Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

Understanding & Dismantling Privilege
2020 Winter Release of

Undocumonologues

Special Compilation by Motus Theater and the Undocumented Project

The journal of Understanding and Dismantling Privilege is excited to feature autobiographical monologues authored by undocumented Americans under Motus Theater and *Shoebox Stories*. A special thank you to Norma Johnson for her editorial contributions.

Featured Monologues:

Download this publication and all of UDP's past issues at WPCJournal.com

UDP is an interdisciplinary, open access journal focusing on the intersectional aspects of privilege, academia, and activism born from the scholars and activists at the White Privilege Conference.

About Motus Theater and the UndocuAmerica Project…

The mission of Motus Theater is to create an original theater to facilitate dialogue on critical issues of our time. We aim to use the power of art to build alliances across diverse segments of our community and country.

Storytelling is at the heart of what makes us human. Motus Theater focuses on bringing marginalized voices or silenced histories to the stage. We support inclusion by expanding our audiences' experiences of the variety of stories that make up our country. By using theater to learn and listen across the gaps of difference, we weave tighter, stronger, and more connected communities.

As the Artistic Director of Motus Theater, I have been collaboratively developing autobiographical monologues with undocumented Americans (undocumented young people who came to this country as children and experienced the United States as their home) since 2012.

Through our autobiographical monologue performances, Motus has helped people get to know the people whose lives are at stake because of U.S. immigration policies. In Boulder County, our home location, and across the Colorado Front Range, elected officials, law enforcement, and business leaders have spoken openly about the impact of listening to these stories and their effect on their leadership decisions. Our undocumented or DACA-mented performers went from feeling like part of the shadows of our community to winning numerous awards, even being named "People of the Year" in Boulder County in 2015.

In 2017, Motus Theater planned to transition from immigration to a focus on issues related to mass incarceration, but with the escalation of rhetoric that falsely associates young undocumented Americans with a criminal threat, the Motus team (staff, undocumented presenters, board members, and I) discussed how we could scale the narrative work we have been doing in Boulder County to a national level. Out of these conversations came Motus' Creative Courage Initiative, which included a performance in which we challenged the false association between documentation status and criminality by asking five Police Chiefs, a Sheriff, and our local District Attorney to stand on stage with Motus' undocumented monologists and read their stories. Not only did this law enforcement performance, through live-streaming and press, reach millions of people, it also influenced a shift in local law enforcement approaches to policies related to undocumented immigrants. Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle speaks of the impact:

> *"Standing beside these young people and reading their stories was moving for all of us and powerful for the audience. But the best experience was learning their stories while we rehearsed and then spending some personal time interacting with them while we were preparing backstage. Barriers were broken down, relationships formed, and mutual respect established. Relationship building like this, using this format, could probably solve a lot of various issues in many communities across this country!"*

From the success of having law enforcement read undocumented people's stories came Motus' UndocuAmerica project. The goal of this project is to get the personal stories of undocumented people into the media regularly to disrupt false

narratives of criminal threats and invasion that justify state-sanctioned violence (such as detaining and separating immigrant families).

We began Motus' UndocuAmerica project in 2018 with a 14-week autobiographical monologue project where I worked collaboratively with a new team of 10 young people with DACA who courageously wanted to impact a national audience with stories about their lives, their parents, families, and friends. The undocumented participants wrote, yelled, prayed, and cried until they found one story from their lives they wanted to share with you and others across our country. The UndocuMonologues that came out of this process are featured in this journal, and they form the substance of our outreach on stage, in newsprint, and our new *UndocuAmerica* podcast series.

Motus created two UndocuAmerica companion podcasts to accomplish reaching the largest audience possible. On the *Motus Monologues: UndocuAmerica Series* podcast, you will hear the original undocumented monologists reading their stories followed by a musical response to the featured story from Grammy-award winning musicians of national significance - such as cellist Yo-Yo Ma, rock 'n' roll legend Neil Young, Latin hip hop and rock band Ozomatli, Afro-Latin Jazz musician Arturo O'Farrill, and the Chicano band Las Cafeteras.

On Motus' companion podcast, *Shoebox Stories: UndocuAmerica Series*, you will hear these same stories read by prominent Americans such as humanitarian chef José Andrés, co-founder of Black Lives Matter Patrisse Cullors, actor John Lithgow, Univision anchor Jorge Ramos, feminist activist and writer Gloria Steinem, op-ed writer for the *New York Times* Nicholas Kristof, anchor and executive producer of *Latino USA Maria Hinojosa*, Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance Ai-jen Poo, evangelical leader Jo Anne Lyon, and Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo.

Each of the prominent Americans featured on *Motus' Shoebox Stories: UndocuAmerica Series* podcast was deeply impacted by holding the personal stories of undocumented people close and speaking their words aloud. Here are a few quotes:

> *"It helped me experience what you experienced. And that's exactly what all of us have to do and concentrate on. We're in a moment of crisis, a crisis of empathy in this country. And it seems to me that the whole thrust of this project is to address that crisis."* - John Lithgow

> *"There's nothing on earth more supportive than people sitting in a circle, telling their stories. Telling the story you think only you feel, three other people who say, "Oh, you feel like that? I thought only I felt like that?" Then we discover that it's in some way about power or injustice or something. And together, we can change that. You know, there's nothing more positive and exciting and forward-moving than that kind of shared sharing of stories."* - Gloria Steinem

> *"Thank you for putting this into, into paper and making people like me, for a second, try to understand what really you are going through, or [what] your family went through, and so many others out there... Without this connection, it's very hard to make anything happen."* - José Andrés

By collaborating with national voices

and musicians and local civic leaders and educators, we hope to wake this country to the urgency of what is happening to immigrant families and how this endangers all the people in our country. Because the border being crossed that threatens this country is not our southern border with Mexico, but the legal precedents and social norms that protect civil rights and human rights.

Thank you for reading the *UndocuMonologues* in this journal; listening to them on one of the UndocuAmerica podcasts; sharing them with your students, faculty, family, and friends; and collaborating with Motus Theater's National Outreach & Education Director, Tania Chairez, to bring these stories to your community. (Motus would love to know the impact of your experience of getting to know our undocumented monologist through their stories: info@motustheater.org).

Motus wants to inspire you to become more deeply engaged in protecting immigrant families. Through that, every person's civil and human rights in this country. We hope you will begin today by sharing this journal and our stories. As Anne Frank wrote in her famous diary - a quote you will see again within one of the *UndocuMonologues*, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

Kirsten Wilson, Artistic Director, Motus Theater

An Invitation to Read, Collaborate, and then…

In the following pages, you will read the stories of just a few of the 11 million undocumented people in our country. I am one of them.

These are not the typical stories you might hear from DREAMers on the news because, in reality, we created them in a Motus Monologue Workshop for our healing. We lay our hearts open - not to further your education - but so that the truth may live. Guided by our ancestors, we divulge our parents' hopes and dreams, our experiences of loss and survival, and the ongoing trauma that comes from being in an abusive relationship with the U.S.A.

For almost four months, we processed our stories in the community - this was prior to COVID-19 - and supported each other through tears and hugs. Although our journeys are all different, we could understand each other without explaining our humanity, which is unfortunately not the norm for us. With every memory shared, we grew stronger, and so did our voices, until our writings became so powerful that they shout at you from the page. Enough so that you can sit in our pain and celebrate in our joy; enough so that you can hear the voices of our undocumented families, friends, and students in our writing.

It is my students that I often think about when I share my monologue. I taught seventh and eighth-grade students in Phoenix, Arizona - my home. Much like myself, they experienced the racist politics of a border state, with a tent city - an outdoor jail Sheriff Joe Arpaio referred to as his own 'concentration camp' - as a visual reminder just a short ride away from campus. Here in Colorado - my new home - I managed a scholarship fund for almost 100 undocumented college students. I walked alongside them as they faced the very real opposition of their privileged classmates, just like I once did at the University of Pennsylvania.

Our stories, our history, will keep repeating themselves across generations unless we are bold enough to demand change. You have that power. Read our stories, feel our stories, then push yourselves to do more. I now continue to work with immigrant youth, and they are unapologetic in their search for justice. Will you join me in modeling for them what advocacy for human rights looks like? I hope that upon reading and experiencing our stories, your answer will be a clear and resounding "yes"!

At Motus Theater, we know that the stories we hold close are the ones that are most likely to impact how we vote, how we act, and whom we respect. That is why we ask that you share our monologues so that others may also think of us as they make critical decisions.

Listen and share our stories with your family and friends:

1. In the *Motus Monologues: UndocuAmerica Series* podcast, you will hear our monologues come to life as we read aloud our own stories with a violin underscore and unique musical responses from Grammy-award winning musicians.
2. In the *Shoebox Stories: UndocuAmerica Series* podcast, you will hear prominent Americans read aloud our stories as a way to step into our shoes, followed by musical responses from Grammy award-winning musicians.
3. You can Host Your Own Reading of our monologues with a literal shoebox full of our stories and pictures at your next Zoom dinner group, book club, classroom discussion, etc. In this intimate setting, you and your family, friends, or students are invited to read aloud and discuss our stories' impact.

Additionally, we welcome partnerships on virtual performances for our UndocuAmerica Tour:

1. During virtual *Motus Monologues Live* performances, many of us read our monologues at universities, conferences, libraries, and other events. Beautiful music in between each monologue helps audiences more deeply connect with our journeys.
2. We will often host allied readings of our monologues - virtual *Shoebox Stories Live* performances - with local business, law enforcement, legislative, and academic leaders who model courageous empathy and civic hospitality for the communities they serve as they step into our shoes.
3. Our *Welcoming the Stranger/ We Were Strangers Series* encourages faith leaders to partner with Motus to read our stories aloud for their congregations. We are actively seeking faith leaders from various traditions to read aloud a story and respond theologically to the impact to spark in-depth discussion.

As you see, there are many ways to uplift our stories and take action. I encourage you to contact me at tania@motustheater.org with any questions and opportunities for collaboration.

Sincerely,

Tania Chairez
National Outreach & Education Director

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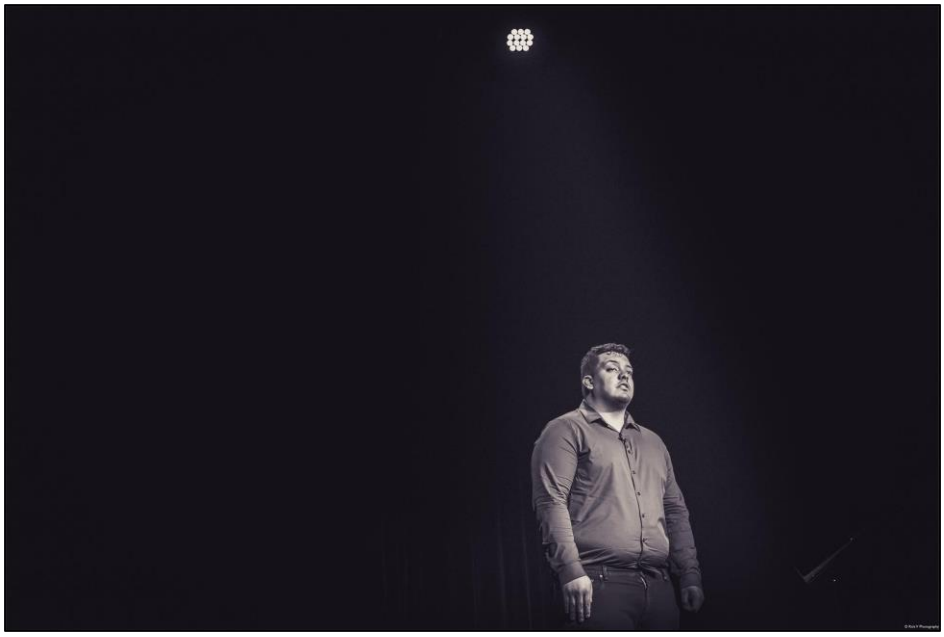
I was Made for the Light

Reydesel Salvidrez-Rodríguez
United Leaders in Higher Education

A story of one man's journey through the darkness and beyond the chains of anti-immigrant policy and rhetoric.



Reydesel Salvidrez-Rodríguez is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. He was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, migrated to the United States with his mixed-status family as a child, and lives in Denver, CO for the last 19 years. He graduated from the University of Colorado at Denver, where he studied ethnic studies. During his undergraduate years, he spends most of his time advocating for education rights and the inclusion of undocumented students on campus. He is currently serving as Vice President for the United Leaders in Higher Education (ULHE), which seeks to educate, unite, and empower students, regardless of immigration status. Reydesel is the property manager for Designs by Sundown, where he has worked with his dad and his family for the last eight years.

Imagine living in a lonely, cold world where you cannot see anything around you but dark shadows moving in the distance. There is no hope. No future. Nothing to plan ahead. You have nightmares of being taken from your family and sent into exile. You have learned to think of yourself as an "illegal," something shameful, something that does not belong. And you fear you are the only one.

Your classmates are talking, laughing, preparing for their life, and choosing colleges. But you don't even have a social security number, so you can't apply.

You seek guidance and help, "I am a good student. I want to continue onto college. I'll work hard. I have overcome the challenge of being deaf, and now I have a dream."

But the guidance counselor interrupts to silence you, "I'm sorry, but there is nothing I can do for you. You are an illegal."

You try to follow as your friends continue to college. But with no option for financial aid and no scholarships available, you don't have enough money for one semester, so you drop out. At the same time, you can't tell your friends you are undocumented, so you lie and tell them you're not ready for college. You then get off social media, so you don't have to see their happy faces—their talk of classes and careers. Little by little, you slowly disappear until they forget about you.

All your life, you have strived to be good, to stay out of trouble, to make your parents proud. You have resisted joining a gang, even though they promised you the loneliness would end. But now you buy a Social Security number on the black market to get a job. You are becoming what you fear.

Your body is being poisoned from the lies; you must tell people to survive and protect yourself. It is starting to destroy you from the inside.

There is no escape. You are illegal. No matter how hard you work. You are still illegal—a prisoner in the free world. You are an *illegal*.

You feel the heavyweight of chains. Are you a criminal or a slave?

For you, being undocumented is a curse. You hate being Mexican, you hate your family, and, most of all, you hate yourself.

And every day that your dreams die, the chains get heavier and heavier. You can't feel yourself anymore. When you accidentally injure your hand at the construction site where you work, you are surprised to feel pain. It has been so long since you've felt anything. At night you pour rubbing alcohol into the wound on your hand and watch yourself burn. You feel less lonely with your body on fire than numb in the cold.

And then you decide… to kill yourself.

The thought cuts so deep—knowing the pain you will cause your mother, your father. Some light at the bone of your existence says, "You cannot die." Maybe your life is over, but your siblings are American citizens. You will help them study. Help them get a driver's license. Help them get into college. Everything you could not have. There is some light. You become one of the many undocumented laborers living to support the dreams of another.

And then your mother calls, "Obama has

given you papers!"

Obama created DACA.

How can the words of a president you have never met, who's never met you, save your life?

I signed up for DACA and college in the same week. I found beautiful people at the college—members of Dreamers United. I was no longer alone but surrounded by other students who walked the same path.

They showed me their scars and the marks from their chains. I saw the tears and motivation in their eyes. I saw them graduating, becoming doctors, lawyers, educators, teachers, community organizers, and becoming friends. I started fighting for institutional change, creating student organizations on campus, marching in the streets. I ran for student government, and I—an undocumented, legally deaf, first-generation college student—WON!

I look down at where the chains once were, and I see a torch in my hand. I am not an illegal. I am not. That was a lie. The lie that created all the lies that pulled me into darkness. I am not an illegal. My name, Reydesel, has its ancestral root in *Rey de Sol*. Or the King of the Sun. I was made for the light. I am a warrior of light. And no human being is illegal on these stolen lands.

Listen… you who are afraid. I know your fear—you who have no hope—who are so deep in hiding that you have lost yourself. You can win the battle with the shadows. The nightmares will stop and go away. You are not alone. Your arms were not meant for chains but freedom, for joy, and to dream again. Your voices are not meant to be silent, but to stand up and fight back.

On behalf of my community, ancestors, parents, siblings, and self, I stand in the full light and call out:

"MY NAME IS REYDESEL SALVIDREZ-RODRIGUEZ. I AM UNDOCUMENTED, UNASHAMED, UNAFRAID, AND UNAPOLOGETIC!"

Welcome to my brilliant, shining, beautiful life.

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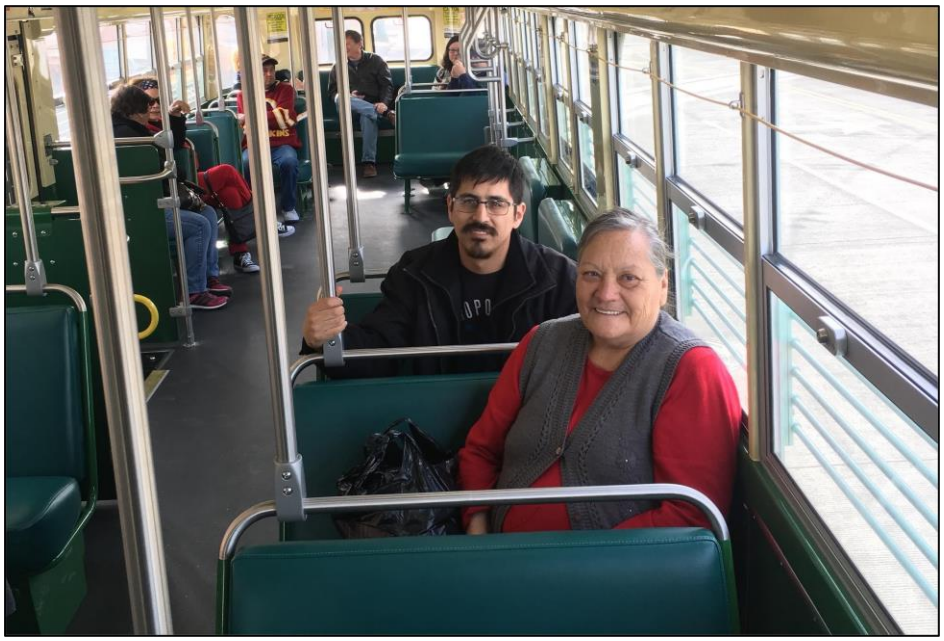
The Most Beautiful Monument

Irving Reza
Motus Theater

A story of risks and Customs and Border Protection checkpoints on the journey to freedom.



Irving Reza is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of New Mexico. He has been living in the neighborhood of Montbello, Denver, for the last six years. During his free time, Irving enjoys his family and two Chihuahuas. He also participates in political events for immigrant rights for various organizations. Irving currently works at Growhaus in Denver, CO bringing healthy food to the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood (a food desert).

On an annual basis, I go to El Paso, TX, to see my grandmother. I have no problems on the drive to El Paso, but when I return home to Colorado, I must pass through an immigration checkpoint. The United States has CBP checkpoints within 100 miles of the border. *CBP* stands for Customs and Border Protection. Everyone calls them the "Border Patrol," but the agents don't like that. They are really sensitive people. The name Border Patrol hurts their feelings.

Sometimes when you're stopped, they want to search your vehicle. It all depends on the agent and the time of day. If you have too much luggage, that might be suspicious, as you could be trying to smuggle something. If you are carrying a reasonable amount of stuff, that might be suspicious since you could be trying to pass off as a normal traveler. If you are traveling without luggage, that might be suspicious since you could be traveling in a hurry. And don't make me talk about passengers. That might be suspicious too.

One night, when I was heading to Denver after passing through Las Cruces, I stopped at a checkpoint and gave them my EAD (Employment Authorization Document). An officer asked me where I was going.

Me: "To Denver."

Officer: "Why are you going there?"

Me: "I live there."

Officer: "How long were you in El Paso?"

I started to count the days, "If I arrived on Friday night and today is Thursday night, does that count as a full day?"

The officer wasn't interested in my answer; he just wanted a reason to search the trunk of my car. I felt that I had no choice—I said, "Yes." I pressed a button on my 2004 Cavalier to open the trunk. It is a junker, with 200,000 miles. The trunk door opens, but it doesn't pop up. It has to be lifted every time. Opening it with a key is quite the puzzle—it's a really old car!

The officer asked again, "Please open the trunk."

Me: "It is open. You just have to lift it." I imagined the officer thinking, "*Ehh. This is too much trouble*."

Officer: "Sir, get out of the car. We are going to use the search dogs."

I got out and waited there in the open. It was pitch black, except for the areas surrounded by the floodlights. It was also dead silent. I could see where the light ended and where the void began. Although I couldn't see anything in the dark, I knew there were hidden shrubs, sand, critters, and—immigration.

I waited under the watchful eye and close surveillance of now five officers; as if I was capable of beating them up and making a dramatic escape. I waited in a resting stance: slightly bent knees, hands on my waist, relaxed elbows, steadily breathing and looking at them without looking at them. Otherwise, I could learn how many immigration officers it takes to screw a Mexican.

The officer with the search dog asked me, "Does the passenger door open?"

Me: "Yes. You just have to unlock it from the inside." It's a Cavalier 2004 with a

manual lock, rolling windows, and busted dashboard equal to $1,500.

The officer told me that I could get going. He then asked, "Your trunk closes, right?"

Me: "Yeah."

After that experience, I always wonder as I approach a checkpoint if they will ask to search my car. Sometimes they just take my I.D., and that's it. Other times they don't even stop anyone, and I keep on going:

Officer 1: "Are we going to stop anyone today, dude?"

Officer 2: "Nah, I just really don't feel like it."

Last year, after going to El Paso, I decided to visit the White Sands National Monument. I made a right turn in Las Cruces and drove until I reached the checkpoint. I always have my I.D. ready, and I gave it to the officer.

Officer: "Where are you coming from?"

Me: "From El Paso."

Officer: "Where are you going?"

Me: "To the monument."

Officer: "Why are you going there?"

Me: "To see the monument."

Officer: "Can I search your car?"

When she asked to search my car, I remembered a conversation with Victor Galvan; an immigrant rights trainer in Colorado. I told him about my previous experience. He asked me why I let them search my car.

Me: "I don't know."

He told me to exercise my rights the next time I pass through a checkpoint. So, in response to the officer's question, I said, "No."

The officer took a step back and went to talk to her supervisor. I usually don't look at them if I am not talking to them since I do not want to look mean. The officer came back and asked me if they could search my trunk.

Me: "Is it truly necessary?"

Officer: "Just answer the question, Sir."

Me: "No."

The officer went back to talk with her supervisor. I assume they did not really expect that kind of response. I imagined their conversation:

Officer: *"He said 'no' to searching his car! What do I do now? It's not supposed to be this way!"*

Supervisor: *"Okay. What if you ask him again and see if he flinches this time?"*

Officer: *"Sir, I asked him again, and he said, 'no,' again."*

Supervisor: *"Well… I um."*

Officer: *"We could impound his car and search it later?"*

Supervisor: *"A Cavalier? We have standards here. Let him go."*

I was permitted to move on, and in a few miles, I reached the monument.

Once I got to the monument, I went to their checkpoint. The attendant said, "Welcome to the White Sands National Monument! Would you like a day pass or a season pass?"

Me: "I'll take the day pass."

Attendant: "Thank you! Here is a map and your car sticker. Enjoy your day!"

When I am at a CBP checkpoint, I always figure that they will stop me, search me, and shake me up a bit. I have not heard of any DACA recipient being arrested or beaten at a checkpoint, but that doesn't mean it hasn't happened or that it won't happen to me. If the agents think either I or my car look suspicious, that could be it for me—whether I'm guilty or not. Even spending a single day in detention could mean losing my DACA status, and that would be a disaster.

But that day, near Las Cruces, 50 miles from the Mexican border, I was stopped at a checkpoint, and I exercised my rights. And my rights, as written in the Constitution, were respected. For many Americans, the Constitution is something they might take for granted. But that day, when my rights were respected—and the Bill of Rights was honored—I experienced the most beautiful national monument America has ever created.

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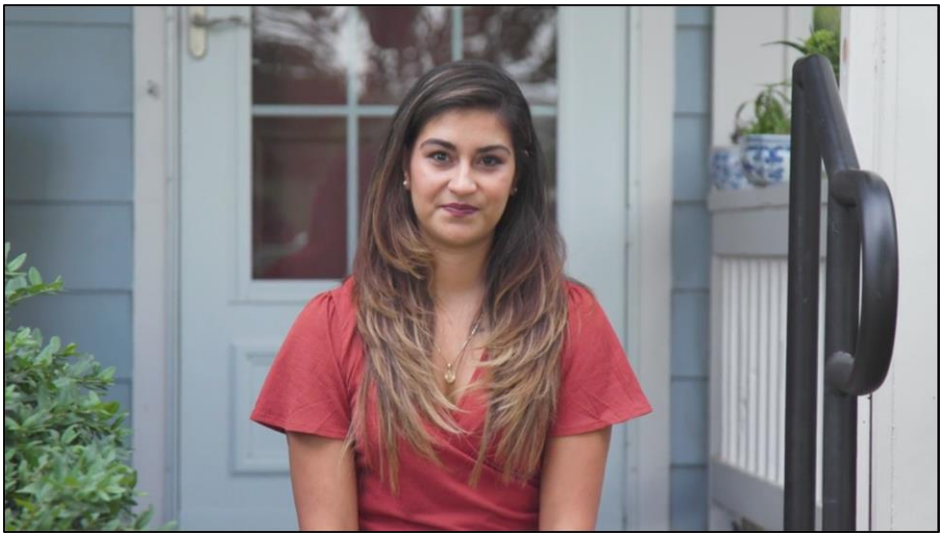
Listen to Your Heart

Tania Chairez
Motus Theater

A story of resilience in the fight against human rights abuses and the citizen apathy which allows them.



Tania Chairez came to the US as a young child and now is the National Outreach and Education Director at Motus Theater. She received a BS in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania and an MEd. in Secondary Education from Grand Canyon University. She is also the founder of Convivir—a nonprofit dedicated to supporting immigrant/ refugee students and families to build individual and collective power. Tania was featured on the cover of *TIME Magazine* in 2012 and presented a TEDx Talk in Boulder, CO, in 2017.

I often hear that the only way to get people to care about my struggles as an undocumented woman is to ask them to imagine me as their daughter or sister. But I have my own family, and my mere humanity deserves respect.

I was taught at school in this country that my contributions to society are all that should matter. So, I have done everything in my power to be at the top of my class, get into a good college, volunteer, work hard, and pay taxes, to prove that I am worthy. And I am worthy—with or without all that effort, getting treated, quite literally, like an alien or criminal, or not having an official document calling me a citizen.

I am proud of my Mexican identity, although it took almost two decades for me to embrace. From ages 5 to 18, I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, where an anti-immigrant sheriff named Joe Arpaio ruled. He put undocumented Mexican immigrants in chain gang shackles, making the men wear pink underwear to humiliate them. He literally celebrated spending less money on his inmates than on his dog—and, somehow, this was acceptable. I grew up constantly striving to prove that I was not dirty, lazy criminal, or shameful; that I was not worth less than a dog.

I now, finally, have a sense of my own value. My life feels under attack, and most people do nothing in response, so it is as if my humanity does not matter. And that baffles me. It is inconceivable that the very ground under my feet is falling away. I could be deported, put into a detention center, separated from my family, lose my job, home, and all I've built. Yet my friends, neighbors, the people at the coffee shop, the grocery store, and you reading my story don't see my situation as urgent enough to get up and do something about it.

My entire community of DACAmented and undocumented people is under attack. Everywhere, left and right, day after day, and it seems most people think they've done their job simply by liking my article on Facebook? Sad crying face, maybe even angry face.

People think they have done enough by staying caught up on the news, so they have something to lament at the dinner table. My life is not a talking point! My life is not something to uplift a *liberal agenda*. And do not pity me or send me prayers. Do something! Call your senator or your immigrant-phobic family. Show up at an immigrant rights meeting. Because every day of inaction is another day, the status quo prevails. And the status quo is painful, even if I still have my family intact. It hurts, physically, emotionally, and mentally, that most citizens do not care enough to give their time and effort to help me and fellow human beings.

Most people are going about business as usual, trying to keep up with work deadlines, health goals, and reflecting on their next *gratitude post*. Then there are those of us on the frontlines of the Trump administration's attacks. We are fighting against limited hours in the day because of our 60 hr-a-week jobs and the meeting after meeting, plan events, protests, fundraisers, and teach-ins—pouring our energy from what quickly becomes an empty cup.

But somehow, at the same time, it is the job of the undocumented community to educate citizens on how our life depends on their voice, your vote, your money, and your willingness to show up. It is not like we enjoy the fact that we need you. But we do. And I am exhausted from pulling your weight and begging you to act like a citizen in a democracy.

And because most people are not pulling their weight, my mental health is suffering. I need rest too, but I am afraid people will get deported or sent to their death. Maybe another family will be torn apart if I do not go to that extra meeting, share that petition, and convince everyone that this is urgent. You see, it is urgent for us, all… the… time.

And someplace, deep inside, you must know it is urgent too. You must.

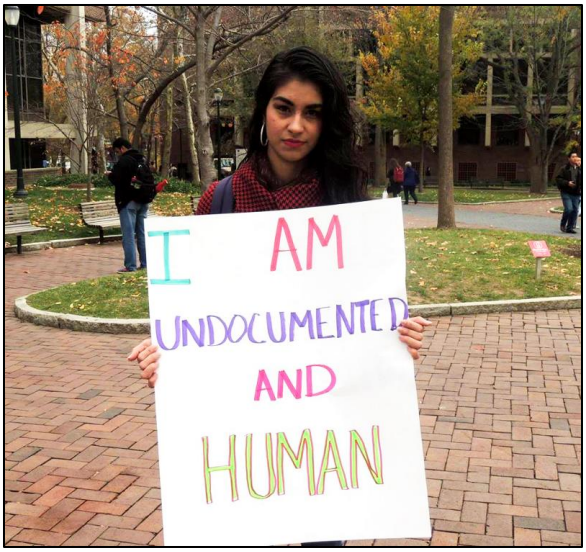
So please, breathe deeply and read the rest of my story slowly and aloud, to give voice to my words.

Can you hear me? I am afraid. I am afraid that, in the end, no matter how much I have fought for others, I will not be able to save my own family from deportation.

Have you seen the pictures from our borders? Innocent families with young children and elders, tear-gassed for seeking refuge.

Do you know what is happening across our country? Hardworking immigrants, good parents, like mine, locked away like criminals in detention centers. Young children, separated from their parents in these terrible tent camps, are exposed to abuse and dying from dehydration and untreated infections.

Do you see a war? Do you see at least a semblance to concentration camps? Can you feel your own heart telling you it is urgent? Please listen to your heart. Not just for me, or for the undocumented community, but for your own humanity. Please, it is urgent.



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UndocuAmerica: 'Not Your DREAMer'

Juan Juarez
Metropolitan State University

A story of brotherly love and the uncompromising fight for hardworking, undocumented people across the USA.

Juan Juarez is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. He is a student at Metropolitan State University, majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He grew up in Phoenix, AZ, and is one of four brothers (pictured above). He came to the US from Mexico at the age of 14.

There are all kinds of older brothers—and from what I hear, some of them are a bit of a pain. I'm sorry if you have one of those, but not mine. My older brother, Alejandro, has always been there for me.

When I was in the hospital as a two-year-old child, Alejandro insisted on being by my side. Even though he was too young to read, Alejandro would pretend, pointing to the pictures and telling me the story to cheer me up.

When we were in elementary school, Alejandro was always protective of our two younger brothers and me. I remember when I was eight, some kids kept stealing my lunch money. When Alejandro found out, he gave me his money for lunch even though it meant he wouldn't eat.

When I was 14, and my mother and three brothers were crossing the desert to join our father in Arizona, it was 16-year-old Alejandro who stepped into my dad's shoes and made sure nobody was left behind. He was constantly looking back to make sure we were all okay. And when it was freezing in the desert at night, Alejandro would do exercises to increase his body heat and then wrap his arms around us to keep us warm.

When we got to the US, Alejandro had it the hardest. He wasn't a strong student, and now classes were even harder because everything was in English. And because he is the oldest son, he wanted to contribute to the family. So, when he had just turned 17, Alejandro got the only job he could: working the night shift cleaning the local mall. He would go to work at 10 p.m., get off at 6 a.m., and then have just one hr before he would need to get on the bus for school.

Despite the challenges he faced—through hard work and his skill as a builder—Alejandro established a construction company, has a wonderful wife, and, as you can imagine, is a great dad.

For my younger brothers and me, when we got DACA in 2012—the program that allows undocumented young people to get a work permit and driver's license, have a chance to go to college, and free from worrying about deportation—we felt very fortunate. But at the same time, we felt guilty because our older brother, Alejandro, could not apply. He had just turned 17 when we crossed the border, so he missed the cutoff date to participate in DACA by a few weeks. I remember him telling us when DACA was created, "Don't worry. I'm okay. I'll find a way. I worry about you guys." As I said, he has always looked out for us.

DACA still has a cutoff date at age 16, but the good news is that the age limit has been changed on the new version of the DREAM Act. For those of you who don't know what the *DREAM* Act stands for, it's "Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors" Yeah, *Alien Minors*. They're calling me an alien.

The DREAM Act would give young people brought to the US a path to citizenship. And in the new version, you only need to have crossed the border before age 18. So, for the first time, my big brother would be included—if we could get it passed.

When I had an opportunity to go to Washington DC and lobby to pass the new DREAM Act, I jumped on it. It was inspiring to be in DC surrounded by immigration rights activists from across the country. But at the same time, that old sorrow started to eat at me. Although my

older brother would be eligible if it passes, I met many amazing undocumented leaders who were willing to do civil disobedience, risk deportation, and put their bodies on the line, who would still not be eligible.

It was hard at the same time. I wanted the new DREAM Act, but it was painful sitting in on the congressional hearings and listening to politicians try to get it passed. The politicians kept referring to the "amazing DACA kids that did nothing wrong" because "it was their parents fault that they were taken across the border." They talked about all the perfect DACA kids with their 4.0 grade averages, and the amazing valedictorians.

It's true; there are kids like that in the DACA program. But I am not a 4.0 student. I wasn't the valedictorian. And more importantly, my parents were not the bad guys either. They did what good parents do to help their kids. They risked everything to make sure we had enough to eat, opportunities for education, and safety. Would you let a border that others cross daily for a vacation stop you from doing what you could to help your children survive?

The hardest part about the DREAM Act debates was listening to the politicians working out their compromises, "We will support the DREAM Act, but only if the bill includes increased border security,"—which means even more immigrants will die in the desert trying to make it to the United States. "We will support the DREAM Act, but only if the bill includes increased funding for ICE,"—which means even more hard-working parents and grandparents, who have contributed to this country for decades, will be deported. "We will support the DREAM Act, but the bill will exclude people who came after age 18,"—my aunts, uncles, parents, and grandparents. What I want if for you and others to think of the stories I told about my big brother Alejandro. Him giving me his lunch money, keeping me warm in the desert, working the night shift in high school to help support our family, and crawling into bed with me at the hospital. This is the love he modeled for me. This care, concern, and kindness, he showed me is what we do for each other—not just for our blood brothers, but all our sisters and brothers in the struggle. So, to be honest, it is hard for me to push for a DREAM Act if the compromise package means a nightmare for other undocumented brothers, sisters, parents, and grandparents.

Yes, I want a pathway to citizenship. I want our dreams fulfilled. But in the political compromise game, I'm not going to be your *DREAMER*. I am a *doer*. I work hard. I build things. I make things happen. And I want to do well, not just for my family, but for other hard-working families in our country too.

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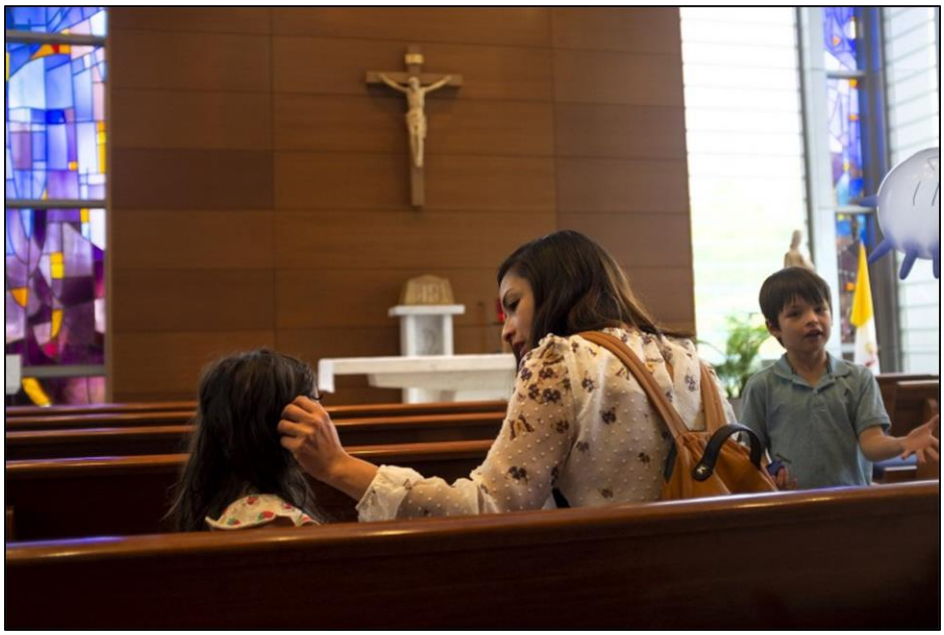
'Wandering in the Desert'

Laura Peniche
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

An open letter to my fellow Christians.



Laura Peniche is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. Originally from Mexico, Laura Peniche is a writer, director, producer, performer, and community organizer living in Denver, CO. She was a producer of the documentary film *Five Dreamers*. Her dream is to continue creating a positive impact in the community through storytelling. Laura currently works with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition as a Hotline Coordinator, documenting cases for the ICE Incident Report Hotline. She loves mountain hiking, yoga, and playing with her children.

I need to talk to my fellow Christians — my brothers, my sisters. I know immigration is not a comfortable topic, but we need to have this conversation. Because you may not know I'm in pain right now and that you might have, perhaps without realizing it, contributed to my pain.

I share my heart, knowing that you are good people. I have seen you help out at church and the shelter and care for the elderly. I have seen you bring food to the homes of people in need. And I know that most of you don't mean for all immigrants to be deported. So I don't understand many of you support leaders who are promising to deport my mom and dad.

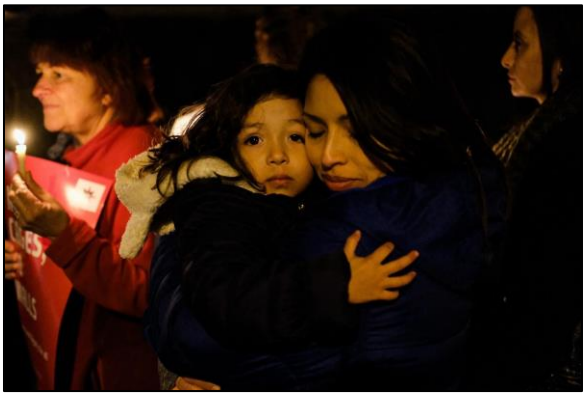
Many of my brothers and sisters of faith tell me I don't have to worry because they will be there to support me or let anybody deport me. But those same people are electing leaders who intend to separate parents from their children—deporting millions of immigrants who are just trying to support their families.

We often get disappointed by our politicians because they don't fulfill their promises. In this case, I know many Christians are counting on our elected officials not delivering on promises to deport all undocumented immigrants. But these hopes are not enough for me right now, when I'm being told that I should fill out an Emergency Plan for my children's school, so they know whom to call if ICE picks me up. The thought of this possibility is forcing my children and me to live with so much anxiety. I don't think that you want my children taken into foster care—left up for grabs to a destiny without a mother.

The New Testament teaches about a woman being killed by a mob because of her sins. But despite her transgressions, Jesus stood up for her. He challenged those who had never sinned to throw the first stone. And there was no person able to throw a stone at the woman.

Of course, many Christians feel my family, and I made a mistake by coming here undocumented. But if you know me, you know we didn't come here to cause harm, but to preserve our own lives: We were hungry, and we needed bread. We were thirsty, and we needed water. We were persecuted, and we chose life and freedom.

I want you to know, from what I have seen in my community, most people who are undocumented crossed the border, like my family, just trying to survive. We would have chosen a safe and legal path if there had been another one. Instead, we wander in the freezing nights of the desert with cacti and thorns digging into our feet. threats of robbers and smugglers. All this while carrying tired little children for miles and miles.

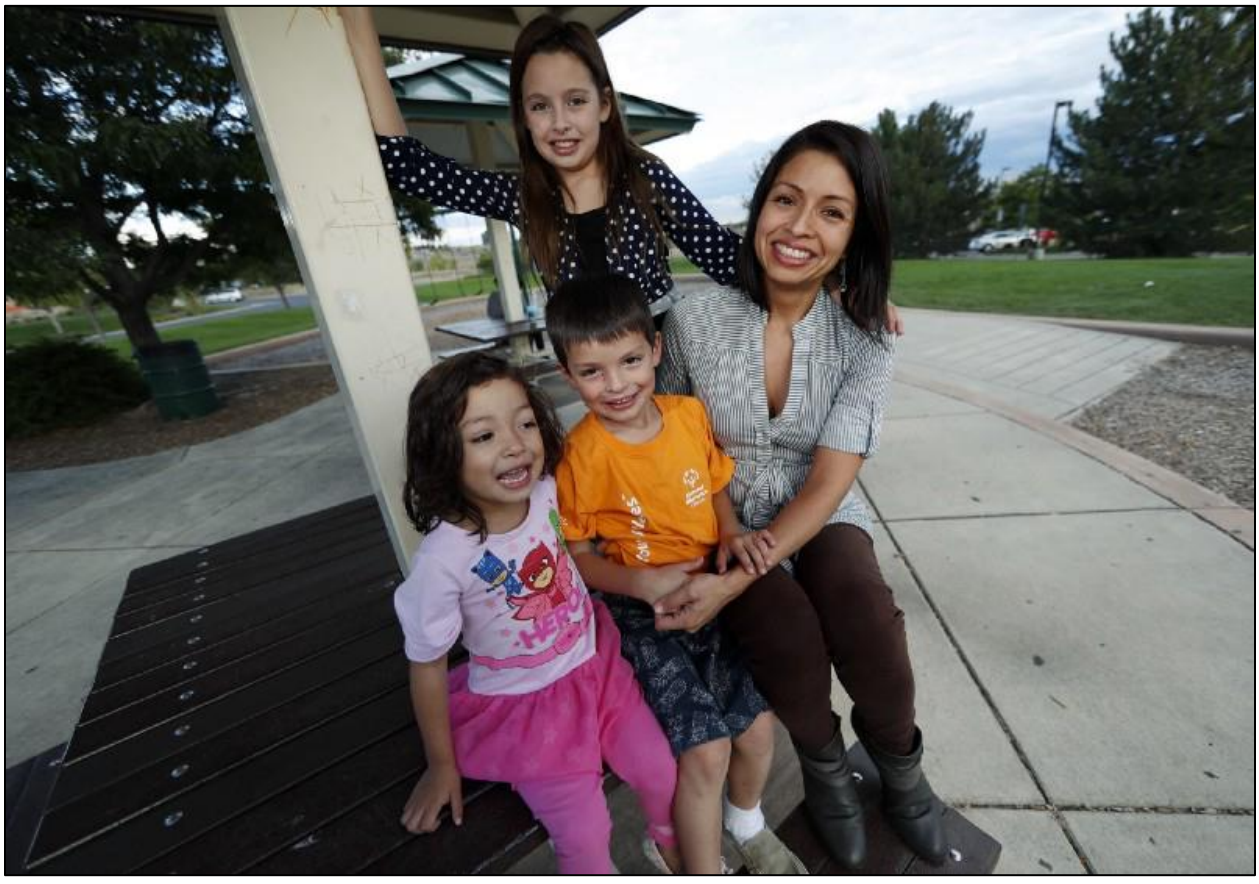


I also know from my personal experience crossing the border that my family and I were not alone. We were held by God's hand into this country. And when I see the beautiful faces of my healthy, happy children, I know that I was meant to be here, and I am so grateful to be part of my community and our country.

I write you because I cannot sit in silence with you at church, or in my faith, while watching my friends and family get deported across the desert we risked everything to cross; called harmful names; told we can live in the shadows and pick the fruit, but cannot eat the fruit; told that because we were born in another country, despite being raised here, we cannot sit at the table together with other Americans; and told that this country would not accept us, no matter how hard we work, no matter how much we give. There are too many families suffering and being separated. Too many refugees in this country are being sent back to their deaths. Many of us are devastated by the pressing circumstances around us: watching the little children in cages, exposed to abuse; the teargas in the eyes of mothers and fathers; the realization that at any moment, our beautiful life, as we know it, could be over.

I find guidance in teaching Jesus and how he stood up in front of the mob to save a life. I pray my fellow Christians will stand with me against cruel immigration policies. And help me save the lives of my family, friends, and other parents who are trying to provide for their children. If you believe in Jesus, you know that Jesus loves you. So when you think of my children, my family, and the undocumented immigrants in this country, please remember His commandment to love one another the way he loves us.

Everyone makes mistakes. I have. You have. And I believe our leaders have too. But we can learn from our mistakes and stand together in God's love.



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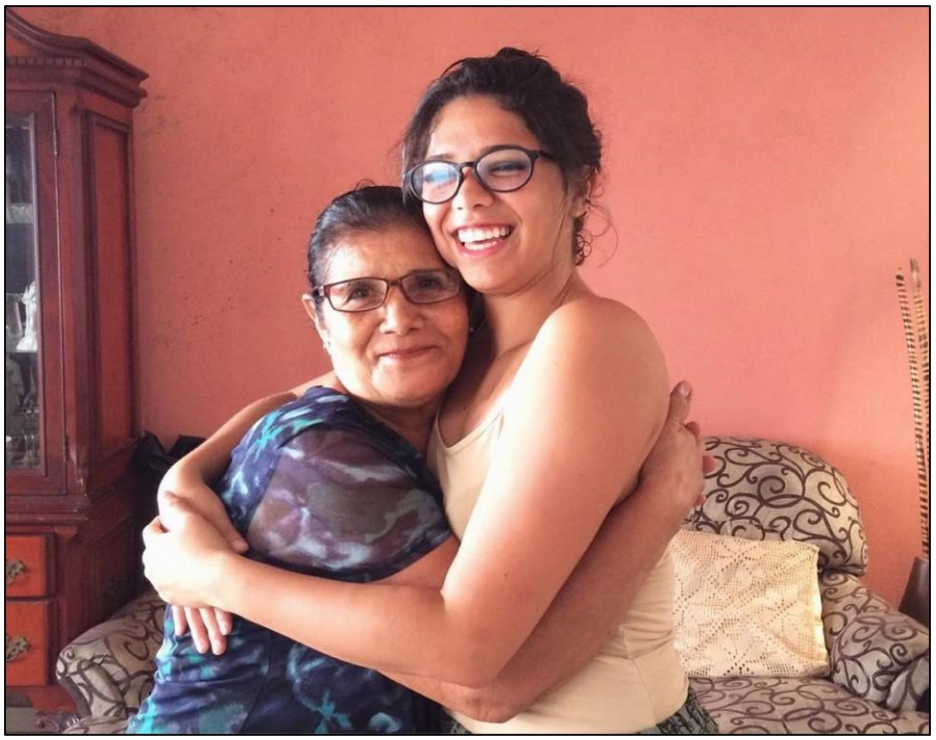
Returning Home

Kiara Chávez
Motus Theater

A story of one young woman's battle against invisible borders in her journey toward who she is and loves.



Kiara Chávez graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder's business school with a marketing degree. While at CU, she founded the Latin Arts Society, whose mission is to celebrate Latin heritage through art, to lessen the impact of culture shock experienced by students of color. Her experience as an immigrant with DACA has fueled her passion for social justice. And she is now the is the Motus Theater's Community Development & Marketing Coordinator.

The longest plane ride of my life was for a trip to Mexico when I was 19—about four years ago.

I don't remember packing. I don't remember the drive to the airport. I don't remember much about all the forms I had to fill out or how much my family had to pay to apply for Advance Parole—the program that used to allow DACA recipients to leave the country for study abroad, employment, or, as in my case, a humanitarian reason. My grandma was having surgery, and she needed someone who could care for her as she recovered.

I don't even remember much about the conversations with my worried parents about the dangers of me traveling. You see, although Advance Parole granted me permission from the US government to lawfully leave the country, it didn't actually guarantee I would be let back in. Spoiler alert—I made it back.

What I remember most is being on the plane because I'll never forget how my heart beat faster the closer we got to take off. The plane was going to Puerto Vallarta. I'm actually from Colima, but they don't have a direct flight from Denver, and this is one of the closest airports. So, you can imagine, I was surrounded by American tourists ready for vacation. Meanwhile, I sat there just about vibrating from nervousness or excitement; I'm not sure which. Either way, I just wanted to vomit, but luckily for the tourists on that flight, the knot growing in my throat kept holding it down.

Other people on the plane were chatting, making last-minute calls, and getting out their reading material. While I was having a complete nervous breakdown—my hands sweating, my breathing fast, my whole body shaking.

When I finally heard the pilot say we were heading out and the plane began to move, my mind started racing. I couldn't stop thinking about what my life had consisted of the past 15 years since I crossed the border at age four and left my first home.

All the nights as a child crying in my parent's arms asking, "Why can't I go back and see my family? Why Mama? Why?"

All the calls to my grandmas, and the long kisses I would send them over the phone—hoping they would somehow reach them all the way from Denver to Colima.

All the pictures of the beaches, my grandparents, and the aunts and uncles who I once knew so well. They are getting older photograph by photograph and having an entirely different life without me.

As a child, I didn't understand why I couldn't go to Mexico, and still, I trusted that it was something I simply couldn't do. But now, somehow, at age 19, I was returning—and my heart was just about to burst.

I remember when the plane finally sped across the runway and lifted off into the air. I began crying with abandon as if I was totally alone—just me launching into flight, somehow through both space and time. In my head, I kept hearing my grandmas' voices, the way they used to soothe me over the phone when I was little, "*Mija, please don't cry. God-willing, we will hold one another soon. Please don't cry anymore*." Those phone calls were so painful because I could hear them, but I couldn't hold them. Touch them. Smell their hair.

My older sister could go to Mexico. She is an American citizen who was born in the US when my father was working in

California. Every few years during our childhood, she would get on a plane to Mexico and return with sweets from my aunt's candy store and a collection of photos of her smiling next to my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins whom I had never met. But I simply could not return. That was the rule because I was born in Mexico.

My sister could enroll in the best private schools in Denver and attend on scholarship. I was smart too and tested in as well. Still, I couldn't go because, as an undocumented person, I wasn't eligible for financial aid, and there was no way my parents could afford the tuition.

My high school classmates could fly to Europe and study the art I loved and strived to imitate with my own brush. But I couldn't join them to see the frescos and the ancient columns myself because another DACA student had tried, and they didn't let her back into the country. Instead, she and her whole family were deported.

I had spent my whole life reconciling myself to the solidity of barriers between me and my dreams and the invisible borders between me and what I loved. But now, suddenly, I was flying over 500 miles an hour straight through the biggest and most painful barrier of them all: between me and my family.

I just kept thinking, "*Is this real life? It can't be. Can I actually believe this is true — when so many of my dreams have been thwarted at the last minute? Is it really true that I'll be landing in Mexico and seeing my family? It can't be*."

But now, for the first time on that plane, I could see it was actually coming true. I was sobbing again like my four-year-old self, picturing my grandmas, thinking, "*I am making it to their arms, and they are still alive. We are alive*."

Midway through the flight, still shaking, I became aware that others were still on the plane. I managed to wipe my tears and smile, finally excited. I laughed at myself, thinking, "*Wow, they must think I'm crazy or really scared of flying*."

But how could they ever understand the magnitude of this moment in my life? I'm fulfilling the American immigrant's dream. My dream. I'm seeing my family after 15 years. And I wanted to yell it across the aisles and tell the whole plane what a triumphant day they were apart of—"It's real. It's real! I am returning to see my family—meet my family. The lineage of people whose love and existence have filled my veins with blood and my belly with culture. I'm going to step my feet on the dirt I was molded from and breathe the humid air my lungs were meant to breathe. I am fulfilling the prophecy my mom commenced when she threw my umbilical cord on top of the house that my father and my grandfather built because she believed it would one day bring me back home. I, Kiara Jocelyn Chávez Garcia, am returning home. I am returning to myself."

On that long ride back to Colima, for those hours of anticipation, my dreams were finally in my own hands. I could touch them. Feel them. Smell them. The years of pain and rejection hardly mattered as the millions of kisses I had sent that way were finally coming in for a landing.

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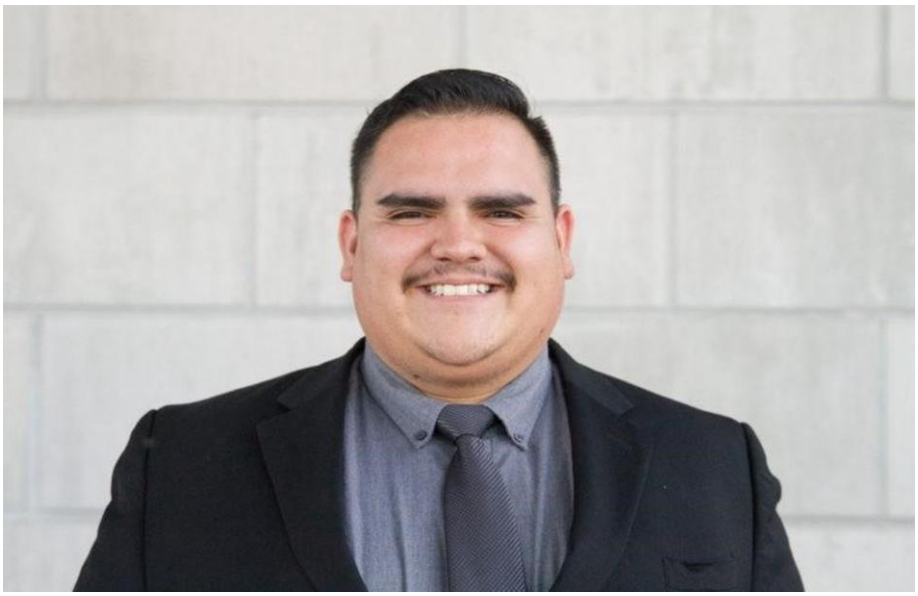
Checkpoint at Fantasyland

Victor Galvan
United for a New Economy

A story of perseverance behind the battle cry of an immigrant rights leader.



Victor Galvan is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. He is a Rocky Mountain native, born in Chihuahua, Mexico. After spending eight years at the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, he is now the Political Field Director at United for a New Economy. This grassroots organization focuses on economic justice on the local and state levels. Prior coalition work includes leading campaigns that targeted low propensity voters of color throughout Colorado and informing them of their rights to vote. He also organized and engaged undocumented persons with post-election legislation. These efforts resulted in Colorado state victories such as ASSET, the Law Enforcement and Community Trust Act, and access to driver's licenses.

I am a 29-year-old DACA recipient who has lived in Colorado since I was eight-months-old—long enough to see four different names on the Broncos Stadium!

My dream has always been that I would become a citizen and then, eventually, serve my country as a congressional representative. But right now, the whole idea of dreams feels like a forgotten luxury. And to be honest, I'm scared. I'm scared that I will be kicked out of the country in which I've lived my entire life. And I'm afraid if I'm deported, my roots may not take in the place they send me.

That is not easy to admit because I am an immigrant rights leader—and my battle cry is, and has always been, that "I am undocumented and unafraid!"

Every few months, there's another announcement from the attorney general or the Department of "Justice," and yet another attack on the undocumented community. The phone just keeps ringing in my office with terrified people seeking help.

Not long ago, a father was picked up at his home under Colorado's order of removal. Within 36 hours—before we could really organize resistance—he had been moved to Texas and then to New Mexico. Once in New Mexico, they forced him to sign a "voluntary departure." I saw the paper he signed, and it was grotesque. It was completely crumpled. There were scribble lines all over it. I don't know what they did to him, but he is not the kind of man who would have left his wife and four children without a fight. And looking at that broken signature, I fear that a fight—with a few detention guards—is exactly what they gave him.

The hardest thing is that these deportations and human rights abuses are being done on such a massive level that the individual starts to bleed into the abyss, and each unique case ceases to matter. And that hurts, because each one is a very real person, with real dreams, like me: I am here. I am brave. I am funny. I care. Is it okay to tear me out of my bed and away from my family in the middle of the night? Are you going to believe I'm scum that doesn't deserve compassion?

When I was a kid growing up in Colorado, I was told, "You can be anything you want to be if you work hard enough. Dream. Dream big!" What they didn't tell me was that there is an immigration checkpoint at the gate to "fantasyland." I'm trying not to let my hopes and dreams fizzle away with the current [Trump] administration attacks. I'm afraid there are fights we have yet to see that are far scarier, more effective, and better-funded even than this. So, I'm going to share a political anecdote that has kept me going.

During the 2018 election, my work was to get out the vote. It was hard. People of color were afraid their vote wouldn't count, or they would be disenfranchised. In the news, we watched situations like Georgia, where the secretary of state, who was running for governor, literally took half a million people off the rolls.

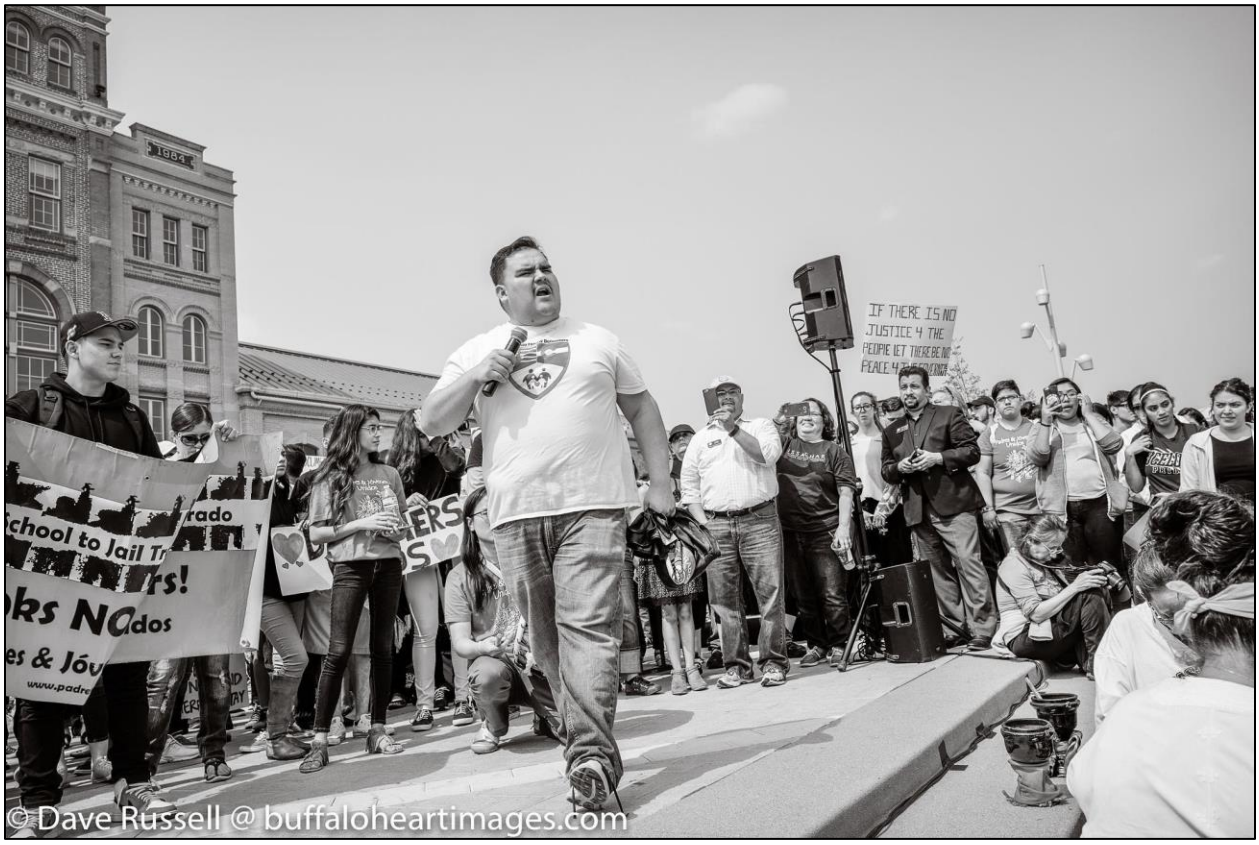
And yet, here in Colorado, we were able to turn out people of color, especially Latinx. That made a difference locally and across the country—an unprecedented number of people of color and women in office. That shift in representation is important. It shows we are changing things if we actually raise our voice; if we actually come out and say what flew as the status quo before doesn't fly anymore. Right? If you shut doors in our face, we will pry them

open ourselves.

Ocasio-Cortez had nothing in the way of media or money when she took on a ten-term incumbent congressman. She ran her campaign out of the restaurant where she waited tables—a woman whose mother cleaned houses and drove a school bus. But she won on a platform of Medicaid for all, Federal job guarantee, a Green New Deal, free public college, a 70 % marginal tax rate for incomes above 10 million, Criminal Justice Reform, and abolishing U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. A young woman of color from the Bronx, playing a rich man's game with the odds stacked against her, and she beat her chest and said, "Yeah, I'm gonna' do this!"

And that inspires me because that's our story. That's my story. You tell me I can't, and I will anyway! I don't care what you think or if this system is rigged against us. When you ask me to dream big, I take that to heart because that is what I think America is supposed to be about. And I'm worth it. I do matter.

My name is Victor Uriel Galvan Ramirez. I am undocumented and afraid. But I'm not giving up. You can write me in for Congress.



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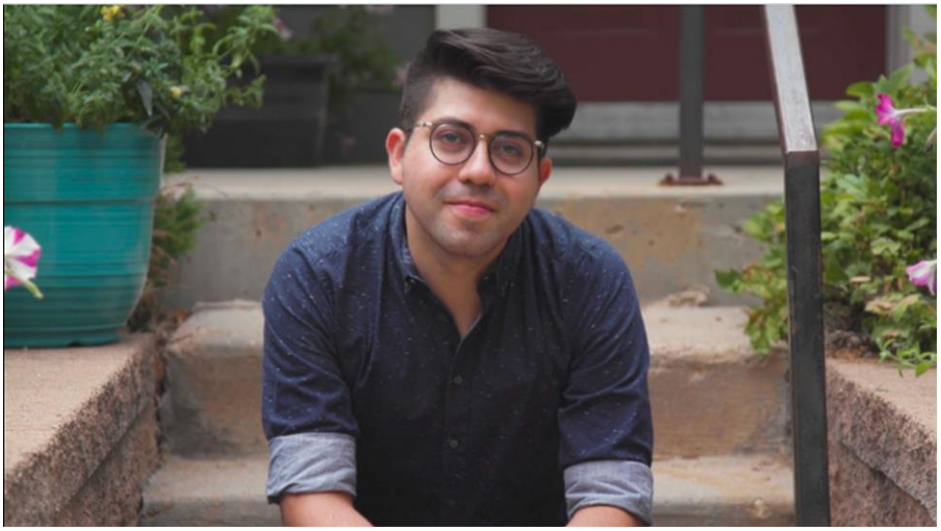
The Meaning of Courage

Cristian Solano-Córdova
Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist

A story of enduring courage in the journey across the border, through threats, and towards liberty.



Cristian Solano-Córdova is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. He is the Communications Director with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition. He is a Denver native, born in Chihuahua, Mexico. He began working for the immigrant community in 2015 when he ran and won an election to become the Student Body President at Metropolitan State University at Denver. Cristian is a proud DACA recipient and hopes to continue his education and one-day work in health policy advocacy.

When I was my sister's age, 10 years old this year, I didn't have many worries. It's funny because my baby sister D'naayi is an American citizen, so it should be easier for her. But it's not. It's not right now because the people she loves most—my mom, our other sister Beba and I—are all undocumented.

When we are threatened, she is threatened. My baby sister is forced to bear the burden of attacks on immigrants under the current administration.

I remember election night 2016. My mom and I were in complete shock, trying to absorb what had just happened to the country, trying to strategize about handling certain possibilities.

I remember frantically googling, "What happens to a US citizen child if an undocumented parent is deported?"

My dad died young, so I needed to assure myself that if my mom were deported, I could get custody of Dnaayi, who at that time was only eight. But then, of course, what would happen if Beba and I were both deported?

My mom and I totally lost track of time during our election night panic, so when hours later, I came downstairs, I was surprised to find my baby sister, D'naayi, wide awake, sitting in a corner by herself, crying. Red-faced, with puffy eyes.

With my dad gone, I've always had to be the big brother—or rather father figure—since my mom was always working. I help D'naayi with her homework; we read each other bedtime stories, play games. I answer those unanswerable kinds of kid questions and comfort her when she is scared. But I'm not used to trying to comfort her when, in reality, I needed so much comforting myself.

I remember tilting her chin, which was glistening with streams of tears toward me, and looking into those deep brown eyes, trying my best to give her soothing answers to her questions and repeatedly say,

Don't cry. Baby, don't cry. It's going to be okay, I promise. It's going to be okay. Listen… why would you be deported? Do you even know what that word means? You shouldn't have to.

Listen to me. You are an American citizen. You will never be deported… You're right. I'm not a citizen, but I've got DACA. They can't deport me… I know mom doesn't, but mom is going to be okay. She has lived here for decades. She is not going anywhere.

Baby, don't cry. Please.

I promise, whatever happens, we'll be together. Always. I'll be there to put band-aids on your scraped knees. I'll be there to help you with your school projects. Yes, we're going to finish reading Harry Potter *together. And I'll be by your side when you need help applying for college. I'll be there for you when you fall in love for your first time when your heart is broken. I'll walk you down the aisle one day. It really doesn't matter where we'll be as long as we're together… And yes, of course, the puppy is coming with us if we go—Lulu is part of this family too, I'll have you know.*

Yeah, that's the dimply smile I like to see. It's going to be okay.

At least that's what I told her. I did my best to offer her what I wanted to hear, what I wanted to believe for her and our entire

family. How do you talk to a child about being taken away from their parent or siblings without terrorizing and stripping them of their innocence?

With each day of the Trump administration, the increased deportations of parents like my mom, the attempts to end the DACA program that protects me and my sister Beba, and the willingness to end rules that limit how long children can be detained, even threats to strip children, like D'naayi, of their citizenship; and all the mounting threats, it feels increasingly cruel to offer my little sister a fairytale when she might need great strength to overcome great threats.

So tonight, I offer her, and you, another story. This story won't kiss it and make it all better—but I'm hoping it will help us stay strong regardless of the challenges we might face.

***

I was three years old, and my sister Beba was just one when we crossed the border with my mom. We walked together with a group of people, maybe 10 to 15, across the desert. We walked for hours and hours at night. I remember we were out in the middle of nowhere following a dim silver light in the distance. I imagined we followed it because it meant we're going the right way, some shining city in the distance.

We finally got to a raised road lined with streetlamps. To avoid walking over the road that night and potentially being seen, we crossed through a drainage tunnel under the road. Mom had me walk through the tunnel in front of her, and she crawled behind with my sister in her shawl.

Beba and I were wearing those little kids light up shoes that everyone was going crazy over that year. Mom had saved up a lot of money to buy them because we would be seeing our dad after a year of him being in the US on his own, and she wanted us to look our best. The shoes were super helpful in the drainage tunnel to light a way for mom and all the people crawling through on their hands and knees. But of course, in the dead of night, they were a dead giveaway.

When we were finally able to see the moonlight at the end of the tunnel and catch a whiff of fresh air, the coyotes urgently requested that my mom take off my shoes. "There's a Border Patrol car parked outside," the coyote whispered.

The drainage tunnel emptied out right next to a gas station, where the Border Patrol car was parked. The officers were inside, we assumed, so we waited for a while, hoping they would return to their car and drive away. But no one was coming out. For some reason, the coyotes grew impatient and abruptly told everyone to move.

In the chaos, everybody immediately scrambled, crawling behind tall grass on their hands and knees as the coyotes gave us voiceless commands by covering their lips with their fingers and pointing to the ground.

But the ground was covered in cactus thorns and prickles, and I didn't have any shoes. While everyone crawled, my mom stood up, carrying both Beba and me in her arms, and she just started walking.

At first, I thought she was giving up because we would surely be seen. Everyone else was still crawling on the ground, but she stood up tall and walked with a defiant pep in her step as if she belonged right there where she stood. That's when I realized she hadn't given up. She just had faith that walking quickly and quietly was her best

strategy to protect us. She was resolved that somehow, somewhere, we would be okay and that we would find a home where our family could thrive.

I have never forgotten the look on my mom's face as she walked down the street and out into the dark of an unknown country. When I first learned that the real meaning of courage is not to pretend to be immune from fear but rather to take action calmly and steadily despite it.

Our current president might caricature my little three-year-old self as a diseased-toddler-criminal-murderer-rapist-gang-member in the making. He might try to scare people who don't know undocumented immigrants into thinking that a mother carrying her children to safety is nothing less than an invasion. But Beba and I grew up beloved by our friends and neighbors and are strong members of our communities. We both went to college. I even became the student body president of my university. I'm not part of some invading army fighting against America, but I'm fighting for the American ideals I think we can live up to like many of you.

The president may want to take away my baby sister's right to citizenship. Still, I remain hopeful that maybe D'naayi or some other young girl might be our future president. She may help lead us to a future where we live up to our ideals to truly have liberty and justice for all.

But that will take a lot of hard work and not just on my part, or only on the part of the immigrant community, but hard work on your part. As Anne Frank once wrote in her famous diary, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

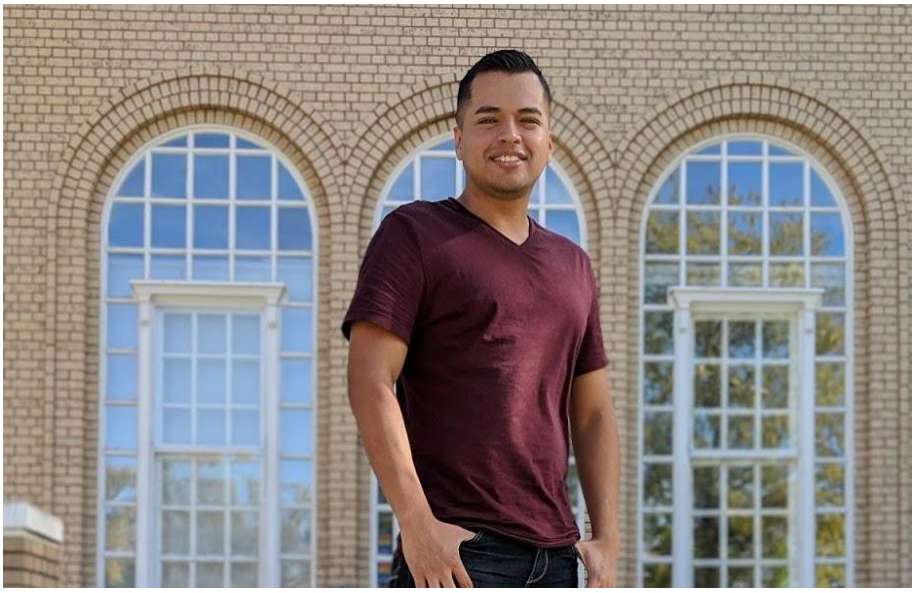
Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

The Official Journal of The White Privilege Conference and The Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion.

This Beautiful Dark Brown Skin

Armando Peniche
Denver Public Libraries

A story of racial profiling experienced by a 12-year-old boy, and the danger of slanderous rhetoric to an undocumented man and his American son.



Armando Peniche is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. He is a Library Program Associate with Denver Public Libraries. Before DACA became a reality, Armando came out about his status, telling his story on camera for the short documentary film *No One Shall Be Called Illegal*. It premiered at the 2011 Denver Film Festival. He currently runs his own initiative called Leamos Juntos. It provides local businesses with books for children to read while at their establishments, nurturing a reading habit for families.

Like many Latinx, I have a huge family. Unfortunately, I never get to see most of them because they are on the other side of the US border with Mexico. My family in the US, I can count on my fingers: a few uncles, my dad, and my brother and sisters.

Thankfully, I've always been fortunate to have wonderful friends whom I see as my family. That's why in the seventh-grade when my dad decided to move us to a different neighborhood, I chose to remain in the same middle school to stay with my old friends.

Hanging out with my friends during lunch and sitting next to my secret crush in math class seemed like a no brainer, but it made my trip to school a long one. I had my routine down though: wake up at 5:30 a.m., catch the first bus at 6:15, and arrive at the second bus stop at 6:45, hoping I didn't have to chase after the bus. If I made it to the corner of Kentucky and Federal by 7:15 a.m., I was good. I could take a deep breath.

This meant I had time to stop at the convenience store and grab a cup of hot cocoa; maybe play a couple of arcade games before school. Talk about a warm-up—I'm winning against hordes of zombies before even starting my school day. Yep, no pop-quiz was even better than that.

After school, on nice days, I would skip the second bus and just walk. My dad would still be at work when I came home, and my sister at her after-school activities, so I was in no hurry to get to an empty house. On my way home, I would use the concrete dividers on the sidewalk as measures and take the time to practice my music lessons for cello. Each step I made on the sidewalk was a note. I would walk and count, *1–2–3–4*. For longer sections, I would count, *1…2…3…4*. For shorter sections, *1-2-3-4*. I had my music teacher in my head telling me, "*Come on, Armando, stay on the beat, stay on the beat*."

So, one day, I'm happily counting along, looking down at my concrete measures when I see blue and red lights flashing across the sidewalk, and I hear an angry voice yelling at me, "Stop. Freeze."

I was totally confused. I might fight video game zombies, but I was just a kid—barely old enough to sit in the front seat of a car, and here are two police officers coming at me, hands on their guns, yelling. I was freaking out, like—"*What did I do wrong?*" My mind was going through a mess of different emotions. Because, as an undocumented person, the last thing you want to do—the very, very, very last thing—is to get in trouble. Even a simple traffic violation can lead to deportation.

So, I'm thinking, "*What did I do? What could it have been? Did I forget to pay the bus driver?*" But no way. I remembered paying David. He gave me a transfer. And he would never call the cops even if I did forget.

The officers were yelling at me to turn around and put my hands up. I struggled to understand what was going on when the second officer physically spun me around, stuck his hands into my pockets, and started pulling everything out: my gum, the coins left from the arcade, my bus transfer, my student I.D. He yanked my arms tight behind my back and handcuffed me.

I was in shock, confused, and terrified. And then, with some kind of kid logic, I thought, "*Is it my hair?*" My family didn't have money for regular haircuts, so I cut my hair. Which, as you can imagine with a 12-year-old, didn't work out so well. I would

always end up using the number four clipper to get rid of the patches. At least it was even! "*No*," I thought, "*it can't be my hair*."

Then, they searched every pocket in my backpack, dumping out my schoolbooks. They were looking for something they couldn't find, and that's when it hit me—"*They stopped me because of the color of my skin. They think I'm some criminal. I can't believe they're doing this. What if they take me to jail and my dad has to come and get me? Will he need an I.D.? Could they deport my dad?*"

The officers pushed me down, grabbed my student I.D., and went back to their car, leaving me on the street handcuffed. It took about 20 minutes to run my I.D. through some database. And while I sat on that curb, all these cars were going by with people looking and pointing at me like I stole something or robbed somebody. They assumed the officers were making the city safer for them—stopping a thief. I'm a kid in handcuffs sitting on the curb, and I wanted to get up and yell, *"STOP! I'm the victim here! I didn't do anything! Let me go! I'm innocent! I didn't do anything! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!!!*"

And I can't explain to you, even now, how humiliated and ashamed I felt sitting there with everyone going by pointing and looking at me, thinking I was some criminal.

Finally, the officers came out of their car, threw my stuff into my backpack, and uncuffed me. One officer handed me my I.D. and said the most ironic thing I've ever heard, "Stay out of trouble." No apology. Nothing. When all along, I wasn't the trouble, they were.

I remember it taking me a long time to pull myself together—to even figure out which way was home. But I did make it home, and like many other days, there was no one there. No one I could talk to. Instinctively, I grabbed my soccer ball and went to an elementary school a few blocks away, where I often played. There was no field, but there was a baseball cage where I would sometimes practice my shots. I stayed there until evening, kicking the soccer ball over and over and over against the metal cage, taking out my anger and shame on that ball until my foot couldn't take the pain anymore.

I often wonder, how many other brown and black kids go through this stuff? Pulled over, harassed by the police with no way to channel the fear, anger, and humiliation. How many undocumented kids go through this stuff and have no one at home to talk to? No shoulder to cry on. No soccer ball. Because we start to serve a life sentence away from our families as soon as we cross that border.

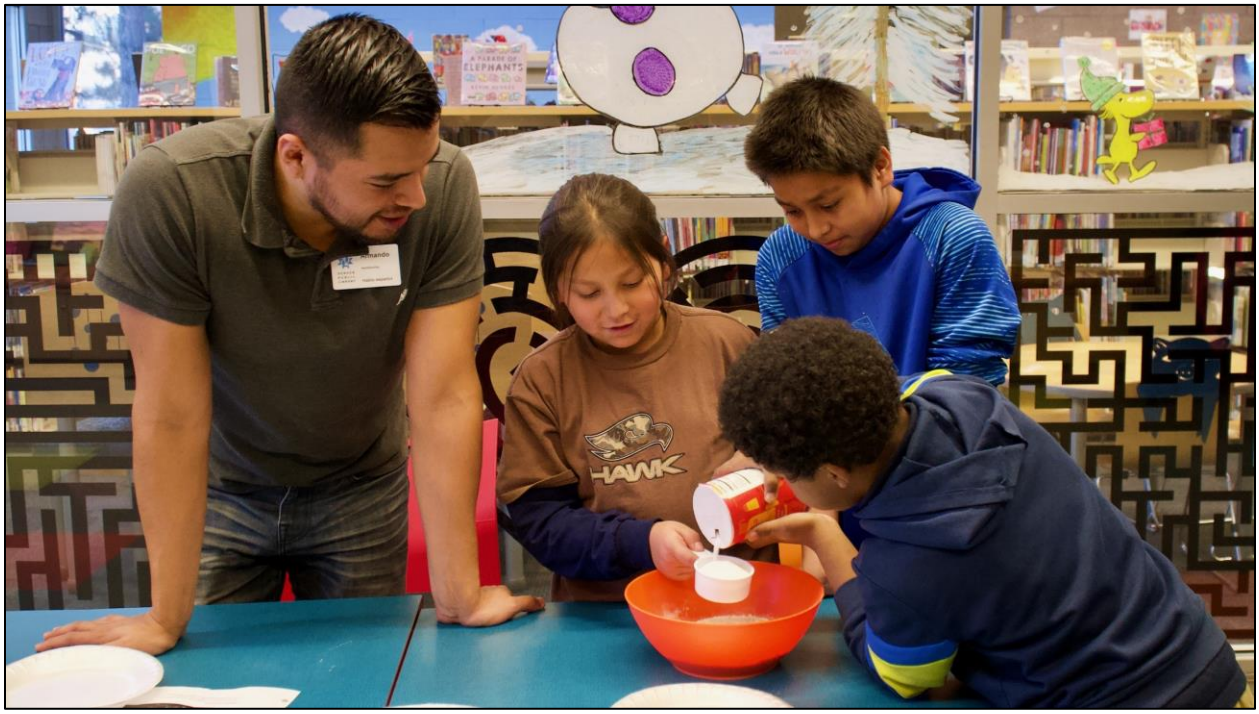
I am a man now, watching another man, our president [Trump], tell the citizens of this country that if you're an undocumented Mexican, you must be in a dangerous gang, a rapist, a murderer. Can I be safe walking home from my job at the library when more and more Americans view people who look at me as a threat? Even more importantly, is my nine-year-old son going to look like a bad guy to a couple of cops? Will my neighbors see me for who I am—a young father hurrying to pick up his son from school so that he doesn't have to walk into an empty house? Or will they see me as their worst nightmare? Like some zombie that must be stopped.

And this beautiful dark skin you see that people are being taught is a threat to this country is the rich, brown tone I inherited from my grandfather. And let me tell you,

my grandfather is the best person I've ever known. No matter how poor he was, he would always house and feed people. Before he turned to religion, he was so patriotic that when the national anthem was played on the radio, he would stand up. And he loved his grandkids so much too. He would wake up extra early and walk miles to a place in Mexico that gave out free milk at five in the morning. So despite our poverty, we had what we needed to grow strong.

Across that invisible border, my grandfather is the person I've missed the most. And because I'm undocumented, I never got the chance to go back and say goodbye to him.

So when you see someone with this beautiful, dark, brown skin walking down the street, I hope you think of my strong, kind-hearted, Mexican grandfather. And I hope you will think of me. And I hope you think of my beautiful son and help me to keep him safe.



Note. José Andrés preparing to read the story of Alejandro Fuentes-Mena for the podcast *Shoebox Stories*.

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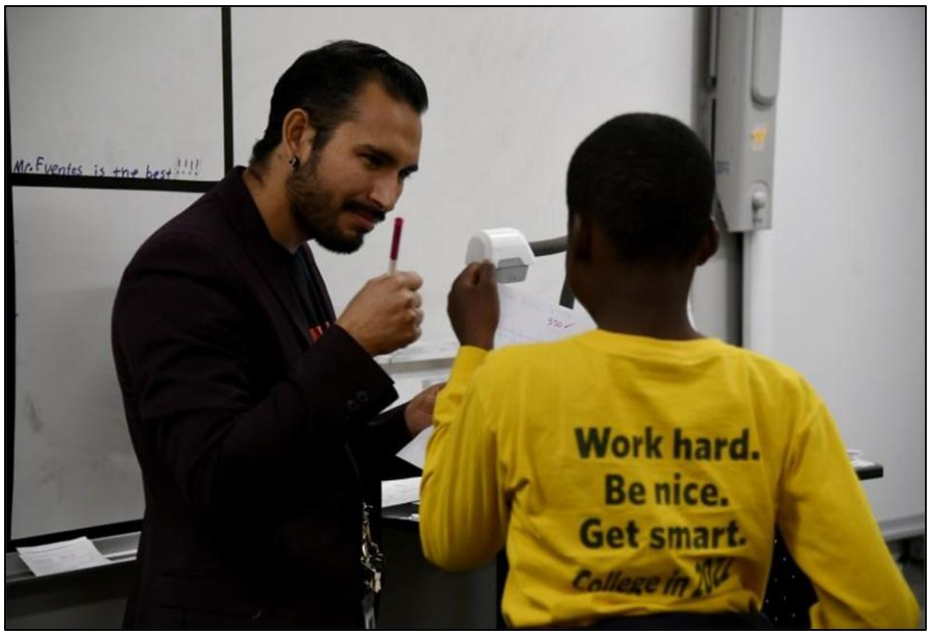
Deport Me

Alejandro Fuentes-Mena
DACAmented Teacher

A story of hard work, familial love, and one man's journey to becoming one of the first two DACAmented teachers in the country.



Alejandro Fuentes-Mena is a Motus Theater UndocuAmerica Monologist. He was born in Valparaiso, Chile and grew up in San Diego, CA after the age of four. He received a BA in Psychology from Whitman College in Walla Walla, WA. Through Teach for America, Alejandro was one of the first two DACAmented teachers in the entire nation and is now completing his seventh year of teaching in the far northeast of Denver.

I was just a kid when I realized what being undocumented meant. At age eight, I started going to work with my dad to help him rebuild the entire outside of other people's homes, all the while not having a real home of our own. I would help my dad research what to charge and work out all the math. For example, I would discover that for one given job, contractors would charge $20,000. But my dad had been screwed over so many times that he would only charge $15,000. Clients would see his strength in Spanish, his lack of English and documented status, and give him about $10,000. And that is who my father believed he was: half the man I thought he was, half the value of any other.

I witnessed as my mother would leave for an entire weekend, 72 hours, to take care of someone else's family. She was lured with the promise of being paid over $300 for the weekend, but she would come back with only $100 in her pocket. One-hundred dollars that she saw as a blessing. One-hundred dollars that I saw as an attack on our family.

All those rich families saw little value in everything my mom did. They would take her away only to use her and spit her out. The money they paid was barely enough to put food on the table. It didn't cover the worry my mom had because she couldn't be home to take care of us when we were sick, help us with homework, and comfort us when we returned to an empty house. One-hundred dollars for a whole weekend away from her family—like she was worthless. But don't you understand? She was priceless to me!

Well, spending my weekends without my mom as she cared for other people's children, and spending those weekends working for my dad for free so he wouldn't lose money for the privilege of building a home for someone else's family. And, witnessing this over and over and over again, I began to think that I wasn't worth much either. Despite the fact that I had been recognized at school as "Gifted and Talented." Despite the fact that I was a math whiz; learned English, a completely unknown language, in less than a year; and that I was an engaged student. Despite the fact, I was the precocious worship leader at my church. I let those weekends of feeling worthless affect me.

I began making jokes rather than making plans for my future. Playing games rather than paying attention. Chasing girls rather than chasing my dreams. And, like all self-fulfilling prophecies, I got to the point where my grades reflected what society said my parents and I were worth: half-priced human beings.

But luckily, I had a teacher named Ms. Kovacic, who worked hard to remind me of my value and helped convince me that what this society was telling my family and me was wrong. With her support, and that of many others, I got myself out of that pit of self-deprecation –past the insecurities, past the hate, past the negativity, past that half version of me– and into a good college and the position where I am now, an educator who teaches math. And like my mentors, I teach young children their value –because all children are valuable, just as you and I are valuable.

As a teacher, I can't help myself. Let me take you to school for a few moments. I hope you're good with that? Let's start with a little math lesson: My father is one man, one of the hardest workers I know. My mother is one woman, one of the strongest and most compassionate individuals in my life. My sister is one daughter, a brat, but a

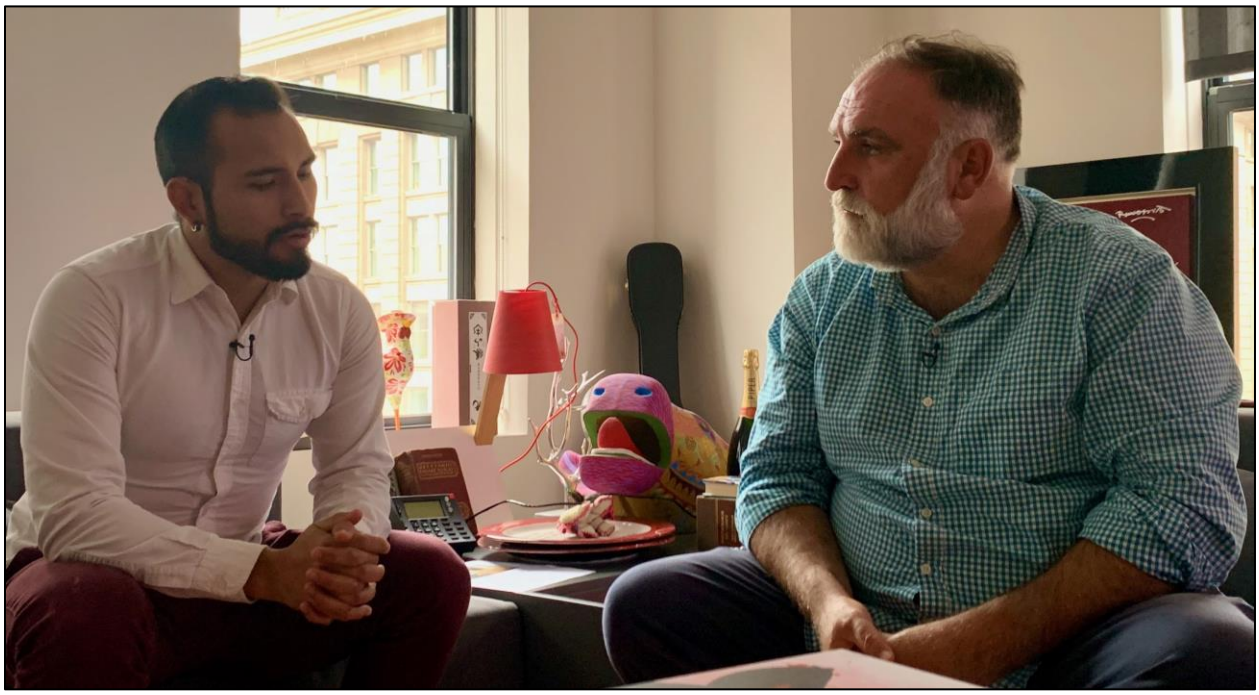
lovable one, and an American citizen. I am one son, half of this country and half of Chile. And we are four whole, beautiful gifts, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. Not the half-priced individuals that society has attempted to make us.

Moving to applied math and economics: If this country continues to deport the undocumented community, it is missing out on courageous, strong, intelligent, family-loving, hard-working people of great value. And that is not only our loss; it is your loss to miss out on us—not to mention the billions in taxes we bring in every year, which is billions more than large corporations are paying.

Lastly, moving beyond math to ethics: Paying an undocumented person half the value for their life's work; extracting all you can get to build your homes and take care of your families; and then deporting them, as if they had not brought value, is not just mathematically flawed, it is also an American math story problem gone wrong. It is criminal to treat us as subservient and less desirable.

I am living in this country undocumented, teaching your children, supporting them, engaging their minds in math and their dreams. I am 100 % here and 100 % committed to this country in which I was raised, this country that constantly seeks to spit me out. Lose me, and you lose my value –not just the money I pay in taxes and the money I pay into social security that I will never benefit from–but you lose my ability to inspire, connect, and engage. You lose my ability to bring an impact, and you lose the knowledge I bring to my students, who are your children. This country would be foolish to lose me.

Deport me. But in the end, it's your loss.



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What Our Secondary Textbooks Miss: Infusing Mexican American History into U.S. Social Studies Curricula

Monica S. Yoo Sylvia L. Mendez Nina Ellis Frischmann Scott Noeller Dana Wallner

University of Colorado Colorado Springs

Abstract

This *Tools and Strategies* piece focuses on Mexican Americans' experience during the Chicano(a) Rights Movement. Drawing upon Culturally Relevant Education, a social justice framework (Aronson & Laughter, 2016), the authors provide a rationale for the importance of this historical topic and suggest teaching ideas through a lesson series WebQuest. In the lesson series, teachers and students compare the rhetoric of César Chávez and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. Students then can apply the learning from the lessons to an issue about which they are passionate. The aim is for educators to use this piece to become informed about relevant historical issues and take up key elements from the lesson series.

Keywords: culturally relevant education; secondary students; social studies; Mexican Americans; civil rights; lesson plan; Web resources; Chicano Civil Rights Movement

Monica S. Yoo, PhD, is an associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at UCCS. Her research interests in language and academic literacy, including the development and connection of secondary students reading and writing. Department Chair and Professor for Leadership, Research, and Foundations at UCCS Dr. Sylvia Mendez centers her research on Mexican descent youth's schooling experiences and teaches university courses on elementary education and educational leadership. Nina Ellis Frischmann, MA, PhD, teaches in the history and humanities departments of secondary and post-secondary educational institutes. She studies ways to create teaching techniques to meet the needs of various learning styles. Writer Scott Noeller is from the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and has a background in examining education. Lastly, Dana Wallner, PhD, has a history of research in national and state educational policy and reform and discrepancies between students in academic opportunities, accessibility, readiness, and placement.

This Tools and Strategies piece in *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege* provides (a) a focus on the activism of the Chicano/a Civil Rights Movement while highlighting the voices of two Chicano leaders, César Chávez and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales; (b) the topic's relationship to Culturally Relevant Education (CRE); (c) a series of interrelated lessons on the topic; and (d) an accompanying WebQuest (http://questgarden.com/194/54/9/170531101714/) for educators interested in utilizing web resources to teach this content. Dodge (n.d.) defines a *WebQuest* as "an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web" (para. 3). The ideas and resources in this article and the WebQuest can be linked as a mini-unit or divided to supplement a secondary social studies curriculum. Teachers and students are asked to explore how the lessons learned from the Chicano/a Civil Rights Movement can be applied to activism today.

The Chicano/a Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement provided a national stage for Mexican Americans to confront inequalities in U.S. life (Gómez-Quiñones & Vásquez, 2014; Gutierrez, 1993; Muñoz, 2007; Rosales, 1996). With the Black Power movement on the national stage and a reclaimed Indigenous heritage and birthright to the American Southwest, Mexican Americans began to identify as Chicanos/as, demonstrating an activist and militant-minded perspective (Delgado Bernal, 1999; Gutierrez, 1993). Organizations such as the Brown Berets, the La Raza Unida Party, and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlán (MEChA) emerged due to the Chicano/a Movement. Founders of the movement include a multitude of Chicano/a leaders, such as César Chávez and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales. Chávez, along with Dolores Huerta, fought for the employment and human rights of migrant workers. At the same time, Gonzales focused on the plight of urban Chicanos/as from advocating for fair housing, medical care, culturally appropriate school practices, and Chicano/a representation in the political arena.

This activism was comprised of grassroots Chicanos/as who demanded self-determination and sought to transform American life's existing economic, political, and social institutions. They did this through educating the community on its dire state with the hope of creating a mass movement for change and activism (Acuña, 2019; Delgado Bernal, 1999; Gómez-Quiñones & Vásquez, 2014; Gutierrez, 1993; Muñoz, 2007; Rosales, 1996). Although these groups and individuals garnered national attention through their radical ideas and tactics, their measures were often rebuffed and rejected. One of the most important contributions of the Chicano/a Movement was the activists' ability to classify the Mexican American community as an "identifiable ethnic minority" (Wilson, 2003). With this new identity, political and legal recognition followed. The 1964 Civil Rights Act authorized the federal government to withhold funds from states permitting racial discrimination. Under the act *national origin*, ethnic minorities were considered a protected group, including Mexican Americans and other Latinx populations (Wilson, 2003).

Mexican American History and Culturally Relevant Education

The underpinning rationale for infusing U.S. secondary social studies curricula with this particular period of Mexican American history is to bring to light the utility of employing a social justice framework for

teaching through Culturally Relevant Education (CRE). Aronson and Laughter (2016) distilled the culturally responsive teaching scholarship of Geneva Gay (2018) and the culturally relevant pedagogy research of Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009) into CRE. They noted, "CRE represents pedagogies of oppression committed to collective empowerment and social justice" (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 164). CRE builds upon the work of Gay, Ladson-Billings, and other researchers who have been committed to the belief that schools serve as a microcosm of society—if the classroom embraces social justice means and ends, a more equitable and inclusive society will result (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Building on the work of Dover (2013), Aronson and Laughter (2016) developed four markers of CRE:

1. Culturally relevant educators use constructivist measures to develop bridges connecting students' cultural references to *academic skills and concepts*. Culturally relevant educators build on the knowledge and cultural assets students bring with them into the classroom; the culturally relevant classroom is inclusive of all students.
2. Culturally relevant educators engage students in *critical reflection* about their own lives and societies. In the classroom, culturally relevant educators use inclusive curricula and activities to support analysis of all the cultures represented.
3. Culturally relevant educators facilitate students' *cultural competence*. The culturally relevant classroom is where students learn about their own and others' cultures while developing pride in their own and others' cultures.
4. Culturally relevant educators explicitly unmask and unmake oppressive systems through the *critique of discourses of power*. Culturally relevant educators work not only in the classroom but also in the active pursuit of social justice for all members of society. (p. 167)

For reference, these markers can be shortened and abbreviated according to their main tenets as 1) academic skills and concepts (AS&C), 2) critical reflection (C.R.), 3) cultural competence (CC), and 4) critiques of discourses of power (CDP) (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p. 168).

Empirical evidence suggests that positive educational outcomes in terms of achievement, engagement, and motivation are realized by employing CRE practices in social studies curricula (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Choi, 2013; Epstein, Mayorga, & Nelson, 2011; Martell, 2013; Rodriguez, Bustamante Jones, Peng, & Park, 2004). Byrd (2016) found culturally responsive teaching practices to be significantly related to positive academic achievement. Students also reported greater feelings of belonging, interest in the subject matter, and stronger racial and ethnic identities due to a direct focus on classroom culture. One of the major inhibitors of employing CRE is the lack of diverse cultural content in school curricula (Gay, 2018), particularly Mexican American and Latinx history (Noboa, 2006; Rodriguez & Ruiz, 2000).

CRE practices ensure that all students experience a curriculum that is relevant and reflective of their lived experiences and have the opportunity to correct misinformation they receive about themselves and others (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2009). When these teaching strategies are in place, educators have the opportunity to develop

deeper relationships with students and understand the strengths they bring to their classroom. The focus on this historical period for Mexican Americans, along with lessons and applications related to the present day, allow educators to develop students' academic skills, to engage them in critical reflection, to facilitate students' cultural competence, and to require them to critique discourses of power—each of the CRE markers (Aronson & Laughter, 2016).

While the lesson content foci are on Mexican American history, the components extend beyond this ethnic group and into the larger U.S. society. In the lesson series below, the four markers of CRE—academic skills and concepts (AS&C), critical reflection (C.R.), cultural competence (CC), and critiques of discourses of power (CDP)—are integrated into essential questions with key objectives:

1. How can activism be utilized to advance democratic principles and participation?
2. What is the role of the individual within a larger social justice movement?
3. How can individuals today take on activist roles in their communities?

As educators, we hope that this lesson series' ideas and resources will provide teachers with tools to help students think through these questions. They build the four markers in a historical context, as well as with the current realities of their lives and that of society.

Chicano Movement Leaders: Exploring the Contributions of César Chávez and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales

Students will investigate key individuals in the Chicano Movement and how the United States' social and political systems may have contributed to that era's activism. Students will compare the rhetoric of César Chávez and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales by addressing how systemic discrimination influenced the migrant Chicano farmworker and the urban Chicano experience in the United States. Students also will consider how the voices of Chávez and Gonzales influenced national events in that period. They will examine multiple viewpoints behind their efforts to promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles. In doing these things, the students can reflect on their voice, values, and ideas and identify ways to take informed action.

Lesson Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify and analyze the contributions of César Chávez and Rodolfo Gonzales in relation to history and the Chicano Movement. (AS&C, CC, CDP)
2. Students will examine the chronology of events that may have influenced the activism of these leaders. (AS&C, CDP)
3. Students will identify and discuss how the activism of César Chávez and Rodolfo Gonzales affects American life today. (AS&C, C.R., CC, CDP)
4. Students will reflect on their personal identities and apply concepts of activism to a "next steps" action plan in which they will assume a role related to an issue of their choice. (AS&C, C.R., CC)

These objectives relate to the USA National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Standards listed below.

National Council for the Social Studies: Standards for High School Teachers

Standard 5. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide the study *of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions* [emphasis in original].

- Knowledge Indicator: The impact of tensions and examples of cooperation between individuals, groups, and institutions, with their different belief systems
- Knowledge Indicator: How in democratic societies, legal protections are designed to protect the rights and beliefs of minority groups.
- Process Indicator: Understand examples of tensions between belief systems and governmental actions and policies.
- Product Indicator: Discuss real-world problems and the implications of solutions for individuals, groups, and institutions.

National Council for the Social Studies: The College, Career, & Civic Life (C3) Framework Standards

Dimension 2. Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools: Civics — Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles

D2.10.9-12: Individually and with others, students analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on applying civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

Dimension 4. Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action: Taking Informed Action

D4.7.9-12: Individually and with others, students assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning

Setting Ground Rules

Prior to introducing the lesson series on the Chicano Movement Leaders**,** it would be necessary for teachers to have ground rules in place. Ground rules ensure that students know what is expected of themselves and their peers, create a safe environment for exploring ideas, support the inclusive classroom, and minimize incivility issues (Center for Teaching Innovation, n.d.). A best practice is to cooperatively create ground rules with your students at the beginning of the academic year, revisiting them regularly. Given the personal and political connections embedded in these lessons, it would be important to remind students of the ground rules—emphasizing the need to listen to and respect others' experiences and ideas.

Lesson

Personal Identity Mapping

To begin this lesson series, the teacher will ask students to map their personal identities. This will subsequently relate to the students' personal activism action plans. The teacher may want to ask: *What are the different aspects of your identity* (such as daughter, artist, animal lover)*?*

Students can answer this prompt using a brainstorm bubble or web diagram. (A sample identity mapping diagram is available via the WebQuest (http://questgarden.com/194/54/9/170531101714/.)

Students will then engage in a free write: Choose one of the aspects of your identity. Free write about how this aspect developed over time. For example, if you choose "student," think about what you were like as a younger student. Ask yourself who and what influenced you to become who you are as a student today? What was or was not important to you as a student then, and what is or is not important to you now?

After writing their responses, students will share with a partner of their choosing. If the topic is too sensitive for some, they may choose not to share. The teacher will ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

The teacher may ask students whether, in relation to any of these aspects of their identity, students ever felt the need to act, make life changes, or make any type of statement. The teacher may ask whether they have felt that they should have taken action, and maybe did not and why not. The students can add their thoughts to their free-write and then share their thoughts in a short discussion with a partner.

The teacher will then ask for volunteers to share any of their ideas with the class.

Introduction to César Chávez and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales

The teacher will briefly explain that Chávez and Gonzales, due to their experiences, personal identities, and societal outlooks, became activist leaders who played a major role in the Chicano Civil Rights Movement.

The teacher will perform a *KWL* (What do you *know*? What do you *want to know*? What have you *learned*?) activity with students. (A sample KWL handout and a short biography of Chávez and Gonzales are available via the WebQuest).

The teacher will ask students to think first about their background knowledge related to the Civil Rights Movement:

- For the letter "k": What and who do you *know* related to the Civil Rights Movement?
- For the letter "w": What do you *want* to know about the Civil Rights Movement?
- For the letter "l": Keep blank for what was *learned* (to do afterward).

Students will then draw a line under this section and do the same about either Chávez or Gonzales.

- For the letter "k": What and who do you *know* related to your activist?
- For the letter "w": What do you *want* to know about your activist?
- For the letter "l": Keep blank for what was *learned* (to do afterward).

The teacher will distribute a short one-page reading on Chávez and Gonzales' background, include a group activity, and read and discuss it. The teacher will add newly learned knowledge to the class's KWL chart, while students will add the newly learned knowledge to their own under the "l" (learned) section. Students also may add further questions and notes about what they want to know in the "w" (want to know) section.

Students will continue to research information and take notes about these activists through a small group activity utilizing laptops, electronic devices, or

computers in a lab.

The teacher will distribute a scavenger hunt sheet to each small group. (Scavenger hunt, guiding questions, resources, and primary source documents are available via the WebQuest.)

Each group will share the information they discovered through their fact-finding activity.

Famous Words: The Rhetoric of Chávez and Gonzales

This segment of the lesson series will focus on the actual words of Chávez and Gonzales.

The students will examine and engage in a close reading of either the "Address to the Commonwealth Club of California" by Chávez or the poem "Yo Soy Joaquin" by Gonzales. Students will listen to the poem or speech online while following a written copy. (Resources are available on the WebQuest.)

Students will pair with a partner of their choosing who will then read the text and ask the following:

1. As a listener or reader, what words were most powerful?
2. What stood out?
3. What was emphasized?

The teacher will follow up by leading a class discussion. Students will be invited to discuss their responses.

The teacher will choose one passage or section from each text that students mentioned in the discussion and model how to closely read and examine the section, using a document camera to analyze what made the section interesting, powerful, or rhetorically influential. Throughout this segment, the teacher should encourage students to participate in the analysis.

Students will continue this analysis of the text on their own or with a partner of their choosing.

The teacher will ask for volunteers to use the document camera to enable students to share their analysis of a passage that was not previously chosen.

Discussion Related to Chávez and Gonzales

1. Why are these activists important to study about the Civil Rights Movement?
2. Why might certain voices be less known than others concerning this historical period?
3. What are the key takeaways that you learned based on studying Chávez and Gonzales?

Activism and Personal Identity

The teacher will ask students to find someone who read the other text (the "Address to the Commonwealth Club of California" or the poem "Yo Soy Joaquin"). In pairs, students will discuss and compare similarities and differences related to these works.

The teacher will follow up with a class discussion on the similarities and differences the students noted.

Students will return to their partner from the previous day and finish the close reading analysis.

Still in small groups, students will return

to the scavenger hunt information and the poem and speech. They will identify aspects of personal identities that are suggested. Then, using their identity diagram as a model, they will create an identity diagram for Chávez or Gonzales.

The teacher will lead a class discussion examining how identity can be used to propel activism.

Activism: Taking a Personal Stand

As a culminating assignment, the students will return to their identity diagrams and writing earlier in the week. The teacher will ask what they might want to add to their diagrams in terms of what is important to their identity.

The teacher will ask students to think and add notes to their diagrams about an aspect of their identity that might propel them to take action or a personal stand on an issue.

Students will discuss their revised diagrams with a partner of their choosing.

The teacher will write these sentences on the board so students can copy the text and fill in the blanks: _____ *is important to who I am and what I care about as a* _____. *I would like to explore how I could take action in relation to* _____.

Students will leave their sentences on their desks and participate in a gallery walk and commentary session. They will write on each sheet of paper suggesting ideas about how someone could take action in an area of interest or issue. The teacher may need to remind them that, although students may disagree with someone's area of interest or issue for activism, they are respectful of one another's ideas and thoughts. They should also write how a student could find resources and ways to become more involved in a particular area of interest without inserting personal opinions and biases.

The teacher will bring the class back together and ask students to share a few of the issues and areas of interest that caught their attention. The teacher will then ask whether anyone received any helpful ideas for becoming more involved with an issue or area of interest.

On the other side of their paper or a new sheet, students will use their peers' suggestions to write one or two paragraphs explaining how they might learn more about an issue and what they can do to individually take action in relation to it.

The teacher will ask them to reflect on Chávez and Gonzales and answer these questions: *How did Chávez and Gonzales' identities impact their activist work? How did your identities impact your desire to take action on the subject you chose?*

Students will share their action plan with a partner of their choosing. The teacher will ask for volunteers to share what they discussed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this *Tools and Strategies* piece is not to encourage the sprinkling of Mexican American history into standardized U.S. social studies curriculum but, instead, to shed light on the importance of purposefully integrating missing voices and experiences along with incorporating Culturally Relevant Practices. As the researchers for this series, we are aware that many educators engage in CRE and other

social justice teaching practices. Still, we hope that more will do so. Our students' future and the cultural vibrancy of the United States are at stake if we all do not. Education is a powerful means by which culture is transmitted, and it is the educator's chief responsibility to communicate the cultural content and values that are to be transferred to future generations (Banks, 2016; Dewey, 1938). Only when educators understand the politics of privilege and oppression and reflect upon their own identities, attitudes, and beliefs are they able to teach "through and to cultural diversity" (Gay, 2013).

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