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As Spanish philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." In 1942, the US government took drastic measures to ensure "security" for the nation, leading all Japanese families to be forcibly removed from their homes and taken to concentration camps unfairly. At 15 years of age, Arnold Maeda and his family also faced this unfairness by Executive Order 9066 and were evacuated from their home just because of their Japanese heritage. Despite having the country against them, Maeda never lost hope; he was able to maintain a positive attitude that changed the lives of those who got to meet him and continued to share his wisdom and values with others across the nation.

Today, the US government is sending out ICE agents across the nation targeting people just by their skin color or the way they talk, sometimes taking them by force or even attacking them with brutal force. This as a harsh measure to make America for Americans again. Learning about Maeda's story made me feel disappointed in the system and those who think that this is right. Like Santayana implied, history is repeating itself with the government doing what they did 84 years ago, this time against every other race that is not white. There is no way of telling if the raids are going to stop any time soon, and as a Latina alien, I fear for my life, for the lives of those that are part of my community, and the possibility of being excluded. However, I always keep my hopes up that better days are coming and to make sure that my family is not afraid of them or for me.

Working with and providing service to others made me realize that life is worth living. When I came to this country, I didn't feel like I belonged. There was a cultural and language barrier that made me self-conscious and led me to isolate myself for years. However, being alive and being able to help the community build a sense of togetherness and belonging is a beautiful thing. Having met amazing, kind, and wise people makes me feel that even in a country where we're not wanted, there *is* love and compassion.

Maeda's story and legacy inspire me to continue working on making the community a better and safer place, free of prejudice and discrimination, and to make sure that people have the support they need, because there is always hope even when it doesn't look like it. I want to be an agent of change and will continue helping the community in any way that I can. Participating in the Manzanar Pilgrimage would be an eye-opening experience that would help me embrace my own culture, honor the past, reflect on the present, and look up while trying to contribute to a better future for those around me. It would be enlightening since I would be able to learn more and get a better understanding of Maeda's life from the perspective of those who got to meet him. the weight of history and the effect he had on people while getting to experience and appreciate the Japanese culture.

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### Bibliography

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