



2021 High School Equivalency Graduate

Margareth Caballero (Maly) certainly practiced patience throughout numerous difficulties in her life. Beginning when she left Honduras with her mother who wanted Maly to have a better life. Thankfully, Maly moved to Tennessee and ultimately found Begin Anew.

Maly enrolled during the initial few months of the global pandemic in 2020 and never experienced in person learning in the time leading up to earning her high school equivalency in 2021.

Maly's tutor, former math teacher Maureen "Reeney" Herrel, served as her sole instructor during the pursuit for her degree.

Their sessions, held on Zoom or FaceTime, took place around Maly's full time work schedule. Many of these lessons occurred while she held her daughter Melany Juliette in her lap. "She is very smart and understood the material without much trouble, Reeney said. "Again, her determination was very evident."

Begin Anew also remembers Maly as the first adult learner to take a virtual high school equivalency exam. Former Nashville Program Manager Julie Russell recalls these trying times when testing centers closed and Begin Anew learned new methods for student testing. Julie said, "Maly was willing to walk through the process and paved the way for so many others to get the opportunity to test online." As soon as she completed the requirements for her degree in July, Maly enrolled at Vizio Makeup Academy which teaches makeup artistry to students around the world. By the time Maly walked the stage at Begin Anew's graduation in December 2021, she was already a certified lash technician.

"To a lot of people a High School diploma might not mean a lot. But after everything, it was a blessing." Maly said before adding, "God has a purpose for each of us. It (earning her high school diploma) was an achievement to my life, and what I wanted to show my kids and my family."

As a woman of strong faith, Maly also recognized other blessings in the form of the people of Begin Anew, encouragement, family, and education without cost.

Whatever it is, "believe in yourself and have positive people around you who support, love, and believe in you even if you don't." Maly's future shines bright. She worked hard for her new life and says nothing should stop you from getting your high school diploma— or whatever you want to achieve. No one should use lack of language skills, environmental circumstances, or anything to stop their dreams.

In 2022, Maly received the Faye Dove Scholarship Award, an annual WMU scholarship honoring select Begin Anew Graduates or others who have demonstrated perseverance in achieving personal goals and plan to continue their education. After earning her diploma, Maly enrolled at Vizio Makeup Academy where she earned her Cosmetology License. By working hard to achieve her goals, Maly has transformed her life and the life of her family.