

I have chosen to do my Immigrant project on a former coworker who also happens to be a Guatemalan Immigrant. Evelyn spent the first 16 years of her life in her home country of Guatemala with her rather large family. She arrived to the United States at the age of 16 in 1987, only 2 years after her father's arrival. Upon entering the United States, Evelyn settled down and found work in New York. She then met her husband, Danny, while in New York. Evelyn and her family then moved to Virginia, where they had their first son. They then made another move, this time to Los Angeles, California where she had her second son. Evelyn and her husband decided to move to South Carolina, where they had their final son.

Evelyn then decided in 2017 to return to her home country to reunite with long lost friends, a close childhood friend, and family. This is the story of the journey of a lifetime.

In early 2018, Evelyn received news that she would be able to travel home in August of 2018. After a few passport and plane ticket complications, she was able to secure her family's spot on a plane bound for Guatemala City. Upon her arrival, Evelyn was shocked to find just how much she had missed, specifically, the food. Foods such as fiambre, beef soup, and hot fresh tamales had definitely been missed. For Evelyn and her family, food has always been a driving force in expressing her culture here in the states. Another aspect of Guatemalan culture Evelyn appreciates is art. This art is stemmed from ancient Maya pottery. Nearly 40% of the modern Guatemalan population is indigenous Mayan. Hand made pottery in this country has been considered some of the best in the world due to its historical significance.

Evelyn loves her home country because of the great history that surrounds it. Upon visiting her home, she planned to visit Rio Dulce and Tikal, two very vital historical places in Guatemalan history. Evelyn first visited Rio Dulce with her family and childhood friend, Hugo, who still lives in Guatemala. They first visited the Castle of San Felipe de Lara, a Spanish colonial fort at the entrance of Lake Izabal. The fort was built sometime in the early 17th century with the occupation of protecting the Port of San Antonio from invading English pirates. The fort is still standing, and Evelyn and her family had the time of their lives touring it.

Next on their list was Tikal. These beautiful Mayan ruins have long been apart of Guatemalan historical identification. Tikal, which has a structure of 5 major pyramids, was built in 700 AD and attracts millions of visitors each year. This site has significance to Evelyn because of her fond memories with her late uncle here at Tikal. Evelyn even recalled a fond memory of a monkey named Tammy that was caught by her uncle at Tikal and given to her as a gift. Unfortunately, after Evelyn's departure from Guatemala, Tammy was given to a zoo in Guatemala where she lived out the rest of her life in captivity.

Tikal has clearly played an emotional role through Evelyn's life and seeing it all again with her sons made it even better the second time around.

Since this was the first time her sons had seen Guatemala and its culture, Evelyn decided that she should take them to Guatemala City. At a population of 3.7 million people, Guatemala City is the largest city in Central America. Large cathedral-like buildings cover the landscape of the beautiful city. Evelyn and her family visited many unique tourist spots, including the Guatemalan National Palace. National Palace was constructed between the years of 1939-1943. It houses Guatemala's Cabinet and 50th President, Mr. Jimmy Cabrera. Evelyn and her sons also got the opportunity to see the oldest Cathedral in Guatemala city. The Cathedral of Guatemala City was constructed between 1782 and 1871, taking 81 years of construction to complete.

Another spot that got attention while visiting was Volcan de Fuego. This Guatemalan volcano is known for constant activity at low levels. However, on June 3rd, 2018, the volcano erupted, damaging much in its path.

Evelyn's journey home was nothing short of spectacular for her and her family. This project is intended to document the journey and life of an immigrant. I believe that Evelyn truly embodies what it means to be an immigrant, and I'm very thankful I had the opportunity to meet her and her family.