



INTERVIEW



Monica Paz



Summer student at NBMC and recent graduate from St. Thomas University, Fredericton, NB - with a degree in Sociology and Cultural Anthropology.



Q. Place of birth?



Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Q. Profession (area of study) / current position and name of organization?

Summer student at NBMC, recent graduate of St. Thomas University with a degree in Sociology and Cultural Anthropology.

Q. Did you choose New Brunswick or it chose you?

My parents chose it for me! When we moved to Canada my Mom wanted to live in a bilingual province therefore, she chose New Brunswick.

Q. Your passion?

Newcomers!

I discovered that when I moved to Canada as a refugee in 2012 and volunteered assisting Syrian refugees. I got so much joy out of working with immigrants.

I want to help newcomers because I know how it feels to be in a foreign country thinking you have no one. Been there and it is not a pleasant feeling.

My aim is to make their transition to Canada easier and also to give back to my community because I am very grateful for everything Canada offered me and my family plus for all of the amazing opportunities I have in this country.

Q. Preferred leisure activity?

One is to play volleyball with my family.

My family is very much into sports. We are all crazy competitive. With six of us in the family, it is perfect! We play volleyball three against three!

This is a very fun activity that we all share a passion for! Once a week we play at the Multicultural Association of Fredericton gymnasium. We also play beach volleyball at the sand courts at the Ramada Hotel.

Q. Which of our four seasons do you prefer & why?

Summer. It reminds me of home... when I would enjoy the crystal-clear waters at the beach back in Honduras.

During the summer, I am rarely ever homesick because the warm weather and the sunshine make me happy.

Winter ... is a whole other story!

Q. Best advice you ever received?

The best advice comes from my Mom. When we first moved here. I was terrified about meeting new people from a different culture.

She said, *“Solo tenes que ser vos misma, la gente que de verdad merece estar en tu vida te va querer por como sos realmente.”* Which translates to: ***“Just be yourself, the right people will love you no matter what.”*** That is advice that I still appreciate each and every day.

Q. Your most enjoyable voyage?

Cuba

It was my high school graduation present - *to me from me.*

I went to Cuba with many friends. We had a blast!





Restigouche Multicultural Association (RMA)

Telephone: 506-789-7747 E mail: info@rma-amr.ca

Website: <https://www.rma-amr.ca/>

THE BULLETIN BOARD #13 – JULY 20, 2021



We experienced both the touristic aspects of the country and also the other realities of every day life of ordinary Cuban citizens.

For the first three days, we enjoyed the comforts of a tourist resort, then for the remainder of our trip, we chose to experience the other (poverty) side of the country... All in all, it was a very eye-opening travel experience.

Cuba remains my most enjoyable voyage.

Q. Destination yet to be discovered?

To travel all over Europe. My Mom's side of the family is from Italy and I have always wanted to travel there to meet them.

Q. You have the opportunity to dine with anyone in human history, who would you choose and why?

My answer is probably not what you expect, but if I had the opportunity to dine with anyone in human history, I would choose *my younger self*.

I would tell *her* that everything was going to work out.

There would be so much (now acquired) experience and helpful advice that I would love to share with *her* to reassure her and to make her not be afraid anymore.

Q. Favorite quote / expression?

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Q. Favorite authors?

Mitch Albom
and



Rick



Riordan

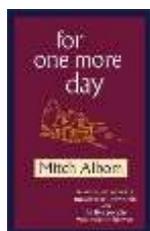
I really enjoy reading Greek mythology!

Q. A book you recommend - why?

For one more day

- Mitch Albom

- It is a sentimental book that makes you appreciate your mom; it describes the unconditional love a mother has for her children. I have read it so many times.

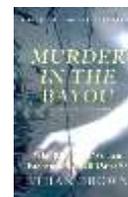


It makes me cry like a baby every single time.

Q. Last book read?

Murder in the Bayou

- by Ethan Brown



I love a good murder mystery.

Q. What are you most proud of?

My parents

They had the courage to leave a country in which they had lived their whole lives just to bring me and my siblings to a better one.

Coming to Canada as refugees, not able to speak the language, leaving family behind, all this didn't stop them from giving us the best life someone could ask for.

Not many people have the courage and strength to put others' needs before their own.

Q. You win the lottery – you do what?

I would start my own non-profit to help refugees who are not being accepted anywhere in the world.

I would help bring them here and give them all the resources that they need with all the money I'd be able to help them out of dangerous and unlivable situations.

Q. Favorite movie? Music preference?

My all-time favorite movie has definitely got to be *The Lion King*.



It reminds me of my childhood and happy times. My siblings and I would watch this movie over and over again. It was the only one we had in our VCR.

We watched this movie every day, we knew the dialogue by heart, so much that every time we watched it, we were all different characters and would narrate their part. When the songs came on, we would start dancing and singing along. I have so many memories attached to it.

The music that I like to listen to varies a lot on my mood. Some days I just listen to Spanish music, all the songs my parents used to love when they were young and all the new music of today.

On other days, I listen to country and during others I'll listen to R&B. My music taste is all over the place so I pretty much like everything.

Q. Your advice to the newcomer to New Brunswick?



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



CONSEIL MULTICULTUREL DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK



It gets easier - If there is anything that I have learned from my experience as a newcomer to New Brunswick is that, at first, it's going to be hard. You are going to be homesick and you will want to go home.

Then, as you meet the people here in New Brunswick, you will make new friends and begin to feel less homesick. Though it will not be easy, making these efforts will make it all worth it in the end. So, my advice: ***give yourself time*** it does get easier.

Q. What one word best describes you?

CARING

- because that's how everyone who knows me describes me as.

Q. Your hero or mentor in your youth?

Marisa Rojas. She is a settlement worker that works for the Multicultural Association of Fredericton.

She was assigned my family's case when we moved here. Marisa was amazing!



She helped us so much and we all became really close. Fast-forward eight years later, we still see each other and chat about our lives.

I would definitely choose her as my mentor. My passion for helping people and working with newcomers is a result of her example. We have a special bond. Marisa was going through a tough time in her life when we first met. She says that she did not save us, rather it is us that saved her.

Without Marisa's assistance and support, our settlement experience in Canada would have not been as smooth as it was.

She was our Canadian *Guardian Angel*.

Q. What are some of the main barriers that newcomers face and overcome to ensure a successful integration into their new Canadian community?

There are many barriers. You must understand that some people are not as educated about other cultures. Some people know nothing about immigration and culture.

Another barrier that newcomers must face is the cultural shock. Personally, this was a big one because the Hispanic culture is nothing like the Canadian culture. I had to learn this the hard way.

Q. The question you detest answering?

Is Honduras in Mexico?

The number of times I have been asked this question is crazy! Though the question is asked so often, I respond politely that Honduras and Mexico are two different countries.

Q. What would you like to see inscribed on your tombstone?

I am 22 years old and I don't really like to think about my tombstone right now.... That said, I would like:

Loving Mother

I love kids and my dream has always been to become a mom.

Q. Share something people may not know about you!

I speak Italian

People usually focus on my French and Spanish, forgetting that I can speak Italian as well. My Mom's side of the family is Italian. Therefore, this is a destination that I've always wanted to travel to and that I definitely will in the future.

Q. Finally, what question would you have liked to have been asked?

How did the experience of moving to another country change your family dynamic?

As a family back in Honduras we were always close however, now in Canada, we are even closer.

Relocating to a new and different country can be a traumatic experience making it very difficult to interact and relate with other people.

When we moved here, for the longest time, we didn't have anyone else but each other. This is one of the main reasons why I think my siblings and I are so incredibly close.

Still today, we remain very protective of one another. I talk about my siblings and my parents because I love our family dynamic and how we can tell each other everything and we genuinely enjoy each other's company.

