

MY HOPE

EVANGELINE'S LIFE

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Evangeline Tennant immigrated to Canada from Philippines on August 16, 2018. she was forty years old when she came in Canada. The following narrative is based on an interview conducted with Chiharu Tennant on May 28, 2021.

Life has never been easy for me. I have fourteen siblings and I'm second to the youngest. My childhood was fun, we used to play on the streets and would run around playing without sandals, and we would also shower in the rain. My father fully sustained our living. Back then, whenever my father would give me coins, I would be one of the happiest kids. Kids nowadays, won't appreciate what we had back then. My life was at ease at that time, everything was fine not until my father got a stroke. Since he provided for our family's living, we struggled a lot. We were in big debt. I remember how we eat rice with just salt every day. We sold lots of our lands and animals to survive. After I finished high school I started working immediately to help my family. Since then, I became the breadwinner of our family.



A TYPICAL AFTERNOON IN PANGASINAN PHILIPPINES, WHERE FAMILIES GATHER FOR FUN. THIS IS A PICTURE OF A ONE BIG-FAMILY PLAYING BINGO. (2017)

The economy, education and healthcare system in my home country is full of corruption. The lifestyle in the Philippines is already poor but there is still too much corruption. Even the teachers, doctors, and government are corrupt. The professionals that we expect to help people are most likely to disappoint us. Most hospitals, schools, and other services lack equipment. I have two children and based on our family's experiences, I see no future for my children.



A PICTURE OF DANIEL ON HIS EMERGENCY FLIGHT TO GET HIS OPERATION IN CANADA. (2016)

My youngest child, Daniel was diagnosed with hydrocephalus disease when he was three months old. My son needed multiple surgeries. We were in the Philippines at that time, the services that they gave there were not that good, and the bills were overpriced. Some doctors will take advantage of their patient's situations. Daniel got his first surgery in the Philippines. They knew that my husband was from another country and so they wanted to pull as much money as they could get, without considering my son's condition. The doctors said that my son needed another operation. My husband wouldn't agree with them because he believed that the doctors were able to do that in the first surgery, but they did not do it, because they only wanted money. We lost our family home to be able to afford the first surgery. My son was still in a bad condition, but we can no longer afford any other surgery. At that time my husband decided to bring my son to Canada for his surgery. And that is when I also discovered that it would be better if my whole family would settle in Canada.



A PICTURE OF EVANGELINE'S CHILDREN BACK IN THE PHILIPPINES. THIS IS EVANGELINE'S ELDEST DAUGHTER, CHIHARU, HOLDING HER BROTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME. (2015)

I was about 38 years old when I planned to immigrate to Canada with my daughter. Everything that happened was so unexpected. We were not planning to immigrate at first because my family was already settled in the Philippines. I just got home after nine years of working from abroad, and I finally got to spend time with my family. We were living normally and happily. When my son was diagnosed with hydrocephalus disease, our family got separated again. After my son went to Canada for his second surgery, my family knew that he could not survive in the Philippines and I also realized that it would be best to set our life here in Canada.



EVANGELINE AND HER CHILDREN, CHIHARU AND DANIEL IN TORONTO, CANADA. (2020)



THIS IS A PHOTO OF EVANGELINE'S YOUNGEST SON, DANIEL, SITTING IN HIS WHEELCHAIR, WHILE WAITING FOR HIS DAD TO DROP HIM OFF AT HIS SCHOOL. (2021)

While my husband and my son were in Canada, I started processing my application and also my daughter's. Finally, our immigration application was approved. When I arrived at Canada's airport the first thing that I thought about was my son. I was so excited to see him fully recovered from his surgery. My husband and my son were waiting for us. It's been two years since the last time I got to be my son, I was so happy. When I saw him waiting for us at the airport. I couldn't help myself not to cry. He grew so much, he was so much healthier and happy. He was able to lift his head at that time, and I couldn't help myself not to cry in happiness. He was laughing, giggling and moving so much, I felt so happy and relieved to see him not suffering anymore.

I started to lose hope when I almost lost everything, but I found hope here in Canada where we can start a new life.