

Interview #3

Name of Interviewee: Alessandra Canales

Occupation: Doctor, Mom of Yasmeen, a student we are highlighting

Date: 3/23/23

00:00:02:11 - 00:00:24:02

Alessandra

All right. Okay. So, yeah, go for it. Okay. I'm just going to start the question. Let's go. Perfect. Just like that.

Could you state your name and your relationship with Yasmeen?

My name is Alessandra Giuliano Canales, and I am Yasmeen Canales mom.

How old is Yasmeen? And what does she enjoy doing in her free time?

Yasmeen is 15.

00:00:24:02 - 00:00:53:05

Alessandra

Lots of stuff. But basically, in her free time, she's dancing, singing, trying to perform like an artist. And she enjoys swimming as well as electronics. She's a teenager.

What are Yasmeen's best qualities?

Her personality, even when she was born, I think she was very fragile. No, she's pretty strong. And it starts when actually she was born with a heart condition.

00:00:53:16 - 00:01:23:08

Alessandra

But she's so very strong and that's why she's over here with us.

What is one thing you wish people knew about Yasmeen that we don't?

Oh, there's lots of stuff. But basically that she's capable of doing whatever she wants. And people look at her and sometimes think that she is incapable but not. And she proved this to me every single day.

00:01:23:08 - 00:02:01:22

Alessandra

Some in the back. We want to be part of the family. Now, you guys have traded this part.

What is the biggest obstacle Yasmin faces day to day?

As I told you, since she was born, she's been fighting for her life. Oh, but basically you know the story of when we moved to the USA . She'll tell us I mean she was really alive and so she never contacted someone that spoke English.

00:02:02:06 - 00:02:28:19

Alessandra

She have the whole support of of my family over there and friends that should make the entire life and moving to us being by myself with her and my husband was pretty hard to accept for her that she need to learn a totally different language and them to send these daily basic that she needs to be by her own in different environment.

00:02:29:10 - 00:03:19:04

Alessandra

So she's still learning, but she makes so much progress every day. She showed me how capable she's and how incredible improvements she'd make every day.

Do you feel that Yasmin has ample opportunities to socialize with your peers? Is there anything that you wish the school did better to help support that department?

It's that everyday fight because the interaction is hard, I think in both ways for people to understand that sometimes, you know, they I'm not talking about just us meeting and talking about their special needs children, that they behave a little bit different.

00:03:19:19 - 00:03:52:23

Alessandra

And to respect and understand that I, I know that's not easy because I have this testimonial that when I, I scraped her the day school district, the once we moved and the school district asked me to spend the whole day in the classroom to make sure that she was comfortable. And to my surprise, even though I'm a doctor, the one that was uncomfortable was me.

00:03:52:23 - 00:04:19:19

Alessandra

So the reality of the day, life for these special needs, it's a little bit different from normal special needs. But the interaction and socialization is the hope, I think, for every parent for us to make it more equal. And you're talking a little bit about how the classes are different from where you are from here.

Could you just describe a little bit about classes in Brazil?

00:04:20:16 - 00:04:54:21

Alessandra

Yes. So the class is in our home county, which is Brazil, she says in a classroom that it's a mixed classroom, that the f I'm sorry. Let me tell you again how I can explain it. So the program

in Brazil is a little different from the program over here, out there. She has the whole time, the classroom, mixing it up with special needs children.

00:04:54:21 - 00:05:33:05

Alessandra

So she found more socialization every single day. And here it's a mix of being just in a classroom of special needs and the anomaly special needs kids so interact with different type of social skills was hard for for her in the first years, I mean, the first two years to get through and through adapt and seeing actions that was different from her daily life in Brazil.

00:05:33:05 - 00:06:04:12

Alessandra

What are Yasmin's plans when she finishes high school? Yeah, yeah, that's a question that actually I have for dinner with two moms in a special needs class. Two months ago, there was one thing that we talked about: what's going to be when they finish high school because from a family standpoint, you know you want your kid to grow.

00:06:05:06 - 00:06:32:07

Alessandra

But once you have a special need, you know it can grow somehow and sometimes you don't have perspective if it's going to work or not. So I should say for this question, we work one day at the time to make the dream come true, that she's going to be in the plan, that she's going to have a job, that she's going to be capable to do whatever and no special needs kids can do.

00:06:33:12 - 00:07:02:18

Alessandra

What is the misconception about your child or children with disabilities that you wish others understood?

I think that was a dream in my life that was pretty rough for me that day. So we were in Brazil, and once the year Me was born, I was fighting for the cows or whatever. I called to make the sauce, the social interaction more even for her.

00:07:03:10 - 00:07:41:22

Alessandra

And I, she was actually seven months and I was already fighting. So I'm going to go to the park. We have this parade over there and I'm going to go to fight for the cause. And I was walking and then that was a kid coming up with his father. And they ask what they're fighting about. And the dad did not have the good answers in my perspective because they said, oh, they are fighting about for the kids that the body grows, but the brain doesn't grow.

00:07:42:18 - 00:08:11:07

Alessandra

That was so rough for me. So true. So here that was very hurtful. It was the first time that I actually felt that the quality to fight that to have every single day. So if I have a message, it's just like because she has a different shape of her ears or you have a different shape of her, her face, different eyes, doesn't mean that she's not capable.

00:08:11:18 - 00:08:43:10

Alessandra

She's capable of doing whatever she wants.

Do you have times when you feel your own friends and peers are insensitive to the experience of raising a child with disabilities?

Is there any way an example can make the question again? Do you have times when you feel that your friends or peers are insensitive or say inappropriate things to the experience of raising child disabilities?

00:08:43:19 - 00:09:13:17

Alessandra

Actually, I don't. I don't have eyes for Dad because I think he knows me. Surprise me every single day how brave she's how independent she can be. So even if someone tells me something I think my future is not. I don't. I really don't. How did you feel when you found out about your childhood disability? That was a pretty good one, actually.

00:09:13:17 - 00:09:38:17

Alessandra

As I said, I'm a doctor. Even if I'm a doctor. The diagnosis was actually when she actually was born. So she was born different. The doctor called me and said, She says she's okay, your kids are okay. I saw her briefly for 5 seconds in your head, took her to you and that to care. I said, What's going on?

00:09:38:17 - 00:10:09:23

Alessandra

Because I knew something was wrong and of course, she was born with the heart condition that she needed to undergo surgery. But as a human being, I should say, the first first reaction is to deny. So I saw that you have Down's syndrome because the signs of the inside of me that I know were over there.

00:10:10:01 - 00:10:51:06

Alessandra

But the fourth thing was the nine. Now she doesn't have that. But over time, I should say it's the same thing that I talk with these moms in the in in our DNA time over time, the best key for me to have it's my daughter and I love so much her that I will give my life for just for you to know and that was the same concerns of the other moms that are disability kids.

00:10:52:13 - 00:11:27:05

Alessandra

Over time, we have different types of strong daily bases that we don't have. Well, you know, the ones.

Do you think it is more difficult for children with disabilities to make lasting friendships versus those without a disability? Why or why not?

Yes, it's much harder. It's a much harder and different perspective because, you know, it's a different type of disability.

00:11:27:05 - 00:12:18:19

Alessandra

But, you know, sometimes we don't know if she's going to behave well in a place we found me. So making a friend that understands that in respect that income comes down and be prepared to house her. It's hard to find. What are your hopes and dreams for you know, as I told one day at the time, but my hope is for her, when she gets there she will have a job where she can interact, socialize and make herself happy and fun.

00:12:19:12 - 00:12:52:17

Alessandra

She'll want to get married. If she wants to get married, then to find someone, she'll get married. So I hope it's just one day at the time. Whatever she can do in my life, my job is to provide.

So based on my research for programs that issues with disabilities like personal stories and cafes like this cafe, not with you, but what about with companies like Google and Facebook to give more effort to show the value of hiring disabilities?

00:12:52:17 - 00:13:31:13

Alessandra

Are there any dream jobs?

Her dream job right now is to be a top model. So I think she has potential because my eyes are for and she's beautiful. So I don't know what your peers are taught about children with disabilities. What do you wish other kindergarten age understood about? I just mean it's a little she's she she she she's very capable and surprised me every day.

00:13:32:03 - 00:13:55:22

Alessandra

That was one day that one of her best friends in the special Needs classroom was not very friendly with her. She was upset and the way she interacts because she has out me is a little bit rough and I heard her a little bit. Then she came back home and said, Oh mom, this happens.

00:13:55:22 - 00:14:31:21

Alessandra

But I understand that having autism is difficult. So to surprise me we have her comments and that's something that the quality is going to happen when everyone understands the differences between each other. So that's it.

Do you have any stories about Yasmeen that you want to put in this interview story?

Yeah, of course. So Yasmeen surprised us a lot.

00:14:32:18 - 00:15:01:17

Alessandra

So one of the things that she should like, it's her independence, but because she is different, we sometimes struggle on that. So last January, because she was back and forced to visit parents in Brazil, but last January it was hard for me to have someone to bring her back to the United States. And she said, You know, mom, I'm going to go by myself.

00:15:03:01 - 00:15:40:03

Alessandra

And she actually took the plan, all doing Brazil to the United States by herself. So it's my everyday surprise that there's been a lot for a special need to do by herself and I know Yasmin does swim. Do you want to describe what that's like and how she got into that? Yeah, I think the sport is very important for these special needs, not just for the aspects of competition because she doesn't want to compete.

00:15:40:17 - 00:16:09:15

Alessandra

She'd just want to be part of the team. So she's not the first swimmer in the team, but she represented the team and she's pretty respectful and responsible in her position. Okay, that's it. You guys got it.