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The challengingfamilysituation I would like to share with you is our move from Korea to the United States. In 1989, my life was changed when my family immigrated to a new country, hoping for a better future. My life in Korea was hopeless, because I was a failing student with not much interest in school. I spent the majority of my time in Arcades, wasting my coins on video games. Rather than studying with my friends, as I had told my parents I would, I obsessed over the games. The only positive aspect to my life was my private computer programming lessons.

Programming in Apple BASIC presented me with an opportunity to create my own world. One day, my parents told me that we were going to move to the United States of America, and I developed a strong feeling that my life soon would change forever. After spending eleven years in Korea, our family moved a totally differentenvironment. This I knew would be my toughest challenge to date. As a fifth grader attending a new elementary school in a new country, I felt left out because of my inability to communicate. Some kids assumed that I did not understand them at all, so they made rude remarksabout me.

I understood them, maybe not completely, but I knew the intent of their messages. All that I had was my Apple II computer at which I just sat and programmed when I came home from school. At home, my parents pressured me to study all of the time, but I was frustrated and wanted to return to Korea. I wanted to go back and talk freely with my friends and play games with them. My parents often told me that they decided to move here because of the educational opportunities, yet I continued to rebel and refused to listen to what they said.

Over time, my English improved. I moved on to regular sixth grade classes; some of which were challenging, but tolerable because of my teachers whom were willing to help. I always enjoyed class trips to the computer lab, where I would start programming on the computer. Other kids would start to gather around and treat me like a genius. Before long, I made more friends and found that I was enjoying school. Thoughts of going back to Korea faded, and my grades rose to a satisfactory level.

This pleased my parents who now encouraged me to invite friends to dinner. When my friends came over, I became the translator between my parents and my friends. Since then, I often translate for my parents in any occasion where translation is needed. Talking to some adults was intimidating and sometimes embarrassing, but I felt mature and responsible. The rest of my school year went by very smoothly, and my self-confidence grew. Now I help other Korean people with language difficulties, helping them to understand English and American customs.

Prior to my arrival to the United States, I thought everything would be nice and easy, but it did not turn out that way. Life was difficult, since I had to learn a new language, culture, and customs. One of the best things I learned was thatmy parents were right. This experience helped change me from a hopeless kid to a confident and responsible young adult. From this experience, I have learned that if one setsgoals, works hard towards those goals, dedicates oneself to those goals, and takes advantage of opportunities presented, they can achieve anything.