

Testimony of Bryton Chikukwa  
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Ndokukwaisai mese nomufaro? ( In my native language it means I greet all of you with great joy in my soul)

In Zimbabwe some say life begins at 40, but to me I would say it begins when you have the opportunity.

It started off as dreams, wanting to study in America and I also didn't believe that someday I would be here.

I would like to thank Patricia Decker, my sponsor and Shayna Ferullo, who works at Quest International and John Davis. These people are all who made it possible, for my dream to come true. I even had Senators Schumer and Gilabrand and Congressman Owens write letters on my behalf.

My greatest challenge in Zimbabwe was obtaining a VISA at the USA Embassy. It was very tough, I had all my papers that were in support of my core aspects in USA, to seek better education, and for cultural exchange.

At the Embassy, we paid \$160 dollars which was non-refundable, to be interviewed. To my disappointment the interview lasted less than 4 minutes, I opted that maybe he would look at my papers but he showed no interest. I was given a regards later that I had failed the interview. This was heartbreaking both to my parents and my sponsor.

Because such opportunities do not come so easily to us in Zimbabwe, we opted to try again my sponsor, Miss Decker sent some money to try again, she also had some letters written to the Embassy in support of me. My second interview went well. We all rejoiced after struggling to obtain a VISA. Words can't explain how excited my family was for such an opportunity.

I think most people are all aware of the political, economic and corruption crises in Zimbabwe . The education in Zimbabwe is deteriorating and everything is just going down. Even in universities there are less programs that a student may opt to study. Entrance into a university is difficult to limited vacancies and a corrupt system . More so on technology, Zimbabwe is very far less advanced than America.

I feel honored to study in America , it's like opening my eyes after being blind folded in Zimbabwe. We never had computers nor internet at school and also we often run short of text books, but here in America students have it all.

To mention the American culture, it's wonderful. Everyone I have come across, is very polite and very nice to me. I feel secure and safe to be around them, I would also like to thank my host family, the Hults family, they are good people. I was amazed that people around here don't lock their doors and they even leave money on tables in a restaurant.

What I also admired about the American culture is the variety of food, I never had a hamburger nor a variety of drinks. In Zimbabwe I never had the opportunity to eat as much food as I wanted to. Truly being in America it's a wonderful place to be.

I think my greatest challenge here, is to obtain a college degree and pursue a university program of my own choice. And I believe through hard work and knowing where I come from, I can do it.