

# Eimeel Castillo

IHAA Resident 2018-2020

Eimeel lived at IHAA for two years while pursuing a Ph.D. in History and Women's Studies. She grew up in Nicaragua.



My story at IHAA is about involvement and the values of sharing which I have been able to nurture in my two years as a resident. I come from a culture in which no one is left behind in their close community despite our tragic national history. Growing up, I always saw my grandmother, whose childhood was extremely difficult, sharing a meal with people. She used to tell me the shame she felt to see others with hunger and that it was a principle to share whatever she had no matter how small. She taught me that love and respect to others are shown through food, service and solidarity. IHAA has provided me with plenty of opportunities to engage in practicing those principles my grandmother taught me.

*Leadership opportunities have been exceptionally important to my experience as an international graduate student at the University of Michigan. Out of the obligations of studying, researching and teaching, I have been able to organize a community meal and a movie night in which I reach to others through food and conversation. My grandmother was not someone who would say with words how much she cared, but she showed it with actions and cooking was one of her favorite activities. Sharing a meal and introducing the history behind those dishes has been gratifying as it has also been to share with volunteers who are curious about my country.*

*Living and leading at IHAA has been a wonderful experience not only to connect with people from around the world through food but to share the love for cooking and entertaining that my grandmother left me as a true gift.*