

It Wasn't Easy

Maximina Romero

I arrived in this country on a Saturday night, and the next Monday I began to work as a housekeeper. I paid one week of salary to the agency that found me this job. My sister, who already lived in the U.S., explained how to clean the house. She told me it was a good job because the boss gave you everything you needed and you could save all your money.

I felt like I was in a jail.

But for me, it wasn't easy because I had to live in the same house with my boss. I could not live with my family. I had to wake up early and go to sleep late. Every week I had only one day free. I felt like I was in a jail. I was living, but I didn't have a proper life. They were like my owners.

However, they were also kind to me. From the first day that I arrived, they put one more chair at the table for me. At the beginning, I felt ashamed because they ate with tableware and I had never used that in my life. But they taught me how to use it, and I learned the basics.

There were other things I had to learn. In my

country, I didn't have a shower with hot water, so when I noticed that their shower had hot water, I was so excited. I took a very long shower. There was a lot of steam and suddenly the door to the shower broke into

many pieces. The glass was all over the floor. I was afraid. I couldn't explain what happened. I didn't speak a word of English. They were knocking on the door and shouting at me. In the end, they told me that if I was fine, everything else would be fine. I have been working with this wonderful family ever since, but now I have my own apartment and I travel to work every day. I feel free.



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Domestic Worker Advocacy Pays Off!

According to the author, what was hard about her job? What made a difference?

Read the quote below and consider whether an organization like this could have been a support to Maximina. If so, how?

“Talk about persistence! Domestic workers have spent decades advocating ordinary wage and hour protections. In 2013, they had several victories. “We won a change that’s going to put hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of low-wage working women,” said the National Domestic Workers Alliance. In September 2013, home care workers won the right to receive minimum wage and overtime pay starting in 2015. In addition, California and Hawaii passed domestic workers bills of rights.”

Source: <www.equalvoiceforfamilies.org/2013-in-review-congress-bickers-people-take-action>

Visit <www.domesticworkers.org>, see what campaigns they are working on, and take action if there is something there you agree with.