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**Karen and a love story in times of Covid-19**

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When Karen Paz decided to major in medicine, she knew very well “what she was signing up for.” A life full of emergency medical services, births — at any time, any day —, worries and lives saved, flows in her veins. He saw it in her grandfather who specializes in gynecology and obstetrics and the only family member who gave his sounded support when the time came: she had not worn the white coat yet, when Karen was summoned to be part of the active neighborhood inquiries performed to detect potential cases of Covid-19.

It is not that the rest of the family lacks sensibility; the truth is that the “baby girl” suffers from a heart condition, which makes her highly vulnerable. But she spoke louder and defended her right to grow: “that is why I chose this major, to devote to others.” And she embraces it as if growing up would also stand for duty. A love story we came to know at home.

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- **Aren't you afraid?**

- Fear is something you feel every single day you wake up. But it is not the feeling governing our minds, but our will to do right things and win this battle against this disease as soon as possible. That is the most important thing right now.
- **Can you tell us any anecdote, something that had happened to you while inquiring?**
- It takes all sorts to make the world: there are easygoing people grateful for what you are doing and there are others who do not. The other day I was calling a group of individuals living in a second floor. As we are not allowed to enter other people's houses, some neighbors started to call the people living there to perform the inquiry process. Nonetheless, no one showed up. I was out there in the sun for almost 15 minutes, but it was paramount to perform the inquiry to that house as there were some suspected cases living there. They were not expecting me to step up and go upstairs. All of them were there sitting in the table. When they saw me, they felt embarrassed.

"They apologized. But it is essential that citizens may understand that we, despite being students, deserve respect because our lives and the lives of our families are on the line as well.

"Another anecdote was the one involving baby Jennifer and her family when they arrived from Guyana because they belong to our Family Doctor Clinic in Santa Marta. The same occurred with the tourist coordinator who turned to be the source of infection of several people here in Matanzas as he was rented here. We performed the follow-up to the owners of that house."

- **You speak in the plural. Are you talking about your partners? There are many students involved in this mission...**
- This mission is really tough and demands sacrifices. The first thing we have to bear in mind is that we must take precautions with our hygiene. But I dare to speak on behalf of my partners as I think that our humanism and love to our major and people have increased.
- **What's your advice to the Cuban family?**
- My advice to all families in Cuba is to take all precautions. But you

can't be too careful and this is just a brief stage in our history that will be controlled in a few months. Hence, we need to be aware this is a very lethal disease, infectious. That is why our way to prove our love is to complying with social distancing.

Karen is barely in her early twenties and is doing year 5 of Medical Sciences. Someone may see her as a very young girl, the "little girl" not even her parents have realized how much she has grown up. She is responsible and full of optimism. As many other young people who are fighting hard against this pandemic, there are also boys and pretty young girls who have grown up while writing beautiful pages of love to mankind, and love. *#QuedateEnCasa* and honors each of them.



**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Diaz / CubaSí Translation Staff**