

# VOCES **S**IN FRONTERAS

**O**UR STORIES **O**UR TRUTH

*PREVIEW*



**TRUE COMICS FROM THE  
LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH CENTER**



# INTRODUCTION

This Preview serves as a window into the process and production of *Voces Sin Fronteras: Our Stories, Our Truth*. Over the course of the summer in 2017, a group of sixteen teens from LAYC's Latino Youth Leadership Council participated in an intensive writing and comic book workshop led by story coaches from Shout Mouse Press and professional comic book artists from the Washington, DC area.

The teen authors began by defining their mission, audience, and messages for this collection, and then worked on a prose story that aligned with those themes and goals. They were then coached in the comic book making process, going from the original story to scripts and storyboards to pencils and inks and, finally, to finished pages.

The next four pages of this book show the evolution of one page from one teen cartoonist's story, from initial notes to finished art. The rest of the book previews each author's work, including a short bio and a page from their final comic.

Check out each artist's unique style, and get a glimpse of their story. We know it will leave you ready to read the whole book!

Stay tuned for book launch in Spring 2018.

*Figure practice from one of the teen cartoonists.*



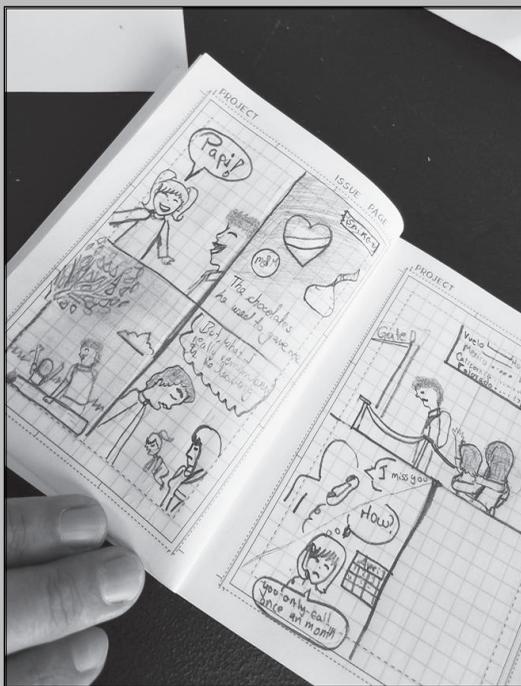
# STORY

The teens' stories were broken down into beats - an overall flow for the comic book pages in order to make sure that they weren't trying to convey too much or too little in their comic:

- *Begin with mother saying, "Your father's here."*
- *I look out and see him. Memories of good times. Memories of sad times (he separated from mother, became distant, etc.)*
- *I open door with mixed emotions.*
- *We embrace. He invites me to NYC with him.*
- *I hesitate but mother tells me to go, I should know father.*
- *Scenes from NYC trip.*
- *Dad asks me to stay with him in NYC.*
- *Tough conversation. Why did he leave? How can we make up 11 years in one week?*
- *I decide to go back to my mother because of respect for her, and because of my dreams.*
- *Ending with my dreams for myself in this new world.*

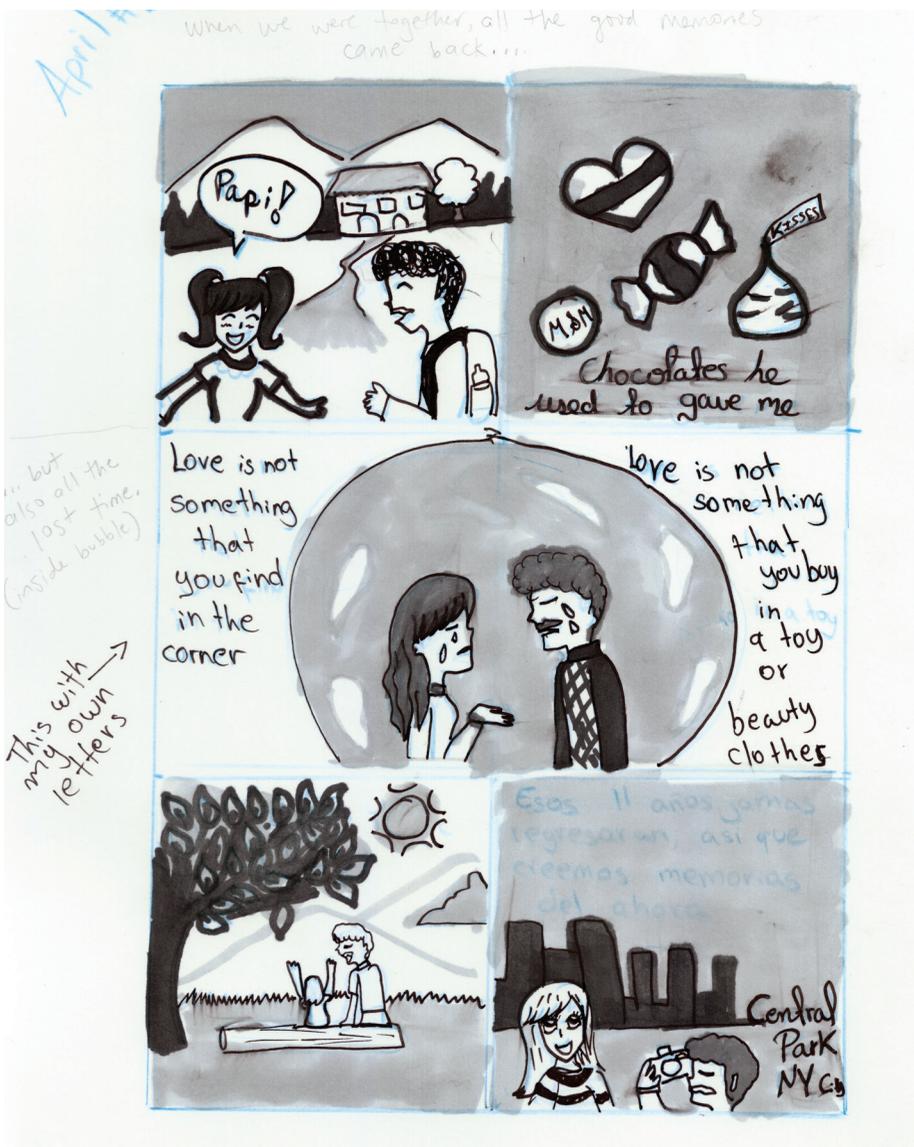
# STORYBOARD

From these beats, the teens then drew thumbnails, quick illustrations that represented how they wanted their comics to look. This helped them pace their stories over eight pages and receive feedback from the cartoonists before starting on their final pages. They created 'thumb books' for their thumbnails, using graph paper and standard graphite pencils.



# DRAFT

The teen artists recreated their thumbnails (with suggested edits) on bristol board using blue line pencils, Micron markers for inking, and Copic gray markers for shading.



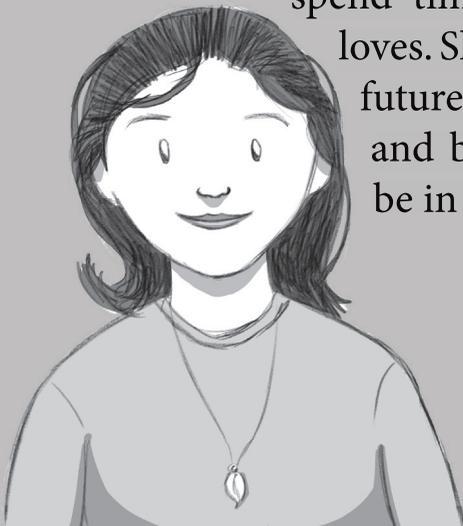
These pages were then scanned and digitally finished in both English and Spanish. The rest of the book shows samples of finished English pages.



# COMING OUT OF THE BUBBLE

BY APRIL

April is a tenth grader in Washington, DC. She is from El Salvador. She likes to watch anime, read, draw, and spend time with the people that she loves. She also plays the drums. In the future, she wants to go to university and be an English teacher and to be in a band.



# PREVIEW

WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER,  
ALL THE GOOD MEMORIES  
CAME BACK



ALL OF THE SWEET THINGS

Love is not  
something  
that  
you find  
in the  
corner

BUT ALSO, ALL THE  
LOST TIME



love is not  
something  
that  
you buy  
in  
a toy  
or  
beauty  
clothes

THOSE 11 YEARS WOULD NEVER COME BACK, SO WE  
STARTED MAKING NEW MEMORIES.



WE EXPLORED!

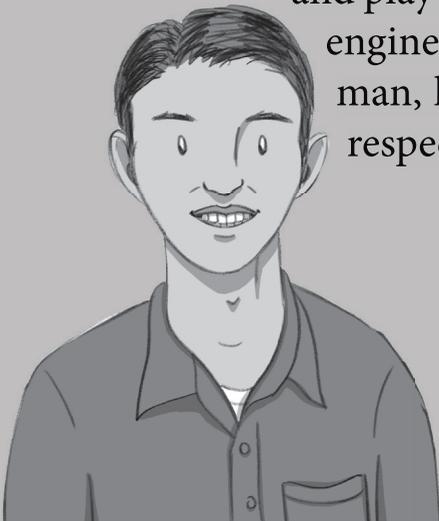




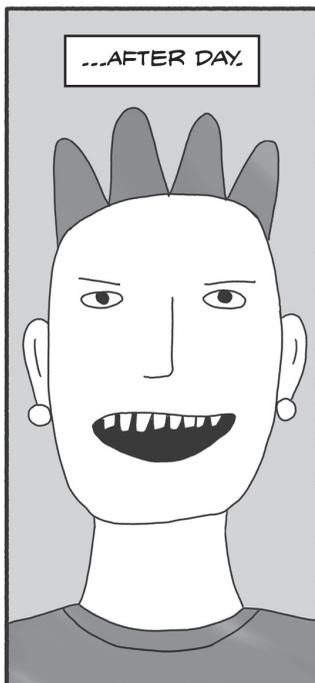
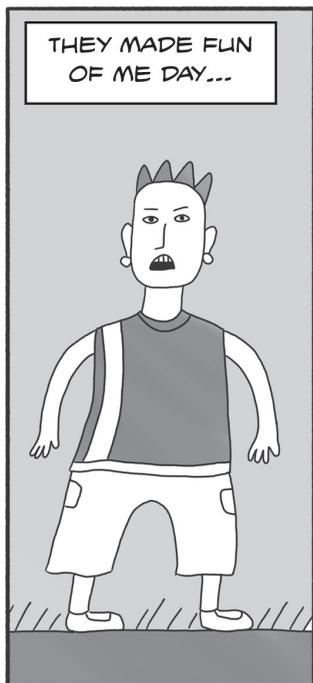
# To BE MYSELF

By JJ

JJ is a sixteen-year-old sophomore in high school. He is from El Salvador. He likes to read, listen to music, and play badminton. He wants to study engineering. JJ is an inquisitive young man, hungry for knowledge, and he respects the power of education.



# PREVIEW





# BLACK BUTTERFLY

By ROSA

Rosa is nineteen years old. She just graduated from high school and is going to major in biology in college so she can pursue a medical career. Rosa likes to cook and watch movies - a lot of movies.

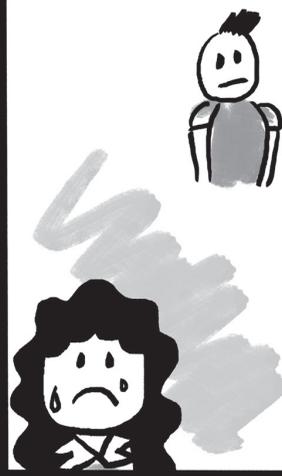


# PREVIEW

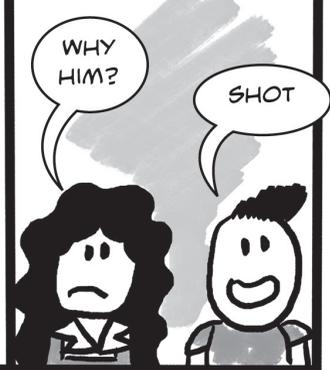
MOM WOULDN'T  
TELL ME HOW  
DAD DIED...



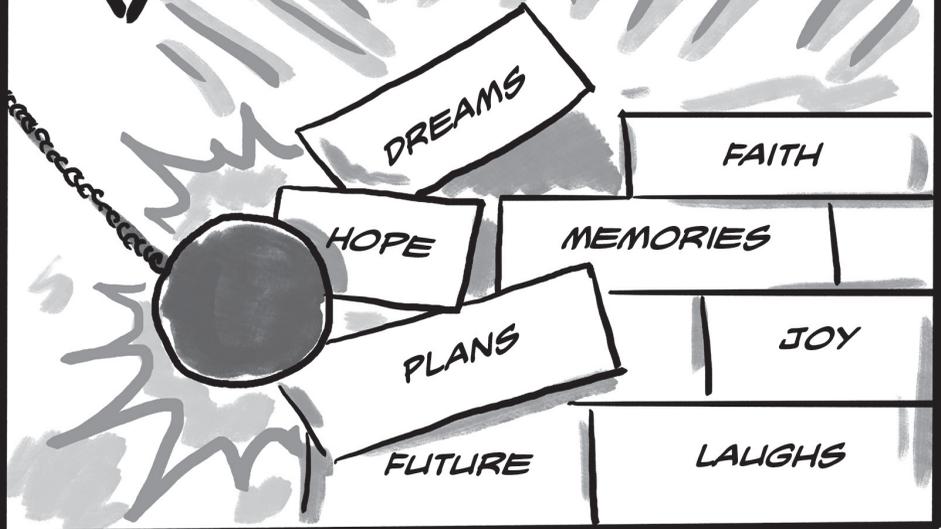
...BUT THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
KIDS HAD NO  
PROBLEM  
LETTING ME  
KNOW.



THEY DESCRIBED  
WHAT HAPPENED  
TO MY FATHER WITH  
LOTS OF DETAILS



# BOOM!





# BROKEN PIECES

**BY BRENDA**

Brenda is a recent high school graduate. She is from El Salvador. She likes to spend time with her family and watch movies. She wants to go to college, possibly to study medicine or international business.

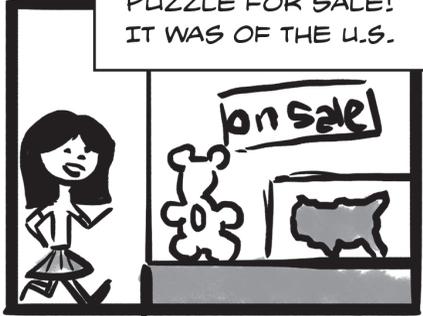


# PREVIEW

ONE DAY I WAS  
PASSING BY A STORE...



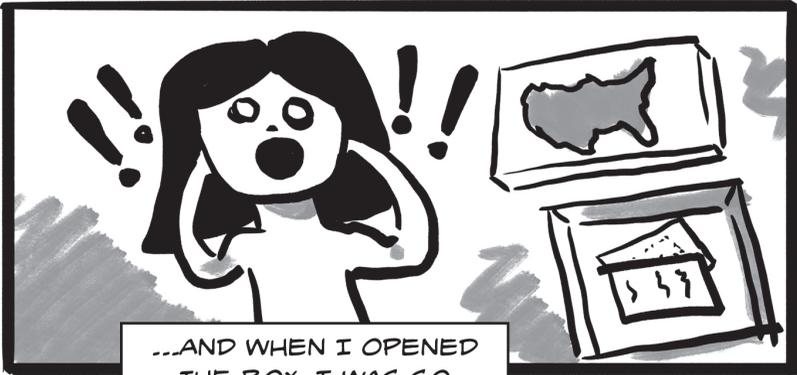
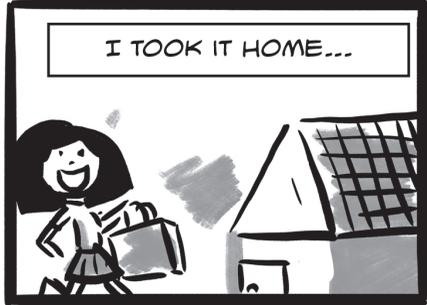
.... AND I SAW A  
PUZZLE FOR SALE!  
IT WAS OF THE U.S.



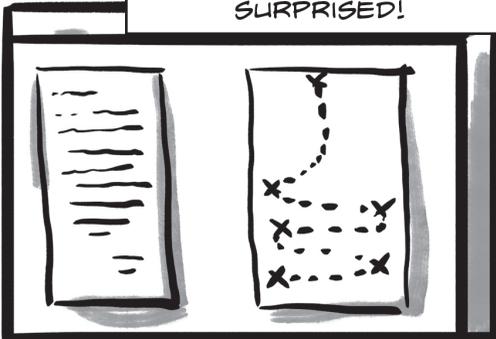
SO I WENT INSIDE TO BUY IT.



I TOOK IT HOME...



...AND WHEN I OPENED  
THE BOX, I WAS SO  
SURPRISED!



THERE WERE NO  
PUZZLE PIECES.  
ONLY A MAP AND A  
LETTER.



# HOPES NEVER DIE

BY SELENA

Selena is a freshman in college. She is from Mexico. She is studying social work and wants to become an immigration lawyer. Selena hopes her story encourages those who misunderstand the refugee situation to have compassion for children fleeing violence.



# PREVIEW

ONE AFTERNOON MY AUNT TOLD ME THAT MAMÁ ISIDRA WAS GOING TO PASS AWAY SOON.



AND THEN, THAT AFTERNOON, SHE DID.

MAY I HAVE WATER?



THOSE WERE HER LAST WORDS.





# LOOKING FOR HOPE

BY YECA

Yeca is in the tenth grade in Washington, DC. She is from El Salvador. She would like to get a scholarship to go to college and study to be a psychologist.



# PREVIEW

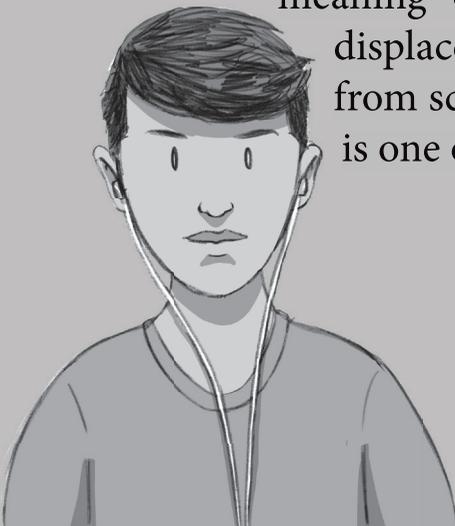




# YOUR PAST NEVER DEFINES YOUR FUTURE

BY ALEJANDRO

Alejandro is in the 11th grade. He is from El Salvador. Through his story, Alejandro wants to show the true meaning of sacrifice. Children being displaced by violence and starting from scratch is difficult. His message is one of hope and possibility for all.



# PREVIEW



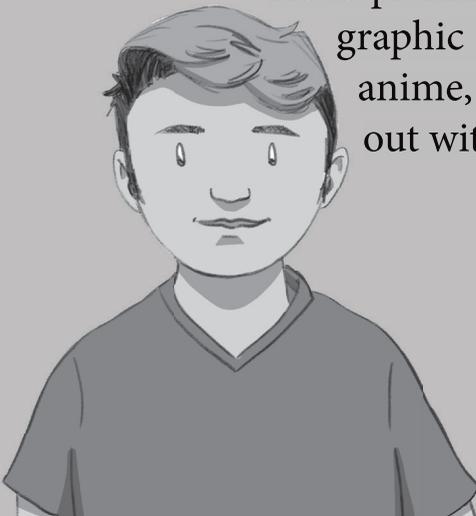


# YOU'RE NEVER GONNA BE ALONE

BY SEBASTIAN

Sebastian is eighteen years old and just graduated from high school in Washington, DC. He is from Ecuador.

He is planning to go to college to study graphic design. He likes to watch anime, play video games, and hang out with his friends and enjoy life.



# PREVIEW

MY FIRST MONTHS HERE, I WAS SO ALONE

IT WAS LONELY.



LET'S  
GO TO THE  
MOVIES.



DESPAIR





# **DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU TELL YOURSELF**

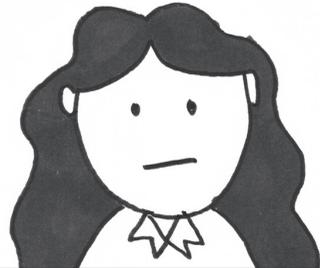
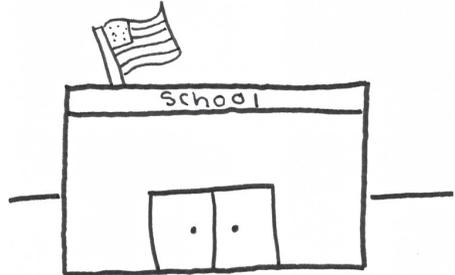
**BY TANIA**

Tania is an eleventh grader in Washington, DC. She is from Guatemala. Tania likes to act, and over the summer, she helped write and perform in a play with the Gala theater.



# PREVIEW

DURING CLASSES, I ALWAYS WANTED THE BELL TO RING SO I COULD GO HOME.



WHEN I WALKED HOME, I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT IT.

WHY DON'T I UNDERSTAND? I FEEL SO STUPID.



IF I WERE IN MY COUNTRY, EVERYTHING WOULD BE DIFFERENT.





# TO DIE DREAMING

BY TATO

Tato is an eighteen year old junior in high school in Washington, DC. He is from Honduras. He likes to skate. In the future, he wants to be a soldier.



# PREVIEW

THERE WAS ALSO A LOT OF VIOLENCE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD. MANY PEOPLE GOT HURT.

SOME GOT KILLED. AFTER A WHILE, I DECIDED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO ESCAPE

MY FATHER LIVED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF HONDURAS. BUT STILL THERE WAS VIOLENCE THERE.

I WAS ABLE TO MAKE IT TO MEXICO CITY. BUT I DIDN'T HAVE MONEY OR FOOD. I HAD TO SLEEP IN THE STREETS.



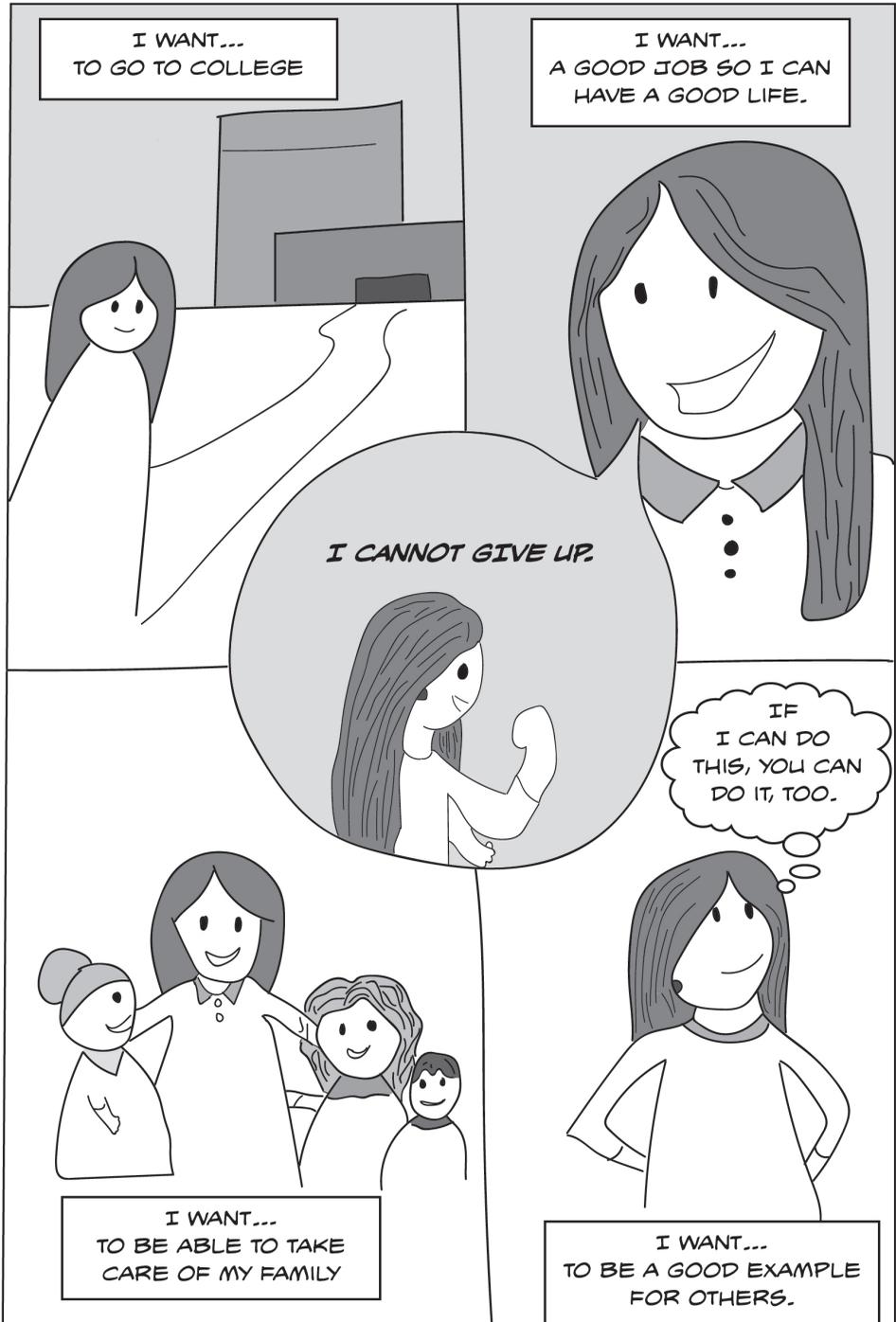
# BELIEVING In ME

By Anonymous

[This cartoonist] is a senior in high school in Washington, DC. She is from El Salvador. She likes to go to the beach and to parks. She would like to go to college and get a bachelor's degree so she can have a good job and take care of her family.



# PREVIEW





# Don't Lose The Time

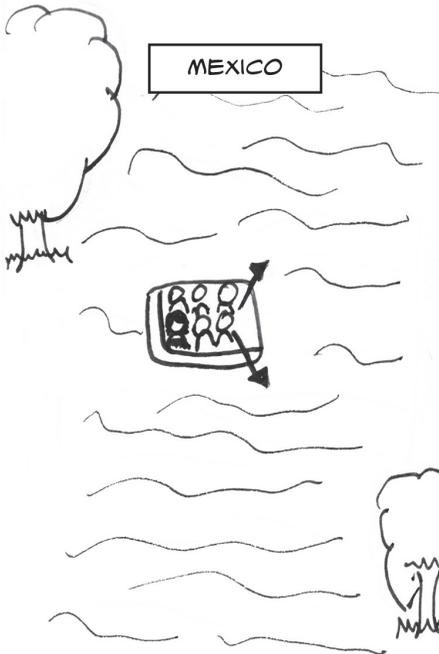
By LISA

Lisa is currently a senior in high school. She is from El Salvador. She wants to study psychology to help other young people overcome their fears and fight for their dreams. She hopes that sharing her own story can touch hearts and inspire others to write.



# PREVIEW

15 DAYS LATER.

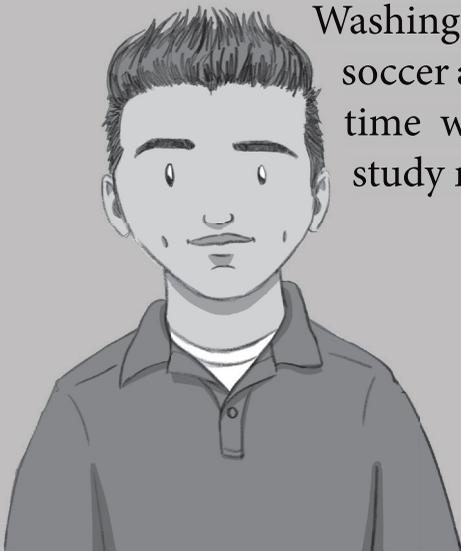




# 10 YEARS WITHOUT YOU

By Anonymous

[This writer] is nineteen years old, and he just graduated from high school. He is planning to attend college in Washington, DC. He likes to play soccer and video games and to spend time with his family. He wants to study mechanical engineering.



# PREVIEW

FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS, I ASKED HER, "WHEN WILL I SEE YOU AGAIN?"



SHE ALWAYS SAID, "SOON."

WHEN I GOT OLDER, SHE EXPLAINED TO ME THE REASON.

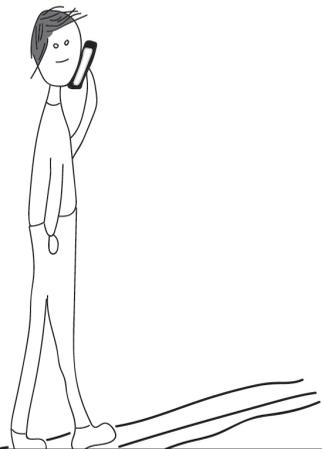


AND OVER THE YEARS, I GOT USED TO HER ABSENCE...

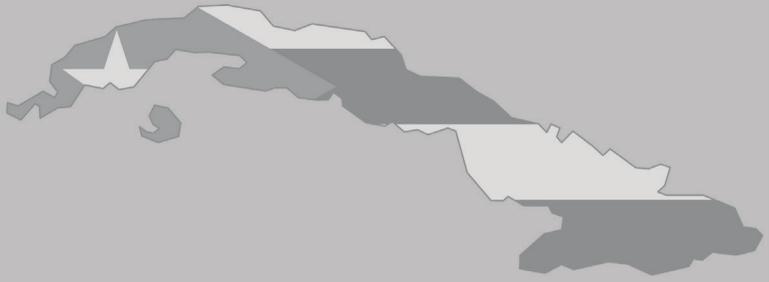


...BUT I FELT SADNESS IN MY HEART.

ONE DAY, SHE TOLD ME SHE WAS NEVER COMING BACK TO EL SALVADOR.



INSTEAD, I WOULD GO LIVE WITH HER IN THE US.



# SELF~ MOTIVATION

BY SAYLENIS

Saylenis is a sixteen-year-old eleventh grader in Washington, DC. She is from Cuba. She likes to learn and to listen to people. In the future, she would like to study math.

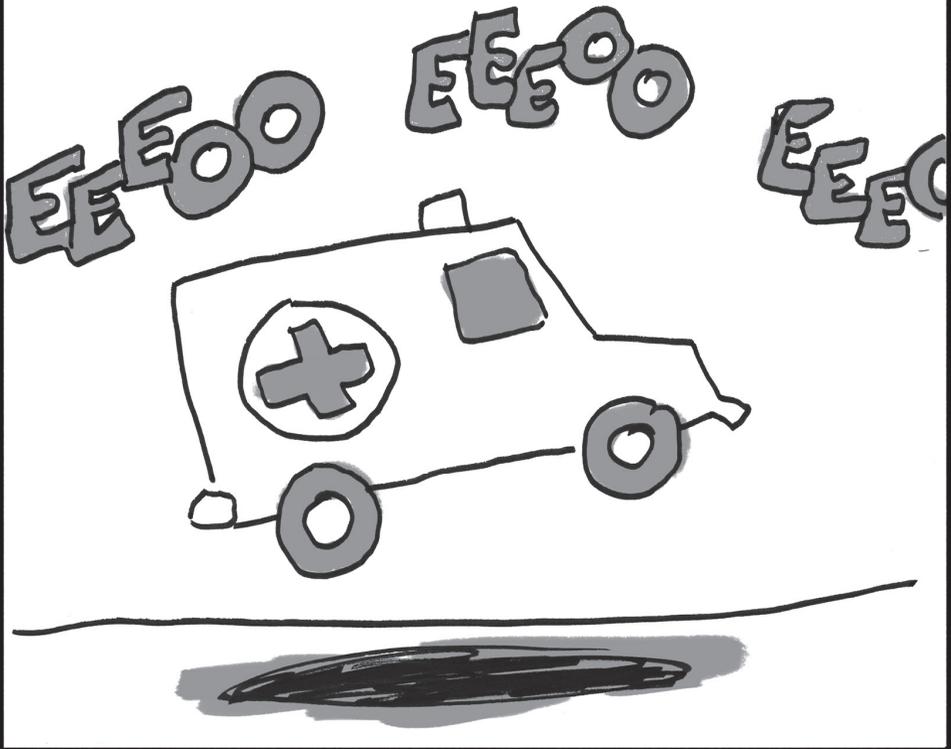


# PREVIEW

I'M GOING TO TAKE THESE PILLS SO I CANNOT FEEL ANYMORE.



I FEEL SICK...





# I CROSS BARRIERS TO CHANGE MYSELF

BY ERMINIA

Erminia is a senior in high school in Washington, DC. She is from El Salvador. She participates a lot in leadership programs. In the future, she would like to be an immigration lawyer.



# PREVIEW

IN EL SALVADOR, I WAS TORN BETWEEN THE COMFORT I FELT WITH MY FAMILY AND KNOWING THAT I WANTED TO SHINE BRIGHTER.

TOGETHER.

NO VALUE.





# LOST IN THE DARK

BY YESI

Yesi is in the eleventh grade in Washington, DC. She is from El Salvador. She likes to listen to music, watch movies, and spend time with friends. In the future, she wants to go to university and have a job related to health so she can help people.



# PREVIEW



# SHOUT MOUSE PRESS

Shout Mouse Press is a nonprofit writing program and publishing house for unheard voices. Through writing workshops that lead to professional publication, we empower those from marginalized backgrounds to tell their own stories in their own voices and, as published authors, to act as leaders and agents of change. Learn more at [www.shoutmousepress.org](http://www.shoutmousepress.org).

In partnership with other nonprofits serving communities in need, we are building a catalog of mission-driven books by unheard voices. Our authors have produced original children's books, novels, comics, and memoir and poetry collections that expand empathy, affirm the vulnerable, and increase understanding of unheard perspectives.

## LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH CENTER

The Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) is a DC-based nonprofit organization that offers a variety of programming to low-income youth of all backgrounds. Their mission is to empower a diverse population of young people to achieve a successful transition to adulthood, through multi-cultural, comprehensive, and innovative programs that address youths' social, academic, and career needs.

Since their founding in the late 1960s, LAYC has grown from a small grassroots recreation center to a nationally recognized agency serving all low-income youth. Each year, LAYC serves over 4,000 youth and families through youth centers, school-based sites, and public charter schools in the District of Columbia and Maryland's Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. Learn more at [www.layc-dc.org](http://www.layc-dc.org).

*We would like to thank the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities for generously supporting this project.*





# VOCES SIN FRONTERAS: OUR STORIES, OUR TRUTH

## PREVIEW

During the summer of 2017, Shout Mouse Press held a month-long workshop with the Latin American Youth Center's Latino Youth Leadership Council, a passionate group of young people dedicated to social justice in their community. The workshop, led by a team of teaching artists with experience devising and illustrating comic books, will result in a graphic memoir collection by Latinx youth that inspires, motivates, and educates its readers, and that changes the narrative about America's immigrants. This project is timely, ambitious, and a much-needed addition to current national discussions about who we are as a country.

The book will launch in Spring 2018. What you are holding now is a preview, containing a behind-the-scenes look at the comics production process and samples from each of the stories. Learn more about the project and pre-order the book at:

[www.shoutmousepress.org/layc](http://www.shoutmousepress.org/layc)

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For bulk orders, educator inquiries, and nonprofit discounts, email:  
[kathy@shoutmousepress.org](mailto:kathy@shoutmousepress.org).

