



A Baby Teeth Tradition

INGRID BENCOSME

AUTHOR, TEETH FAIRIES: A BABY TEETH TRADITION

BIOGRAPHY

Talking to Ingrid Bencosme makes you feel like you are being listened to very carefully and like you are being studied simultaneously. She speaks calmly and with kindness even when her three children are running around her, causing commotion. It only makes sense considering she was an elementary school teacher for over ten years. Children, fun, excitement, patience and education are her world.

Growing up in Queens, Ingrid's childhood was typically great. Her parents, both from Colombia, held traditional roles of mom being a homemaker and her father worked in refrigeration. Ingrid remembers playing outside on the block with her sister and brother and the other kids on the block (many of whom still remain her closest friends), until they were reluctantly called in for dinner. Ingrid's mother, Gloria, made sure to speak to her children in Spanish in order to retain their heritage but she did not want them struggling with English the way she was, so she enrolled Ingrid in a book club. It was the start of something magical. Ingrid would get so excited for her new book to come, she would stand at the mailbox each day. She and her mother would read favorites like Danny the Dinosaur and the Dr. Seuss books together – she probably didn't realize that this was teaching her mother English as well.

Ingrid and her family spent a lot of time in the city of Manhattan and Ingrid loved the urban life. She grew up with NYU as a backdrop, so when it came time to select a college, there was only one choice for her. Ingrid had always been drawn to children and vice versa, so a career in education seemed perfect. In her senior year, she got stage fright at the thought of standing in front of a room of children and being able to command a room. She decided to take advertising classes and see if she was more suited for that. She wasn't, so back to education she went. When she sat in as a guest at her old elementary school in Bayside, the light bulb really went off. This was where she was meant to be. Ingrid started her teaching career in the Bronx, working in a tough neighborhood with mostly minority kids. Even though she didn't love the scary surroundings and the long commute to Queens, she absolutely adored the kids she worked with. It was a diverse group with a lot of foster kids who had difficult stories but they thrived under Ingrid's care.

Ingrid would have stayed at the school forever, but a choice offer came from the Elmont Union Free School District and she jumped at the opportunity. At the same time as her career was building, she met a handsome young man from Brooklyn named Thomas out one night with her girlfriends. After dating for five years, they were married. They both wanted a family. Upon the arrival of her first child, Ingrid immediately decided to follow in her mother's footsteps and be a stay-at-home mom. Her mother had passed away from cancer and Ingrid could not think of anyone else she would want caring for her kids.