

My 15th Birthday

Maria Hernandez

Hispanic people celebrate the 15th birthday of young girls with a huge party called “quinceañera” or “a party in pink.” Traditionally, everything is pink, including the young girl’s dress. It is just like the “sweet 16” party for girls in the U.S.

Back into the late 70s, my parents were planning my 15th birthday. They wanted to have a big dance with their “princess” wearing a fairy-tale gown. Unfortunately, I never had that dream. I liked dancing and being with my friends, but I didn’t want this kind of a party. Therefore I told my parents, “I’ll celebrate my quinceañera if I can choose my outfit.” They agreed.

With their permission, I visited a friend who knew how to sew. She showed me many magazines full of designs, but I knew just what I wanted, a light-blue jump-suit. She tried to dissuade me from that crazy idea, but I was firm in my decision. My outfit would be blue, not pink, and it would be a fashionable jumpsuit, not a dress.

When my parents saw my outfit for the quinceañera, they were very disappointed. As a punishment for my disrespectful behavior, they canceled the big dance. I convinced them, however, to let me celebrate at home with my closest friends. This was what I really wanted!



Domenica Dillon-Garcia, daughter of Maria Hernandez, was born in 2000 in Ecuador. She says, “I plan to be a fashion designer some day. My inspiration came to me one day when I was about 8 years old. I was drawing a picture of people and decided to decorate their clothing. I really like using more and more outfits. One day, while designing, I said to myself, “I’ll be a fashion designer when I grow up!” I get my ideas from the public. When I am walking around Times

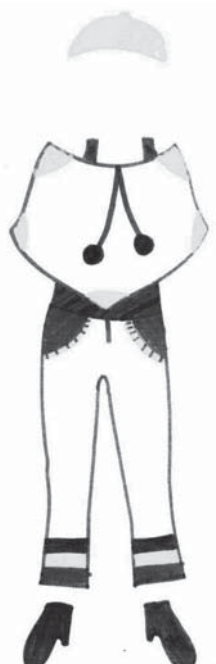


My 15th birthday was an unforgettable event. We had the party at my home, which was decorated with red, blue, and yellow lights and a flashing white light that illuminated the guests every five minutes. The music could be heard one block away! All this was cheaper than a huge party at a hotel, so my parents were not so disappointed. I enjoyed an evening dancing in my beautiful light-blue jump-suit, designed especially by me and for me.

As the years have passed, I have become less fashion conscious. However, life can be ironic. God has given me a daughter whose biggest dream is to become a famous fashion designer. (See some of her designs below.) She loves to wear fairy-tale gowns! At 10 years old, she is already

talking about her quinceañera, one in the U.S. and one in Ecuador. I guess I will be dancing at the “party in pink.” My parents will be laughing, too, about the life lesson I have learned.

Maria Hernandez (pictured here with her daughter) is originally from Ecuador where she worked as a Spanish and Literature teacher. She currently lives in Haverhill, MA, and takes ABE classes at the Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School.



Square, I see many people wearing really cool clothing. Then I decide to change the outfits a bit. I draw during my free time. I so badly want my fashion company to be in Times Square in New York City. I hope you like my designs. Someday, I hope you will be able to buy my clothes in stores. Look for “Antoga.” That is my designer name.