

PENNSYLVANIA

What the Class of 2020 Taught Me

**By Pat Miller, Senior High ESL Teacher at
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The students in the 2020 graduating English as-a-Second language (ESL) class of Coatesville Senior High School are worthy of the greatest admiration and honor that could be presented to them. The students are not just a class, they have become a family bonded by their shared experiences and hardships. If only everyone could experience the miraculous growth and success that I have seen in each of these young men and women over the past years, they also would want these 2020 students' efforts to be recognized as exceptional.

Each of 18 graduating seniors in the ESL class of 2020 has had a unique path to be proudly wearing their cap and gown in May. These students had to leave behind much of their lives to look for their dreams of an education here. One girl was heartbroken as she had to leave behind her puppy. I learned that dreams involve sacrifice.

These young people are from many countries, are from diverse academic backgrounds and are from diverse cultures. Yet they became a true family over the past years. They truly showed me what caring for one another means by supporting one another in classes, with helping each other to understand language and culture, to excel in their chosen sports and work with each other as a team. They taught me to look for similarities and needs rather than differences and to laugh together. They taught me, that we are all part of a team. We all have different strengths and weaknesses, but we all need each other to succeed. We need to adapt and to be resilient.

In the class of 2020 are the children of El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Liberia, Guatemala, Honduras and Puerto Rico. Each of them is proud of who they are and where they are from. What I learned the most from the 2020 class is not to just like the students but to return their love and love them.