



**FROM THE PHILIPPINES TO MONTANA: A SPED TEACHER'S
JOURNEY OF HEART AND HOPE**

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Becoming a special education (SPED) teacher in the United States is a profound journey, deeply interwoven with personal life experiences, significant family involvement, and a unique blend of sacrifices and immense happiness. My own path began in the Philippines, where I earned a Bachelor of Elementary Education, majoring in General Education, and later a Master of Arts in Education, majoring in Early Childhood Education. These foundational degrees equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of educational principles and early childhood development. My teaching career then took a significant turn, leading me to Philippine School Oman, Muscat City, Oman, where I further honed my skills in a diverse international setting. For many, the decision to enter this field is not merely a career choice but a calling, often stemming from a personal connection to individuals with disabilities, a deep-seated desire to advocate for the underserved, or an innate passion for growth and independence in every child, regardless of their challenges. This path demands a significant investment of time, energy, and emotional resilience, as educators navigate complex individualized education programs (IEPs), adapt curricula, and tirelessly champion the diverse needs of their students. The learning curve is steep, requiring continuous professional

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development, an understanding of various disabilities, and the ability to collaborate effectively with therapists, administrators, and parents.

The role of family in this endeavor cannot be overstated. Pursuing a SPED teaching career often involves rigorous academic programs, fieldwork, and demanding work schedules, which necessitate understanding and support from loved ones. My family shared in these sacrifices, whether through limited leisure time, financial adjustments, or by taking on greater domestic responsibilities, allowing me to focus on my studies and initial years in the classroom, both in the Philippines and during my time in Oman. This shared commitment extends beyond the practical; my family became an emotional support system, offering encouragement during challenging days and celebrating the small victories that define the SPED classroom. Furthermore, for those with children of their own, the experience of teaching students with diverse needs can profoundly shape their parenting approach, fostering greater empathy, patience, and an appreciation for neurodiversity within their own homes.

Despite the inherent challenges and sacrifices, the happiness derived from becoming a SPED teacher is unparalleled and deeply rewarding. Today, as a Special Education Teacher at Crow Agency Public School, 101 Makata St., Crow Agency, MT, I witness students achieve long-sought-after goals, no matter how small, a first word, mastering a new skill, or expressing themselves independently. These moments bring an immeasurable sense of fulfillment. The unique bond formed with students, celebrating their individuality and advocating for their potential, creates a powerful and lasting impact. This happiness is not fleeting; it's built on the profound knowledge that I am making a tangible difference in the lives of children and

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their families, empowering them to navigate the world with greater confidence and independence. My journey from the Philippines to Oman, and now to the United States, underscores the universal need for compassionate and dedicated special education, and it's a testament to the power of dedication, empathy, and the enduring belief in the limitless potential of every human being.



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