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**Gabriela's Reward: Humanity**

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By: Giusette León García / CubaSi

22/10/2020



When Gabriela Puivert Alfonso returns to the Camilo Cienfuegos University in Matanzas to continue her studies, she will walk through the same path. She will find the same halls, the same classrooms, even the same people. But she will not be the same. And the school will not be the same either.

While the whole nation battled hard Covid-19, this restless, thin, little squirrel raised to the height of her own Moncada and volunteered in the isolation center that worked for months in that university.

"I am studying a bachelor in Education, Foreign Languages, English actually, but I am a cadet in the Revolutionary Armed Forces. I am here, firstly, because my vice principal called me, my Principal, everyone was calling for reinforcements. I am the Secretary-General of the UJC (Youth Communist League) in my school. So I was the first to volunteer myself. I am not obliged, but I feel responsible and I have principles. My family is revolutionary. My parents are enrolled in the army. And even though I am not a doctor, I know I can save lives. I can contribute. So I said "yes" in a minute and it is the second time I am here.

I am ok with returning a third or a fourth time, said this young girl who leads a group of six students and professors of different schools. We knew her when some concerns had already vanished, but she said:

"Firstly, I was afraid to get infected. But I realized that if I comply with all the measures, I would be safe. We are here with doctors and nurses who care for us all the time. Conditions are set so this pandemic cannot affect us."

No one said it would be easy and she does not complain. She woke up at six o'clock in the morning every day for fifteen days in a row to check everything and take the orders to the storehouse. Later, she would assist the patients and served them six meals and answered each of their questions, welcomed and bid farewell to them at any hour of the day, cleaning the wards of those discharged...an exhaustive routine, but rewarding at the same time:

"I worked with the elderly and children the first time, all patients at risk. There were four patients testing positive for Covid-19. Wow, many of us cried. We got emotionally so attached to them. I believe it was the toughest part. Not to

mention some of their problems cannot be solved by us and you get desperate as you know the situation they are in."

"I felt rewarded with children. I love children. I do love them. I think this is our happiness and once they are here, I try to be here for them. I give them candies. I do my best so they do not cry. I feel great with it and patients show their gratitude. The nicest thing that happened to me was a couple of elderly left me a letter showing their gratitude to me and I have treasured it at home."

Gabriela should have already concluded her second school year. But she is fine. She knows she would end the academic year and she is ready to do her best in the school. She will be at home studying, living with responsibility. And she is ready, quite ready for the next mission.

"Humanity. A great deal of humanity. And much happiness as well. I have come home very pleased with myself. I have told my mom: I feel great. I accomplished my mission. I did not stand on the sidelines. I contributed with something."

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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