



Retail Business Services

Diana Strickland Celebrates Heritage of Optimism, Good Humor

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Diana Strickland, Supply Chain Continuous Improvement Training & Development Specialist for Retail Business Services, the services company of Ahold Delhaize USA, knows what it means to persevere. While Diana's family lived in the U.S., she was born in Medellin, Colombia, where her mother decided to spend the final stages of her pregnancy with her Colombian family.

A few months after she was born in Medellin, Diana and her mother returned to their home in Connecticut where she lived until age 16, when her father told her they were moving back to Colombia.

"My father told me, 'We want to help and care for our parents, your grandparents,'" Diana recalled. "At 16, I was looking forward to learning how to drive, volunteering at the hospital and going to practice with my swimming team at home in Connecticut. But my dad told me, 'don't be afraid of change.'"

Diana lives by his advice to this day.

Medellin is known as "The City of Eternal Springtime." She lived there for 16 years and received her degree from EAFIT University as a Systems Engineer.

"You need to get an education," Diana's mother always told her. "You are capable, and you don't know what the future holds mi'ja."

Diana experienced another life change when she chose to reunite with her family by relocating to Charlotte, N.C. in 1999. While the adjustment was challenging, Diana kept her father's advice in mind – to not be afraid of change – and she knows that her decision led to the life she loves today.

"If I hadn't decided to return to the U.S., I wouldn't have met my wonderful husband, Mike," she shared. "I grew up knowing I could count on my family. When I met Mike, I noticed the caring relationship he had with his parents and the way his family treasured time together. It was familiar, even though we were from different cultures, identifying this common way of life united us even more."

She believes this realization and outlook exemplifies the heart of Colombian culture.

"Colombians handle life with good humor, and we're optimistic of the future," she said.

During National Hispanic Heritage Month, Diana said she's proud of the way Latino parents influence their children on how to overcome challenges and adapt. Additionally, she noted pride in how Hispanic and Latino communities value their relationships with their families and their faith, and how they love to celebrate with food, fiestas and fútbol (soccer).

This month, Diana encourages associates to explore the many diverse Hispanic and Latino cultures by trying new recipes, learning about different nations and celebrating the history and traditions of their colleagues.