Hello my name is Iris Suarez,

A little background about me: I am a first generation immigrant. My parents and I came from Cuba with little knowledge about the language or how things work in the United States. Everything here was foreign to us. We had no idea how the school system worked, or colleges, along with many other things. When I graduated high school I started working and gave college my first try, however I was not equipped with the right tools to succeed. I also needed to work full-time. I then left Millersville University after a first semester and a half to work full-time. I worked in a factory for a few years glazing, and sanding doors. I knew I wanted more. I had always dreamed of becoming a nurse. I just did not know how to get there and so consumed in my need to work I lost my vision, and my hope. My only hope at that time was picking up a few extra hours at work to make a little more money, or maybe I was considering a second job.

One day I ran into a friend who told me about Tec Centro, it was then just opening its door. She said "They are going to offer free classes to low-income students". I laughed inside when she told me. I did not believe her. In my head I thought 'free' "yeah ok".

My curiosity however took me to Tec Centro. There I met amazing motivational women, who were eager to tell me about the program and get me started on the sign up process. Yes they were certainly offering free classes! I told myself "how did you get so lucky". I still remember the joy I felt after being registered for the Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A) program without any cost. I had the will and the desire to learn/study, yet at that time in my life my finances were not there. I was in disbelief, but I told myself *good things **DO** happen to good people*.

I think it only became real to me, when I became part of the first graduating C.N.A class from Tec Centro. I was so happy! I felt so blessed to be given such an opportunity, how could I waste it? I was assisted by amazing people towards taking the first step to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse. They not just only gave me the opportunity to earn my C.N.A certificate, but they also prepared me for my C.N.A test, equipped me with a resume, costumer service techniques and practice employment interviews so that I would be successful.

I was able to find a job as a C.N.A right away! I was finally able to leave the factory environment and emerge myself in the healthcare field. Having earned my certificate I was able to find a job with flexible hours in which I could work full-time and go to school at the same time.

A year after becoming a C.N.A I decided if Tec Centro had given me the opportunity to start on my dream I would keep going, I had to keep working! In 2017, I graduated from the HACC nursing program with my R.N. I had to keep going! I had to keep working! In 2020, I earn my Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N) from Millersville University. I also have goals for my future in 2024, I plan to start working towards earning my master degree in becoming a Nurse Practitioner at Millersville University! Tec Centro gave me an opportunity; it allowed me to take the first step towards my dream. I sometimes sit and look back and still find it hard to believe but *good things DO happen to good people*, and coming to TEC Centro was that for me! I am forever grateful to have been given such an opportunity!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!
Iris Suarez