City of Riverside; Diverse Community Essay Contest

The 21th century, 300 years from now, is not going to be remembered for its wars or its technological innovation but rather but rather the area as we stood by and either actively endorsed or passively accepted the massive thrive of cultural diversity. Southern California is a great geographical area that exerts such force which drives diversity. The city of Riverside is in the midst of it all. It has constantly been engaged in a dance with new possibilities of lifestyles.

Seven years ago I emigrated from Vietnam, a country where social orders were isolated and global relations were distance; for me, the lifestyle there was homogenous. All that change within the first year of settling in Riverside. My first impression of Riverside was that it's a melting pot. It is home to a wide variety of people from different ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, religions, and economic levels. Overall the population is highly educated which makes it an interesting place to live. However, it didn't feel like home. Cultural diversity means that I need to learn more about people unlike me, and are more cognizant of how I present something might offend someone, or may be misunderstood. This misunderstanding range from a different interpretation by that culture to a language barrier. I was a quiet kid. But Riverside isn't a quiet city; the people here are willing to connect if one is willing to reach out. A Hispanic friend my mother met at Riverside Community College on her study of basic English has two children, and they became first friends in America. They took me in with their open arms like a bother, and teach me most of the thing I knew now about the Hispanic culture and tradition. Because of friends like them I was able to grow an open-minded and sociable person in a new country.

When I was born in Vietnam, there were 6000 language spoken on the planet. I had only known and learned my native language there, and nothing else. However, now living in Riverside, I had come in contact with at least seven different languages through school, work, and the general public. Language is not just a body of vocabulary, or a set of grammatical rules. A language is a flash of the human spirit. It's a vehicle through which the soul of each particular culture comes into the material world. Every language is an old-growth forest of the mind, a watershed, a thought, an ecosystem of spiritual possibility. This is why I am an enthusiastic on learning new language. People from many blocks of the world come to settle in Riverside, thus it's a place that provide me with such opportunity to connect to others.

Cultural diversity presented in the city of Riverside in general makes for more possibilities. It opens the door for discussion and consideration of different points of view, different ways of thinking, and different ways of living. I'd never lost my own trait, but rather expand it and become a contributor of a highly diverse community I live in today. Riverside is my home.