

## **Invisible in the Bank**

**by Filadelfia Vargas**

### **New York City Department of Education - School 2, at Phipps**

I love my daughter Elina. When she was 8 years old, I opened an account for her in Chase Bank for her college education. Ten years passed. One day I went to the bank with her to get information about her account. I was very happy to see her so excited to know that I gave her such a big gift. We dressed appropriately for that moment. My daughter dressed in jeans, a jacket and a cute blouse. Her huge boots were the same color as her pocketbook. I dressed nicely with linen pants and a pretty sweater. We went to the Customer Services in the bank.

The lady working there asked us to follow her to her desk. She dressed professionally. When she asked me, "How can I help you?" I said, "Thank you!" Then I introduced myself and my daughter to her. My daughter, born in New York, greeted her in perfect English. I explained that I opened the account for my daughter ten years ago, and my daughter did not have any information about this account. The lady might realize that my English was not very good. She turned to my daughter for the documents of the account and our IDs. I handed them to her. She asked my daughter when that account was opened. Without any difficulties to understand the conversation, I immediately said, "Ten years ago." however, this clerk turned her back to me and continued talking to my daughter. Uncomfortable with the situation, Elina kept looking at me while the clerk continued asking her questions. It was I who answered her all the questions. But in the whole conversation, this lady had never spoke a word to me, without even eye contact, as if I were invisible.

The conversation finally finished. Different feelings came to my head and my heart, some were sad, and some were mad. Yes, my English was not good enough. But why, why did this clerk treat me this way? How could a professional judge people by their accents?! Then I said to myself, "She is not going to spoil this day. Today is very special for my daughter and me. My daughter is going to college, and I am going to continue improving my English!"