

# Immigrant Voices: Gabriela Guevara Bolivar

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[00:00:14] **Gabriela:**

[00:00:14] Hi, my name is Gabriela Guevara I am twenty-three years old, and I am from, Costa Rica.

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[00:00:26] **Gabriela:** Well of the things that I am passionate about, uh, I guess the most important is arts. Since I can remember, I have loved to draw to paint or to do any kind of manual arts. I am also passionate about hiking in nature or to do any kind of outdoor activities. Uh, and I'm also passionate about to be.

[00:00:55] In the service of the people who need my [00:01:00] help. So, I think these passions are what define me and make me feel alive.

[00:01:07]

[00:01:13] **Gabriela:** Well, my life was quite difficult. In my country, the opportunities to study or work are limited. So that has led me to have episodes of depression and anxiety during the last eight years. Uh, because personally. Umm, having a profession has always been one of my dreams since I was a child, after my mother left us, I realized that things had home were not going to be good.

[00:01:45] We began to have many economic problems, my dad also goes into depression and [at] a certain point of my life, I see myself completely alone, a 14-year-old [00:02:00] girl without economic support and with many problems in high school. So, I started, uh, working when I finished high school, so I could pay for some courses in university.

[00:02:14] But from that moment [and] on, I had to take care of the economic issues at home.

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[00:02:28] **Gabriela:** When I decide to come as an au pair, I didn't really know the city I would arrive. So fortunately, I arrived in Middlesex County, and it is a place that I really like, and that's why I decided to stay in the area.

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[00:02:52] **Gabriela:** The companies sell you the idea of a cultural exchange. At first, it [00:03:00] sounds like the best opportunity for growth and adventure. But..., because, uh, we come to the country to live with a family, we care of their children, and they give us a small, weekly salary. The company offers to be a sponsor as it is our requirement for the visa.

[00:03:24] However, they charge a large amount of money during the process, uh, which we must pay, the au pair. So, um, with this, the agency helps us or help you to get a family, which you can leave in theory, safely [safer] because, uh, they are the ones who should be responsible for the welfare of the au pair.

[00:03:54] [00:04:00]

[00:04:00] **Gabriela:** Well, everything impressed me is very different from my country. Uh, the way of life, uh, of the way of working study, uh, there are [is] a variety [of] cultures. And I like that very much. I have also found people who have welcomed me very well and I'm very grateful for everything.

[00:04:28] Hopefully with a college degree, with a job I love and maybe adding more knowledge the way life.

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[00:04:50] **Gabriela:** So, I guess. The best day in my life was when I, um, went [to] high school, when I finished high school. I get [got] my [00:05:00] diploma. So, uh, since this [that] day, I guess this day was the happiest day in my life because I can [could] get the diploma, even if I had a really hard time with my family, with my personal life, with high school and everything, um, those times were really bad for me, but the high school diploma makes me feel really, really good and happy.

[00:05:34]

[00:05:40] **Gabriela:** Yes, I suffered discrimination from the host family and from the au pair agency, that's really sad because I never expected anything like that. Actually, I paid, like I guess \$1,200, um, just [00:06:00] to travel with the agency, and I spend other money to get some, documents that the au pair agency needed.

[00:06:09] So I spend a lot of money, and when I arrived into U.S., I noticed that I was alone practically. The au pair agency always supports the host family.

[00:06:27] So, um, the other thing that I have had with this family was that I needed something, some stuffs personal stuffs from Walmart. Uh, I didn't have any type of transport[ation], so the host dad he drove me to the Walmart. I's suppose that he has to pick me up at 10:00 PM. But, at 10:00 PM. I sent him a text, I called him. I called the host-mom and [00:07:00] send them [a] text, but [nobody] answered me.

[00:07:05] So I decided to take an Uber at 11[PM] I, I waited, uh, from. 10:00 PM to 11:00 PM. in Walmart waiting for them. So, uh, they didn't arrive. So, I decided to take an Uber. I arrive on at the house, but when I tried to get in my passcode from the door, uh, doesn't [didn't] work. So, I was alone outside. I call the agency, and the agency never answer[ed] me.

[00:07:38] Um, And I had to wait until 11:45[PM]. I, I arrived at 11[PM], so I wait[ed] there like 45 minutes. Uh, just looking if someone will open the door, at the end the host-dad opened the door. I didn't received any type of apologize [apology] . Uh, [00:08:00] the agency didn't, they didn't do anything. They didn't talk with the host family about the.

[00:08:08] situation. Um, they answered me until the next day, I guess. So, I was super scared because, uh, it's supposed that the agency is in charge of you. So, if something happened to me, because it was really late and super cold and dark, if something happened to me, I guess that the agency. They didn't take any type of responsibility for that.

[00:08:39] So for me, it was, uh, really sad because, uh, as I said, I, I receive a level of treatment, from them and nicknames and things that I really didn't like it. I really didn't feel comfortable there.

[00:08:57] [00:09:00]

[00:09:03] **Gabriela:** I will tell them not to give up. Despite the difficulties, uh, that we go through in our lives. We have the possibility to be better and to achieve our dreams with perseverance, regardless of what others said, only we ourselves know how much it has cost us to get, uh, where we are. There are many opportunities, and we must know when to take them

[00:09:34] and work for them.

[00:09:36] So, this is one of my pieces[s] of art, umm he's my cat Kylo [laugh], when I arrived to United States, I had to left my cat here, in Costa Rica, because he can't[couldn't] [00:10:00] travel with me. So, uh, was a really hard time because he, uh, ran away, uh, we think that he was looking for me. So, uh, that was super sad. I love him so much, so I decided to make this.

[00:10:22] piece of art, in memory of my cat. We spent really beautiful moments and he was my best friends and my, uh, sad moments to, uh, we use to do so many things together so, uh, I decided to paint him. So, I love this paint it a hope you like [it] too. Thank you!

[00:10:54] [00:11:00]