

Nicole Mariona

## The Production of Her Lifelong Devotion 4/6

She reminiscence the long drive, admiring her oldest sister who was ready to head off to college. While dropping her sister off at the University of Santa Barbara, she had reassurance in her gut that her parents would do the same thing in the future with her.

“And what do you know, a few years later I went there, and I graduated with my bachelor's in psychology,” Liliana Vega said. She will also receive her M.A. in Psychology, with an emphasis on Industrial Organization, in Spring 2019 at Azusa Pacific University.

At the University of Santa Barbara, Liliana had many experiences that shaped her view of the world and motivated her own. One of the opportunities she's most thankful for was to study abroad and become an English Teacher for students, from kindergarten to teens, in Seoul, South Korea.

“I got to implement their learning plans and meet with parents and just get a really good buy for their culture, and just fully immerse in it,” Liliana said.

Liliana's experience with children opened her eyes to realize the different stigmas in Seoul, such as having a child with a cognitive disability.

One of her experiences involved a young boy who had behavioral problems, and as an educator, she felt the need to let the parents know, but the parents did not want to accept it.

“I felt the student was never really able to capture what was being taught in the classroom and not excel in their education. So that was sad to see that,” Liliana said. She became more thankful knowing that there are services in the U.S. that implement needs for children with cognitive disorders.

Liliana also gained skills that aided her in the future with her current occupation. In her workplace, Liliana meets new people every day coming from different countries and with different diagnoses. She assists people with cognitive and physical disabilities by interviewing people and conducting assessments based on their disabilities. Her psychology degree comes in handy when a person reports having disability and she is able recognize the symptoms and provide them with appropriate answers and services.

Since she was younger, Liliana had always felt devoted to help others. One of her motivators to pursue her education and give back to her community started in her hometown of Southside, Los Angeles. Where drugs, alcohol, and gang violence were prevalent, Liliana strived to get out of that environment and give back.

“I pursued a career in psychology because I wanted to go back to the community that helped shape me and to help youth be motivated and advise them to seek higher education,” Liliana said.

