

Cuny ...

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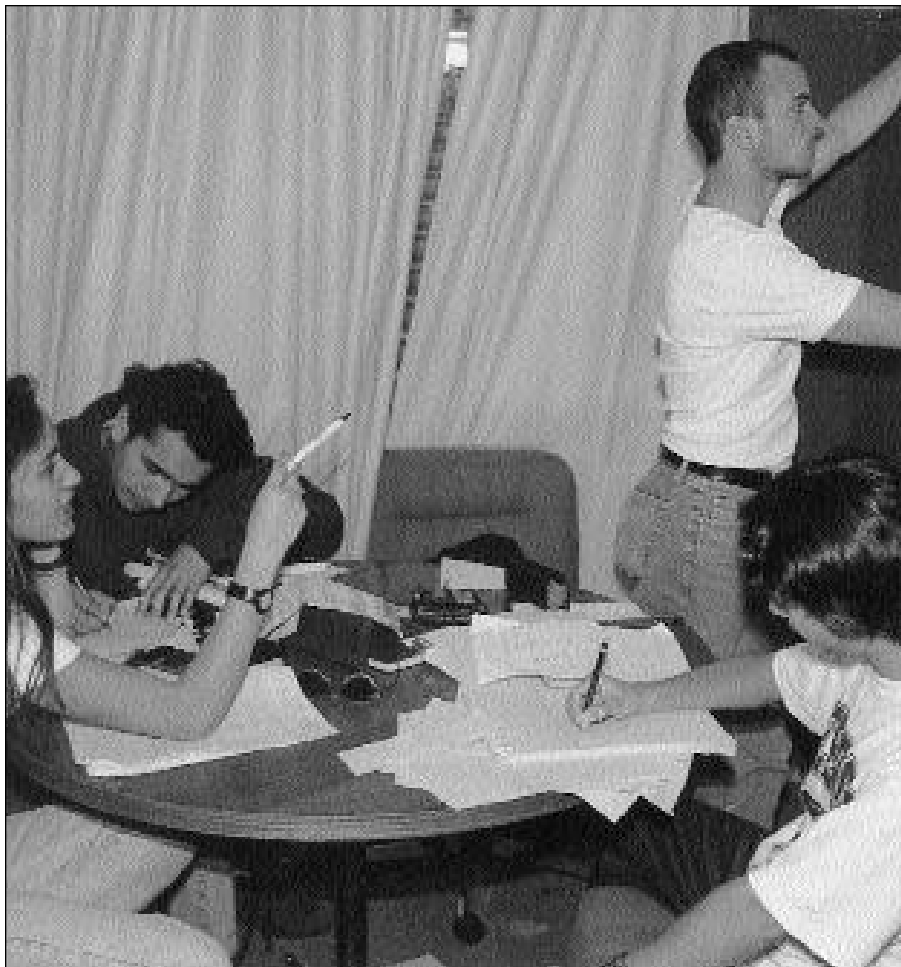


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Michael for now will keep working in the supermarket, supporting Julia until she finishes whatever that she wants to finish. "I was the one who got her pregnant, so she didn't finish High School because of me. The least I can do is try to make it easier for her to finish at LaGuardia

only three hours, all of which allows her to be a full time student, so that she will be able to pay her full tuition with the two main assistance programs: PELL (the Federal Assistance Program,) and TAP(the State Tuition Assistance Program). However, even though Julia is a full time student, she will take more than the two years estimated time to obtain an Associate's degree, since her first year will be basically dedicated to remedial courses.

Meanwhile Julia's husband, who works in Mount Vernon cleaning a supermarket, and who also takes care of little Michael at night while Julia does homework, keeps bothering her for not being able to enter Hunter College.

"I make jokes about this, but I know she is not stupid or dumb; she didn't have the advantage high school graduates have, she only got up to tenth grade. But still, all of this is sometimes overwhelming, and my way of getting back at her is reminding her that she failed the exams" says Michael, who now prefers to joke about the issue and not fight with his wife anymore for not spending time together.

Michael explains that one night, Julia was studying for an exam, little Michael did not seem to stop running around, and he was so tired and stressed up from work, that he decided to take little Michael to his grandmother's house. "I was getting desperate, I couldn't control him and Julia was busy, so I just left him with my mother for the entire weekend. But I paid for it; he was mad at me for the next three or four days," recalls Michael.

Julia says that for her, the hardest thing between going to school, working a part-time job in a department store, and taking care of a family, is to leave her baby for so long. "He needs me, and when I leave he is crying because he wants to be with me. But one of the good things about this, is that sometimes I enjoy the fact that my husband misses me more than before, than when I was all day at home," Ms. Ramirez says, with a big smile in her face.

Michael for now will keep working in the supermarket, supporting Julia until she finishes whatever she wants to finish. "I was the one who got her pregnant, so she didn't finish high school because of me. The least I can do is try to make it easier for her to finish at LaGuardia. Who knows? Maybe one day she'll be the one working and taking care of the baby and I will be the one in school. But I will be accepted in Hunter," says Michael laughing out loud.

Perhaps the new Remediation Policy will actually raise the prestige of the senior colleges of the City University of New York, as many advocates of the policy argue. But the truth of the matter is that for now, Julia will keep traveling for almost two hours to Queens, and her husband will keep taking care of little Michael at night while she does her homework. "At the beginning I thought that my relationship with Michael would collapse because I don't get to spend so much time with him and the baby anymore, but we have learned to deal with this and we are trying to make it work, especially for our child," says Julia.

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