



## **Checking in with our Compas**

Less than 6 months ago, many of our lives changed abruptly in so many ways due to a novel virus. You may recall during those days of upheaval in March that joyful news was shared. Through the support of the Immigration Justice Team a young mother and her son seeking asylum had arrived safely to the Fox Valley. Shortly after, another a 14 year old girl, alone in the US after her mother was deported also arrived.

While we were all adapting to our new “normal”, these two courageous young women were establishing their new “normal”: adapting to “Safer at Home” in a new house, a new city and in a community that could not welcome them with the open arms that we had hoped due to the pandemic.

Additionally, these young women were practicing a new language, adapting to new routines, trying new activities and tasting new foods. And recently have begun to pursue their educational goals.

As we are still physically distanced and we cannot share in person, we invited each of them to share their updates, which they recently wrote as part of their weekly English class.

## **What is something new that you have learned since moving to the Fox Cities?**

**Compa 1:** I haven't really learned a lot of streets. I haven't gone out much due to covid-19 but I have seen beautiful parks. I sometimes go walking to the lake or we go to buy ice cream to the store. I like to live here because is a quiet place.

**Compa 2:** I know some places. I always try to look and take a good look at the streets when we go out to some places. I know Appleton and I know Michigan because we went for camping.

**Please describe some of your daily activities during the week and which are some new favorite activities?**

**Compa 1:** I have class in Zoom with Ligia and Miriam every Tuesday they are helping me to learn English. Sometimes we go walking to the lake or the park. I cook when I don't have homework or everybody is busy.

My favorite activities are to listen to music, or when the whole family watch a movie. I like to draw and when I start to play with my son. I am seeing that he is starting to do new things. He is 1 year old. I am happy because he is a healthy boy and happy.

**Compa 2:** I like to go outside for a walk because I like to distract my mind and think. Sometimes, I like to watch a movie or study, and do my homework for my classes.

### **Are there new foods that you have tried?**

**Compa 1:** Yes, there're many delicious foods that you brought that I have never seen but I love them. Also, I love how the family I am living with cook. When I first lived in the US I didn't like to eat cheese but my new family has taught me how to prepare it in another way.

**Comp 2:** Yes, I have tried salads. Some food I don't know what it's called but I like it.

Despite the fact that life is not "normal", our new friends are finding opportunities for connection, learning and growth. As we move into our Spiritual Year of Growing Resilience, let us remember how our support of money and time help those around use continue to cultivate their resilience and strength.

### **From October 1 Immigration Justice Team - update from our Compas**

As we transition into fall and the "Growing Resilience" program year, the Immigration Justice Team recently reflected on updates from our "compas". Our compas (friends) are two young women who are seeking asylum in the United States. With the support of our Fellowship, they arrived in the Fox Valley this past spring, amidst the unfolding pandemic.

Now, we take a look towards the future and share some of the goals these young women are diligently pursuing. Our compas recently responded to this writing prompt as part of their weekly English class.

Describe some of your goals for the future.

Compa 1: I really have many goals in my future but right now I want to speak English. Later I hope to be able to find a job but I don't want to neglect my child.

And I want to be a nurse in the United States. I love to help people.

I am very grateful to you because everybody is giving me support and that is really important to me. It is very appreciated. Is good to know that there are people who love us. I have good news, my host family enrolled me at Fox Valley Tech school of nursing but I cannot pass the English

test yet. I am at level 3 of English but the school will help me with my English before I take the TEAS entrance exam.

Compa 2: My first goal is to graduate from High School. Then, I want to be a doctor. There are other things I am interested in such as human rights and justice because I don't like bad people or the harm they do to others. I want to help people without shelter or other types of things. The other thing is to see my family and have them by my side.

We invite you to reflect on their stories and their resilience, as they have adapted to cultivating aspirations despite personal histories of adversity, trauma, and financial limitations.

The Immigration Justice Team would like to extend thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time, donated needed items, and supported monetarily. This is truly an example of how together we "can build a better world".