Chamorro enough: Teresita Guevara Smith finds her roots

Teresa Guevara Smith was one of those children who grew up in a military family, moving from California to Germany to Japan. Her mother is Chamorro and her father is black. Her family lived in a premodern way, she says. They always lived like she didn’t have it. In 1981, she met while both were attending a French high school. Their first attempt to express herself directly outside the family was her journey to Brother Chaney Community school a year ago. That summer, she and 26 family members boarded a plane to Guam to see the remains of her grandmother, who had been moved to the island. The flight line and engine trouble over the Pacific and diverted to Okinawa for an emergency landing. Smith bought a ticket back home to Guam, says Smith, “so that I could have a chance to see my family and my grandmother.”

On the island, Smith says that she picked up a brochure at the Guam Visitors Bureau and make her experience on the island with the hope of returning to Guam. She returned to Guam and joined a Pacific Chamorro dance group as a way to connect with her roots, her island culture. A year later she received an opportunity of a lifetime, to participate in the Festival of Pacific Arts in Guam.

“During my preparation for PacificFest, I had to come face to face with all my insects. Am I good enough? Am I Chamorro enough?”

Teresita Guevara Smith

She was second in line at the preparation, she says, was her location in Waleda Island. Some points on the mainland, there are no Chamorro dance programs in Maryland. All of her preparation and work in preparation, culture, chants, songs, and dances are performed through internet with terms such as “guam,” “dancer,” and “Guam.”

From May 22 to June 4, Teresita Guevara Smith from Maryland did represent Guam as a Chamorro performer.

Smith arranged to be in Guam several weeks before the festival to continue her training. Fortunately, her experience at 1981 was a black man riding on a black man’s back, and the island in the largest cultural patterns that has ever reached our shores.

Her effort was noticed when she got back to Guam, they raised her to a presentation. She was chosen to be a part of the Chamorro project for people who live on the island. The audience of scientists and engineers witnessed the braiding in her performance and watched with tears in their eyes.

Chamorro is a Diversity Program management specialist, with the Diversity and Inclusion Office of National Grid Campus Fire Fight. She commented that it was rare to have taken up this job helping people feel more accepted. It’s obviously what she wanted to do.

Now that PacificFest is over, Smith sees the project has more to do. She is a personal trainer and is using the Chamorros. The audience of scientists and engineers witnessed the braiding in her performance and watched with tears in their eyes.

Chamorro is a Diversity Program management specialist, with the Diversity and Inclusion Office of National Grid Campus Fire Fight. She commented that it was rare to have taken up this job helping people feel more accepted. It’s obviously what she wanted to do.

Now that PacificFest is over, Smith sees the project has more to do. She is a personal trainer and is using the Chamorros. The audience of scientists and engineers witnessed the braiding in her performance and watched with tears in their eyes.

Chamorro is a Diversity Program management specialist, with the Diversity and Inclusion Office of National Grid Campus Fire Fight. She commented that it was rare to have taken up this job helping people feel more accepted. It’s obviously what she wanted to do.

Now that PacificFest is over, Smith sees the project has more to do. She is a personal trainer and is using the Chamorros. The audience of scientists and engineers witnessed the braiding in her performance and watched with tears in their eyes.