

September 15 – October 15
Hispanic Heritage Month

September - October 2014



Bayamon Puerto Rico

By: Patricia Nowicki

I was born in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. There, I lived in a small neighborhood inside a big and diverse town. We were very close to beautiful and historic San Juan. I wasn't too far from their picturesque beaches. I have never seen more beautiful beaches than the ones in Puerto Rico. There are so many palm trees, everyone can hang a hammock while you visit the beach. In addition, there was always small kiosks where you could buy local snacks and refreshments while listening to music.



Beautiful Picturesque Beaches

As beautiful as San Juan and the beaches were, the public schools there were not very good so my parents worked very hard and sent my siblings and I to a private school. We had to wear a uniform every day and take religion classes. The classrooms



had no technology, there was no central air, no cafeteria, and no playground. This is how I thought all schools were like. Nonetheless, we had great teachers who motivated me to become one since Kindergarten. When I was nine, my parents moved us to Central Florida. I was shocked how beautiful everything was. The schools were amazing! They had playgrounds, a cafeteria which served full meals, and air conditioning in every classroom. I loved school in Florida since the first day. My teachers nominated me to be a peer tutor in middle school to help students with disabilities. I knew I wanted to be an ESE teacher since then. I am glad to have my culture and heritage but I am so thankful to Florida for helping me reach my goals. It was their public school system that helped me get into college. The University of Central Florida paid for my Bachelors and Masters Degrees through scholarships and grants. Without our great education

system I would have never been able to become a teacher, my dream since I was five years old.

Rio Piedra Puerto Rico

By: Marielis Aviles



Rio Piedras Market

¡Yo soy Hispana Americana!
My name is Marielis Aviles and I'm Hispanic American. I was born and raised in Puerto Rico up to the age of 10. My mother brought me over to this country with only the clothes on our backs in search of a better life. Despite the language barrier, socioeconomic and cultural challenges, I worked hard at reaching the "American Dream". I have been working since the age of 15 and worked two jobs to put myself through college. After years of hard work and many sacrifices, I'm proud to say that "I'm a Latina Americana" and I have reached "the American Dream".



Bronx NY- Puerto Rico

By: Luis Alvarado

I was born in the Bronx NY and raised in Queens. My first Language is Spanish. I am Puerto Rican and lived in Puerto Rico for 3 years. When I came to NY I struggled in school because I couldn't read or write in English. I then learned how to read and loved to read ever since. I joined the marines when I was 17 years old and served during Desert Storm. I got to march down the Canyon of heroes by the shadow of the twin towers. I graduated New York City Tech with my Associates Degree, I then went to Hunter College for my Bachelor's Degree. I then moved to Florida with my wife and began teaching. I taught for 6 years and received my Master's degree from the University of Phoenix and became a Dean.



New York- Puerto Rico

**By: Marisol Sepulveda ESOL
Teacher**

"I am very proud to be an American of Latino heritage." I'm a New Yorker, a Hispanic, and a teacher, and I'm proud to be Latin American. I have learned a lot about my ancestors which are Puerto Ricans. I feel that we have certain advantages because we are able to speak two languages and to communicate with both English- and Spanish-speaking people of this world. We also have very beautiful cultures in our dancing, music, and delicious foods, and we are able to share these cultures with everyone. This country offers a lot of opportunities for everyone who wants them. For me to be an American of Latino heritage means that I have a tremendous history behind me that enables me to offer this country a rich artwork--

being an ESOL Teacher, teaching and inspiring students from around the world most of them from Latin-American countries. It has made me a person who is able to have a better understanding of different situations. Enjoy Heritage Hispanic Month! Viva la Música, Fiestas y Comida!!!