

Time to Grow Up

It's funny how when I was a teenager I would think about how great it would be when I turn 18. The freedom, money, and fun I would have would make my college years great. After I graduated it *was* great. It was everything I had been looking forward to. Problem was it lasted only a few months because my grandparents decided to move away. "Right on!" I thought, "Even more freedom. I'm grown up. I can handle!" Although I thought I was grown up, when my grandparents moved away I found out what growing up was all about. I had to find a place to live, pay my own bills, and cook my own food.

One task was learning to pay my bills. I had to be better organized because the bills would come in at different times. Since they had different due dates, I needed to make sure they were paid. To help me remember, I had an area on my desk that was reserved for bills. Then, I would spend Saturday mornings making sure they got paid and making sure I had enough money in my checking account to cover them. I still use this organizational strategy to this day. On my desk at school, I have a stack on my desk of papers that I need to pass out and I have a stack of work I need to correct. Since everything goes on my desk, I don't lose anything.

Another of the hardest tasks of growing up was finding a place to live. I had about six month to find a place, but I spent five months not worrying about it. Then came the month before my grandparents was leaving and I was panicking. My grandparents kept saying they was leaving and if I didn't have a place, I could live on the street. With

that image in my mind, I spent two weeks looking and finally found a place – with less than a week to spare. This taught me a valuable lesson – don't procrastinate. When it came time to transfer to Mililani Middle School, I got all of my paperwork completed early instead of waiting.

Finally came cooking my own food. I found it amazing how much time it took to prepare food. I realized it took a lot of work to cook different meals on different nights. My grandmother cooked a different meal everyday of the week. I tried to, but it took so long to shop and get all of the ingredients that I scrapped that idea and my meals needed to be cooked in the microwave or I had take out. Because of that experience, I learned to plan meals ahead. Now I make a list of what I need and go shopping once a week to get all the food I need for the week.