Halia Taisacan

CO210-04

I Believe in compassion within humanity

Growing up, I was taught to be thoughtful and considerate of other people’s feelings. When someone dies, you show compassion and understanding towards the family. As humans, we all go through obstacles in life and experience a ton of emotions. Today, I work a fulltime job at The Athlete’s Foot. With my job, I get to meet different types of people. I have met people who come from all over the globe from places such as Indonesia, Russia, and Jamaica.

However, I met this one elderly woman who could possibly be the nicest person I’ve met. Because of this woman I firmly believe is it important to be reminded of compassion and empathy within humanity. I remember the day I met her, it was a good day, the sun was out, and it was pretty hot. She walked into the store and I immediately greeted her. She was fresh off the plane and still had been rolling her luggage. I had asked her if I could be of assistance and she gave me the biggest smile. She said in the softest voice “I am looking for a pair of Birkenstocks. My shoes are not comfortable, and I didn’t bring any extras.” I brought her to our selection of Birkenstocks, and she was immediately drawn to two styles. She asked for my opinion and we both agreed on the slightly golden Birkenstock. I brought the shoe out in her size and offered to help put it on. She commented on how the straps had been a bit loose, so I tightened them and had her try it once more. I repeated the same thing on the other Birkenstock, she then looked at me with the same big smile. With tears in her eyes, she said “Saipan is such a friendly island. The people here are so nice and welcoming.” I returned that big smile and thanked her for the comment.

I had come to learn that this wonderful woman had flown in from Japan. She told me that she came here with a group of Japanese people, old people. Some of them were here all those years ago, some of them lost mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. They came back for the last time. She told me that her purpose for coming to the CNMI is to look at the history from the war. It was her first time coming and she was excited to learn more. She asked me questions about my ethnicity and a little about my ancestry. She wanted to know if Chamorros were tall people, and how they were treated during the time of the Japanese here on the Island. She told me how the Japanese military were strict and quite scary. She expressed her pain for everyone who committed suicide, and for those who were abused during that time.

 As she sat in the chair of an empty shoe store telling me stories that had been passed down from generation to generation, I couldn’t help but feel a cloud of emotion. In the middle of my shift, I sat with this elderly woman listening to the words from her mouth and I shed a tear. I proceeded to ring up the item and send her on her way. I thanked her and said goodbye. I believe in the empathy and compassion within humanity. This lady wanted to know more about my people and the roles played in the war. She felt the pain and showed empathy. I deeply admire this woman who flew so far to learn about the history that is the CNMI.