



Dana's Story

Originating Country: Ukraine

Originating City: Kiev

Immigrated to the U.S.: September 1, 1992

City: Glenview

State: Illinois

Friedrich Nietzsche once stated "He who has a why to live, can bear almost any how." Through the years of watching my family members go through arduous obstacles, I've deduced that despite hardships, it is possible to succeed. I was born in Kiev, Ukraine, and immigrated to the United States in 1992. I was 1, so I do not remember my first impression of America. The primary reason we migrated was the vast opportunities in America and the lack thereof in the former Soviet Union. Due to our Jewish religion, each member of my family had an exceedingly difficult time receiving the best education despite deserving it. Like others in my family, my mother dreamed of going into the medical field. However, despite her straight A's, she was rejected immediately when the word "JEW" appeared on her application. After migrating to the U.S, my mother began attending Nursing School. After becoming a Nurse Practitioner, with tears in her eyes, I remember her saying that she had never imagined her dream of helping people would come true.

Since 1st grade I've wanted to go into the medical field, to give my utmost to the betterment of society, and to utilize the opportunities given to me that my parents and grandparents were denied. Furthering my determination, when I was in 5th grade, a very close family member of mine suffered an unforeseen brain aneurism. This person had a 30% chance of surviving, and how they did, I still question to this day. From the moment they awoke from the 10 hour-long surgery, I swore to them that I would work in the medical field and help humanity. No matter what obstacles stand in my way, I will live out my dream to

the best of my ability. THIS is my "why to live." THIS dream is only possible due to my family's immigration to the USA.

In addition, by immigrating to the USA, I have been given a colossal amount of opportunities that I would have never imagined if I still lived in the Ukraine. I am able to receive an incredible education at Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU). Specifically, I am able to go into the medical field, by having the opportunity of studying Nursing. I am also able to receive amazing health care, unlike some of my family members that still live in Ukraine. They tell me stories of standing in lines for hours at the pharmacy and Doctors' offices. I am also able to express my freedom of religion openly, without the fear or others ridiculing or taunting me. I am currently the President of the Hillel at IWU, and feel so blessed to be able to openly be Jewish and to know that my children will not be denied access to anything because they will be Jews. I am so grateful to live in the USA!