



## THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

### *Philippines Valedictorian Celebrates Uniqueness*



Shaina grew up being bullied and discriminated against from the very beginning. When Shaina was young, her mother let her stay hidden in their house- Shaina's father was African American and so she looked different, with darker skin and different textured hair. Abandoned by her father at birth, she was raised by her hard-working single mother, Arlene, who tried to protect her from the bullying she was subjected to when she left the house. But Shaina was so intelligent and curious, ready to learn and explore the world, her mother knew Shaina needed to be out in the world- and in school.

Arlene explained to Shaina when she was young why she looked different and what had happened with her father, and Shaina learned how to accept how she looked as not what made her different- but what made her unique. She had many talents and gifts and despite the bullies and discrimination, Shaina

focused on her worth and on her schoolwork, building up her confidence and becoming an outstanding student. She has earned First Honors since she was in preschool, and just graduated elementary school from White Angel Academy as valedictorian. In her valedictory address, she said:

*"It is common knowledge that it is not easy achieving highest honors without perseverance hard work, self-discipline and responsibility. I was able to make it amidst discouraging, painful, and discriminating comments just because I have a different color and I am a bi-racial. I did not mind all of them; and I did not allow their judgments to enter into my heart and into my mind. I am so grateful to my mom and her unconditional love for me, and her patience of constantly explaining to me my situation until I was able to comprehend and understand. Thank you also to all the people who believed and trusted me. Thank you to Pearl S. Buck Foundation Philippines, Inc. and my generous sponsor ... from the US who provides me with my school-related needs and expenses. May God keep and bless all of you as He has blessed me with all these talents and gifts."*

In addition to being named valedictorian of her class, Shaina was an Academic



Excellence Awardee (in Mathematics, English, Filipino, Science, Civic and Culture, T.L.E.) She is also a Meritorious Awardee: Most Active, Most Compassionate, Most Encouraging Person, Most Trustworthy, Most Determined and True Leader Award. She is also a Loyalty Awardee, considered a major academic award.

Despite the discrimination and bullying and being raised by a single mother, this young girl has hidden wings, thanks to the love of her mother and the generosity of Pearl S. Buck Foundation Philippines and her child sponsor. Thanks to their support, she will continue to grow and soar high in life.



# Ongoing Need for Help in the Philippines

The holidays are over, but sponsored children and their families in the Philippines are still struggling with displacement, damaged homes and lack of basic necessities following Typhoon Rai, which hit the islands of Leyte and Cebu on December 16. In addition to recovering from that devastating natural disaster, the children and their families must also prepare themselves and their homes for the next typhoon- which is not a matter of if it hits, but when.

There are several ways you can help the children and families served by Pearl S. Buck Foundation Philippines. Your generosity can ensure that sponsored children and their families living in Ormoc, Leyte, Philippines can make the necessary repairs to their houses to keep dangerous rainy season leaking and flooding at bay. <https://pearlsbuck.org/gifts/repair-homes-affected-by-rainy-season-flooding-125/>



Your support can also ensure that sponsored children and their families in the Philippines who have been displaced due to typhoon flooding and other natural disasters receive a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, alcohol wipes, and basic instructions on use. Staying healthy will enable them to return home, to work, and to school as soon as possible. <https://pearlsbuck.org/gifts/personal-hygiene-kit-6/>

Pearl S. Buck International also has an ongoing project set up to provide disaster assistance to sponsored children and families in the Philippines. The rainy season there lasts from May through October, with typhoon season lasting through January- so there is always a need for relief from natural disasters. The Disaster Preparedness Project teaches the sponsored children and their parents the importance of environmental protection, disaster preparedness, and disease prevention. The beneficiaries also receive boots, raincoats, umbrellas, and disaster kits which they can use during the rainy season and at times when strong typhoons or earthquakes hit their communities. This rain gear will also protect them from certain water-borne diseases that are widespread during the rainy season and excessive flooding.

<https://pearlsbuck.org/projects/disaster/>

As always, we are so grateful for your generosity to the sponsored children and their families in both their biggest times of need and throughout the entire year!

