

## Braulio's American Dream

By: Tara Meyyappan, Alex Stec & Erica Yang



For many, the American Dream is out of reach, but for Braulio, “the American Dream is real.” In fact, he says, he is currently living it.

Six years ago, Braulio left his job in the Cuban government. Wanting a fresh start, he looked towards Massachusetts for new opportunities. He saw Boston’s emphasis on education with the range of universities in the area and knew: “This is the place where I want to be.”

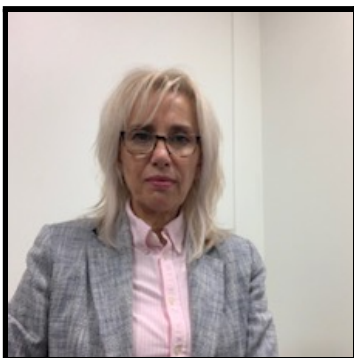
Before coming to the US, Braulio learned German and studied International Relations. But despite his expertise and education, Braulio faced major challenges when he arrived in Boston. With only a suitcase to his name, he started out by living in a homeless shelter. Though this was a difficult environment, it was there that he was given two things that “saved [his] life at that time”: a locker and a bed.

With a locker, he could put his belongings away safely and avoid being judged by people who assumed he was homeless. With a bed, he had a designated, safe place to rest every day after working at Logan Airport as a safety instructor.

Thanks to this newfound stability, Braulio could start focusing on improving his English and pursuing his professional goals. ... *[continued]*

## Just Do It: How Tatyana Gets It Done

By: Aarushi Basmatkar, Nandini Goyal, Virali Patel & Lakshmi Venugopal



Tatyana doesn’t just dream, she does. She pursues opportunities as they arise, not allowing the obstacles of life to shut down her drive and passion.

Tatyana was born in Russia, spent her childhood in Bulgaria, and moved to the United States 20 years ago. She came to the country with only pictures of the adult daughter she had to leave behind and a “beautiful red dress” in memory of her mother. Today, she holds the title of business manager at YMCA’s Education and Training Branch, the same place where she started her journey of learning the English language.

Tatyana considers herself an impatient person, but it was her eagerness to understand everything that helped her as she started to learn English. Part of this was out of necessity: “If I had to eat, I had to start learning English, and looking for a job,” Tatyana shared. This

reason, along with her tenacity, encouraged her to take on the challenge of learning English by joining the ILC. In addition to her classes, Tatyana made sure to immerse herself in the language in her free time as well, watching many English films and cutting out Bulgarian and Russian movies and music. She also found a job at a hotel, which enabled her to pick up new vocabulary. As a result of the ILC classes and her commitment to English, Tatyana picked up the basics of the language quickly—in just six months.

After concluding her classes at the ILC, Tatyana then participated in the YMCA's Training Inc. program to begin building her skill set for future jobs. ... *[continued]*

## **Amani: From Mentee to Mentor**

By: Leah Cohen, Layan Elshihabi, Ari Kantorowitz & Sasha Moscona

When Amani was 16 years old, her mother swapped school supplies for suitcases and gave her the ultimate back-to-school surprise: plane tickets from Kuwait to Boston. Upon arrival in Massachusetts, however, Amani felt a complete culture shock—and some loneliness—walking into a new society. “I knew nothing, and it was shocking,” she said. “It was also really sad. I had many friends that I went to elementary through high school with, and I graduated high school without them because I relocated to central Massachusetts.” Through the help of a resettlement agency, though, she advanced her English from a level of proficiency to fluency, and this made a tremendous difference in her sense of belonging. Learning the common language allowed her to feel more comfortable communicating and connecting with the people around her.

Amani has since transformed her own experiences adjusting to American society into a passion for languages. This drive led her to earn a degree in linguistics from UMass Amherst. Now an adult, Amani supports other new immigrants as they adjust to life in the US by teaching English at the International Learning Center (ILC).

From her background and studies, Amani understands how much immigration and diversity of language and culture can enrich society. ... *[continued]*