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March 26 2022

The More The Merrier: Communities I Belong To

Being born in Canada as the only child of two immigrants from Serbia, I got to experience both Canadian and Serbian cultures. We celebrated two Christmases, spoke two languages, and cheered the loudest for both tennis *and* hockey. When I was 7, we moved to Michigan. This brought around unexpected challenges. Along with moving to a new house, going to a new school, and making new friends, there were many changes in everyday life. The milk turned out to be in a plastic jug instead of a bag, I had to wait an extra month for Thanksgiving, and temperatures were now measured in Fahrenheit. I was not sure what to call my mother: mom, mum, or mama. I felt as if I had to choose between being Canadian, American, or Serbian.

My family is big and loud. My grandma gets offended if somebody does not want to eat when she offers food. We blast folk music, get lost at family reunions, and get into each other's business all the time. But above all, we love and support each other. I am proud of my Serbian heritage.

Donuts from Tim Hortons still taste the best, maple syrup is always on my table, and I say "Sorry" more often than others. I still take my shoes off before getting inside and spell "center" as "centre." Free health care is fantastic. I am proud to be Canadian.

Then again, the warmth is better than cold. I love watching football. I am 5'5 and not 165 centimetres tall. I just started drinking soda and not pop. My friends are Michiganders. I use my

hand to explain where I live to my Serbian and Canadian friends. I am proud to call Michigan home.

I was struggling with choosing if I was Canadian, Serbian, or American when I realized that I did not have to choose, I could be all three. Belonging to the community means having something in common with other community members, building relationships, and caring about each other. We can belong to multiple communities at the same time. I have ties with all three communities through many experiences, memories, and friends. Whether I am in Serbia, Canada, or America, I feel at home. These communities will always be a part of my life, even if I move to a completely different place in the future. And yes, I am proud that I can call my mother all three: mom, mum, and mama.