



BA/BFA Senior Honors Book Gallery

2010

Con Esperanza en Sus Ojos

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Recommended Citation

Kang, '11, Jamie, "Con Esperanza en Sus Ojos" (2010). *BA/BFA Senior Honors Book Gallery*. 13.

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con
esperanza
en sus
ojos

for all children who make the dangerous journey from one world to the next

hoping to find a better life

with hope in
their eyes



10 children
10 stories
10 lives

thousands of little
voices waiting
to be heard





age: 6 years old
gender: Male
country of origin: El Salvador

miguel

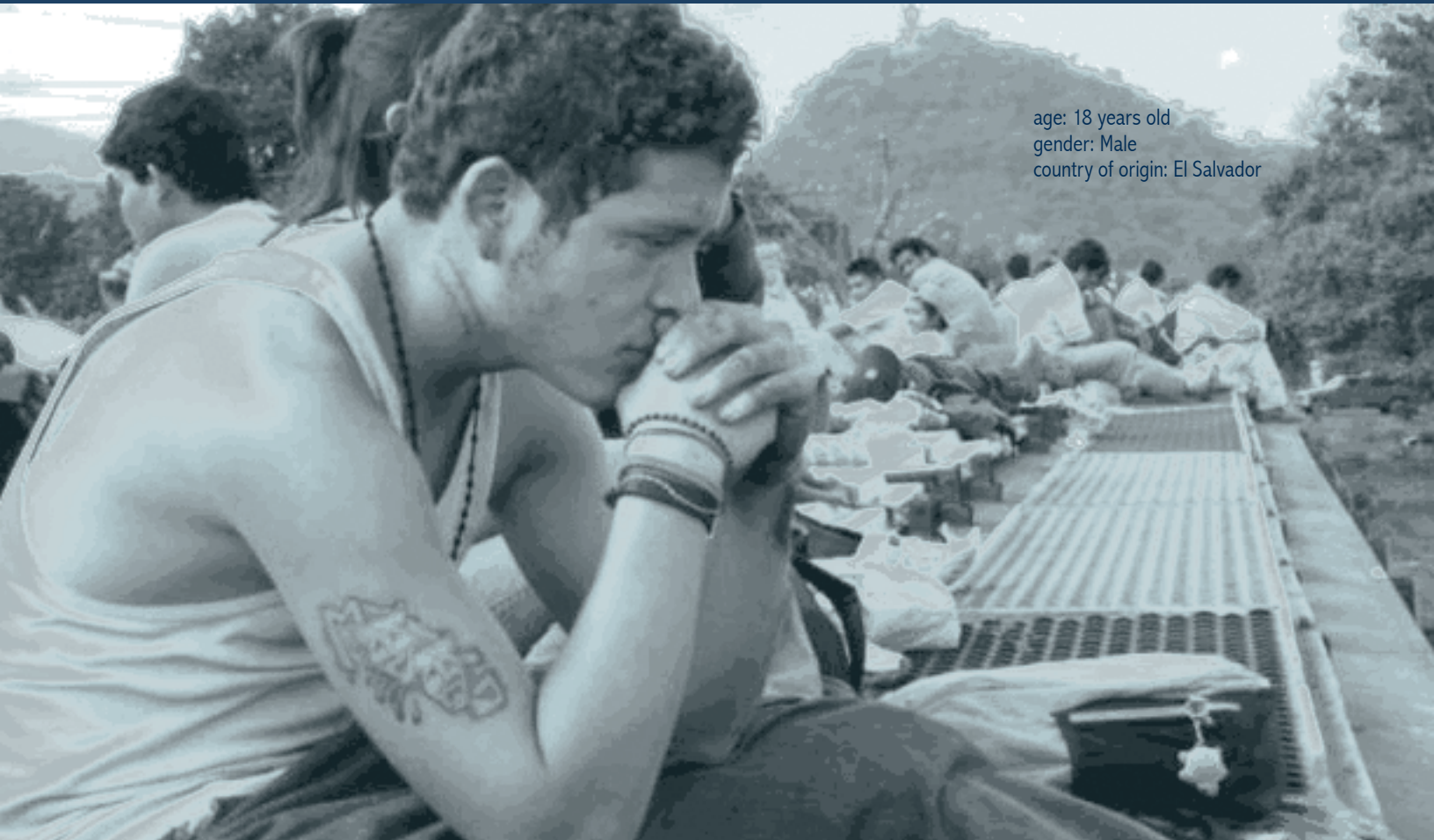
I am sick a lot. The doctor says I get something called pneumonia often. All I know is that my chest hurts a lot when I get that. I get stomachaches and cough a lot. I have allergies, blood disorders, eye problems, headaches, and white spots on my skin.

My dad left me when I was 1 ½ years old because he didn't want to work to pay my medical bills. My mom and grandma had to find a way to pay for everything. My mom decided to go to the U.S. to find a better job, so my grandma had to take care of me even though she had health problems of her own.

I was unsafe in my country because my older cousins were involved with alcohol and gang violence. At the end of May, my grandma sent me to the U.S. by myself to live with my mom, but I was captured by immigrant officials and put in a juvenile center in El Paso, Texas for 7 weeks.

I didn't like living in El Salvador because I was bullied everyday. I was always sad because my mom wasn't there with me. I am a lot happier living in the U.S. with my mom again. I'll be starting first grade in the fall.

If I return to El Salvador, I will not be safe because I will be forced to join a gang when I get older.



age: 18 years old
gender: Male
country of origin: El Salvador

jorge

I lived in El Salvador my whole life—it is part of who I am, but I can never go back. The Mara Salvatrucha gang controls the area where my home used to be, and for two and a half years I had to endure their threats and violence.

Ever since the day I refused to join MS-13, I have lived in fear.

I couldn't go to school. I couldn't leave my house. You can see the scars on my legs and arms where they attacked me with knives when I did venture out. I've witnessed my friend's death because he disobeyed their orders. They killed my uncle and two cousins. My family was next.

I couldn't bear to continue living like a mouse in a lion's den, so I left. I couldn't say anything to anyone about my departure in fear that MS-13 would find out and come after me. In the dead of night I left with the clothes on my back and the 270 pesos I saved up.

I spent a month and a half on a bus that took me from El Salvador to Guatemala, where I took a train to Mexico. There I met up with my half brother, who helped me plan out my route to the U.S. It took twelve days of walking and a swim across a river to get across the border, but I was found by the border patrol and detained in a juvenile facility for 27 days.

Luckily my aunt who lives in Texas took me in. I am hoping to go to school and one day become an engineer.

If I go back to El Salvador, the MS-13 will kill me.

2



age: 14 years old
gender: Female
country of origin: El Salvador

yanali

My parents abandoned me when I was born, so I lived with my two older brothers and elderly grandparents in El Salvador. I had to walk a long time to get to school. While walking to school, gang members would threaten my friends and me to join. The gang has threatened to rape me since I was 11 years old because I didn't want to join.

Four of my friends and my seven-year-old cousin have been raped because they refused to join the gang. I even witnessed a friend's murder because she didn't join.

I was scared of that I would be next, so finally my aunt and I decided to illegally flee El Salvador to the United States in hopes of a safer life. I was caught at the border and placed in a juvenile center for three weeks.

Fortunately, I am now living with my aunt in the United States, and I am happy to go to school without any threats.

If I return to my country, I will be living in constant fear of getting raped or even killed.

3



no puedo volver

por favor ayúdame



age: 13 years old
gender: Female
country of origin: Guatemala

isabel

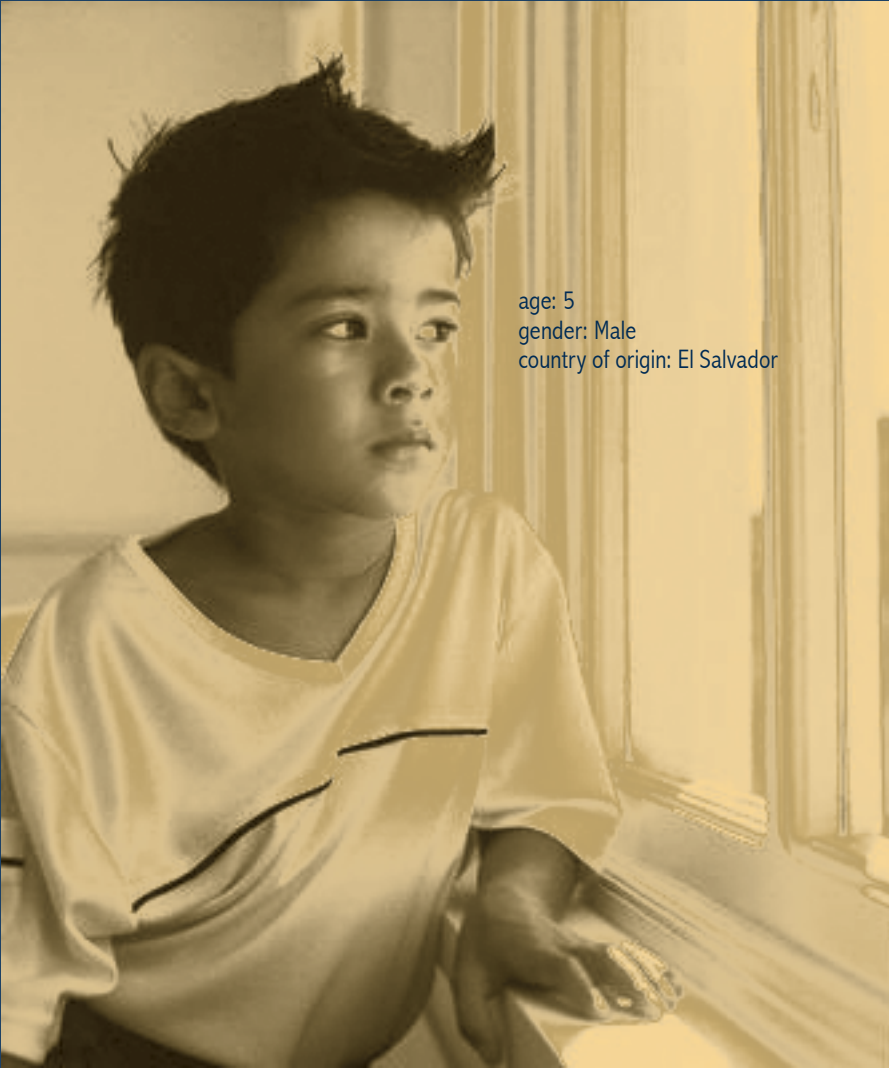
I lived with my old grandparents and two brothers in Guatemala while my parents were in the United States with my five other siblings. I was able to go to school until 6th grade in Guatemala.

Since neither my grandparents nor my brothers wanted to play with me, I would often go to my uncle's house, which was nearby, to play with my cousins. My uncle owed a lot of money to scary men, who threatened to take away his children if he didn't pay them back soon. I was afraid that they might mistake me for one of his children and take me away because I was at his house so often.

My grandparents sent me with a coyote and three acquaintances to the United States. Immigration officials caught me at the border, threatened me, and told me that I was going to die. I was held in custody for two days and was barely given any food. Then I was sent to a juvenile center for two weeks.

I'm thankful to be living with my cousin right now, and I'm really happy to be near my parents again. I want to stay in the United States because I'll be starting 6th grade in August.

If I go back to Guatemala, I will not be safe. The scary men know my face. What if they come get me too?



age: 5
gender: Male
country of origin: El Salvador

pedro

The bigger boys and men with tattooed faces followed me to and from school. When I passed them they would push me and yell at me. They would call me their little friend, but they are not my friends.

My mommy didn't call the police because she says they won't do anything to help us. I heard my mommy tell my older brother that the scary men showed up at her work and threatened to kill her and my brothers if I didn't join the gang.

We moved after that. I heard mommy say that Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez, our old neighbors, said they came by the house looking for us. They were mean to Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez because they wouldn't tell them where we moved.

They found us anyways.

My mommy decided to send me to America to get me away from the scary, tattooed men. It was hard getting to America. The man who took me wasn't very nice, and he didn't give me anything to eat.

We were caught after crossing the border. The officer man got mad at me because I couldn't speak English. He yelled and yelled until he got so mad he pushed me against a wall and pointed his finger in my face. I had to stay in the kids' center for almost a whole month until my tias came and got me.

I live with my tia Emila and tia Maria now. I am very happy to be safe and to be starting school soon, but I wish my mommy and my brothers were here with me too.

If I go back to El Salvador, I don't know what those scary men will do to me.





age: 17 years old
gender: Male
country of origin: Guatemala

carlos

2 weeks
to reach u.s. borders

2 days
in immigration office

26 days
in juvenile center

In Guatemala, my family could not afford my educational expenses, so I worked in the fields with my father for three years before leaving for the United States to pursue a better life and an education

It took 2 weeks to travel from my country to the U.S. border. I spent 2 days with immigration officials and 26 days in a juvenile center before I was released to my uncle's care.

Now I live with my uncle in the United States and am learning reading and writing skills in my English class. After registering for an English class, I realized that I could do so much more with my life than just working in the fields.

I am very happy and grateful to be living in the United States.



JOFFEE
OR



DE

MS13

MS13, also known as MS, Mara, and Mara Salvatrucha, is a criminal gang that originated in Los Angeles and has spread to Central America, other parts of the United States, and Canada. The majority of the gang is ethnically composed of Salvadorans, Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans. The group was started, in part, to protect themselves from the 18th Street gang, also known as MS18.

MS13 gang members are known to be involved in all aspects of criminal activity. Because of their ties to their former homeland, they have access to sophisticated military weapons, thus making firearms trafficking one of their main criminal enterprises. Other law enforcement agencies have reported MS13 members were exporting stolen cars to South America. As with nearly all street gangs, the MS is also involved in drug sales, murder, and other common gang crimes.

It has been estimated that MS-13 has over 15,000 members and associates in at least 115 different cliques in 33 states, and these numbers are continually increasing. The areas with the greatest concentration are Southern California, with 20 different cliques and over 4,400 members and associates; New York City, with 24 cliques and over 1,700 members and associates; and the Northern Virginia and Metropolitan D.C. area, with 21 cliques and a total of more than 5,000 members and associates.

MS13 and MS18 are known to be bitter rivals. They distinguish themselves from each other by their intricate and expansive tattoos and hand signs that signal their gang allegiance. MS13, MS18, and other similar gangs are responsible for the violence in Central America.

MS18

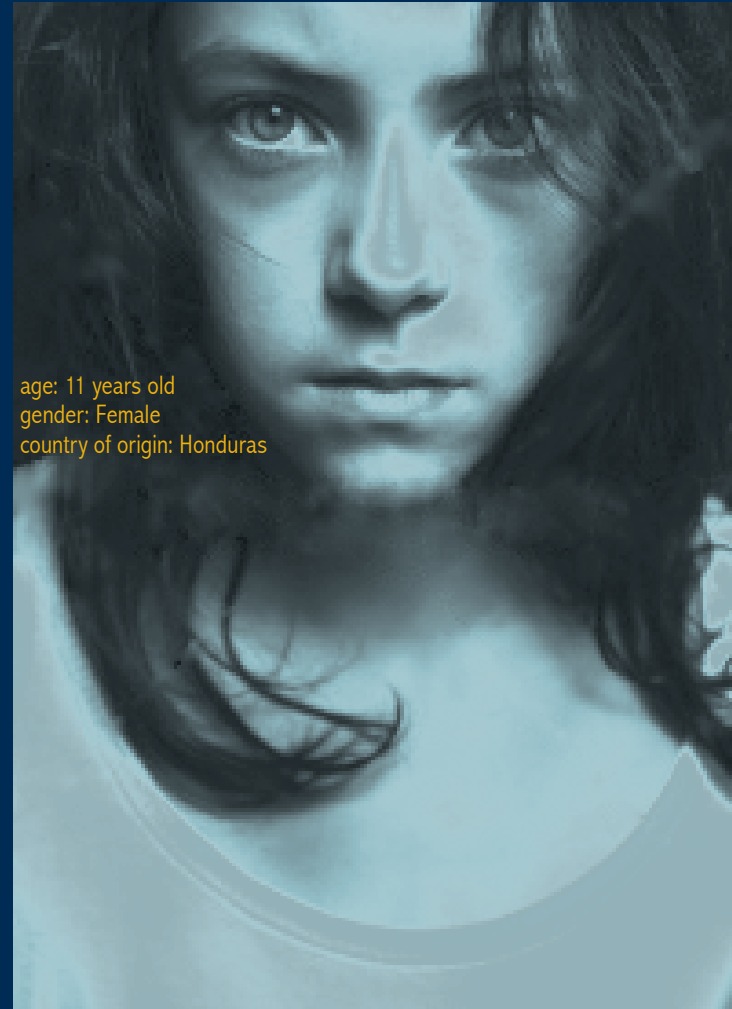
MS18, also known as the 18th Street Gang, is the largest gang in L.A. It is made up of mainly Hispanic people, and its total number of members range from 8,000 to 20,000. MS18 also forces middle school aged children to join their gangs, and because of this, they are known as the "Children's Army." The gang members mark themselves and their territories with the signs "X8", "XVIII," or "XV3."

MS18 has systematic beatings to punish gang members for their wrongdoings. Failure to obey superiors may result in 18 second beatings or even execution.

MS18 is involved in all areas of street-crime. Some members have even become involved with producing fraudulent Immigration and Customs Enforcement identification cards and food stamps. They have also been linked to murder, assaults, drug trafficking, extortion, vandalism, drug smuggling, prostitution, robbery, and weapons trafficking, as well as other crimes.



claudia



age: 11 years old
gender: Female
country of origin: Honduras

I lived with my parents and my grandparents in Honduras, but we were not able to live normal lives because my grandpa killed a man who belonged to a large gang family. They were the most dangerous people in my neighborhood, and my grandpa killed one of their family members to defend himself. The gang didn't care if it was self-defense, so they began to threaten to kill us. They would come by our house every night and shoot their guns into the air to scare us.

I lived in fear in Honduras. I never knew what was going to happen to me.

We called the police, but they did nothing. We moved to a different town, but the gang followed us. There was no way to solve the problem while still living in Honduras. They would always find us no matter where we went.

I took a taxi to and from school every day. I never knew if they were going to catch me and take me away. I was thankful for each day I was able to come back from school safely, but a life full of fear was no way to live.

My grandparents decided to send me and my parents to the United States to live with my aunt because it was too dangerous for us to stay in Honduras.

When we had finally reached the border, my parents were taken away by the border patrol. They were sent back. I was without my parents in a foreign country whose people spoke a language I didn't even know.

I am now living with my tia in Arizona, and I'll be starting sixth grade soon.

I miss my parents and I wish they were here with me. I hope they are still safe.

I can't go back to the violence in my neighborhood in Honduras. Please don't make me leave.





age: 17 years old
gender: Male
country of origin: Equador

saúl

I lived in Ecuador with my family and endured gang violence and threats every day. I got married to a girl who had temporary residency in the United States. She gave birth to my son a few months after she returned to the U.S.

I decided that I had to go to the United States because my son deserved to grow up with a father and because it is my duty to support my wife.

I took a flight to Honduras and from there a car ride to Guatemala. After that I walked for four days trying to reach Mexico. Someone gave me a ride into Mexico, but I was left to walk alone for eight more days with little water and no food.

I met a coyote who said he could get me into the United States. I agreed to follow him because I didn't know how else to get into the U.S. He didn't give me any food during the trip, and he treated me badly. He said that if I really wanted to get to the U.S. I could endure it.

I finally made it to America, but I was abandoned by the coyote, picked up by the police in Phoenix, and put in jail. They gave me food, but they threw it on the floor and were very rude.

After two months in jail, I was finally able to reunite with my wife and our son. I was so happy to meet our son for the first time.

If I return to Honduras, I will not be safe because there is crime every day. Also the coyote who left me in Arizona went to my parents' house many times insisting that we owed him \$8,000! We don't have this kind of large money. How can he expect us to pay him that much?



age: 18 years old
gender: Female
country of origin: Mexico

Lupita

I am 18 years old and have been in the U.S since I was 2 years old. I do not keep in contact with my parents at all because they abused me. I have been a victim of domestic violence since 2003.

My husband, who is a native of Mexico, has been living in the United States as an illegal alien. He was recently deported in 2008.

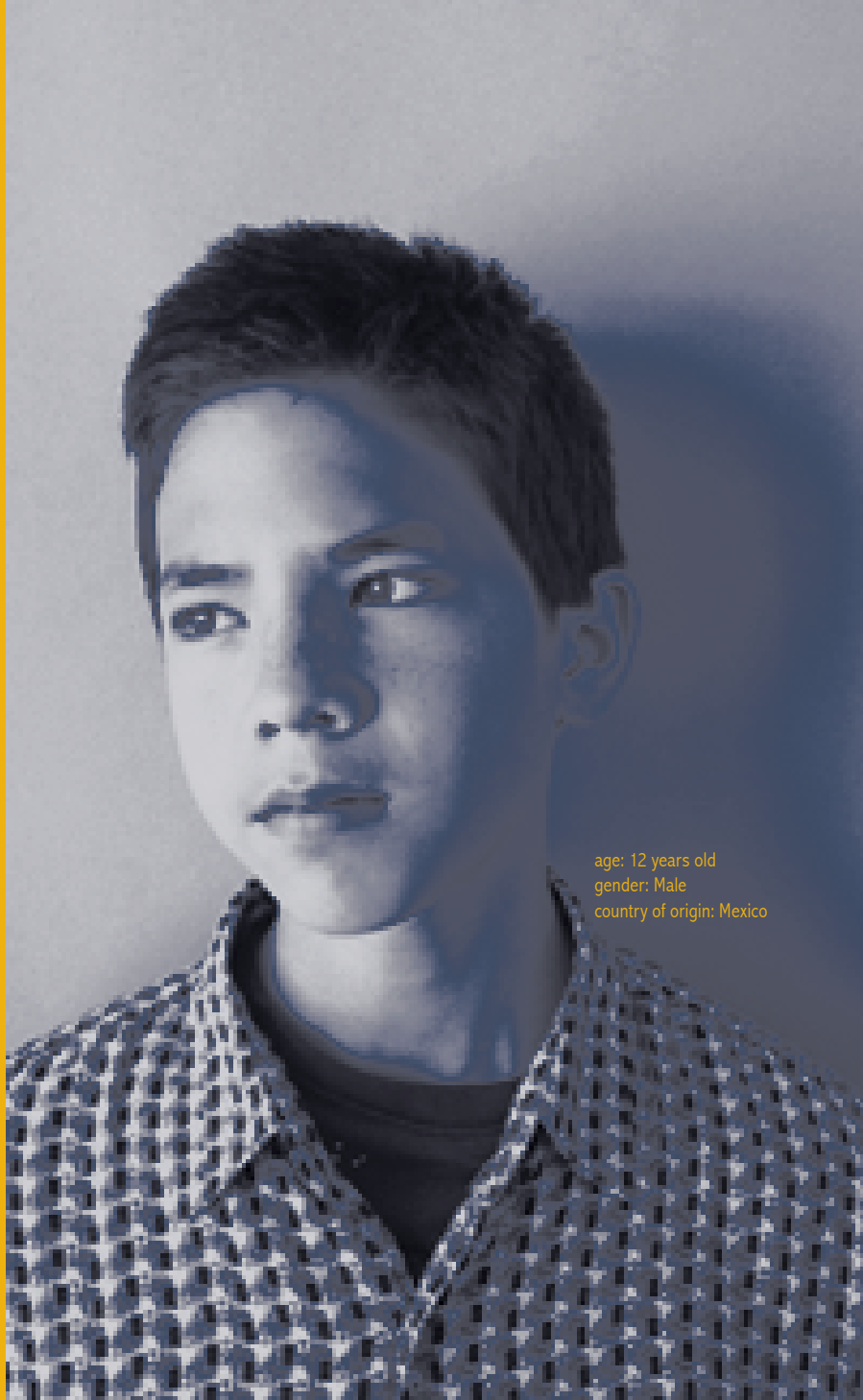
I was studying in the U.S and was able to complete the ninth grade before dropping out to give birth to my two daughters.

After my husband's deportation, he became sick, so I went to Mexico and took care of him for three months. After he got better, I returned to the U.S on a bus in 2009 but was denied entry. After my husband's deportation, he got sick, so I went to Mexico and took care of him for three months. After he got better, I returned to the U.S on a bus in 2009 but was denied entry. After my husband's deportation, he got sick, so I went to Mexico and took care of him for three months. After he got better, I returned to the U.S on a bus in 2009 but was denied entry.

The whole bus was caught. I was forced to stay in a juvenile center for three months. I was given a chance to stay in the United States in exchange for information about the coyote.

I plan to live in the United States to raise my children. I hope to go to college and work in a health related field.





age: 12 years old
gender: Male
country of origin: Mexico

ignacio

but you can call me
nacho

I never knew my parents because they went to the U.S. to find better opportunities. I lived with my grandparents who have medical and money problems. They were only able to feed me once a day and did not pay attention to me.

My grandfather was an alcoholic and would abuse my grandmother and me when he drank. Once, my grandmother had to go to the hospital because my grandfather smashed her head into the wall.

Outside of my home conditions were even worse. I would always feel scared walking on the streets because every week a group of men would take my lunch money. They even threatened to kidnap and kill me.

Because of all the violence in my house and neighborhood, my grandmother sent me down onto the street. When I was 9 years old, a group of men beat me up and pushed me down onto the street. I fell on a broken glass bottle and got on a flight alone to the U.S. I was caught a cut in my stomach area. I had to get 8 stitches at the hospital. by immigration officials at a stopover and placed in a juvenile detention center for 2 months. I didn't know what was going on.

Now I'm living with my grandmother from my mother's side in Minnesota. I met my parents for the first time last week. They are undocumented immigrants, but my grandmother in Mexico is trying to sponsor them. I am fluent in English and will be starting 8th grade in August.

If I return to Mexico, I won't be safe and will be neglected by my grandparents.

I'm scared that those men will kill me.

10

gracias por la oportunidad
de estudiar.

quiero
estar con
mis
padres.

dónde está ^{mi} HOGAR?

NO

me van a matar

puedo

por favor, ayúdame.

volver

agradezco a Dios

todos los días.

unaccompanied children

Unaccompanied children are children under the age of 18 who come to the United States without authorization and without the protection and supervision of a parent or guardian.

According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) more than 86,000 accompanied and unaccompanied children were apprehended each year from 2001-2005.

This number reached 101,952 children in 2006. Four out of five of these children were from Mexico. The U.S government agencies do not keep thorough enough statistics on unaccompanied children to have an accurate number.

Statistics from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) show that 7,000-9,000 unaccompanied children have been referred to the ORR from the DHS each year since 2005.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol put pressure on these unaccompanied children to sign for "voluntary departure" without given notice of their rights and put in contact with a relative or a nonprofit organization. The majority of unaccompanied children are not given a hearing before an immigration judge to tell their story.

Most children take enormous risks to come to the U.S. in order to escape poverty, violence, abuse or abandonment, while some come seeking to reunify with their parents or other relatives.

Some cross the border with the help of a coyote—someone who specializes in human smuggling and bringing people across the United States border from Mexico.

Coyotes can be gang members trying to trick and kill people who want to cross the border. Even with an honest and reputable coyote, there is always the risk of dying in the desert while walking to the border, dying trapped in trucks and shipping containers, drowning while trying to swim the Rio Grande, or being shot at by border patrol or vigilante groups while swimming across the river.

Unaccompanied children also report being sexually and physically assaulted, abandoned by traveling companions and unable to find food and shelter. They report being raped by other migrants or law enforcement officials. Various reports document that children in DHS detention experience harsh conditions that often violate their human rights while in the custody of U.S. institutions.

In their journey to the U.S. these children are exposed to the same dangers and hazards as adults but their age makes them more vulnerable.

what are you going to do to help these innocent children?

