

Amada's Success Story

It is easy to feel intimidated by your surroundings and by the people around you when living in a country that is not your own. This may cause obliviousness to the laws that are set up to protect you or there may simply be a fear of exercising your rights when people in higher socio-economic hierarchies violate those laws and harm your sustainability. The Pregnancy Act of 1978 states it to be illegal for employers to fire, demote, reassign, or refuse to hire a woman for being pregnant. Prior to coming into our program, Amada had perplexing circumstances because of her pregnancy. A child, the most precious gift of God, brought unprecedented and unjust issues for Amada that eventually caused her to lose her home. When Amada was pregnant with one of her daughters, her employer noticed and fired her without remorse. Amada sought a different job and was hired but as soon as this employer found out about the pregnancy, she was fired from there too. Struggling with her pregnancy and without employment, Amada did the best she could to protect the baby she carried while fighting for her family's well-being. Amada eventually gave birth to a healthy baby girl. She knew she needed to get out there to earn money but without a baby sitter, this task seemed impossible. With no money coming in, Amada's funds were soon dried out and she lost her home. Desperate to find shelter and safety for her family, Amada came to Growing Home.

When I first met Amada, after Belia had completed the intake and accepted her into our program, the skepticism about her receiving help from us was notable. I did not blame her for not trusting us imminently after learning all she had gone through but for the sake of her children, I did notice that she put forth tremendous effort into the program. At one point of the program, Amada had three jobs lined up and was working long hours. The amount of physical and emotional strength it takes to partake in this strenuous lifestyle while being a mother of four seems unimaginable but I assume that Amada did it with her children in mind. She paid off debts she had, renewed the tags on her car, and got in contact with immigration lawyers all in an attempt to better her economic status. Amada never asked for anything and always completed what was asked of her (in order to successfully exit the program). Towards the end, Amada filed her taxes and received a refund that would be of ample help to her and her family. This refund was a major victory for Amada and she was going to use it to pay first month's rent and deposit for her family's new home. Growing Home however, went an extra step and awarded Amada with a check for her first month's rent and deposit. Informing Amada (during case management) about the economic help we were going to be providing her was one of the most memorable moments I have had at Growing Home. There was no considerable enthusiasm on Amada's part. Nothing was verbally said that expressed the amount of appreciation she had about the news. You had to be there to understand the non-verbal, silent, fervor gratitude that she expressed to me and with a simple thank you (*muchas gracias*) our last case management meeting together came to an end.

Amada's biggest success was gaining the confidence and knowledge that life cannot keep her kneeled. Amada is finally living in her own place and the family's unity continues to be a considerable contributing factor to their resilience. There is no doubt in my mind that they will continue to succeed outside the program. Their individual contributions with everything they have gone through are an amalgamation of tools that will keep gathering more successes in the future and Growing Home will continue to provide help for this family and for many more to come.