

Detainee Allies Oral History Project, UC San Diego

Narrative name: Saul Alejandro Miranda Cardenas

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My name is Saul Miranda Cardenas, A UCSD student taking Race & Oral History of San Diego,

Course: HIUS 120D

It is May 21, 2019

I am going to read letters from Luis, who is in Otay Mesa detention center, who he writes to Otay Allies, now known as Detainee Allies.

Hi Otay Allies, it's a pleasure to meet you again. First, thank you for the support you are giving us and may God bless you with this brief greeting.

You asked me in the previous letter certain points, I will answer with pleasure.

Do you have access to the computer? R / Yes, we have access to the computer only to type, because they only have a program to type and does not have internet.

Are writing materials provided? R / No

Pens, envelopes, stamps, notebooks, but we buy them since they do not provide us that

What can be sent inside a package? I asked an officer and they told us they can not send us anything, only what is in the police station, you can only send money and we can buy from inside.

What should you buy and what do they provide? In hygiene they only provide soap and shampoo, but the soap and shampoo they give us causes us dandruff and grains, and we are forced to buy that.

Do you have basic information on how to represent yourself? Yes, there is a program called elogpi* that gives us advice, but it is difficult to receive a call from that program, I noticed since the beginning, and I'm on my way for my 2nd court meeting, but they have not called me yet.

Do you have yard time or time outside? Yes, we have specific hours to go to the yard; the yard is a small place of 74 meters to play basketball, and on Wednesdays we leave at 10:00 am to a small soccer field.

Can you listen outside? Yes, only listen

Can you listen when there are demonstrations? Yes, but if it is during yard time, they remove us from the yard and lock us up, again.

Can you see outside? I can only see some mountains and a few trees on Wednesday, there is nothing else.

That is the answer to your answers. Thank you for communicating. I hope for another answer and thank you for supporting all of you as an organization, thanks for helping us in our struggle, may God bless you today and tomorrow.

Note; I'm sorry for my writing, but I'm in a little pain in my right arm! Thanks for everything!
Sincerely, Luis

Hello Kimberly,

My name is Luis. I am a young man of 19 years old, it was very hard for me now that I am 19 years old on May 05 last year, it was very difficult since I was arrested and brought to Otay Mesa detention center. I am a Salvadoran national, I am very studious and hardworking, in El Salvador I studied up to 3 years in high school specialized counter technician in: Assistant Accountant and Business Administration.

I came to the border with the caravan group, because I did not know Mexico and this was my first time in the United States. I left the violence and discrimination in El Salvador that I experienced daily, and for the lack of support for young people, and I did not come with family.

I want the world to know that

"The Migrants, we are:

The hope of our families

The hope of our Countries

The hope of a better society

The hope of a better world

We are the hope that does not stop shining

We are a light that never ceases to illuminate

Roads forces and above all, Lives
And we are not what President Trump believes”

I would like the world to know, no matter how it is published, you can take all my information even my photograph, what I want is to make aware that we as migrants are not a danger to society.

My experience as a detainee is very hard, but I am willing to suffer, because there is no other option, because I am afraid to return to my country.

Can you receive visitors? Yes, I can receive visitors, but I do not have anyone who can visit me. Can you make calls? Yes, I can make calls locally. Do they give medical care? Yes, they give medical care but there are very angry doctors. Is the food enough? !No! There is very little food they give and the food we receive is sometimes in poor quality, especially: flour tortillas, salads, drinks and the food is poor quality. Do they treat you with respect? !No! In this detention center there are many officers who are very aggressive to answer and a friend recently received a very aggressive treatment and we do not deserve that.

Thanks for everything Kimberly for writing since your words have given encouragement to my life, thank you for everything, I send you many kisses, a rain of hugs and a flood of blessings, thank you for everything, thanks for being my family

Sincerely, Luis