

LuLu earns her GED and a better life at Gerard Place

Zuleima “LuLu” Rosario moved to Buffalo from Florida in 2017 looking for a better life for herself and her three sons. In Florida, she worked long hours at fast food restaurants, sometimes 12-hour shifts, just to make rent and pay for daycare, losing time with her boys and missing milestones.

“When I moved here to Buffalo, I promised myself I would work towards my GED and get a Certification in the Medical Field so I would not lose more time out of my kids’ lives,” she said.

One of the many success stories of Gerard Place, LuLu earned her GED in August 2022 and a certification for Sterile Processing Tech from Trocaire in November 2022. The road wasn’t easy, but she was determined to accomplish her goals.

“I would get ready with my children so that they can get ready for school, get them on their buses, and then I would have to catch two buses to Gerard Place,” LuLu said.

“Meanwhile, I was going through a horrible situation where I had to leave my home because it was unsafe for myself and my children,” she said. “I had to look for a new apartment, come up with the money for a deposit and still deal with backpay on the rent, but I never gave up.”

She credits Gerard Place with providing the support, programs, and encouragement she needed to move forward. In addition to the GED program and Trocaire program, she has participated in the food pantry, clothing closet program, and Christmas assistance.

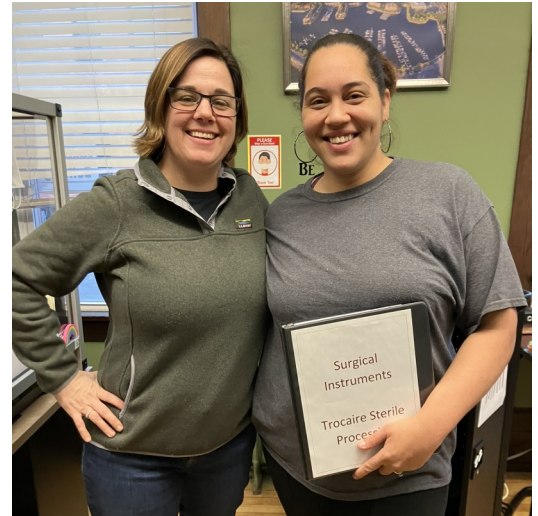
“The atmosphere at Gerard Place is beautiful - they treat you with respect and kindness. The love and support that I have gotten from Gerard Place has been over the moon. That’s why I decided to stay and help other students succeed because Gerard Place is so peaceful and you can feel the love there.”

Amanda Hibbard, literacy program coordinator, Gerard Place, describes LuLu as resilient, respectful, and grateful. “Even though she faced many barriers, like housing and busing issues, she showed up and was here every day,” Amanda said. “Now she is volunteering and helping other students in the GED program.”

LuLu’s future goals are to continue working in the medical field and at some point go back to school to become a surgical technician. She hopes to become a travel nurse after her boys are grown up. Right now, she is extremely proud of what she is doing.

“I get very emotional speaking about how Gerard Place has helped not only me, but my boys, and the love they have shown me,” LuLu said. “Amanda, Kathy, Kaitlin, Jill, Joe, Sister Maureen, and Sasha have been my number one supporters. They never let me give up when it got tough and would give me pep talks. When I got my GED and Certification they were so proud of me.

“I have no family here in Buffalo and Gerard Place became my family. I hold them all dearly to my heart.”



*Gerard Place Literacy Coordinator
Amanda Hibbard and Lulu*

