

# EVERYDAY HERO

By Luis Montealegre

Vilma Beatriz Montealegre: A woman with many dreams, memories, occupations, and so much more. If it was her birthday she would pay for the birthday cake. She is a Spanish teacher at Flagstaff Academy, but her real occupation is being an incredible wife and mother. This is a story of another world hero.

Mrs. Montealegre, daughter of Vilma Beatriz Cordon and Luis Alfredo Cordon, was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala. At the age of two months, the Cordons moved to Houston, Texas. Mrs. Montealegre has had many memories that she still keeps with herself 'til this day. Her house was only fifteen steps away from a creek, which she spent lots of “outdoor unsupervised fun” with her brother, Luis Cordon, and the neighborhood kids. Whenever it rained all of them would meet and go to the creek because there was a hill in the middle of the creek which became an island when it rained.

She was the youngest of the crew and one of her earliest memories in Houston, Texas would come from that creek. Mrs. Montealegre, her brother, and her neighborhood friends were playing in the creek, when they encountered a snake. She was around five years old at this time and noticed that the snake, “Had a big bulge on its body, so we thought they would put the snake out of its misery by killing it.” Of course a couple years later she realized that the snake had just eaten an animal and wasn't sick or hurt, and to this day she still feels guilty for killing the snake.

When Mrs. Montealegre was eleven years old, the Cordons decided to move back to Guatemala which became, “One of the best decisions ever made,” in the eyes of Mrs. Montealegre. She is glad that they moved back because, “It made me fully bilingual and fully bicultural,” she states smiling. When she moved to Guatemala, she still spent her three school-vacation months at her previous school in Houston, Texas (Guatemalan school runs from January to October). Mrs. Montealegre has scores of incredible memories of parties, dancing, boyfriends in both cultures, and she loved how her family was so extended in Guatemala.

One of her favorite memories came when she was twenty-one years old. When she woke up on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, she was surrounded by twenty-two dozen

roses of all colors. “They were everywhere; even in coke bottles because they didn’t have enough vases,” she describes with a smile, her eyes shining with happiness. Twenty-one of the twenty-two dozen roses provided by her family represented her twenty-one years of life, and the other dozen roses was a good luck tradition that Guatemalans have which stands for an extra year of life, “una para la vida.”

She married Jose Ramiro Montealegre, who has another story of his own. When she turned twenty-six they moved to Boston, Massachusetts where Mr. Montealegre got his PHD from Harvard Business School. Four years later, they moved to Boulder, Colorado. Today, Mrs. Montealegre is the mother of Jose R. Montealegre Jr., Luis F. Montealegre, and Andres Montealegre. She is a family hero and I dare you to meet her, she is amazing.

*“Thanks for taking me down memory lane”- Vilma B. Montealegre*