Veronica Arias loves Roswell. She grew up here, met the love of her life here, raised her children here and now she empowers people here.

"I am so blessed," Arias said. "The opportunity to serve in mission, outside of our community, gives me more passion and understanding for anyone in our community. My experience has made me more aware of the resources available in our community."

She loves the lay of the land, too.

"I love Roswell," Arias

Empowering students is interactive work. Veronica Arias encourages interaction with those she teaches in seminars. Arias works at WESST empowering women and supporting business owners all over Chaves County.
Spotlight
Continued from Page A1

said. “You can watch your dog run away for two weeks.”

Arias’ first love is still the love of her life.

“I met Alfred when I was almost 14,” she said. “My freshman year of high school, he was a sophomore. He was an older man. We were boyfriend and girlfriend and by the time we were 17 and 18, we knew it all so we got married. We finished school and our first daughter was born at the end of 1983. Our second daughter was born at the end of 1985.”

As joyous surprises came their way, they’ve enjoyed rolling with the times.

“We thought at 19 and 21 we were through having kids,” Arias said. “Ten years later we got our son. Thomas is 21. LeAndra is 31 and Loretta is 33. We have six grandchildren.”

Even her career plans met with surprises, and she rolled with those, too.

“I started college at ENMU-R,” Arias said. “I always wanted to get my teaching degree, but I kept landing jobs that stayed from that. My first official job was at Sunwest Bank, as a proof operator. I worked there for seven years.

“Then, I had the opportunity to work with the schools as a Vista volunteer. It gave me the opportunity to be home with my girls, too. I did community outreach. We started the Hug A Bear: Reach For A Book: Each One Teach One and ESL classes.”

She’s always made sure that her jobs supported her family time and efforts.

“When they got older I got a job at the hospital,” Arias said. “I was there a few months when Dr. Latimer joined SCOR (Sports Medicine Clinic Orthopedics and Reconstruction). I worked there for about 13 years. When my son was born I wanted some mommy time with him so I bowed out and stayed home for a few months. Then I went to work for the schools. I started with substitute teaching. Then I got a job as a principal’s secretary. I did that for about nine years and now I’m at WESST which has been so good for me.”

With an eye toward empowerment, Arias sees her work as a ministry.

“My ministry is empowering women,” she said. “I like showing them their worth. All of us feel, at times, that we don’t have anything to offer. We compare too much and that’s not healthy. All of us have been through traumas. It’s about overcoming those. I believe women are overcomers.”

As an achievement-minded person, Arias teaches herself how to set goals.

“I like to empower them with tools,” she said. “I’m very big on setting goals, and using tools like vision boards. I like to talk to people about setting their goals. I do a workshop here at WESST, it’s called Goals for Success. It’s for adults, but I like to do it with teens, too. We do about a two-hour goal-setting workshop.”

One of her earliest ministries was inspired by her love for her aunt and her uncle. It was another surprise, but it broke her heart.

“I wrote a little devotional book,” Arias said. “It wasn’t intended to be a devotional book when I started. I have an uncle who was diagnosed with Parkinson’s at the young age of 46. It was a hard blow. My mother is one of 10 children and the uncle is the baby of the family.” The aunt and uncle were hardly elders, but they were supportive and involved with Arias in childhood.

“They have always been our role models,” she said. “He was the first to graduate high school in the United States. He was in the Army. They always talked to us about education, investing and moving ahead. I have 38 first cousins. This couple were our go-to’s, they encouraged us to grow. They weren’t much older than us, but they were our inspiration. They went to college.”

Arias wasn’t content to simply accept her uncle’s diagnosis without finding a way to give some grace to the two of them.

“I’ve always written to my auntie,” Arias said. “She encouraged me since childhood. We’d write back and forth. So when he was diagnosed, I wanted to write something inspirational. I didn’t want to talk about his disease. So I would write something maybe about the sunflowers in my garden, anything I felt was uplifting. Then I’d end it with a scripture. I’d send a letter to her every week.”

The letters had blessed more people than she had known.

“One day, I got a box in the mail with copies of all the letters I had sent her,” Arias said. “She told me she had been sharing them with people at work. She and her friends felt that I should turn the letters into a book. I said, ‘From your lips to God’s ears, because I don’t know how to make a book.”

Her first effort may have lacked ambition, but it made up for it in love.

“I went to Hobby Lobby and bought a blank book,” Arias said, “and thought I’d just redo the letters in calligraphy and it would be her book. I ended up doing water colors on it, too. I took it to work one day to show it to a friend. A co-worker, Jerry Holm, saw it and said, ‘That should be a published book.’ I told him that I didn’t know how to do that and he said ‘I publish.’”

With Holm’s help, her book became a reality.

“He helped me publish this little book,” Arias said. “I was going to buy 50 to give to my family, but I felt in my spirit that I should buy more. I’ve printed about 500 now. I sell them for donations and I use the money for mission trips in ministry. I love to do mission work.”

Having done mission work in many parts of the world, Arias loves doing it here in Roswell now.

“I am so happy about the mission and vision that WESST has,” Arias said, “I would like to stay here for a while. I see me writing more books, life-coaching, doing more missions.”

“I was working with a group of women who came to my goal-setting class and they came to some of WESST’s financial courses. They said, ‘We really love what you’re doing. We should gather a bunch of women and just tell them what you do.’ We thought we’d have maybe 40 women attend. Last year, we ended up with 120 people. We like to talk about things that affect women personally and professionally.”

One piece of advice, from someone who knows how to respond to life’s little surprises, is easy to understand, but can be a challenge to implement.

“Never let someone else define you,” Arias said. “You have to define yourself.”

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