

## NEWS

# With first snow of 2022, Indianapolis couple embraces new chapter in America

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With the sun shining over the west side of Indianapolis, baby Joaquin lays down and rests on a cloud of fresh, untouched snow.

At 5 months old, he can't move his arms and make a snow angel just yet, but that's how his parents, Lucy and Marcos, see him. They wanted him to get the full experience for his first snow, dressing him up and taking him outside as soon as they could do so safely. It had been snowing heavily all day on Thursday, but finally, Friday morning offered a moment of solace.

Laying there in a neon yellow snowsuit, Joaquin is even brighter than the blindingly white front yard. Marcos is grinning ear to ear. "Papi! Joaquin!" Lucy is waving and cooing to him.

They're overjoyed.

"It's crazy," Marcos says. "Too much snow."

This is their first major snow, too.

**Finding a voice:** Devoted to his family, country and God, he's learning English to love them even more

## Former police officers escape cartel violence

Lucy and Marcos moved to the U.S. less than a year ago, fleeing violence in Zacatecas, a central Mexican state that has seen escalating turmoil during the last few years.

Back there, they were police officers, solving complicated cases and investigating drug cartel crimes. They saw the worst of the cartels' brutal tactics to gain territory, Lucy and Marcos told IndyStar, in an interview translated by Lucy's brother. IndyStar is not using their last names to better protect their identities because of their fears of cartel retaliation.

Guns. Dead bodies. Mutilations. Fellow police officers being targeted and killed.

Despite the dangers, their careers kept them going. Marcos says he liked the investigative work of policing. Lucy says she enjoyed feeling like she was helping.

In late 2020, their pregnancy added a new variable to everything. They changed their risk analysis, factoring in the new life to come and the death surrounding them. They chose their child. And they chose the United States.

"We just want him to be happy and safe," Lucy said, in Spanish. "We want him to be a good person."

## Adapting to parenthood and the U.S.

As they're navigating their new country and their new parenthood, they're learning that just as life presents unexpected challenges, there are unexpected moments of hope, too.

In August, when they were living in Arkansas, Joaquin was born with intestinal complications, severe enough where he was airlifted and treated for several days in a hospital. The quality of care they received was unparalleled, Lucy said.

"What happened to Joaquin, if this happened in Mexico, he may not have survived," Lucy said. "The hospital treated us like family."

**More in local news:** He went to the Philippines looking for answers. He returned with a mission.

They moved to Indianapolis in October and have leaned on relatives for support. They're waiting to receive political asylum, hopefully, and stay in the U.S. Being on the receiving end of assistance is a new feeling, Lucy said.

"We were helping people for the job we were doing," Lucy said. "But here, people are helping us."

Parenting has brought on new lessons as well.

"(I've learned) to be alert," Marcos says. "I was alert before, but it's not the same."

"The love for the baby, it's unique," Lucy said.

As they await progress on their asylum case, they're trying to enjoy the newness and wonderment of daily American life. Endless aisles at grocery stores. Pet dogs at home.

**'America belongs to all of us':** How the Chinese Lion Dance bridges Indianapolis cultures

## The never-ending Indiana snow

And when they discussed Friday's snowfall with Lucy's brother, Oscar, the couple was shocked to hear that even as they were surrounded by inches of snow, there was still the possibility of more.

While it does get cold in Mexico, Oscar explained, they don't experience snowfall like this. Low temperatures and troubles without the reward.

"Coming from our country... (Indianapolis) is a nice, small city, but it's not too small either," Lucy said. "For Joaquin, this looks like a place that can be good for him."

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