



DREAM COME TRUE: Newly-minted American citizen Aurora Hermoso and her son Luis in front of their apartment building in Chestnut Hill. (Bas Slabbers/for NewsWorks)

PHILADELPHIA — Inside an unremarkable classroom in West Philadelphia, Aurora Hermoso's dream came true.

In early September, after eight years of living and working in the U.S., the registered nurse finally became a citizen.

After the ceremony, it wasn't hard for Hermoso to smile as she stood for pictures in front of an

Philly RN new U.S. citizen

Written by AARON MOSELLE
Friday, 24 October 2014 17:26

American flag.

She had never felt so lucky.

“It was one of the happiest days of my life,” she said.

Hermoso grew up in Alfonso, Cavite in the Philippines, but always dreamed of coming to the U.S. of having all the rights the country guarantees its citizens.

Her childhood unfolded during the late President Ferdinand Marcos’ leadership.

He ruled the country using martial law, in part, to suppress the People Power Revolution, which aimed to bring democracy back to the island nation.

“There was no freedom. If you say something against a government official, they’re going to arrest you. There was a curfew so you couldn’t even go where you wanted to go,” said Hermoso.

Her aunt, at the time a registered nurse, inspired her to leave the Philippines.

She had moved to Atlanta in the 1970s and often wrote letters detailing her life in the U.S.

“I idolized her. I’ve always wanted to be a nurse like her,” said Hermoso.

“She was really passionate about being a nurse.”

Philly RN new U.S. citizen

Written by AARON MOSELLE
Friday, 24 October 2014 17:26

By her senior year in high school, Hermoso knew she wanted to follow in her aunt's footsteps and head to the U.S.

The Philippines was a democracy again, but Hermoso's desire to come to the U.S. never waned.

The move took some time.

Hermoso spent more than a decade practicing in the Philippines before reaching the U.S.

But in 2006, after five years of trying, she finally arrived in Philadelphia.

At the time, she said permanent visas were hard to come by.

Temporary, or tourist visas were a bit easier, but officials suspected Hermoso probably wasn't just looking to get away on vacation and denied her applications.

The wait, though, made that first night in the city that much sweeter.

Before arriving, Hermoso had watched videos and read magazine articles about Philadelphia, but it was all no match for reality.

"It was evening time and we were driving by Boathouse Row and I said, 'Oh my God. It's exactly the same as the postcard,'" recalled Hermosa, laughing.

Philly RN new U.S. citizen

Written by AARON MOSELLE
Friday, 24 October 2014 17:26

Hermoso started working for Germantown Home, an assisted living facility in Mt. Airy, just two months after arriving.

She's been there ever since.

New Courtland Elder Services, which runs Germantown Home, helped her get her permanent visa as they have for several Filipino nurses in recent years as baby boomers in their ranks prepared for retirement.

"The nursing curriculum in the Philippines is similar to that of here in the United States," said Hermoso.

Still, even after all these years in the U.S., the fact that she is now a citizen has taken time to internalize.

Hermoso said she couldn't be prouder to be an American or happier about being able to provide her 11-year-old son Luis with the kind of life she wants for him.

"It's an awesome feeling," said Hermoso.

(NewsWorks)