



Latin Inspiration Awards July 9th, 2015 Motivational Speech by LLuvia Meneses

Thank you Latincoover, Paola Murillo and volunteers for being pioneers in creating and putting together this event that I consider the most inspiring and empowering event for our latin community in BC . My name, LLuvia, means 'rain' and it has been nice hearing that everyone in dry B.C. has been wishing for rain lately.

I am proud to be an immigrant in this country. Love brought me to Canada 7 years ago. When I came here, I didn't imagine how hard the weather and motherhood were going to affect me.

Being at home all day with a very loud crying new born was making me a very lousy crying wife too. Rocking my baby in my arms, I stared at the window and saw all those runners under the rain. I felt inspired, some days I wished I were soak in rain and not in tears.

After joining a running clinic and based on the hope that there were other immigrant women feeling the same isolation, living in a new country and in many cases not able to speak the language I started looking for running buddies. This was the beginning of the LatinRunners project and the beginning of a new stage in my life. I had the honor to be the winner of the Latin Inspirational Award in the Sports and Athletic Category a year ago. This Award game me the strength to push myself, the volunteers and the project harder. Today, my strength is knowing that the project I started and that many other women are following is leaving a legacy for our future generations.

I have faced many challenges since the project started. Not a day goes by in which I don't ask myself What was I thinking when I started 10 running clubs for latin immigrants with no funds and no other supporting organization? The answer is always the same. I was following my dreams and my passion of helping others adapt to this country. Yes, I was very naïve too, it has been a long journey with still many unanswered questions, nevertheless, the satisfaction that I get by knowing we are making a change in the life of many women keeps me and the team going. We not only see women become runners, we see them overcome their fears and mental barriers. When I see the happiness in their faces, sometimes the tears in their eyes and I am able to feel the beating of their hearts as they cross the finish line just then all doubts go away. I listen to the little voice in my heart every night whispering: 'Be strong. Don't run away now'

In our busy, complicated lives, we all have challenges and it is up to us to decide how to overcome them. I see the challenges as big rocks in this running trail called life. These rocks can be used as blocking barriers to failure or as stepping-stones to success. We all have the power to use our rocks either way. I came to Canada to make a difference. I use my stones everyday for progress and for positive changes. Inspiration requires courage, passion, love, discipline and patience but it can be achieved and the proof is all around us tonight.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LLuvia Meneses'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'L'.

LLuvia (Joo-via) Meneses
LR Founder.