

SOUTH LA HOPES

Hector Sanchez profiled by
Michelle Salguero & Yadira Tejada

Hector Sanchez was born in 1980 in South Central. Hector started as a community volunteer at Community Coalition (CoCo) while attending Manual Arts High School in South Los Angeles. When he was in high school, his school lacked a lot of resources. Hector shares how he helped raise money for Manual Arts but the district wanted to use the money to put grills on the windows instead of getting other resources like pool filters or better access to restrooms. Now, Hector works in the community. He helped build the first leadership council and he is trying to improve South LA. Hector is now the Deputy Political Director at Community Coalition.

Hector shares that the South Los Angeles population was mainly Black and now it is mainly Latinos which is a huge change for the community. The article, "Shifting Demographics in South LA" states, "In the 1990s, black residents made up roughly half the population in South Central. Today, Latinos account for about two-thirds of the residents in what is now called South Los Angeles" South Central was predominantly Black but Latinos were moving to South Central which was the most affordable place to live in Los Angeles at that time.

Hector mentions how gentrification is a huge part of the issue with South LA. Gentrification is not only happening in South LA, it is happening everywhere. Gentrification is when people of color are getting kicked out of their neighborhoods because they can not afford rent. This happened to Hector who unfortunately had to move to South Gate because it was more affordable for him to buy a house and have a family.

In "Inglewood Today" by Mike Sonsksen it states "The combination of rising property values, the lack of rent control, dozens of new condo developments, Metro's expansion, and the Los Angeles Rams moving to nearby Inglewood, is contributing to South Central Los Angeles' struggle with gentrification". As you can see, gentrification had a big impact on South LA in a negative way.

The Los Angeles Riots that happened in 1992 really affected South Central—the community and people. Hector shares that when the riots were happening he was 12. In an article by Anjuli Krbechek, Krbechek states that "The reaction to the acquittal [of the LAPD officers] in South Central Los Angeles was particularly violent. At the time, more than half of the population there was Black. Tension had already been mounting in the neighborhood in the years leading up to the riots: the unemployment rate was about 50 percent, a drug epidemic was ravaging the area, and gang activity and violent crimes were high." Seeing all of this really affected Hector. He says that for one it really affected him seeing the community up in flames. There was so much violence happening during the riots. Flashing in the streets and news for over 5 consecutive days. He states that it was definitely traumatic.

In conclusion, it is important for the people who are part of South LA to use their voice as an implement for better resources. We've seen changes already because we have people like Hector working and advocating for a more sustainable future, therefore there is still hope for South Central.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Michelle Salguero



My name is Michelle Salguero and I am 17 years old. My whole life I've been living in South Central. All my siblings went to Fremont High School. When almost all my siblings graduated we moved places. Hence why I go to school here at Mann UCLA Community School. Being able to interview a leader who lived in South Central, I learned that

South LA has definitely improved. We're witnessing improvement as of now. We need more change and resources.

One of the questions we asked Hector was if he felt proud of South LA's progress, and he said definitely because finally now us Black and Brown students are learning about our backgrounds and ethnicities. I really related to that because I hardly even knew about South Central's background. I feel that the people of South Central are one of our greatest strengths as a community. I hope that in the next 10 years we have all the resources we need for schools and the people who live in

South LA. We're seeing change now, so imagine how much change will be seen in South Central in the future as long as we as a community stick together. I hope that one day I can also be an asset and help be a leader like Hector Sanchez. After high school I hope to chase after my career then help out my community.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Yadira Tejada



I am Yadira Tejada and I am American and Salvadoran. I used to live in Highland Park but I moved to South Central 2 years ago because my dad had a terrible accident and I moved in with my aunt. What stood out to me from my interviewee was that he shared a lot of information about him and his goals for the community of

South Central. I learned that the people from South Central are resilient and I learned that people are taking a stand to improve South Central. South Central's greatest strength is all the people that live there because they are special people who have amazing talents. I hope South Central improves in a positive way for there not to be so many empty lots more plants and trees. I hope to become a very successful business woman. I plan to attend UCLA for college and major in Economics or Pre-Med.