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Our America  
02-07-2023

#### Autobiography:

I was born to a culture where racism wasn't always present at the table, where people of different races and ethnicities lived in harmony. Where Dominicans and Haitians grew up together even though a cultural gap interfered with their daily activities. Back in my country, the Dominican Republic, it was common for the story of hundreds of Haitian citizens who migrated from their native country due to the lack of economic resource, thus, our life journey united some of my early friends from Haitian descents and I. I remembered attending the same school and even inviting home one of my closest friends whose parents were Haitian. Although I knew that culturally speaking we were different and that his family were not fully dominicans, never did it occur to me that they were any different than I was or that their darker skin separated our stories. Growing up, I was taught to treat everyone with kindness and respect, regardless of their background. There was no such thing as racism in my amateur's mindset.

However, my innocence was shattered when I experienced racism for the first time. It was my 8th grade in middle school, by then I had already moved to the United States with my family when some of my peers began to make fun and mock me as I made every effort to ameliorate the new language I

had adopted. I remember the scene like if it took place yesterday; “speak english,” some of my classmates cried out as I took part in the class discussions. It was very embarrassing, listening to all of my assumed friends burst into laughter after the other student’s comment. Nevertheless, I handled the situation like never before. Continue my daily participation even knowing I barely could finish a full sentence without being interrupted by their bad jokes and laugh.

They called me racial slurs and excluded me from social activities. I felt hurt, angry, and confused.

This experience made me realize that racism still existed in our society and that not everyone shared the same values as I did. It was a difficult lesson, but it also made me stronger and more determined to stand up against hate and prejudice, against stereotypes and dark jokes. Never in my mind had the word racism been considered a welcome treatment towards other people. I’m now able to show reluctance to any form of racism because of the experience.

From that day on, I made a commitment to educate myself about different cultures and to actively promote diversity and inclusion. I joined organizations that advocated for social justice and took part in community service projects that helped bridge the gap between different communities.

Looking back, I am proud of the person I have become and the impact I have

had on those around me. I believe that by spreading love and understanding, we can create a world where everyone is accepted and valued for who they are.