



Charo Estomo revisits her “first home” in Canada in the neighbourhood of Diamond Crescent. She was reunited with the Layman family again on Oct. 29, 2013.



Estomo snuggles and plays with the youngest son in the Layman family, Xavier. They certainly missed each other very much.



Estomo revisits the back porch where she used to spend time playing with the children and cooking at times. She said she always finds this area beautiful.



Estomo re-reads the goodbye notes from Jeramie and Abby on Oct. 29, 2013.

“First Home” in Canada

By Paulina Uy

On a cloudy day in the neighbourhood of Diamond Crescent on the east side of Belleville, Charo Estomo revisited her “first home” in Canada where she used to be a live-in caregiver for the Layman family.

Fallen leaves of different colours, ranging from the lightest green to crimson red, covered the ground and some parts of the road.

Out in the dark, it felt like winter was coming. Estomo came to Canada during winter of 2009.

Prior to that, she worked in Taiwan for five years before she decided to find a better future for herself and her family in Canada.

Similar to her job in Taiwan, she was able to work as a live-in caregiver for the Layman family.

On Dec. 2, 2009, Sarah and two of her four children, Abby and Jeramie, fetched Estomo from Toronto Pearson International Centre under a light snow and waving a name card stating “Charo Welcome to Canada!”

Most of her days back then were spent taking the children to the park, taking them swimming with other playmates, going to the mall, and buying groceries.

Reminiscing, she talked about how she particularly enjoyed winter with the children.

“The Laymans are a very generous, religious, loving, and understanding family. They are everything great you can imagine.”

Sarah and Tyler Layman accommodated her very well.

“I felt like they treated me like a part of their family. I didn’t have any fear then.”

Estomo stayed with the family for two years and eight months. She was then eligible to apply for permanent residency in Canada, which enabled her (after three months) a permit to take a different job.

When she was leaving, many tears were shed as the children expressed their missing her so much – in person and in writing.

During the fall of 2012, Estomo took a job as a line-worker at Gunther Huettlin Manufacturing Inc.

As a second source of income, she worked at Tim Hortons at Loyalist College for several months.

After her contracts ended, she found another two jobs – one at Highline Mushrooms where she was also a line-worker and the other at Vantage Foods where she worked in the packaging department.

Comparing her nanny life and her life now, she admitted both are great but totally different experiences.

As a nanny, her focus was primarily on the children.

“It was not physically demanding.”

And now, working at the mushroom farm and meat production, she has experienced both mental and physical exhaustion.

“I work long hours, make more money for overtime, and it is exciting. I love doing it.”

Her vision for the future is to finally get her permanent residency and go to school for a higher-paying field of work.

She also dreams, one day, to have her entire family reunited together in Canada – her mom, dad, son, brother, sister, and nephew.

“The Laymans are a very generous, religious, loving, and understanding family. They are everything great you can imagine.”



One year later, Estomo has her own place and attends a food festival, spending more time with the Filipino community in Belleville.