

THE LIFE OF FRANCISCO PEREZ

Francisco Perez profiled by
Michael Castro & Elyse Smith

Francisco was born on September 1, 1974 in South Central and he has seen how South Central has changed over the years. Francisco's parents emigrated to the United States, motivated by what Jerry Garcia explains in the article, "Bracero Program": "The Mexican Agricultural Labor Program, also known as the Bracero Program, was the result of a series of agreements between Mexico and the United States in response to the demand for agricultural labor during World War II." Francisco is the child of immigrants, and growing up in a dangerous neighborhood, he feels like he didn't have enough resources and there were a lot of drug deals going on which made it hard growing up. The drug deals made the neighborhood worse and he feels like that's why there weren't a lot of pathways. Growing up for him no one talked about college.

Francisco feels like in South Central, people want something better than the riots in the 60s and 90s. "At the same time, the community's anger was also deepening against Los Angeles police. African Americans said they did not feel protected during times of need, but instead reported being harassed without cause." When it comes to the police, he feels like you shouldn't take chances with the police because you could get shot. Growing up he was told to stay away from the police because his family didn't trust them. He feels like people are still getting beat up by the police and it happens all the time. He feels what happened because of the riots was sad but a change happened. A lot of people back then were getting beat up for no reason which would have made anyone scared of the police. Andrew Diamond explains in the article "Street Gangs in the 20th Century American City,"

"In the 1980s and 1990s, with minority communities grappling with high unemployment, cuts in social services, failing schools, hyper- incarceration, drug trafficking, gun violence, and toxic relationships with increasingly militarized police forces waging local "wars" against drugs and gangs, gangs proliferated." The police didn't care but now there are policies with the police. He feels like kids are scared to get shot by police. An anecdote that he had with the police was when he tried to open the door of his car because he had forgotten the keys inside. When the police passed by there they thought the one who was trying to steal it; but being in times of great violence, the police did not want to risk their lives and acted hastily. Pointing their guns at Francisco. Francisco was very afraid of losing his life and all because of a misunderstanding.

A strength that he feels could make South Central better is bringing hope. Although conditions in South Central might not be perfect, Francisco believes that, "hurt people hurt other people." For him the highlight of South Central is the people in the neighborhood especially if they try to bring hope because it could bring hope for other people.

In conclusion Francisco's life has been a mixture of challenges and historical moments that have left a deep mark on him.

Since his birth in a neighborhood marked by a lack of resources and rising crime, and his subsequent time in prison, Francisco has faced significant obstacles in his path. However, despite the difficulties, Francisco has shown resilience and determination to change his life. Through his work and the development of his emotional intelligence, he has found a way to deal with adversity and maintain a sympathetic perspective towards others.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Michael Castro



My name is Michael Castro, I was born in 2004, in the department of Cuscatlan, El Salvador. I am the son of Salvadoran parents. My dad went to the United States to support us financially. Since he wanted to give us a better future, my family and I moved to the United States in the spring of 2019. Living 4 years in South Central, Los Angeles. What

caught my attention the most from the interview I had with Francisco was the bad experience he had with the police. Having the police in front of you pointing their guns, yelling at you, the fear inside. It must have been the scare of his life and he could have died at that moment but the good thing he didn't. Something I learned from Francisco was that despite going through difficult times, he kept going. At the beginning of his life he started on the wrong foot; being imprisoned for a bad decision he made, this experience changed him for the better.

The greatest strength of South Central is the people, because my family and I had a difficult time. Despite not having so many resources in South Central, we received the support of the local people without expecting anything in return, and I am very grateful to them. What I hope from South Central is that the situation of drug addicts improves, since it is ugly for a city with many good things like its landscapes, places, and people. It's full of people who are consuming their own death. I would like you to change this as quickly as possible. What I expect from me is that I can improve myself more, work harder to achieve my goals, and finish my degree.

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Elyse Smith

My name is Elyse and I am a high school student. My mom and I moved to South Central five years ago. What stood out to me from the interviewee was the challenges he faced. I could not relate to anything he said because I am not from here and I think things were different back then. I learned what it could have been like for Hispanic people back then. It could have been a little different from how it is now. I think South Central's greatest strengths are what other people think of it. I hope I go to college and it goes by fast. My plan is to go to college after high school.
