

Closer than ever to the city that became home

In 1979, I moved to Buffalo, but like Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, I was chanting, "There's no place like home." Home for me was Long Island, and I loved my proximity to New York City. Arrogantly, I thought NYC was the center of the universe, not just for me, but for everyone. Chicago and LA had nothing on us. New York was the place.

It had theater, culture, shopping, and the streets were surrounded with bustling energy. Oh, I spoke of how I missed this energy every chance I could get.

I moved to Buffalo to follow my future husband, Mitch, but I missed my "home city." New acquaintances would ask, "Where are you from?" My canned reply was, "Well, I am from New York, but I currently live in a suburb of Buffalo." Like it was a temporary location.

I no longer crave the energy of the big city as a home base. In fact, I love the vivaciousness of Buffalo.

I identified with NYC and felt like I betrayed my birthplace by moving across the state. What kind of name is Buffalo anyway – why would a city have the name of a large animal?

There are a few theories on the origin of the name, and they're all under endless debate.

I like this one: Buffalo is the French name for Beau Fleuve (beautiful river), a reference made by Father Louis Hennepin when he first saw the mighty Niagara River.

Time stampeded on, and I became a Momma to three kids. I also met my lifetime buddies (many are also NYC transplants) and I found a career and place in the community.

Eventually, I stopped saying I was originally from NYC. Although, occasionally, my accent, which is sadly fading, gave me away.



Vickie Rubin is the author of "Raising Jess: A Story of Hope" and a blogger.

And now it is 2022 – the Buffalo Bills and Josh Allen are national treasures. Our kids and grandchildren all live in town, and I no longer crave the energy of the big city as a home base. In fact, I love the vivaciousness of Buffalo. There is so much culture, plurality, theater, nature and a sense of community and kinship.

Recently, my city was attacked. Senseless, horrific devastation on the East Side of Buffalo. Ten people dead! If you can't feel safe shopping for milk and bread on a beautiful May day, where can you feel safe?

The local Tops on Jefferson Avenue was more than a store; it was a place to gather and see friends and neighbors. The atmosphere within the store was friendly – until hatred ended the lives of 10 community members.

Thirteen people were shot, with three survivors. The stories continue to grow about the qualities of the deceased. A grandmother, a father, a caretaker, a retired officer-hero, an activist, a devoted son, a protector and provider, a woman who never met a stranger, a dedicated and loving wife and a pillar of the community. Each was an anchor in their family and circle.

My heart grieves for the families and our community.

What kind of name is Buffalo? It describes a community that is resilient.

A community that has the energy of people helping people. A community vibrant with diversity. Our city will survive. Our city will help those suffering from the tragedy, and our city will thrive. And perhaps what is learned from this tragedy will prevent future mass shootings. Perhaps.

My name is Vickie Rubin, and I am proudly from Buffalo.