



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

BRYCS Youth Conversations: Rossul, an Iraqi Teen

In January 2017, Rossul shared her resettlement journey and experiences with BRYCS staff on what it's like to be an immigrant teen in the United States.

Family Background and Migration Story

I am a Muslim youth, born in 1995 in Baghdad, Iraq. All my family are Muslims and also born in Baghdad. I had to leave my country with the rest of my family in August 2015 because of the unsafe situation there and lack of maintenance like electricity, clean water and all other life requirements. We went to Jordan then to Turkey and we were resettled in Illinois. It took four days to get here and *alhamdu lil lah*, which means "thanks God", we didn't face any issues on our way.

Life in the U.S.

Life here is so different than my country. *Alhamdo lil lah* now I am almost used to living here after I finished two years of my college, obtained my driving license and got married. It was so hard at the beginning to start a new life from zero. However, me and my family did a great job to build our life again. Now, I am an adult. I don't care about what people think about me or my religion as long as I know that I am doing the right thing. I love this country but I will always have love for my country of origin and my people. I live a good and peaceful life today and am very thankful to the people who brought me here and helped me to resettle.

Before I came to the U.S., I wish I knew the people here don't speak the English we learned in our schools, but use more street language. But leaving my relatives and friends has been the hardest thing...finding real friends or any sort of friends; just be prepared to be alone. Work hard because you can do anything in this country.

Advice for Parents

This is a different area and you should teach you kids to adopt this new culture and live with it. However, at the same time, work so hard so you can make your children behave according to their religion and culture, take them to the mosque and speak Arabic at home. Be a friend to your children and always tell to them to stay away from what they might see here like drugs, bad relationships, etc.

Advice for Teachers

Teachers should understand that we are talking in a second language. They should be patient and understand our needs. English is the main issue for all refugees.

Advice for Immigrant Teens

Don't forget your culture and your religion. Be proud about who you are. Don't let this hard new life let you down or make you think bad about yourself, you are special. Chase your dreams and study hard so you can be an important individual in this society, represent and make your country proud.

Future Goals

I am in my second year of college. Within five years *in shaa allah* I see myself working in the hospital as an ultrasound specialist, living with my lovely husband, near my family, with a little kid, in a calm house.