

Miles to Make a Difference

Leaving home for the first time was very difficult for her. Brenes said she remembers her parents leaving her in Honduras, where she attended boarding school, in her uniform with tears in her eyes. Everything she had ever known was gone. She had to start over and find a new normal.

Growing up in America, education has always been readily available. Students go to school, public or private, until senior year, and then the choice is up to them what they want to do. Some want to start working right out of school, and others plan to attend college to continue their education.

International students wanting to come to college in the United States have to make many sacrifices. The application process is lengthy, the cost is pricey, and they are leaving everything they know behind in order to pursue their dreams.

Baleshka Brenes, a doctoral student in the agricultural education and communication department at Texas Tech, came to America in 2010 from Nicaragua.

Brenes attended Zamorano University where it sparked her interest in agriculture.



Zamorano is located in Central America, and it offers students a chance to get hands on experience while learning. Half of the week they take classes, and the other half they work. Learn by doing is their motto.

After going to school in Honduras, Brenes applied to come to school in the United States. The students that attend Zamorano had a big network that helped them know about the different programs, scholarships, and opportunities available.

She moved to Ohio to prepare and take the GRE (graduate record examinations).

"I was really excited about coming to the U.S.," Brenes said. "I have family in Miami, so I've been here before, but never to Ohio."

Not knowing what this new adventure would hold, Brenes left Central America with big hopes and dreams.

"I didn't have a farming or anything agricultural background," Brenes said. "My dad did his bachelors degree related to agriculture, but he didn't do anything with it."

Leaving Central America for the first time was hard because Brenes was scared and would be living in a new place, but she was excited at the opportunity that awaited her.

The first week was the hardest, but she slowly got used to it.

"When I was there," Brenes said, "it was a shock because they have their own culture."

After working hard in Ohio to prepare to study for her masters, she saw an opening for a masters program in Commerce, TX. Brenes and a friend packed their bags and flew to Dallas. Not knowing anyone, having a car, or knowing anything about the housing industry, she made her way to Commerce and had a fresh start.

Brenes graduated from Commerce with an agricultural science masters with a focus in agricultural education, but she didn't know what she was going to do upon graduating. Then, she got in contact with a professor from Texas Tech.

A Tech recruiter from the agricultural education and communication department talked to Brenes about coming to Lubbock. The visit to Tech went great. The staff was welcoming, the campus was more than