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Time Changes, but the American Dream Doesn’t

When Karla was just four years old, her parents immigrated to the United States with hopes of building a better life and giving their daughter opportunities they never had. Though they faced challenges adapting to a new language and culture, they never doubted their decision to pursue the American dream.

Karla attended school like any other child and, despite language barriers, graduated from high school. She began working in agriculture and customer service before marrying and starting a family of her own. For several years, she stayed home to raise her two young daughters, but her desire to further her education never faded.

She knew that education and a stable immigration status were key to achieving the life she envisioned. In 2019, she studied diligently for the U.S. citizenship exam and proudly became a citizen. This was a milestone that reignited her determination to pursue a professional career. Soon after, Karla connected with GST Michigan Works! and enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program to pursue her dream of becoming a dental hygienist.

Although she was initially accepted into a dental hygiene program, Karla later realized her true passion was in physical therapy. With guidance and encouragement from her career coach, she transitioned into a Physical Therapy program, which aligned perfectly with her strengths and goals.

Throughout her journey, Karla remained committed, balancing family life, rigorous coursework, and internships with unwavering determination. Her husband and daughters provided constant support, inspiring her to keep going even during the most demanding moments.

After four years of dedication and hard work, Karla graduated with honors, earning a high GPA and the admiration of her instructors. Even more rewarding, she was hired by the hospital where she completed her internship.

Karla is the first in her family to graduate from college, a milestone that fills her with pride and gratitude. She sees her achievement not only as a personal victory but as a promise to future generations — to show that with perseverance, education, and community support, the American dream is still alive and attainable.

It was a great honor for us [GST Michigan Works!] to be part of this dream!