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“Where do I Fit?”

Elizabeth M. Guevara

Ontario, California is the place that I call home,
a place where the “exotic” language of Spanish is the common language
where the *elote* man is around every corner.

Ontario is a community where I found my people everywhere I turned.
But this all changed.

I moved seven hours north to Santa Cruz, California to follow a *sueño*.

I was no longer a part of the 909 but now the 831.

Changing area codes was the easiest step for me in the journey to follow my
dreams.

I was now faced with being labeled a *Student of Color*.

A Student of What? ¿Qué?

I did not blend in with my new community--I was now different.

I soon found out there are not that many Portuguese and Peruvian mixes out
there.

Being multi-racial puts me in a different category;

Torn between two sides of my identity.

Not feeling complete.

Outsider.

I was the conqueror and the conquered all in one.

I did not just know three languages; I also knew two cultures and traditions.

I had to find a way to keep true to my identities but adapt to my new
surroundings and find a space where

I could be authentic!

A space where I could speak my mind, not be seen different, and

be open to understand how society perceives me as a White woman or a Latina
or an Other.

I was able to find Latino and multicultural student groups,

but I was still not able to fully connect with them.

I was finally exposed to a multi-racial student group--I found my place.

Elizabeth M. Guevara, originally from Southern California, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Elizabeth is currently a first-year graduate student in the HESA program and serves as the Assistant Residence Director for the Living Learning Center at UVM.

I was not expected to pick one side of me or the other,
I was able to embrace my background and was finally seen as Me!

But the Guevara in me wants to fight and stand for what I believe in.
So I am here at UVM starting a different chapter in my life,
a chapter that continues my struggle of understanding myself and where I fit *en este mundo*.

A world that makes me conscious of both my privileges and obstacles,
a world that can hurt me with just one word,
a world that does not see the true me!

The true me that is ready to change this world,
to fight for people like me and believes that we deserve better.

I am here to challenge myself and my surroundings.
To make people think.
To prove to everyone who has doubted me,
that this first generation, multi-racial, fair-skinned woman of color with a
learning difference
can succeed in this world
and be a role model for others to follow.

¡Si puedo hacerlo entonces puedes hacerlo también!
Se eu posso fazê-lo então você pode fazê-lo também!
If I can do it then you can do it as well!