

2013 Student Writing Contest

Theme: Crossing Borders

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THEME: CROSSING BORDERS:

How my international experience has affected my view of the world

My mom says proudly to her friends, 'My daughter studies in the United States Of America', one of the wealthiest countries in the world. What she doesn't know is, I am working at the Cafeteria cleaning tables and waiting for people to tip me. I stand for nearly 5 hours every day serving people and making hot chocolate and giving the finishing touches to the exclusive American Wraps they order. I take the orders.

I come back home, I wash my own vessels, do my own laundry, vacuum my own floor, get my own groceries, cut my own onions and do my own cooking. I apparently feel like I stay below the poverty line. Back home I used to lead a luxurious life. My mom used to cook food for me, 3 meals a day. If you count in snacks as a meal, then put it as 4. I used to have a room of my own, where every morning before I used to leave, it used to be a mess. But used to be all sparkling clean once I returned after a day's routine outing of attending classes and hanging out with friends. I used to have a maid to do my laundry, do the dishes, clean the carpets and clean up my tables. I used to have a chauffeur to take me around whenever I had to get somewhere. Here I wait for a bus which comes every fifteen minutes to take me to the closest destination, because I don't own a car. I cook only thrice a week. I have to run for classes, I have to run to work, I have to pack my food and do my assignments and write my research papers. I used to shop at the most exclusive stores, eat at the most exclusive restaurants, I could afford it. Not only myself, but for my friends too. I used to live rich in a poor country.

If I try explaining this to my mom, she's going to sob. She still considers me as a little girl who is irresponsible and can't take care of herself. I have been pampered throughout; she gives me a helpless sad grin and says why you had to go away while I am having a Skype conversation with her which makes me wonder, why I had to.

But you know what makes me stay here, and what makes me love for where I am now? It's the feeling of independence. I don't have to be dependent. I can do my own work. I don't have to rely on people to do my work. I trust me more than I could trust anyone else. There are 100's students out here who is in the same shoes as where I am now. We share the same thoughts, the same feelings the same sense of love and emotions. We live here as a community, we learn cross cultures, we learn the definition of fun, we love sharing our food, we love sharing our thoughts. We crib a lot, now we learnt that we love to crib. Meeting new people, learning to communicate and put our thoughts across. I might not have a car, I might not have a maid, but I have me which could do better with neither of them. Its human nature, we are never satisfied even given the best of the best choices.

I work here. I learn here. I do feel homesick, but there are people around me to lend their shoulders when I have to cry, there are people who cook for me when I fall sick. There are people who teach me when I do a mistake. There are people who advise me when I don't know which path to take. I hang around with people from all over the world. I go to movies with them. I have had fun which I would have never had, if I was back home. I have learned to respect other people's feelings. I did, did learn a lot

which has just made me a better person of what I am today. It all goes to the one decision I made, which changed my entire sense and perspective about how I look at people and things around me with love and compassion and the sense of touch of independence. I do the same things I used to do back home only with the little bit of freedom and independence. It has shaped me for what I am today. A better person. That's what I need, and more, that's what the society needs. May be not contributing directly to the society, but definitely indirectly I am contributing to humanity by being the person everyone would love to be around with. Everything's changed by this one decision I made, Crossing Borders flying million miles only to realize, there is more to life than just the four closed walls which you were in. And I am glad that I am not the frog in the well, but the princess who knows which frog to kiss, the one inside or the one outside.