



## Does the American Dream Still Exist?

*Penned by Amani Abdullah*

I'm an African Sudanese woman. I'm an engineer. I'm a mother for two amazing kids, they mean everything in my life. They are my air, my sunshine, my hope, my strong point. They were the reason for me to make many important decisions in my life. My decision to leave my country and come to America was for them, because I tried to give them a better life and better future. I had the courage to face my fear because of their beautiful smiles. I left my country in 2016 moving to an unknown country to us: a new place, new language, new people, school, neighbors and completely new life. I didn't have anything with me in this journey accept a strong faith in Allah in my heart and big dreams!

***"I believe when you give charity God gives you back more than you give."***

A few months after we came to America, I started facing economic issues because of the high rent and expensive life in America compared to the life in Africa. I felt scared because I had two kids with me. I didn't know what to do. I knew my money would not be enough to pay my next two month's rent . I started to pray *qiyam* (extra prayer) and do a lot of *isteghfār* (repentance), read *Surat Al Baqara* (chapter of the *Qur'an*) and make *sadaqat* (charity) . I didn't have enough money or food at home but I believe when you give charity God gives you back more than you give. So, I started to cook food and saved some for my kids and gave away the rest for the hungry people in the street, I didn't know them they didn't know me, but I believe that Allah sent me for them and he will send someone to help me.

I started looking for a better job because I have talent in making custom cakes and because it was hard to work as an engineer without a license in America, I started looking to work as a cake decorator, the thing I like most. I found a part time job in a small bakery and I started from there. It was my first baby step to make my dreams come true, but I still couldn't make enough money to pay my rent! I was continuing in prayer.

One day I took the kids to play in the park, a stranger lady came and sat near me because I was wearing *hijab* (head scarf) she said *asalam alaikom* (Islamic greeting) and we started talking and I felt so happy because I met a Muslim woman . During our chat she noticed that we are new in the country and we are facing many issues. She gave me the website for Uplift Charity and she encouraged me to call and tell them about my situation and she introduced me to Muslim mothers in the masjid (mosque) near us , I felt so happy.

I was feeling shy for more than three days, I felt that I can't make the call to the charity and ask for help!! But the time was running out and I had to take action to save myself and my little kids. I made the phone call and *alhamdulillah* I found love, care and support in Uplift Charity. They surprised me with generosity and kindness. They supported me financially and emotionally . They took care of me and my family. They made me feel loved. This is Allah's hand to tell me that He is hearing all my *du'a'a* (supplications) .

I started work as hard as I could to support my family and because I didn't have permanent papers at that time I couldn't find good chances in jobs but I never felt down because I always knew that God has a plan for everyone and He has a plan for me too, and I have to have patience and faith. Many months have gone by and I'm still working in the bakery. Also, I started to cook food and sweets at home and I sell them. I do other work too. I never stopped searching for honest ways to make money and support my family, and Uplift Charity was always checking on me and my family every month. They gave me all the support I needed and made me feel strong. I was taking care of my kids, and their studies, and their safety, and Uplift Charity was taking care of me, so I can continue in the right direction in life.

One year after I came from Africa I applied for my kids in the Magnet program and they got accepted . I felt proud that all my efforts came with good results and the other people saw the bright and smart side in my kids, these kids that had just come from Africa... *alhamdulillah* .

Their new school is far from our home and I have to find way to transport them, so I put a plan for myself that I have to get my driving license during the summer time before the kids start school. I studied very hard and committed myself to practice driving while I worked and supported my family . In a month and a half I got my license *alhamdulillah*. I received my permanent papers. It was a very happy moment because now I can start to dream again and follow my dreams. I started thinking to return back to school and try to get my engineering license for America . Dreams always come true if we have hope and faith . I'm looking for better job now and when I look to the past, and how much we went through difficult times, and how much we are blessed, I feel THANKFUL because I know that my dreams will come true one day. I just need to believe in Allah and myself . Thank you, Uplift Charity. Thank you, my Muslim community, . I am now an American, from Sudan.