

Race and Oral History Project, UC San Diego

Narrator: KRYSTAL SALAS

Interviewer: David Rodriguez

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DER: Alright, this is David Rodriguez and I am here at the Barrio Logan College Institute, or BLCI for short. It is May 2nd, 2019 and I am here interviewing Krystal Salas for the Race and Oral History Project. How are you today, Krystal?

KS: I'm great, how are you?

DER: I'm doing fantastic, thank you for asking. And so, anything special to start for today?

KS: Not really.

DER: Alright, just making sure. So, could you give me a... could you give myself and the audience a brief description of yourself?

KS: I am a first-year student at San Diego State University, studying social work with an emphasis in counseling. I've been at the Barrio Logan College Institute for over 10 years, at the beginning as a student and now as the College Access Program Assistant. With my time here, I have been able to obtain a lot of opportunities and to really flourish in the career path I want to take.

DER: And what career path is that?

KS: Social work.

DER: Social work, so is it more of a matter of trying to expand to different areas?

KS: Yes and no, because of the fact that mental health isn't really something that people talk about a lot and here at BLCI, we at least try to allow students to be more aware of it, be more aware of any learning disabilities that they have or if they need any help that we're there for them. If they need any counseling, we usually at least try to be a listening ear for them so that they are able to understand that we are here for them and that it's not only just going to college, but more of taking care of themselves as well.

DER: Okay, so you attach yourself to the kids more personally in many cases. So, it isn't only just academics, it's always just a whole all-around kind of process with these kids.

KS: Yep, so if they are having problems at home, they talk to me and vent to me.

DER So you're basically like their mom sometimes?

KS: Sometimes, some students do call me Mom.

DER Or like tia or something like that?

KS: Nah, it's just mom.

DER Just running around saying "A-Ma" or something like that?

KS: They'll just say mom.

DER Alright, sounds good. So, describe a little bit more about yourself so like where you're from, who are you, and all that kind of stuff. More personal.

KS: So, I'm from San Diego, California. I grew up in Barrio Logan and in Logan Heights, so being at BLCI is pretty home-y for me. My parents... one of them was undocumented for a while, but he later became a US citizen and my mom is from LA. Both of them have... only had one child so I am also an only child. I've had a lot of pressure throughout my path through grade school and just going through high school and trying to be above and beyond and be better for my parents since I am also a first-generation, so a big part of my life is just getting my school

work done and being able to reach out to anything that I can do within the community to at least give back to where my parents grew up. And to kind of just learn and improve what they used to have. I also love to read. I read for pleasure, which is something that not a lot of people say. But I do enjoy reading books about either Latino history, Chicano/Chicana history, any kind of aspect that has to do with the border or more or less just seeing how much culture is such a big aspect of people's lives.

DER Are there any fun memories in your childhood that you remember by any chance, like maybe in such cases like around your neighborhood?

KS: I did move a lot, so I didn't really have one set area where I would hang out a lot. But my grandparents have always been here in Logan so that's usually the place where I would always be. I have a lot of memories with my grandma because she used to take care of me and, still to this day, I am very close with her. It's funny because I remember at some point, she lived with us and I would wake up like at 6 in the morning just to play Loteria with her.

DER Ooh, excellent game. Nice to take people's money out of.

KS: I mean I would give it back after because I would feel bad but yeah.

DER it's like "I can't bet, I'm illegal. I need to be 18 to bet."

KS: Yeah, I was like six back then.

DER What would you use, the pennies or the beans?

KS: I would use beans, yeah.

DER Yeah, that's a common one, normally. Like I remember I would do that, too, with my family as well. Any other memories other than that like any other surrounding memories around the neighborhood like in terms of the city or something like that?

KS: In terms of the city, I do remember living on a hill and being able to see downtown, the skyline of downtown. And I've always enjoyed being on like high levels or high-level areas because then, I also love to see stars so then I was also always able to just stargaze a lot of the times when I was younger. Since I didn't have siblings, I was usually always doing things on my own, so I learned to self-reflect at a young age and to just see things in a different perspective, unlike growing up with siblings and fighting all the time or something.

DER I mean we have to get our out our aggression somehow, right?

KS: Yeah, definitely.

DER: You did say you moved a lot. Where did you move to?

KS: So, it was more of moving around San Diego. Not really leaving to different cities, so at some point I was in Lemon Grove and then I remember being in Chula Vista for a long time and then at some point, my parents and I lived with my uncle in National City and then we went to... back to the Lemon Grove, and then to Spring Valley, and then now we're back in Lemon Grove and we've been there since.

DER: So, it was more like all around and then you literally just went into full circle.

KS: Yea pretty much.

DER: You did mention that one of your parents, your dad, was undocumented. Could you kind of elaborate about his, kind of, route to the states?

KS: So, he is the baby of 10... and he's from Nayarit. He doesn't remember much because he came to the United States at a very young age, but I remember asking him to tell me stories from when he came and he used to tell me like things about El Coyote and just how they would walk across the border, or to his understanding he was in a car or something like that and just seeing how much my dad has been able to adapt to American culture. The fact that he is a baby of 10

and the rest of them are girls. So, it was him and his brother and the rest of them are women now. So, it just came to a point in time where he took things to his advantage and when he was able to get a job, he got a job so he can help his parents out with their house. I remember him telling me a story about them being in a little studio apartment with all 10 of them and seeing how much of a struggle that was and how much they did move around a lot too but it was more just around the Logan and the Barrio Logan area and just seeing how like from when he was a kid to now. And the house that my grandma currently lives in being the house that a lot of my cousins and I grew up in. And seeing how like now my cousin's kids are growing up in the same area too. But my dad didn't really want to go to college. He was almost gonna drop out of high school, but because of my mom, who he met in high school, pushed him to at least do something better for himself instead of working all the time and not putting much effort into his academics. So, he ended up graduating. Out of all his siblings, at least four of them graduated high school, so he was fortunate enough to at least get a high school diploma, but once my mom and my dad tried Community College, my mom wanted to keep going but then she got pregnant with me.

DER: Isn't that cute?

KS: I guess.

DER: Yeah, I was pretty fond of that because of the fact that, of the struggle that your dad had to go through living in a studio with 10 kids and living in the same place.

KS: yeah, it's pretty crazy.

DER: Would you say that your dad was more in favor of the sisters or the brother?

KS: Actually, he was more in favor of himself. He was pretty just to himself. He was pretty quiet.

DER: Is that where you get your self-reflecting characteristics?

KS: Yep, yeah.

DER: And so, they're both Mexican of course, right?

KS: Yeah.

DER: Alright. So, let's get a little more towards your job. So as mentioned in the interview, you work as one of the directors for the Barrio Logan College Institute. Could you elaborate more on your duties as a director for BLCI?

KS: So, I assist the director. I'm more of her right-hand man. If she's out and there's a workshop that day, I have to be ready with something to do workshop with the students. I also do a lot of data entries, a lot of putting parent hours in, putting attendance in for the students, helping out with any kind of big events such as ? that we do with the new children's museum or any kind of presentations that come in, such as panelists that are either our donors or they're interested in the program and who want to get to know the students a lot better. I also do a lot with the rest of the pipeline. Because I'm the college assistant, I have to look down upon everyone else and at least help them out too. At some points, I do help with interviews when new applications are coming out so a lot of the times, I sit in the interviews and I ask the questions to the parents and to the student and it's kind of a lot of pressure because it's like I can either say yes or no, along with the specialist for the grade but it's just really cool to see the inside or just the actual labor work that BLCI has to put into providing a program for students, unlike when I was a student I didn't see any of that.

DER: So, you were a student here at BLCI?

KS: Mmhmm since third grade.

DER: It's like you never left.

KS: Yep, pretty much. It's a second home. At some points I'll just be like "just spend the night."

DER: At your own school? I'd pass. So, how much time has it been already since you already started working here?

KS: It's gonna be a year in the summer.

DER: one year for the whole summer and you graduated...?

KS: Last year from high school.

DER: So, from the start after you graduated, you were here?

KS: Mmhmm.

DER: Alright what's your favorite part about working at BLCI?

KS: The students! Yeah, they always have a way to make me laugh to the point where I have to pee or like, it just comes down to being really close with the students and trying to see where their struggles are and since a lot of us have gone through most of the same struggles, a lot of them do come to me. I'm more of that person that a lot of people like to vent to.

DER: the mom?

KS: Yep, the mom. I have four kids here at BLCI.

DER: Not really, right?

KS: Not really, no. Not literally, no. if, that, no! If that would've happened, they would have been like 11 or 10 no no. But, I mean, I kind of see it as a good thing and just seeing it as like, they see me as something else and not as like, yeah I'm also staff here, but there also comes a personal level to it and I like to have that personal touch with the students because I feel it's just more closure for them and more of a reason to feel validated. As they're growing up and as they're getting to the point of time when they are up with me in college.

DER: Do you have any stories of those people that can relate to your kind of struggle, by any chance?

KS: I remember as a student, I had a friend who she... Since I went to a more privileged high school rather than one that was in a low-income area, I would always struggle trying to find friends in high school and at the same time, even though she was at a school that was in more of a Latino area, there was still a lot of people that didn't look like her. So I was able to relate with her to that and it was just more of seeing the culture shock and seeing how much of “us” was not there and just coming to BLCI was more of a place of closure and seeing like, you know, all of us look alike and even though that may seem like a bad thing, it's more of just a place where we can be ourselves.

DER: So just embrace your identity no matter where you are?

KS: Mmhmm.

DER: And so that's what you learned throughout your time in school as well?

KS: Not only in school, but just on my own. I learned to adapt to my environments and making sure that I've acted differently in situations that I needed to act properly. And you know because of that, I landed an internship at Hewlett-Packard, HP. So, I was able to work with a lot of engineers and just seeing the dynamic and I was a junior going into my senior year of high school. And a lot of the interns were college students and so, it was amazing to see how much of a maturity level I had, to be at a place like that. And just to at least see the different dynamics that happens within a big company like that.

DER: How was that internship by the way?

KS: It was really good. At some point, I did get a little bored because I was just designing and 3D printing all day. But at the same time when I would ask questions to the engineers or at least try to pick their brain a little bit. They would be closed off, so I was just like “oh so is that stereotype true? Like engineers don't really talk as much?”, but at the same time you give people

the benefit of the doubt. And you try to see what happens within a company like that. But yeah, at some points, I felt like I didn't fit in because I didn't see more of myself but, at the same time, I was already used to it, so I didn't really care as much but it was a great experience and it was a paid internship, so that portion was really good.

DER: "I just need my money, that's it."

KS: yeah, for college.

DER: So, you mentioned it was a lot of engineer work. So social work wasn't the only thing you did then, right? There was also engineer work, right?

KS: Yeah, so I thought it was going to be this big engineer. At first, I was in aerospace engineering and then later on I found out about with mechanical engineering you can branch out to almost anything so I was more open to that because aerospace engineering was still one of the things that I could have done. So, I worked I did a lot of clothes with Engineering in middle school and in high school. I did the Mesa competition at San Diego State and it was up to the point where my partner and I went to Regionals and we won first place and we were really good, but they didn't have a state competition so we were bummed out, but it's okay. But, I worked so hard with trying to gain so much experience in engineering and once I went to HP and got that internship, I realized that this wasn't for me and it was like "ok I'm going to be a senior in high school and I'm saying this now", so I didn't know what I was going to do or what major I was going to be going into

DER: When was that Eureka moment that you just figure it out "I don't want to do it"?

KS: it was just my time at HP. I didn't enjoy it; I wasn't genuinely happy with it, and it was more of I realized how much closure there was. I literally was in a cubicle for 8 hours and lunch was for an hour or so I would go outside and every now and then I would walk around the building

just to like see things that I knew I would probably getting it to never see again but I just thought it would have been a little bit better to go through something like that, but I'm thankful I went through it because I learned a lot out of it and I was able to use software programs that not a lot of people get to use when they're in high school. So, I also learned a lot about designing and computing and working in a machine shop and being able to wow them. Working with the people and I remember there was a welder there that he actually went to high school with my parents.

DER: oh really?

KS: yeah, so it was pretty crazy. It was pretty gnarly just like him telling me stories and that's like the one part that I really enjoyed about being there, just being able to connect and talk to him.

DER: Did he tell you some funny stories about your dad?

KS: nah.

DER: Was he like “your dad was one of the coolest kids in school.”

KS: No, my dad tells me those stories

DER: is like a weird flex huh?

KS: yeah pretty much.

DER: Alright and so you like you said you switch to social work. What make you switch from that from engineering?

KS: Yeah, it's completely different. So, I kind of realized it when I started... it was weird at first because I didn't really know what it was. I remember taking... because after I graduated I also took a summer course for sociology, just to at least get ahead with my GE's, so I enjoyed being in the Sociology class but I was also trying to figure out what major I was going to change into

cuz I had applied into schools as a mechanical engineering major so either way I was trying to see where I was going to go, and then it kind of hit me one day when I started thinking about my past and just a traumatic experience that happened was kind of the triggering moment. When like I was 13 and I didn't know what it was at first and once I was able to put a name to it, it took me by surprise and I had been shoving it under a rug for the past six or seven years, not really understanding what it was and I realized how much of pain I had with it and how much I wasn't expressing myself and how much of my voice wasn't being heard so I realized like I'm not the only person that it's happened to, but at the same time, I wanted to be a voice for people and to be a voice for youth in the matter of as a child you don't really know things and you are really confused and if I could help a child find that and see that you know just because it happens doesn't mean it's the end of the world and just out of pure heart seeing what kids are capable of doing and at the same time I realized how much of my life I've struggled with myself, but at the same time, just trying to figure out why certain things happen. Why it happened to me and, when I fell upon social work, I really connected with it and kind of just felt like it was kind of a match, kinda like it was destined to be.

DER: Keep in mind you don't have to keep going with many of the things that you don't feel like saying just clarifying so that way you don't feel pressured to say anything you don't want to say. So, through that summer course, you just figured out it was destiny to do social work and then after that BLCI came in as well and you decided that was your first program to do with.

KS: Yeah.

DER: Okay, so on a lighter side ... on a lighter side, for the sake, are there any stories that you have that are most memorable when working at BLCI? Like any fun moments, like I know that there are those similar cases of first-generation Latino students and Latinas students who are at

BLCI trying to go through the struggles of what they have to go through in order to get to college. But I know that they're some good sides. So, do you know anything do you remember anything that was pretty fun?

KS: I remember going to a snowboarding trip.

DER: What?

KS: Yeah, so we have a connection with an organization called Outdoor Outreach and, once a month, they would take students to go snowboarding or kayaking or paddle boarding or practically almost anything. Like rock climbing, it didn't matter, and I remember going snowboarding and I fell on my face so many times, but at the end of it, I was a pro. I did not give up and I kept like going at it, but it was really fun and I really enjoyed it and I remember one of the older girls that was with me is actually one of the sisters of one of the seniors now so it's crazy seeing her sister going off to college and seeing her little sister take on the same path and I'm like "you know you guys are so sweet and nice."

DER: like your little mom comes out huh?

KS: Yeah like my mom instincts come out. Yeah.

DER: alright and so there's that there's the enjoyment and it was with the kids, right?

KS: Yeah, so it's just with the kids and us being with the outdoor Outreach staff and just being able to go up the mountain, come right back down there, and just being able to learn how to snowboard.

DER: were you teaching kids or the kids teaching you?

KS: nah the kids were teaching me. I was like nah I can't do this.

DER: were you afraid?

KS: no oh no I love doing stuff like that. I love being a daredevil.

DER: Oh gosh, just a fan of danger, I guess.

KS: Yeah.

DER: How long ago was that?

KS: Like I was a student, so it was about like 5 or 6 years ago.

DER: Wow. And they still do these kind of trips?

KS: Mmhmm, yep and I went as a staff member once.

DER: oh really?

KS: Yeah. We went paddle-boarding. We went underneath the Coronado Bridge.

DER: Oh really? Were you a pro at that too?

KS: Yeah. That, I was fine I was fine.

DER: Alright and so you were helping kids... what were the kids doing?

KS: Well, it wasn't me helping, it was more of me supervising. Because, no because the staff does the whole teaching and everything, so it's kind of just laid back for staff to go and something for us to enjoy doing.

DER: So basically your vacation?

KS: Yeah, having fun and bonding with the students.

DER: Take some time away from the classroom.

KS: Yep.

DER: Nice. Being the great interviewer I am, I had to do a little bit of research and I noticed that you did have a magazine appearance.

KS: Yeah, I did.

DER: In giving back magazine?

KS: Yeah.

DER: Can you elaborate more on that?

KS: So, when they had asked me to be a part of that magazine, I kind of wasn't shocked because I wasn't really expecting that to happen and I... it was more of like the mechanical engineering portion and basically telling the community like "hey, there's this young girl having this big dream of wanting to become this amazing mechanical engineer and trying to break the glass ceiling with that and saying more people of color in the industry and say more women in the industry and being able to be an inspiration to others." Yeah, I didn't expect it to happen. I remember like them taking the picture and people being behind the guy and there were like "smile!", and like it was... it was so bad.

DER: It's a nice picture. It's a really nice picture, you have that great smile that you have.

KS: Yeah, but that was a pretty memorable moment and I remember, like a month later, them giving to me the magazine and me turning and seeing it and I was like "oh my God, like that's me.", and some point like I remember going home that night and giving it to my parents and I remember my dad like teared up a little bit and I'm like, "why you tearing up?", and he was like, "because I'm proud of you.", and I was like, "you're going to make me cry now."

DER: Don't be crying to me now.

KS: Yeah.

DER: I'm seeing it out of your eyes coming out, I'm not I'm not trying to bring that part out of you no. But I mean it sounds like a big thing because I mean, for many cases, like especially just a woman trying to get into mechanical engineering is such a big struggle in itself let alone as a Latina is even a bigger struggle So it's one thing that is very important in many cases, in terms of not only the Barrio Logan Community but also just every community in general, that a woman is trying to break the glass ceiling of the engineering world or a Latina... Latinx person is trying to

break the glass ceiling itself. Are there any other appearances that you made I couldn't find any other?

KS: There's actually one posted down the hall. And it's actually me like as a staff member and there's also another posting of me being part of the Leadership Council at BLCI and it was more of like community work and we actually got ourselves on Telemundo or Univision or something like that. Yeah, we had a lot of publicity about it and this happened about at least a year ago and it was for the... let me see if I don't mess up the name... the commuter, or no not commuter... it's called CCC, I just forget what each CC stands for. But I know the last two are, I know the last one is conference, or something like that. I don't know the whole name.

DER: Don't worry. I'll include it. Like when you show me, I'll find out. I mean props to you for making it that's for sure. I mean I love to see this gorgeous face that no one's going to see behind the magazine or in a magazine but props to you making that. So I want to get a little bit into the important part of this interview cuz, so all the time you coming to BLCI as a former student and a current worker, I imagine that you wanted to explore so many opportunities outside of BLCI with your involvement in school and such. So why does BLCI have such a strong impact in your life to keep you there, even after going to school there your whole life?

KS: It's more of a sense of how much support there is here for me and just how like at some point, I'm going to have to let go of BLCI but accept the fact that there will always have my back because I have made so many connections and so many fun memories with everyone, but at the same time, I think it's just there comes a point in time where I have to realize that I have to move on and hopefully I'll do that soon, just to get away and experience something new and experienced something other than the world of BLCI. And I know my mom always nags me about it to like, "ya vete [go now]", Like you need to leave. And I'm like, "no, not yet", but yeah.

I mean, a lot of it, I'm grateful for everything that BLCI has given me and for giving me so many outside opportunities that I didn't know I would get. But I guess it's just that I don't know when the time will be and I think it might be soon, but I'm not sure. And it's just hard for me to let go of it because I've had so many great memories here and my mentor is also here, so she's done a lot for me and I love everyone here because they're just like family.

DER: it's also the inner aspects of who you work with, right? And where you work as and I'd figure, if anything, you see a lot of empowerment in terms of working with first-generation Latinx students. How do you feel about that yourself, just that?

KS: I sometimes get inspired just by them seeing the students at such a young age and seeing their mind grow and seeing how much... like how much you want to protect that, but at the same time, like you can't because you need to let them grow. There's that Mom side of me again.

DER: You just all about that Mom life.

KS: Even though it's like not completely true. But yeah, I just remember cuz we have other than the leadership program I did growing or being here I also did Ciclo de Mujeres [Women's Cycle] and we also had Ciclo de Hombres [Men's Cycle]. And it's kind of a way for students to be in tune with themselves and being able to see the struggles that everyone has as a whole, and we do something called Real Talk and Real Talk has, I believe, four aspects. So, the first one is venting and there is no judgment with that; there's also telling a story and someone relating to it and being able to understand that they're not alone. The third one is "A Kick in the Pants", so basically having someone pressure you to like... not pressure but more on your case about a certain situation. Like for example, say I have an essay due next week and next week comes around and that person is like, "Hey, have you started on that essay?", and they just checking up on you. And the fourth one is... what is it, I forget all the time... I forgot what it was, but like a lot

of the students do benefit from it. It allows them to just be vulnerable and just have a safe space within BLCI to see how much of ...how many people that go through the same struggle.

DER: Yeah, cuz I was about to say, safe space? kick in the pants? I don't think that's safe.

KS: No, it's not literally.

DER: I was a little bit scared. "Real talk, I'm going to kick you in the pants"

KS: No, no, it's not literally. Figure of speech.

DER: Yeah, I was just clarifying.

KS: Yeah.

DER: And also.... so like, there's that. There's first-generation Latinx students in general. What about the impact BLCI has on Barrio Logan itself and Logan Heights?

KS: A lot of older generations come, and they see how much that they wish they would have had something like this when they were younger. To get youth, or during the time, youth off the streets and to have them thrive in something better for themselves and seeing how much Barrio Logan has grown as a community and how much... At some point, it was so unsafe to walk alone in the dark and now up to the point where like there's more of a balance in that and you don't see much of gang violence around anymore and having a place in the hood and it being like, "Oh yeah, we're taking our students to college", when we're being that extra hand that gives students the opportunity to find something else rather than graduate or maybe not even graduate and do something worse.

DER: Do you believe this is something that should be needed in every community, except like other than this community? I'm talking about different areas like, for example where I'm from LA, so like do you think places like there, other places in the state, everywhere else in the world? What do you think?

KS: I think it is necessary because a lot of the students do benefit from it. I mean, from my story, a lot of students are able to do the same thing but in a different way and just take the same opportunities as what I had. I know BLCI is actually expanding. We also have another site in Chula Vista and we're going to get another one in San Ysidro. Yeah, so we're growing.

DER: Grind don't stop.

KS: it never does.

DER: Yeah, so what do you feel is the importance of first-generation Latinx students to go to college and university?

KS: I just think that it's a great place to learn a lot about yourself and just to be able to see something different that your parents might have not been able to tell you about or experience and also for your parents to see like, through your eyes, what your life is and just being able to communicate that to older relatives or like even when I tell my Grandma she's like, “¿porque estas alli[why are you there]?”, like “Why are you so studying?” or “You study too much.” and like just things like that and it makes me laugh all the time, but at the same time, it's like dang that generation gap, but at the same time, I start thinking like when I'm older and when I have my career and everything and if I'm helping my kid like I'll actually be able to help them because I got an education or because of this or because of that. So, it's just pretty crazy of seeing like how my parents couldn't do that for me and BLCI was there to help me and to tutor me and to mentor me.

DER: Nice and such as, like you being a mom of BLCI in many cases, what do you usually say for younger generations of first-gen Latinx students? Like what are some of the important quotes you'd say or the important life lessons in many cases... like even if it were like the incoming classes, what will usually be the first thing you would say?

KS: I would really just say to work hard. There's nothing else to it. If you're inspired and you're motivated to do something that, you know, exceeds your limits, it's a great place to start because being uncomfortable is where growth is and you're never going to find that if you keep being comfortable and to just be open-minded about a lot of things.

DER: Is that how you perceive that yourself?

KS: Yeah. I was very open-minded with a lot of things and just willing to do anything to succeed.

DER: Is that something that you would've wished you would learn earlier as a child?

KS: Yeah. But, at the same time, I've kinda always been open-minded. Only with certain things, I'm close-minded, but not everything. But yeah, it was more of just.... I remember my mom always telling me like "echale ganas [Give it your best]" like stop being hard-headed, like get your stuff together, because it's always tough love in the house.

DER: Hard-headed? What you mean by hard-headed?

KS: Hard-headed like... like me not giving a chance to something. For example, like I played soccer for a long time and I got bored of it. And my mom, one day, was like, "Why don't you try basketball?", and I was like, "Nah, maybe not.", like, I was like, "No, I don't think so.", and she was like, "No, I'm going to put you in it.", I was like okay and I ended up loving it.

DER: Yeah, that's a common one for us Latinos. You kind of get put into everything and your just like, "No, I don't want to do it" and it's like, "Nope, you're going to do it.", and it's like "Okay, nevermind."

KS: That was with BLCI like my mom was like, "Nope, you're going to do it."

DER: Really?

KS: Yeah.

DER: Wait, your mom or...?

KS: My mom, yeah. So, we found out about BLCI through a family friend who like we basically consider family and her daughters went through the program and one of them is actually my grandmother right now. Yeah, but we found out through her and she was like, “You should put Krystal into this program. It's great, they'll get her to college, and they'll help her with homework and just things like that” and my mom was like, “Okay, Imma do it” and so my mom like she told me about it and I was like, “Really, Mom? I'm already busy as it is like, do we need to add something else?”, and she was like yes and I was like, “Alright cool. Thanks, Mom.”

DER: Looking back, do you regret it?

KS: No, not at all. I'm glad she did that to me.

DER: Is that the same for basketball?

KS: Yeah, I'm glad she put me in basketball because I was already tough, but I got tougher. Yeah, I mean, at some point, I did broke my nose.

DER: Really?

KS: Playing basketball, yeah.

DER: How?

KS: It was during a co-ed game actually and I was... the ball had just like... I forgot how it happened, but the ball was rolling on the ground and I was running to it, trying to grab it, and one of the guys just elbowed me in the nose and yeah. And I didn't even realize I had broken my nose like literally one of my teammates was like, “Oh my God, there's blood on the floor!”, and I was like, “Oh crap, oh that's from me!” Yeah, my coach was like, “Oh my god, Krystal!” and I mean it was funny, but I was like in pain.

DER: It's like, “It's my nose, come on!”

KS: Yeah, yeah. But it was a fun experience to have. I didn't ...yeah it hurt a lot, but it was okay.

DER: Tough cookie I guess, tough cookie.

KS: Yeah, it was fine.

DER: Alright, back to the real world. So yeah, I just want to say so after all we talked about: so the biography of Krystal Salas, the work you do at BLCI, the impact for these kids, and the importance of them to make it to college, what would you want your legacy to be for the future generations of first-gen Latinx students, whether Barrio Logan, California, or even the world, what would you want your legacy to be or say?

KS: More of just being true to who you are and making sure that you go with your gut and going through experiences, like I said before, with an open mind and just seeing how much of an impact you can have on one individual can do a lot for them. Not only like with BLCI academically, but emotionally and at some points there's gonna to be times where like yeah, you fall down, but there's no way else going but up so you always just gotta push through everything that you go through and just not dwell much on what your past has been, but what the future holds for you.

DER: Is that what you tell your kids all the time?

KS: Yeah, pretty much. I, at least, tell them you know it may be hard now, but it'll be a lesson for you to keep in mind when you get older cuz you might not realize it right now, at the moment.

DER: Alright, so yeah. Is there anything that you'd like to add in terms of for the audience whoever has to hear it in the future Like anything cause... so my interview was to bring the importance of first-generation Latinx students, especially those who are in BLCI, as I've experienced many times coming here. And kind of the importance it is towards the community of

low-income and how it is a strong priority and importance, most times an importance, for them to go to college, so that way they can become better people in the world; they can break the social barrier of Latino students shouldn't be at full success in many cases that... in many cases they should just stick to low-income jobs, the same way that their parents have been raised by and all that kind of stuff. So, in terms of that, is there anything that you want to add for any stories or any lessons you've learned from people from your past?

KS: I guess just... you know a lot of people tell me, "Anyone can make it to college." and I'm like, "No, that's not... that was never a thing in my household. College was never something that we talked about at the dinner table.", or it wouldn't... like I don't even know what college was until I got to BLCI and I didn't think that I would make it to college. And just to see how much I've gone from when I was a kid in third grade and like kinda falling asleep in class to now like just thinking of everything that has happened and just seeing how much, even for my parents, to like become more educated about... about college and...

DER: Please excuse the ruckus for anyone listening to this interview. So, you were saying...?

KS: Yeah. And just a matter of just, you know, being in tune with yourself and making sure you learn from the lessons that you failed on because learning obviously never stops but when you come from a household when... sorry.

DER: So, you were saying about when you were coming from a household...

KS: Yeah, so when you come from a household where college isn't really talked about, it kind of puts your mind in a different place and you kind of feel alone about it because you don't know who to go to. And back in elementary school, none of the kids I was with, because I went to a school that was in the hood, like no one really knew obviously where they're gonna go. But my mom was like, "You know, we're going to take you to a better school up north. We're going to

take you to those rich areas where education is better.” And because my mom did that, my graduation was full of practically all of the students going to college and when I went to my best friend's graduation in high school... of high school, not even half her class was going to college. The majority of them were either gonna go off to the military, which is obviously not a bad thing, but it was more of like seeing how much of a distance there was in San Diego and seeing the lives, like the two worlds completely different and it's like I didn't realize it then but, at the same time, like my best friend is like, you know, she now lives on her own and she doesn't have... she wants to go to college, but she didn't get the fundamentals to get there and it's like she's kind of like living through me as I go through college and at some points it's hard for me to see her like not being able to do what she wants and just being able to just go at it with reality, but, you know, you're put in a position where you can only do so much for them and seeing how much of *that might have been me if my mom would have never put me out of a school that was in the hood and put me into another school that was up north* and so that's why like I said in a house where college isn't talked about; now, I talk about it all the time because I'm in college, so it's fun to see like the way my parents react when I'm talking about certain things that I've learned in class or just them seeing how much learning I still have to do. So, it's the whole dynamic of the dinner table has changed dramatically throughout the years, but it's at a good place.

DER: Alright, are there any clarifications to like to make in terms of what you've talked about, in terms of the interview?

KS: No.

DER: Alright so then, that will conclude our interview. Again, it is May 2nd, 2019 and my name is David Rodriguez and this is the conclusion of my interview at the Barrio Logan College Institute with Miss Krystal Salas. And so, thank you for your time.

KS: Thank you.