

M: How did you or your family like to come to South Central?

Oh, okay. I don't know. I was born and raised in South LA in 1980.. My parents were already here. So I think 1970

M: How has South Central changed over the years?

H: Ah, well, it's changed in various ways. One it was when I was growing up, it was predominantly black. And now it's predominantly Latino. So there's been a shift in that. I think. The other aspect of it is that I think more and more younger people, younger folks are trying to understand the history of South LA, which is very rich, and full of a kind of resilience. And so, yeah, it's, it's been, I think that's how it's changed.

M: How has your role changed since you've been here?

H: My role. So I actually started at a community coalition as a young, high school student, I went to Manual Arts Schools. We needed to graduate with volunteer hours. So I started, that's when I started in 97. Here at Community Coalition, and then I've stayed ever since I played multiple roles, both as a volunteer and as a young student, but then also, I was one of our first parent organizers, organizing parents to address issues of educational equity, access to quality education, helped build our first leadership council here at the organization involving residents and trying to figure out how do we, you know, think about a South LA differently, reimagining South LA. And then I went, took a turn, and went into administration, I managed our admin team. I've managed our finance team, I built our civic engagement, which deals with electoral politics. So I admit, I've worn multiple hats.

M: What's one challenge that you occasionally face in your job?

In my job? What do you do? What do you do in the community?

H: I think one challenge, it's a good challenge to have is trying to let people know that you have, rights, and we can make some changes because there have been significant changes that we've seen, the fact that you all are taking an ethnic studies course, is one of those changes, right, that we were able to be a part of and be. And so that, letting people know that and, and then them being able to see it is actually really good, but it's a challenge of having people realize that they have agency.

M: What is your favorite thing about the community of South Central?

H: I think the diversity, we're a very diverse community, like I said, it was predominantly black. It moved to predominantly Latino. But for me, the importance of ensuring that black culture is relevant is always front and center. And their resilience, people are resilient. And so they want to see change.

M: What are your opinions on South Central?

H: I love South LA, I think part of the issue with South LA is that more and more people are seeing the value of South LA which is what unfortunately is causing gentrification, people are moving into South LA that aren't that that aren't here weren't here and are essentially pushing our folks out into, you know, areas of the Inland Empire and other parts of the of the county but

M: What do you feel are South Central's greatest strengths?

H: People, people, it's people, it's history, or its greatest strengths, I think young people are always surprised.

How did the 1992 riots affect you?

I was 12 in 1982. And seen, it impacted in a couple of ways. One is seeing our community go up in flames, obviously, a negative kind of thing that has always been flashing in the news, and you

had to see it every single day for over five days. It was definitely dramatic. But if you contextualize the civil unrest, and think about the why, it's because again, the resilience of the people saying we can't take this any longer, right? We can't, we can't allow for a system to continue to provide no justice. And even though it's blatant, still say that it's not, it's not really taking place. And so I think the recent resilience of folks really exercising their right to say, we can't have south la be the way that it is, especially as it relates to police brutality treatment of, of our black brothers and sisters, and just, you know, our community

M: If you don't currently live in South Central why did you move and if you still live in South Central, why did you stay?

H: So I don't live in South America, I live in Southgate, which is just east of here. It's the next city after Watts. And, part of why I moved is I couldn't afford them. I Tried to buy a house, and build a family, but I couldn't afford it. And so I moved to where it was a little bit more affordable. And but, you know, I've essentially stayed here in South LA trying to ensure that we, there's unfinished business that we're doing. And so we're, we're making sure that we are continuing to build a generation of next leaders making sure that we continue to, you know, continue to promote. Our cultures continue to push for greater change. And so that greater change shouldn't come at the expense of our people. What I mean by that is, just because we've improved this area, does it mean that the people that live there should be pushed out? Right. So that's what we've been seeing. And so fortunately, we have, you know, some elected officials that are working to try to address some of that, along with community, but and like, are you still proud of the progress? And how people are already starting to want to learn more about South Central and how we can get more resources for schools?

M: Do you feel proud of the progress of South LA?

H: Do I feel proud of the progress? Absolutely. I think, again, you know, the fact that you all are even here, as part of a class project, to me shows that there's been, you know, conversation about what, what needs to move, right? We can't talk about history. Without talking about the history of our community and where we live, where we grew up, where we didn't have ethnic studies, all that stuff was not there when we were when I was going to school. And I think the fact that there are more and more folks that say, I grew up in South LA, and I'm still here working in South LA to help build the South is always a good thing.

M: About like resources, like more resources in schools,

H: There's not enough. We need more. We need more resources in our schools. I think, you know, we've been working to try to bring in so when I was in high school a couple of decades ago, at the time we were actually fighting to so the voters had passed an initiative that brought in \$2.8 billion to address the physical structure of the schools right when I was going to school we had I don't know if you heard of tracks. So we had four tracks because our schools were so tight. So we have four tracks, and, and the school is all year round, you all are about to go into the summer break. And it's summer. And if you want to go school, summer school and all that stuff, that's great for when I was in school, it was like, Okay, you're going to school from like February to August, and then you're off for like three or four months. And then you go into school again, and so forth. Now, we've kind of been able to build a traditional calendar, because one, there's more schools that get bills, too, that is, you know, the importance of ensuring that this whole student population is able to go through, we're all in school together. We're all out of school together, and so on. I think there's an external factor that impacts that creates more

community, right? Like your friends, and you guys are all able to hang out in the summer or whatever during break. That wasn't happening. Because if I had friends in another track, like they were in school, I was. And so I think that is great. But again, this is we're not where we need to

question. Yeah, sure. Um, so

Y: how do you see South Central in like, the next 10 years?

H: I think that's a good question. You know, continuing to build consciousness ensures that people are aware that conditions that we currently live in, are not what they should be. Because sometimes we just tend to normalize it. Right. This is my community. **When I was at Manual Arts High School, what I was trying to say about addressing the conditions of our schools, the school district wanted grills on our Windows, and that was what they were going to use the money for. Right, while other schools that were getting pool filters were getting better access to the restrooms, we didn't even have restrooms to go to, right when we didn't have no lockers. And so we were able to bring \$173 million back to South La schools.** And so to me that that's part of answering your question is like being able to bring more resources, being able to ensure that we don't just take it for granted that things are the way that they are, as they are, but rather that we have agency and we can change. And so building that consciousness and I'm and I'm hopeful that you know, within those 10 years, we're able to also have people come back, people that left that were kicked out that were pushed out, come back. And so you know, having that exhibit that you all just walk through this, one way of trying to you know, build that consciousness that this is our home. This is where we grew up and the fact that we're being pushed out is not okay.

Extra notes:

- He attended USC