

We Must Be Ready

David Israel Caluna Pilamunga

BEFORE YOU READ: Look at the sub-headings in the article. What do you think this article will be about?

Living as an Immigrant

I am an immigrant. I live day to day, week to week. I don't have a social security number, and that makes life very difficult. I applied for a Green Card three years ago, but the government has not responded to my request. When the pandemic started, I was working in a restaurant. I had been there for four years. With my income, I supported my family in Ecuador, including my eight-year-old son. Since they closed the restaurant, I have gotten another job where I am making less than half of what I used to earn.

The Pandemic Hits

The first two weeks of the pandemic were the worst. I was depressed and worried. I even got fever and indigestion. I decided to make a new routine at home. I began to fix things. I built a fire pit in my backyard. Now my new routine includes more cleaning, exercising longer, and reading, which has helped me tremendously. I also have been practicing my English through apps on my phone. I set a goal of improving and developing my English to the next level, so the day I get my Green Card I can get more opportunities.

I miss going to the adult school where I studied English. It gave me a way to forget about my problems and money worries. When I am at school I feel great, I know I'm learning. I know I'm building toward something that will be worthwhile. My teachers are amazing. They are patient and don't give up on us.

My school is now providing classes online, so we can keep learning and practicing English. Nevertheless, I'm not going to lie. I prefer the hu-



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man contact of being in class, talking to my classmates and my teacher Miss Wendy. She cares for her students so much. She is always looking for a way to help us. Miss Wendy is always checking on us. We have a messages group that she uses to send us homework or just to be in touch with us.

Demand Change from our Leaders

Everyone has made adjustments during the pandemic. Maybe the government could make some adjustments, too. (And I am talking about more than a stimulus package.) Based on what's been happening in the last months, we know there has to be a change in the system of the United States. We've let the wealthy take control over our lives. We have to remember and make them remember that the government has to work for every single person in this country, not just for the very few who have accumulated more than 76% of the wealth of the U.S. (according to the Congressional Budget Office).

We need to demand our leaders change how they spend our taxes. We should be more ready for this kind of catastrophe. A doctor is more important than 100 politicians. A mask and gloves are more important than a gun. It is possible. It can be done. If we can prepare and be ready for war, we could also prepare and be ready to protect peoples' lives.

David Israel Caluna Pilamunga is a student at Minneapolis ABE in Minneapolis, MN. He is from Ecuador. He comes from a native family, and he speaks Kichwa, the mother language of the Kichwa people.

