

## Pass It On®...

### Taking Responsibility.

*How one high school student supported her family during the pandemic.*

Maria and her parents moved to the US from Brazil one year before the pandemic. Better education opportunities lay ahead, and they were excited to get Maria into an American high school to prepare for college.

Each parent got a job, and Maria hit the books. She also signed up for a service club because she wanted the social interaction, the chance to work on her English skills and to be a part of the community.

“I love to serve,” Maria says, smiling and pulling her auburn hair back behind her shoulders. “I think it is my thank-you for the opportunities I have.”

She worked in the local food bank with other kids her age, organizing bags for families who were having a hard time making ends meet. But when the pandemic hit, she found herself at the food bank for another reason: to bring home groceries to her parents.

“We were all shocked when my mother lost her job. My friends at the food bank got me through it.”

Luckily, her father kept his job. And with classes moving online, Maria was able to secure a full-time job and do her class work at night. She earned just enough to cover a few utilities and help with the rent. It would have been easier for Maria to just drop out of school, but her goal in coming to America was to go to college. Three of her courses were college prep classes that demanded a lot of work. During her senior year, Maria worked 40-hour weeks and studied even more. Yet, in her spare time, she packed food bags for others before taking hers home.

Just before graduation, Maria came into the food bank. One of the volunteers started getting a bag ready for her.

“I don’t need one today,” Maria said. “My mother got a job. I’m here to help.”

Maria supported her family for eight months. She graduated on time and got scholarship offers from three different colleges. She moved to part-time work and has completed her first semester of college.

“My family means everything to me,” she says. “They sacrificed so I could be here. I was happy to help. I’m always happy to help.”

**Responsibility...** [PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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