



reflections

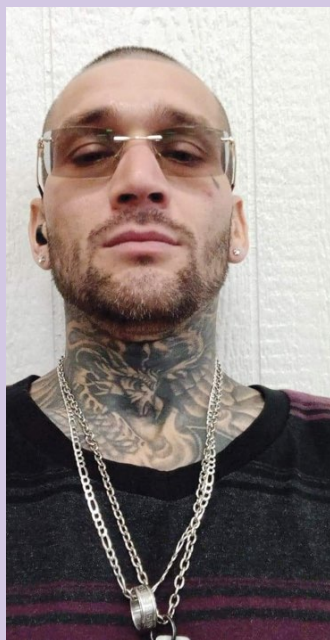
By José Colón



EDITOR'S NOTE: Kayla Miranda submitted these reflections written by a former Escuelita student.

A chance

It took me fourteen years to walk 20 steps forward, but a few minutes to take 20,000 back. I battle it all in under my shell then the smallest thing makes me crack. My whole life i've had these wounds that have never quite had time to heal. I use people around me as band-aids, overtime i have created a shield deep down. I feel unwanted, alone and inadequate amongst many other things—yet, I try to hold my head up high, carrying myself like a king. Rejection is a tough pill to swallow. What's wrong with me? I ask. Abandonment is no stranger. We were even closer in the past. I dislike being vulnerable so I prefer to be by myself. Unfortunately, my worst energy takes over my mind when I'm sitting alone in my cell. Love could have changed my life—if, i had got some as a little boy. Instead, i got sent out to wolves in the world....



Many lives have been impacted by those who've seen potential in someone in need of a nudge in the right direction. We call these individuals who seem to take notice when no one else cares, the "human compass". The Human Compass, not only to bring new meaning to a lost person's life—but create an environment where broken relationships may find healing. In a closed off environment like prison, we find ourselves on the spectator's end of another person's torment. Once we escape our bonds do we shine a light by reaching out to those who are in obvious turmoil, or are we too busy thanking God that is not us anymore? It's not a mistake to give room for improvement. Choose today to be a light in the darkness, to guide those in need of direction, choose today—to be a human compass...

our mask

Let's talk about the mask that many of us wear
The mask that makes us look and act a certain way

You know, the mask
Hidden behind the mask are mixed emotions
Some that we may have never felt
Rejection ,disappointment, fear ,violation, sadness, disrespect , anger and so many more.
Today, I would like to encourage you to take off that mask and stand up!
Stand up in freedom
Freedom to know it is okay for you to feel the way you do.
Yes, it is...but it is not okay to take it out on others around you
Nor, is it okay to act on those feelings
Feelings change every second, but the consequences last a lifetime.
Feelings will have you trying to prove yourself to others when, in fact, they have on a mask
Who are you trying to impress?
So, take a stand and take off the mask...

José Colón, is currently incarcerated and is seeking redemption once he's out of prison.

power of the pen

I was 22 years old when I picked up the pen
When it leaks i see people cry and people laugh
The pen is the most powerful weapon
It can keep you locked down or lead to enlightenment .
Within the pen dreams are envisioned
The pen can build relationships or destroy family and friends
At times it's unfair and ruthless in the wrong hands
When you see it, you learn to obey its commands.
The man behind the pen can turn a kid in to a monster
Or teach a parent how to be a man or a father
The ammo in my pen is about out .
It runs dry until there is none
I look all around me.
It's amazing how much power you can find in the pen

the human compass

Some of us are in prison because we lost ourselves somewhere in the notorious street life, indulging in the popular vices such as money, sex and drugs that lead to addictions. For some, prison has become a safe haven, protecting them from further harm to themselves and their loved ones. For others, they have discovered that they fit right in with like-minded people, continuing in harming others. From the rough terrain of street life to wandering aimlessly through life—becoming lost in the process. For those of us who claim to have "been there and done that". When you were a lost boy, I'm sure your path to perdition entailed a person or two who cared enough to intervene.



Kayla Miranda with José Colón and other Escuelita Buena Gente at an Esperanza event.