

Transcript of Interview with Andrea Avilés by Sofia Soto

Interviewee: Andrea Avilés

Interviewer: Sofia Soto

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Location (Interviewee):

Location (Interviewer):

Transcriber: Lily Crigler

Abstract: Andrea Avilés is an International Student from Tegucigalpa, Honduras. From borders closing in March to Hurricane Eta causing catastrophic damage, Andrea shares about how she copes, stays connected to her family, and above all, positive through such difficult times.

Sofia Soto 0:00

Hello, my name is Sofia Soto, and today I'll be interviewing Andrea Avilés. So hi, Andrea, tell us a little bit about yourself, please.

Andrea Avilés 0:10

Hi, Sofia. Thank you for inviting me to be part of your interview. My name is Andrea. I am 22 years old. I am from Tegucigalpa, Honduras. And I am a senior at UTSA. I am graduating this semester, I went to St. Mary's, from 2016 to 2019. And I am currently a public health major.

Sofia Soto 0:36

Fantastic. What would you say has been one of the toughest challenges that you've had to overcome throughout this time?

Andrea Avilés 0:45

I think that the toughest thing was the sense of instability. And normally throughout my years here at college, I have had a plan of finishing a class and finishing my classes as strong as I can, and then going home, seeing my family kind of recharging on that sense. And coming back and doing the same thing over and over. And this semester was different because I had no idea when I was able- when I was going to be able to go home. And the scary thing is, you know life goes on and school went on and teachers kept putting assignments and you kind of just have to shake it off and know that you have to prioritize what you're doing now. And so I had to learn how to just live day by day without thinking about what's going to happen next week, next month, or when I'll be able to go home, when- when it's going to feel normal again. And I had to just focus on what I had to focus on. And getting to that point, I think was very hard. I think that you have to learn how to put your feelings aside and just think what your priorities are at that moment. And in a way, I think that, you know, everything that came with COVID, there was many negative things. But I think it did make me stronger in that way. I was able to learn how to separate what I- what my heart was feeling and what I had to do.

Sofia Soto 2:09

What would you say to other international students who are going through the same thing?

Andrea Avilés 2:15

I would tell them to just hold on. I would tell them to try not to focus on everything that's missing. Try not to focus on the negatives that are happening around us. Try not to focus on the uncertainty that that comes with, not knowing when you'll be able to go home and just getting everything that you- you know, like making everything that's surrounding you right now, your focus. So I definitely think that the friends that you have around you, the people that you have around you like that you care about, hold on to them make relationships, make your little second home away from home, something that's actually stable, because you never really know when things like this are going to happen. For example, right now, Honduras was hit by Hurricane Eta, and it's on- another hurricane is on its way. So who knows if Christmas is going to be some some time where we're going to be able to go home again. And we can't let things like that that are out of our control make us feel uncertain because things happen, life happens. So I would just say, hold on to what you have here. Make it your own. And always know that dates are just dates and that your family's always going to be your family, and thank God for technology right now. Just make the best out of it. Keep in contact, make sure that you're checking in, make sure that you feel like you're close to them even if you're not physically there.