

SOUTH CENTRAL'S HOPE

Francisco Perez profiled by
Kayla McKing & Jesse Preciado

Francisco was born on September 1, 1974 in the Martin Luther King Hospital in Compton. Francisco's father's life matches the story of the Bracero program written about by the Library of Congress in the article, "A Latinx Resource Guide: Civil Rights Cases and Events in the United States": "An executive order called the Mexican Farm Labor Program established the Bracero Program in 1942. This series of diplomatic accords between Mexico and the United States permitted millions of Mexican men to work legally in the United States on short term labor contracts." Because of his participation in the residential program, Francisco's dad ended up meeting Francisco's mom in Compton.

When Francisco was in junior high, he said it was pretty good except for the fact that he lived in a Blood neighborhood but went to a Crip area school. So when Francisco went to school, even though he wasn't in or associated with Bloods, they assumed he was one. Francisco said that they declared, "You're guilty by association." This isn't surprising due to the fact of how active gangs were when Francisco was a teen. In the article by Elizabeth Hinton, "Los Angeles had a chance to build a better city after the Rodney King violence in 1992. Here's why," Hinton talks about how, "Whereas in 1972, only eighteen known and active gangs existed in South Central, Compton, and Inglewood, by 1978 that number had more than doubled. And with the expansion of gangs has come the expansion of violence and killing." The fact that Bloods and Crips were the most well known gangs back then, Francisco would have had a lot of encounters with Bloods and Crips throughout his life where they assume he is in one of these gangs.

In the early 1990s, police presence and abuse were at an all time high. The Los Angeles Times article, "Los Angeles Police Department fatal shootings: By the numbers" states that police shootings were at "a high of more than 100 per year in the early 1990s." Francisco's life is somewhat similar to that because Francisco could have been one of the 100 people because his experience with the police that was terrifying. Francisco was held to a gunpoint by the police at a young age without questioning. He was scared out of his mind as a young kid having a gun pointed at him thinking they weren't going to live. Francisco could have been one of the wrongly shot people by the police.

Even after everything Francisco has been through, he still keeps his head up and looks at things from a brighter and positive perspective. He thinks South Central's greatest strengths are the people no matter what: "It's like no other place in the world, you know?" There are other people still inspiring hope in others—hope that things will change and there will be better days. Francisco believes, "It only takes one person, one person that could make the difference for somebody."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kayla Mcking

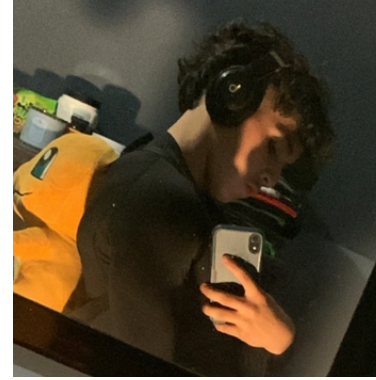


I am Kayla Mcking. My mom moved out here to South Central when she was 17. She moved out here all on her own. My biological dad has lived here his whole life. I've been in South Central since I was born April 24th, 2007. What stood out to me about my interviewee is how Francisco always thought of a brighter way to look at what

happened to him. Most people wouldn't have that type of way of thinking. A lot of people would be negative about the whole situation but Francisco didn't. That character trait made it more of a better experience for me to interview Francisco. At the moment I can not relate to anything that happened because my parents mostly keep me in the house because of all the gangs and the neighborhood we live in. I learned that only hurt people hurt people, nobody is going to just hurt you without reason. I think South Central's greatest strengths are the people because the people that want to help South Central be better are the strength that holds it together. I hope that it keeps changing for the better. What I hope for myself is to stay motivated and clear on my dreams. My plans are to go to college and figure out life as I grow older and enjoy it and never take nothing for granted. I will live a more positive life and stay open minded.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jesse Preciado



My name is Jesse Preciado and my family came to South Central in the early 1990s. My family moved to South Central after living in Ventura County for about 5 years with some family. I think something that really stood out to me about my interviewee is it seemed that all though everything he went through he still looked at things the most

positive way. I also really felt it when he said "hurt people hurt other people". I think the thing that truly gives South Central its strengths is the people and how strong minded they are. My plans when I finish high school is to go to college to be a master tech and be a fitness influencer on the side.
