

The Journey Project



My name is Noray Menekse. I was born in 1974 in Turkey. I met my husband in Turkey and got married there. Three months after we got married, my husband came to the U.S. I waited three hard years and then I came to America. My husband picked me up at Laguardia Airport in New York City. I moved into his apartment



in Brooklyn. We lived there for three months.

I first thought that America would be awesome because on the television I saw Hollywood. It looked amazing. But when I got to Brooklyn it was full of old brick building apartments and it was boring. I moved three months later because there was only one person we knew that was Turkish. So, we decided to move to Long Island because we knew some people there. I liked Long Island more than Brooklyn. It seemed more peaceful and quiet.

In 1995 I had my first child. His name was Yasin. He looked mostly like his father. My second child in 2000 was a girl named Yasemin. In 2004, my husband and I moved to Albany, NY. I came to Albany because my husband wanted to work there. My sister, who lived in New Jersey, decided to move near us.

All I want for my children here is for them to go to college and have a good life. After my kids graduate, I want to go back to Turkey with my husband. That's all I want in my life.

Noray Meneske

My name is Kin Omar Abokar. I am 24 years old and I'm from Somalia, East Africa. Most of my family are back in my country. My father has 14 sisters and 6 brothers. My mother has 4 sisters and 8 brothers. I have eight brothers and 8 sisters. One brother and one sister live in London. Both of them are married. I have one sister who lives in Kenya. Me and my sister, we live in the U.S.A. She is married in California. I am in Albany and am not married. The rest of my brothers and sisters live with my parents in Somalia. I came with my cousin and my aunt. We live together in Albany, NY.

I came to the United States because I thought it would be a better life to get a good job and to go to school. Also, to help my family in my country. Before I came to this



country I was living in different places like China and Djibouti. I lived in China for 3 1/2 years. I didn't like it because I didn't have any family or friends and no one understood me. But after that, I liked living there because more people were nice and friendly to me. Then I came back to Djibouti. It was so hot there. I lived there for three years.

Then, I moved to the U.S. It was a long journey. From Somalia to the U.S., it took four days of sitting in airports and changing airplanes. We were very tired.

Now, I go to school and work and help my family. It's all so peaceful here and I'm very happy with things now because I live with my aunt and cousins. But I miss my family; especially my parents.

I have challenges here though. My challenges are going to school after working long hours and then come back home and do my homework. Next, I will get my G.E.D. and then I will go to college. After that, I will go to a university to become an ultrasound technician and get a good job.

Kin Omar Abokar

Hello. My name is Bahereldeen Abdulrhman Fadol. I am from Sudan. I left my country because in my country, there is a lot of fighting so I left and went to Libya. In Libya, soldiers caught me and locked me in jail for two days because when I left Sudan, I didn't have my documents. After two days, my friend Mohammed helped me get away and get a job.

I worked as a farmer in Libya for four months but I never got my money. I asked the foreman, "Where is my money?" He said, "If you need your money, I will kill you!". And then I left my money behind.

After, I got another job with my friend Mohammed fixing houses. I got my money each day. After Libya, I went to Europe. I took a small boat. I was on the boat for six days with 26



other people. The boat ran out of gas. We didn't eat or drink for six days. One day, Maltese soldiers came to help us with a plane and a military boat. We were all taken to a refugee camp in Malta. I stayed there for nine months. In Malta, I got my freedom and a new life. I got a job in customs and worked there for four years. I met so many friends who I will never forget.

I came to the U.S. on October 28, 2010 because it was safer. When I came here the language was very different so a volunteer helped me get what I needed. I need to study English and I hope to become a business man and work with computers. Now, I have a hard job fixing wooden pallettes. But, I am grateful for the community of Albany for helping me with everything. Thank you to every volunteer.

Bahereldeen Abdulrhman Fadol

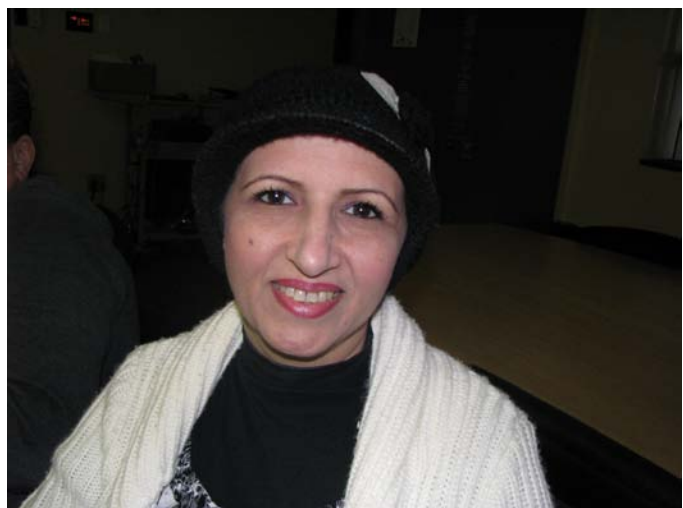
I am a simple person. My name is Pedro and I am from Mexico. I came to the United States by myself. My brother and his family and my sister and her family stayed in Mexico to take care of my mother.

I decided to come to this country out of curiosity. In my country, everyone always talked about the United States, so that is the reason I came here. It was strange first arriving in this country. It was hard learning English but interesting to meet new people. I don't know what will happen in the future. I will have to see.



Pedro

My name is Hanan Mohammed. I am 44-years-old and I am from Iraq. I left Iraq with my husband and my four daughters because of the war. We went to Egypt and stayed there for four years and in Egypt we went to the International



Organization for Migration looking for safety.

I did not have any idea about the United States of America. I arrived in Albany, NY in March 2010 and the weather was very cold. I discovered that America is a very nice country and I found people from many countries. I found America to be beautiful from the neighborhoods to the schools and the streets and the parks. Everything is very clean, beautiful, and safe.

In the beginning we faced difficulties because of our ignorance of the language and the laws and despite these circumstances, my husband found work and my daughters entered school. And I am trying to learn English. At the moment, I am having difficulty learning the English language but when I do, I will find a job as a hairdresser. That was my job for twenty years in Iraq and I loved it. In the future, I will get my own hair salon.

Mohammed

Hanan

My name is Ahlam. I'm 52-years-old. I'm from Iraq. I came to America in June 2010. I left Iraq because there is no safety anywhere and no work. I came here with my family.

We found safety in the U.S.A and we found jobs and schools for my children. But there is a different language and different weather. In Iraq, summer is hot and winter is cold but in America we have a short summer, especially in Albany.

I worked in the Green Zone in Baghdad with my son for six years. We made Iraqi food for the Americans and Iraqi workers. I also made American food and Italian food every day. The food was good and everyone was very nice.

When I came to America, I found America to be beautiful. From the neighborhoods and the schools and the streets and the parks. Everything is very clean and beautiful and safe. In the future, I would like to become a nurse.



Ahlam Jojo

I am Bassa Toume. I AM 37-years-old. I am from Mali, Africa. In my family, there are five plus mom and dad. The oldest one is a girl followed by three boys. I am the youngest one. They are all in Africa. I am the only one here.

I decided to come to the United States because I was all the time dreaming about America when watching some TV shows and seeing American movies. And people who already visited America always said good things about America like how people were living and getting their own food and the respect of human life and if you wanted to work how easily you can get a job.

One day I got help from my cousin who already came a lot of times to America for business. We got some paper work together and I went to the embassy for a visa and I got it. That day I was so very happy, I walked around with my passport and showed it to the people in my town. And people envied me. They wanted to be in my place because Africa is very difficult. To survive, you have to sacrifice a lot. Even if you graduate from college with a master's degree, to have a job is very difficult because the government is very corrupt. You need to have a family member in the government to get anything. They don't care about people's rights, especially the poor. If you are homeless, you can sleep on the street without food. They don't care.



I had a miserable life with my family. If you got lunch, then you would get no dinner or breakfast. The living was expensive so we didn't eat enough and that is why we are always so slim. And in the family, everybody was supported by the head of the family. My dad was the only one who could work. He had to support everybody. It's not like here.

My journey to America was splendid. I was very happy that my dream was coming true. But when I arrived to America, the beginning was very difficult for me. I lived in the Bronx with my cousin who never told me how the system here worked. I was supposed to work to help pay the bills but, like I said, it was not that way in Africa. And after two months in America, my cousin kicked me out. But by the grace of God, I was helped by a friend. We left the Bronx together and helped each other with the bills. After, I met my husband and we had our first child together. Her name is Sandy. She is nine-years-old. We also have a second child, a boy, whose name is Mustafa. After 10 years of marriage, we moved to Albany. We bought a house in a

good neighborhood. I have my own business now. I am a hairstylist; working so hard to support my family in Africa and help my husband with the bills as well.

My opinion of this country is that it never should change because the dream I was always dreaming came true. I drive a big car and have a nice house and I thank God a billion times. America changed my life thank God. My dream is to be a big business lady, make a lot of money, and give a good education to my kids. I don't want them to suffer the same ways I did. One day, I want to go back to my country to help all of the poor people and fix all of the mess. God willing.

Bassa Toume

I am Shirajum M. Tabassum. I am from Bangladesh. I am 20 years old. Bangladesh is a small and beautiful country. I have five people in my family. My father is a doctor and my mom is a housewife. My sister is older than me and my brother is younger than me.

My family lives in Bangladesh. I married in my country five years ago. My husband is an American citizen. He applied for me and I came here alone. His family lives here in the United States. He has two sisters and one brother.

I decided to come here because I got married and my husband applied for me. We met in my country after my parents talked to his parents about me and their son.

I like to study in the United States. The schools here are good. When I left Bangladesh to come to the United States, I thought this country seemed very nice and clean too but I didn't know much about this country or the city of Albany. Now, I think some places here look nice and some places do not look like my country. Some places, I have never been there. That's why every thing you watch on the T.V. is not true. That is why I miss my country.



Now, I think I will finish my G.E.D. and then go to college. I like to study computers. This is my favorite subject. I finished high school in my country but in my country school ends in 10th grade. That is why I need a G.E.D. My future dream is to work in robotic engineering.

Shirajum. M. Tabassum

When I started teaching ESL to a group of adults, I thought I was simply teaching the English language to people who were just learning it for the first time. I never realized how close I would get to them and the respect I gained from them from all they went through just to get here. They are all very good people with families either here or back in their home country and they all have their unique dreams and things they want to accomplish here. I truly hope they get everything they wish for.



John MacDonald