

Aracely Jumpa Carhuamaca

Hello dear friends, my name is Aracely. I am fifteen years old and would like to share my story with you:

My first days in the Peruvian jungles

I was born in Puerto Yanaqui in La Merced Chanchamayo, which is in the District of Junin in the jungle of Peru. My mother is Neyda, and I have only one brother, whose name is Vladimir. I don't have any contact with my father. In the jungle we were living with my grandfather Moises (my mother's father), an extraordinary man who taught me to be independent. This place has wonderful places and an amazing waterfall named "El velo de la novia", but in this place, girls can't find many opportunities to improve their lives. Many girls here had babies when they were only 15 or 17 years old. In this place, I used to help my mother in the restaurant where she used to work.

From Puerto Yanaqui to Lima

When I was 6 years old, my mother thought that it would be better if we moved to Lima. First she went to Lima alone, and after three months, she came back for my brother and me. When we were in Lima my mother used to work washing clothes. I remember that our life wasn't easy, at one job my mother washed lots of clothes, and her boss gave her food for her, my brother, and me but never paid my mother. After some months, my mother started to look for an orphanage for my brother and for me. I remember the exact day when I arrived to this place because it was my seventh birthday. It was April 27, 2006. I remember that I didn't cry that day because I understood that my mother wasn't able to raise me, and she had to work.

My life starts to change

Some months before coming to Lima when I was 6 years old, I met Lon Haldeman, a man who changed my life and gave me the possibility to be the person who I am right now. Also I'm really grateful to his friends who helped him to improve my life. In that moment, I didn't know the magnitude of their help, but now I totally understand how important was this moment.

My life in the orphanage

My life in this place has been nice. I actually used to miss my mother, but I can see her every weekend. Lon and his friends never forgot me. Although he met me in La Merced, he didn't lose contact with my mother and me when I arrived in Lima. He was always worried about my studies. He wanted me to study and become a better person. From my first years, I understood that school was the only way to improve my life. My mother, her parents, and her brothers and sisters never went to the university, so I want to change that. With the help of the people of PAC Tour I am almost sure that I will reach my goals. When I was 12 years old, I started to study English with the help of my friends in the United States. I really love to learn new languages, because it lets me speak with foreign volunteers and also learn more about new cultures. Each year, starting 8 years ago PAC Tour used to take me to nice places around Peru. In those places I could learn something more about my country. I also learned how important it is to help people and the different ways that we can help these people. In my country there are a lot of poor children who are very smart and intelligent, but unfortunately they don't have the opportunity to grow as a professional person. Thanks to God, that is not my case because I think God put many good friends in my life.

Hogar de Gina

Now I am living in Hogar de Gina, an orphanage where I live with some girls who have similar stories. In some cases, their stories are worse. I really love this place because here I could find a family. I want to be a professional too because I think the girls who live here in Hogar de Gina could see my example and fight for a better future. Here I feel protected and learned about the life of other girls.

My brother Vladimir

Vladimir is my lovely brother. He loves me so much, and I really love him too. Actually he lives in another orphanage, but I see him every weekend. He is very smart and intelligent. I also want to be a good example for him and help him in all the ways that we can help a person. I am really proud of him because he has excellent grades in his school too. He is always in all my plans, and I want to help him too.

The University

I think that education gives us the tools to face life, and it helps us to improve our lives and fulfill our dreams. In December 2014, I will finish my school and I will start at the University. It is really incredible to know that there are people around the world who will help me with this goal. I think it is incredible because when I was a child, I never thought that I was going to find people so kind who would help me to study in a University.

AFS

Before starting the University, my I would like to join the AFS program. AFS is an international exchange program for students. Some months ago a volunteer from Switzerland was living here in Hogar de Gina with me, and she told me her story with AFS. She told me that she learned many things and through this program and found the way to pursue her goals. In my case, I want to join AFS because it will let me learn about foreigners, new cultures, and languages. I love tourism, ecology, the protection of the environment and the solidarity. Also I would to join AFS because it will help me to improve my English, since I want to learn more English and some new languages like French and German. In Hogar de Gina (the orphanage) I learned that we can help in many ways, but the best way to help someone is through studying.

Thanks, PAC Tour

When I review the past, I think about my life before I met my friends at PAC Tour. I think of all the children who couldn't find the support I have received. In the future I want to be a professional because I want to help poor children. I would like to tell them my story and explain to them that it is very possible that they can reach for their dreams and goals. Finally, I want to say, "Thank you very much" to all unknown people who have helped me follow my dreams.