing we got in America was the benefits card, green card, and medicare card. For me and my siblings it was the benefit card. We waited a very long time for the benefit card to come. My parent stated that when we receive the benefit card, we could buy any food we wanted. Before the benefit card we couldn't take or afford anything we wanted because my dad didn't work and my mom couldn't support four of us. When the benefit, medicare and green cards came, we were happy. And the only thing that was in my siblings and my mind was that now we won't have to eat only cucumbers, tomatoes, and pasta but instead eat delicious foods.

### **Abdurasul Jabbarov.**

While I was walking airport halls I was thinking of my country, my friends, my old school, my cousins. But also I felt good because my parents and my siblings were around me. I have never been in airport before, but more than that I've never been in a long line as the one I was waiting on. While waiting in line I see people complaining and hear them shouting. Everyone has their own turn so did we and then we finally got out. First thing happened is the smell of the halal food hit my nose. I couldn't say anything. I was just shocked. In my brain I was thinking "am I really in the U.S.?" Suddenly my brain just flew out of mind, and there I was facing my new life.

Life in the U.S is different from Uzbekistan. It is different because there are more opportunities in the U.S. The school and the teachers are nice and respectful. Life is easier

because in United States you can buy anything you want if you have the money that it requires. For that you just need to study hard and become what you want to be. Traveling to new world makes you believe that you will have new and different life. That is what happened to me when I first came to United States. I came to United States with airplane and I was on the air for 18 hours. In the everything and everyone I looked at was strange. I didn't know anybody there were people who spoke different languages. I already knew that the new world was going to be hard to get used to.