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Que Ondee Sola - February 2014

Alyssa Villegas

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QOS

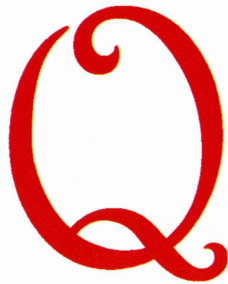
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Misión

Que Ondee Sola was established in 1972 and remains the oldest Puerto Rican & Latina/o university students publication in the United States. Our mission is to provide the NEIU community with a relevant and engaging publication that deals with student issues with a focus on Puerto Rican and Latinas/os, our communities, and our patrias.

Que Ondee Sola continues to affirm the right of Puerto Rican self-determination, freedom for all Puerto Rican political prisoners, and support for a truly participatory democracy.

We appreciate and encourage suggestions and contributions.
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Celebrating Julia de Burgos

February 17th marked the 100th birthday of iconic Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos. Julia's poetry was deeply influenced by her experiences of being involved in the independence movement and as a feminist. During her later years in life, she was influenced by the Puerto Rican diaspora in Spanish Harlem, New York City where she spent the last years of her life.

Despite the fact that her work is a staple in Puerto Rican art and culture, as well as literature as a whole. In my experience as a student, I have never been formally taught her works or even taught her influence on Puerto Rican history. None of my students at Roberto Clemente Community Academy have heard her name even though her portrait adorns a wall in the school.

As we celebrate her 100th birthday, I believe it important to keep the lack of representation of Latin@ women in our curriculums. In a setting where history and culture are continuously white washed, it is vital that our young people are able to see versions of themselves and their lived experiences incorporated in their education. Julia and artists like her have the ability to speak to the hearts and minds of young people while they are hungrily searching for their identity. Julia's poetry has been instrumental in my continued engage-

ment in my community and my ability to articulate my experiences as a Puerto Rican woman. By offering youth literature that encompasses community and resilience, it can inspire youth to engage in conversations of community involvement.

Julia's life was truly inspiring and her art allows her legacy to live on. However, her death is equally important. Like many Latin@s, Julia suffered from mental health issues and alcoholism. These are issues that deeply affect our community yet are seemingly ignored in high schools and universities. Julia de Burgos' biography could be used as a tool to discuss detriment of ignoring mental health and substance abuse. The ignorance of Puerto Rican/Latin@ women in education greatly affects the formation of identity for young women and men. Young people are taught to believe that people of color did not write astounding literary works, did not create extraordinary art, did not direct and write film. Matter of fact, students at Columbia College Chicago have begun to challenge the lack of people of color in their film department's curriculum. "Diversification" or labeling a campus a "Hispanic Serving Institution" do not solve the core problems in education. It doesn't automatically force educators to show their students

people who look like them in history. It doesn't force universities to have extensive courses that teach youth about important women like Julia de Burgos.

Julia de Burgos has inspired me to articulate my struggles as a Puerto Rican woman in the diaspora. Her poetry made me realize the importance of resilience and community. My knowledge of Julia de Burgos and powerful women like her has formed my strong identity a woman. She has been important to me life and the way I talk about abuse and total health. Had I been given a poem written by Julia six years ago I might've felt more connected to learning and thought twice about abusing drugs.

It is important to celebrate Julia de Burgos this year, read her poetry, learn about her life, and think critically about our influence on the education of our youth. How important is it to us that our young people are represented in their education? How important is it to us to have conversations about health with our students? Challenge yourself and others to consider these questions.

For now:
Happy birthday, Julia.

College Pipeline Celebrates 1st Semester Achievements!



NEIU mentors Becky and Alyssa distribute certificates to their students.

On December 18th, a group of 65 freshman and senior students from Roberto Clemente Community Academy (RCCA) celebrated the completion of the first semester of the 2013-2014 school year. It marked a successful completion of the freshman's first semester, and for the seniors marked 3 1/2 years of their high school careers complete. The event was hosted by the College Pipeline, a program which mentors students through the fulfillment of their final year of high school and their first two years attending college. Mentors Alyssa Villegas & Rebecca Rios (NEIU), Maria Borrero (UIC), and Matt McCanna (Columbia College) distributed certificates of achievement amongst all seniors to highlight their hardwork and dedication through the first semester of their final year. Destiny Ares, a student in the Pipeline, and Sikarra Nicholas a student from Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos represented the Barrio Arts Culture Communications Academy (BACCA) to address the student body about the Anti Underage Drinking Campaign and reflected about their negative relationship with alcohol. After their reflection they performed spoken work and musical sets. To culminate the event professor Jose E. Lopez spoke about the importance of establishing a culture of excellence in the Humboldt Park community and stressed the weight of coming back to the community with the knowledge and skills they gain in college to help grow. The celebration took place in Batey Urbano to intersect RCCA with the community. Now with that historical memory, the students look forward to having their own events and critical discussions in the future.



Clemente freshmen discuss their thoughts on underage drinking.

On Wednesday, December 18th, a freshmen class of 15 students from Roberto Clemente Community Academy came to Batey Urbano to engage in a discussion about the history and purpose of the space as well as the Barrio Arts, Culture and Communications Academy. They will be working on a service learning project with the Anti-Underage Drinking Campaign. Students discussed their personal thoughts about drinking and talked in depth about some risks of drinking alcohol. Students expressed how alcohol influenced their personal lives as well as some of the reasons they thought drinking has become so prevalent in our communities. They also got to talk about community and how alcohol affects their individual lives as well as their communities. Through this service learning project, we hope that the students will have be more informed about the risks of alcohol and be better prepared to understand social problems and address them through social marketing techniques and skills they will learn.

Noche de Poetas

Dispersed people, New Identities

Noche de Poetas, a monthly poetry event, has become a safe platform to discuss issues that are important to students at U.I.C. On Thursday November 14th, the Union of Puerto Rican (UPRS), Mexican Students de Aztlan (MESA) and Students for Justice in Palestine (SFJP), joined forces to make the last Noche de Poetas event of 2013 one to remember. The theme of the night was “Dispersed People, New Identities”. NEIU alumni Luis Tubens was selected as the featured artist. Tubens made the topic of dispersed people come alive in theatric and performance poetry. The Puerto Rican poet paid tribute to the hard work of families in the community of Humboldt Park while also raising issues of racism and segregation suffered by many Latin@s in the United States. Between open mic performances and featured poets, unity among members of the audience grew, making Noche de Poetas a success!



Poet Luis Tubens performing during Noche de Poetas.

Journalist Stephen Kimber Visits UIC

In November journalist Stephen Kimber and attorney Jan Susler joined forces to describe 2 different cases of political imprisonment in the United States. For almost an hour both speakers were able to address some of the issues surrounding the case of the Cuban Five and Puerto Rican prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera. The Cuban Five were unjustly imprisoned in the United States by the FBI on Sept. 12, 1998 and convicted in U.S. federal court in 2001. In addition to discussing content analysis on each of the legal procedures of the Five, Stephen Kimber also stressed the importance of awareness and education regarding political prisoners. On the other hand, attorney Jan Susler discussed the case of Puerto Rican political prisoner, Oscar López Rivera, who has spent 32 years in prison. In 1981, López was convicted on federal charges, including seditious conspiracy – conspiring to oppose U.S. authority over Puerto Rico by force. The human rights issue of his case has pushed political action and different political leaders to organize in and out of the United States on his behalf. Both speakers were able to engage all 75+ audience members in critical thinking. More than 40 petitions for the liberation of Oscar Lopez Rivera were collected from the audience!



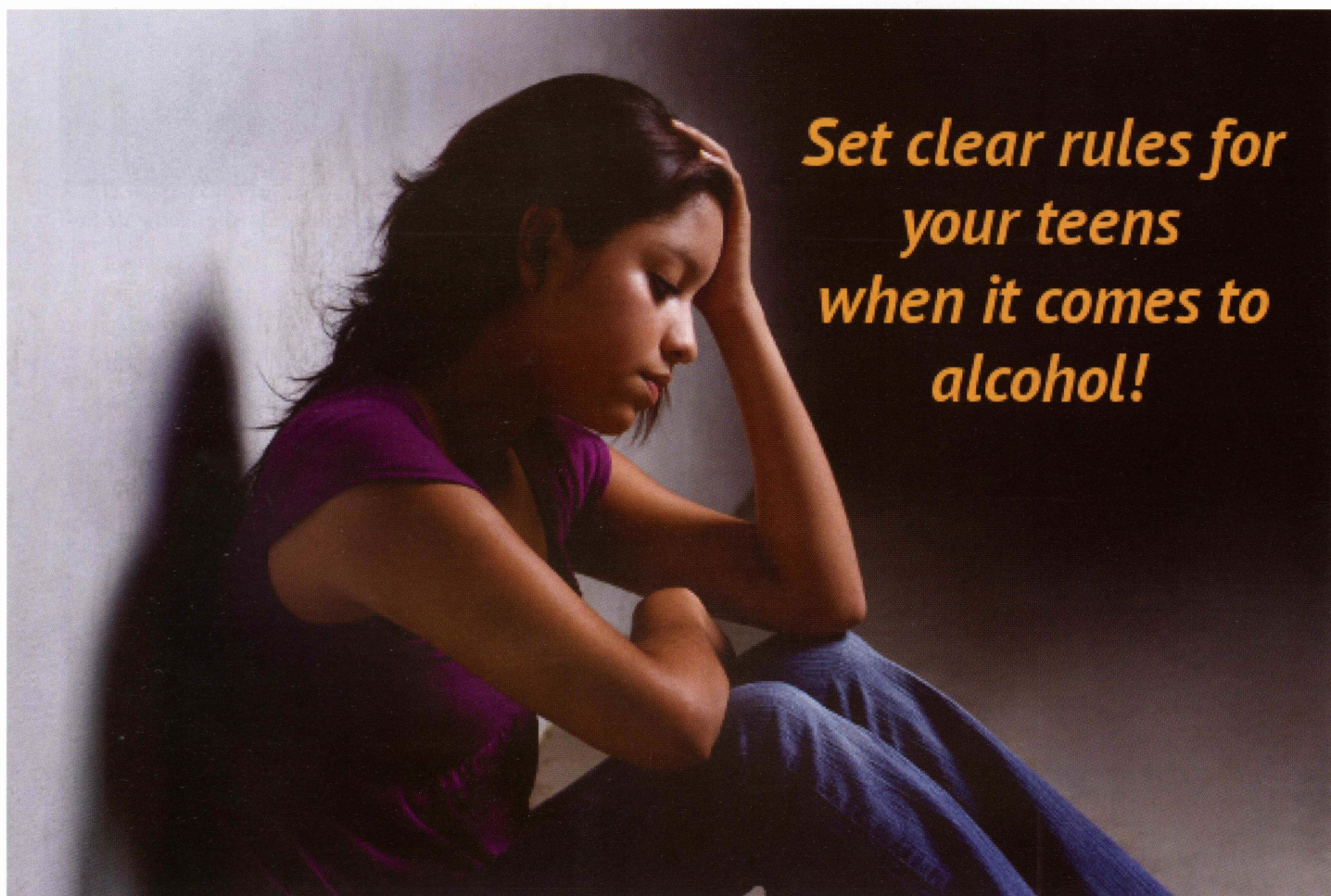
Journalist Stephen Kimber speaking about the Cuban Five.



Jan Susler speaking about Oscar Lopez Rivera.

"Complete disapproval of teen drinking by parents was the most protective, even more than when parents allowed a limited amount of alcohol consumption."

-National Public Radio, 2010



Set clear rules for your teens when it comes to alcohol!



B.A.C.C.A

Barrio Arts, Culture, and Communications Academy

This campaign is partially funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services

Art Corner: Jessie Iniguez

I am a twenty year old Mexican-American born on the south side of Chicago. I have been creating art since I was a toddler. I primarily draw and paint with a variety of materials including: acrylic paint, watercolor, pastel and collage on paper, canvas, and cardboard. I have had my artwork shown in exhibitions such as The L.I.S.A Show (The Great Frame Up) at the Thompson Center, and the "Chicago Public School All City Arts Show" at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

I have practiced my talent for art extensively throughout high school by joining the After School Matters and Gallery 37 Advance Arts Education Program. The staff of After School Matters gave me the resources to develop my

unique artistic style and build my portfolio. I am currently enrolled at Columbia College Chicago where I am studying as an Art and Design major. In this department I have had extensive experience with sculpture, digital photography, graphic design, and have been able to further develop my creativity in drawing and painting. I generally create artwork that is meant to blow the viewer away with vibrant depth, color, and texture.

The concept of my work deals with how people of color in urban communities view hope, even though their world can be dark and enclosed by the affects of oppression. This series is meant to express how spiritual Latin@s express their hopefulness through spirituality in the face of adversity.



Original art piece by Jesse Iniguez

Quote of the Month: Julia de Burgos



Don't let the hand you hold, hold you down.

Julia de Burgos was born on February 17th, 1917 in Carolina, Puerto Rico. De Burgos graduated from the University of Puerto Rico as a teacher. She worked at Feijoo Elementary School in Barrio Cedro Arriba of Naranjito, Puerto Rico. Julia also worked as writer for a children's program on public radio. Her love for literature led her to write poetry .

At age nineteen her first verses were published. Her best-known poem is "Río Grande de Loíza". De Burgos published several books including; Poemas Exactos de mí Misma, Poemas en Veinte Zurcos and Canción de la Verdad Sencilla. She received

several honors and homages before and after her death.

Julia was also an active member of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico). She served as the Secretary General of the Daughters of Freedom, a non-partisan women's organization which was the women's branch of the Nationalist Party.

De Burgos died on July 6, 1953 in New York. Julia has long suffered from depression and alcoholism. In 1946, de Burgos was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, the result of years of alcoholism. She also developed a papilloma on

her vocal cords and had to seek treatment in a variety of hospitals. She continued to be hospitalized for treatment of her alcoholism and her liver problems.

In July 1953, Julia was discovered unconscious on the street in Harlem and taken to the Harlem Hospital where she died. The coroner's certificate indicated that the cause of death was a pulmonary condition. Because de Burgos had no identification on her when she died, her body was buried in a public cemetery. A month after her death, the coroner's photograph of her body finally led to her identification.

Somos Puños Cerrados

Julia de Burgos

Somos huelga en los muelles
Nuestros brazos se cierran a
descargar los barcos.
La vergüenza del hombre no
resiste más tiempo
El insulto al trabajo.
Todos dicen que hay huelga en
los muelles,
Y nosotros decimos
Que hay mucho trabajo.
Nuestros brazos son astas que
Sostiene la lucha.
Nuestras mentes trabajan.
Nuestros pechos trabajan.
Nuestros puños trabajan.
¡Estamos descargando!...
Descargando los siglos de sus
Maquinas-hombre;
Ya no somos esclavos.
Descargando el horario
Capitalista;
El momento demanda el reloj de
las manos.
Sigamos camaradas,
Sigamos descargando
Del sistema que explota nuestras
masas
El esfuerzo de todos nuestros
brazos.
Lancemos la ofensiva
En un soberbio empuje proletario,
Nuestras mentes alertas,
Nuestros brazos parados,
Rechazando la carga de los
Muelles
Mientras el rico insista en
Explotarnos.
Continuemos la huelga,
Camaradas:
¡Ya no somos esclavos!
Anunciemos el grito presente:
¡Somos puños cerrados!

Canción de la Verdad Sencilla

Julia de Burgos

No es él el que me lleva...
Es mi vida que en su vida palpita.
Es la llamada tibia de mi alma
que se ha ido a cantar entre sus rimas.
Es la inquietud de viaje de mi espíritu
que ha encontrado en su rumbo eterna vía.

El y yo somos uno.
Uno mismo y por siempre entre las cimas;
manantial abrazando lluvia y tierra;
fundidos en un soplo ola y brisa;
blanca mano enlazando piedra y oro;
hora cósmica uniendo noche y día.

El y yo somos uno.
Uno mismo y por siempre en las heridas.
Uno mismo y por siempre en la conciencia.
Uno mismo y por siempre en la alegría.

Yo saldré de su pecho a ciertas horas,
cuando él duerma el dolor en sus pupilas,
en cada eco bebiéndome lo eterno,
y en cada alba cargando una sonrisa.

Y seré claridad para sus manos
cuando se vuelquen a trepar los días,
en la lucha sagrada del instinto
por salvarse de ráfagas suicidas.

Si extraviado de senda, por los locos
enjaulados del mundo, fuese un día,
una luz disparada por mi espíritu
le anunciará el retorno hasta mi vida.

No es él el que me lleva...
Es su vida que corre por la mía.

Se recogió la vida para verme pasar.

Canción de la Verdad Sencilla continued...

Me fui perdiendo átomo por átomo de mi carne
y fui resbalándome poco a poco al alma.

Peregrina en mí misma, me anduve un largo instante.
Me prolongué en el rumbo de aquel camino errante
que se abría en mi interior,
y me llegué hasta mí, íntima.

Conmigo cabalgando seguí por la sombra del tiempo
y me hice paisaje lejos de mi visión.

Me conocí mensaje lejos de la palabra.
Me sentí vida al reverso de una superficie de colores y formas.
Y me vi claridad ahuyentando la sombra vaciada en la tierra desde el hombre.

* * * *

Ha sonado un reloj la hora escogida de todos.
¿La hora? Cualquiera. Todas en una misma.
Las cosas circundantes reconquistan color y forma.
Los hombres se mueven ajenos a sí mismos
para agarrar ese minuto índice
que los conduce por varias direcciones estáticas.

Siempre la misma carne apretándose muda a lo ya hecho.
Me busco. Estoy aún en el paisaje lejos de mi visión.
Sigo siendo mensaje lejos de la palabra.

La forma que se aleja y que fue mía un instante
me ha dejado íntima.
Y me veo claridad ahuyentando la sombra
vaciada en la tierra desde el hombre.

Playwright Carmen Rivera Discusses Play “Julia de Burgos: Child of Water”

Can you give us some background on yourself? (Where you're from, how you came to be a playwright, etc)

I am New York born Puerto-Rican ...my parents were both born in Puerto Rico and came to live in New York City when they were 8 years old.

I've always loved writing and reading I began keeping a journal when I was 9 years old.

I believe I also started “play-writing” without even knowing I was doing the job. My favorite show as a child was “Lost in Space”. I used to dream of being on the show so I created a character for myself. Two of the characters on the show got married and had a little girl named “Lisa”, which was me. I even designed my own costumes!

My mother also began taking to me to the theatre at a very young age. There was lots of free theatre all over NYC in the 70s. Then for my twelfth birthday I asked me mother to take me to a Broadway show instead of having a birthday party. She said agreed and he took me to see “Grease”-my first Broadway show.

In college I discovered I truly loved writing. I had a professor that told me I already had a voice. And that's when I began seriously thinking of living my life as a writer.

It took a couple of years to finally become a writer. I worked at a Brokerage House and then in an Insurance Company. One day I finally had the courage to quit the Insurance Company and pursue writing in 1989, when I was 24 years old. I haven't looked back since.

Why did you chose to write Julia de Burgos: Child of Water?

It all began with a commission. I knew who Julia de Burgos was, her famous poems, “Río Grande de Loiza” and “A Julia de Burgos”, and that she had a tragic death. But once I delved into her life I really fell in love with her and her work. I was also humbled and astounded by the life she led. Despite all of the adversity and challenges she experienced, she never stopped creating. The words never stopped, even towards the very end of her life. It's unfortunate that many people do not know who she

was, even people of Puerto Rican descent. Her talent was great and her poetry still resonates today. I am very grateful that I was given the opportunity to write a play about Julia de Burgos and that through this play new generations are discovering who she was, her work , and the very dynamic life she led.

What does the play mean to you?

Writing the play “Julia de Burgos: Child of Water” was a very intense and sacred exploration into the world of a woman, whose genius was both a blessing and a burden to her. It has been and continues to be a significant experience for me both as a Writer and a Woman. Her story, although tragic, is also a story of determination and courage. Throughout all of the challenges Julia faced in her life, she never allowed the words to stop. And the poetry she created has outlived her mortal life to still inspire us today.

How do you feel your work embodies the spirit Julia de Burgos?

Although we write in different

Playwright Carmen Rivera Discusses...continued...

genres, it's all story-telling. I feel that she not only told the truth in her work but she was also brave, angry, confrontational, frustrated, defiant, depressed, hopeful, in love, in longing, and brokenhearted. She put all of her dreams and fears into her work. I've tried to do that with my writing. Sometimes I find myself a little fearful to go to certain places. In those moments I really do think of her and where she went with her writing; I take a deep breath and find the courage to dive in.

But I do believe there is a danger in existing in such raw places. I think if you cannot find your way back home, you will get lost in the abyss, never to return. That's what I believe happened to Julia.

What are your plans for the show for this year?

Right now the plans for the show are:

-Publication in English by Red Sugar Press, an independent press started by activist/filmmaker

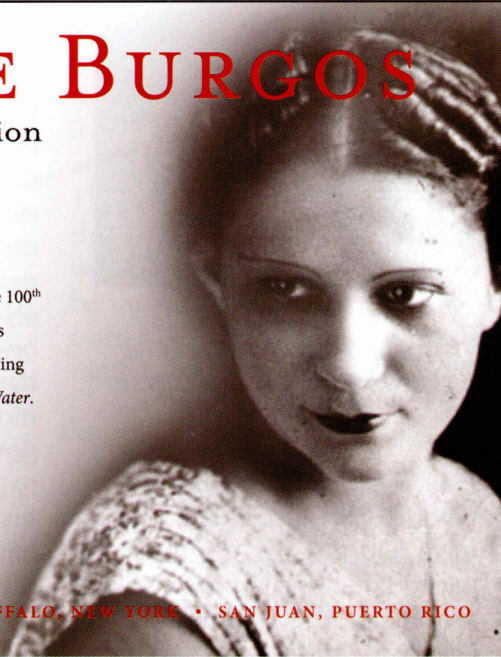
Iris Morales, in the spring of 2014 -Production at Baruch College, directed by Maria Torres, who directed Celia: the Life and Music of Celia Cruz, in May 2014 -Production in Chicago, by Urban Theatre Company, starring Jasmine Cardenas as Julia and directed by Sandra Marquez, in October 2014 -Production in Puerto Rico, starring Amneris Morales and Belange Rodriguez, in the fall of 2014

JULIA DE BURGOS

A Centenario Celebration

A unified event spanning four cities celebrating the 100th anniversary of one of Latin America's greatest poets born in Puerto Rico: Julia de Burgos. A choral reading of Carmen Rivera's play: *Julia de Burgos: Child of Water*.

NEW YORK CITY • CHICAGO • BUFFALO, NEW YORK • SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO



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NEW YORK CITY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16th at 4PM - in English
Teatro Círculo - <http://www.carmenrivera-writer.com>

CHICAGO

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17th at 7PM - in English
UrbanTheater Company - <http://urbantheaterchicago.org/>

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17th - in English
Raices Theatre Company - <http://raicestheatrecompany.com/>

PUERTO RICO

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17th - Translated into Spanish
Amigos del Corralón Inc. - Corralón de San José
<http://bit.ly/AmigosdelCorralónInc>

National Boricua Human Rights Network Reflect on National Meeting in New York City

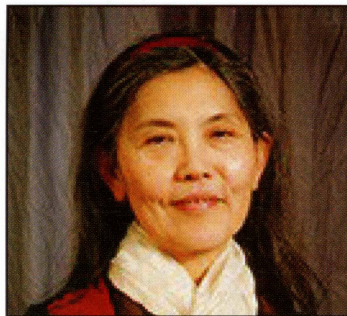
Juan "Nito" Morales

During the Martin Luther King weekend, the National Boricua of Human Rights Network (NBHRN) held a national meeting at El Maestro in the Bronx, New York City, New York. El Maestro is a community-based organization that promotes culture and sports for the surrounding area of the south Bronx. The name "El Maestro" is in reference to the popular name given to Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos due to his oratorical skills.

The purpose of the meeting was to strategize about the upcoming efforts in the United States to seek the freedom of the Puerto Rican patriot Oscar López Rivera. More than 50 representatives from the following cities attended; San Francisco, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New York, Hartford, New Haven, Massachusetts, and Orlando. Prior to the NBHRN meeting various youth from different universities met and mapped out ideas on how to engage universities students in the campaign. Alyssa Villegas representing Que Ondee Sola, and Rebecca Rios representing the Union for Puerto Rican Students (UPRS) were active participants. Two representatives from a monthly event "32 Women for Oscar",

Annette Diaz and Alida Millan Ferrer from Puerto Rico, one of the highlights of the meeting was the presentation by the 2 women.

During the meeting I was able to interview representative from various parts of the U.S., including the renowned Puerto Rican artist Miguel Luciano. The following are excerpts of those interviews:



*Nozomi Ikuta,
Minister at Church of Christ,
NBHRN Cleveland Chapter
Coordinator*

I met the other [former] prisoners before I met Oscar. All of them have had a really profound impact on me. As a Christian and as a minister, they confronted me, just by their life, with a question: What did I care about? What was I committed enough to risk going to jail for a long time or lay down my life for? I have never been in the armed forces. I've never been

a cop or firefighter. You know that in those kinds of jobs you routinely put your life on the line. And in the United States being a Christian, according to just going to church and stuff, is pretty easy. It doesn't involve risk. So it was actually meeting the former prisoners and Oscar that raised those [questions].

I have had the privilege of knowing Oscar and meeting him personally, [but you also] get a feel [for him] in the letters to Karina. Or when people talk about their time with him they start glowing... He is disciplined, brilliant, creative, caring, and compassionate. All of those things, and in ways that call us to be better people; call us to be our best selves, the way he tries to be his best self every day. He doesn't have to get up at four in the morning to do his exercise. He doesn't have to continue trying to paint in a rec room so cold his fingers freeze and the paint hardens. He doesn't have to do these things that he has continued to do to maintain himself to maintain his dignity and maintain his contributions. Anybody would say that he has already given more than anybody could be expected to give. And yet he is not sitting back and saying,

National Boriua Human Rights Reflect...continued...

“Well, ok I’ve done my time, I’ve done enough. It’s up to you.” No, he’s in there everyday, working harder than the rest of us. Not primarily for his own release but to make the world a better place.



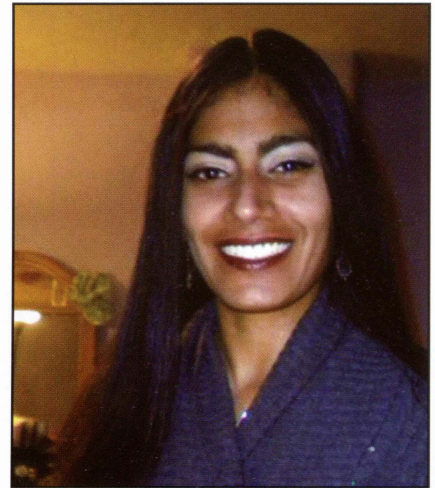
*Judith Mirkenson,
Solidarity Activist, San Francisco*

The struggle for Puerto Rican independence and the struggle to free the [political] prisoners has been a really significant part of my life. It has connected me to the whole struggle against colonialism in Puerto Rico and to a vibrant, incredible people and movement. I think being a part of this has been a defining tenet of my life.



*Raquel Seda,
NBHRN Detroit Chapter Coordinator*

Oscar influences me because I feel that he has done so much. It makes me want to push myself to do more. As one of the compañeros said earlier, everything we do is so little compared to what he has done. He’s been in there longer than I’ve been alive – to put it into perspective. That alone, not to mention all of the things that he did before he went to jail...it’s inspiring for me because I could be doing more. I am able and capable of doing more because of what Oscar did.



*Inez Ramos,
NBHRN Philadelphia
Chapter Co-Coordinator*

When I found out the truth about colonialism and Puerto Rico and the fact that there were Puerto Rican political prisoners and that there was a man such as Oscar López Rivera, it was the missing link for me to all the questions [I had] about why the conditions of my family, my life, and my community were the way they were. He is sort of the missing link to my historical identity. That was how I found myself as a Puerto Rican woman. Before that point, I was lost...I didn’t have a complete understanding of my identity, of who I was. [Learning that] gave me purpose...and the drive to go find out the truth about my life, about my experience, and my identity.

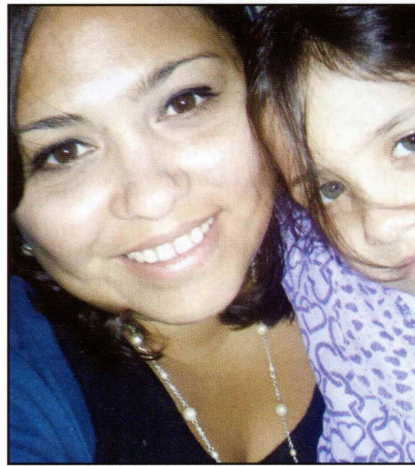
National Boriua Human Rights Reflect...continued...



Miguel Luciano,
Renowned Puerto Rican artist,
New York City

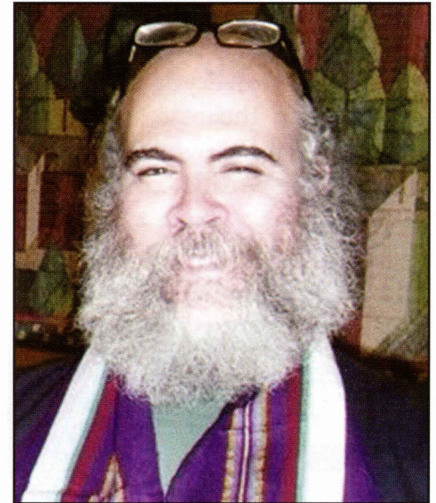
I think the question for me is how has he influenced me as a person first in terms of his sacrifices and what he represents, what he stands for. Symbolically, he represents something that's bigger than himself. He always has. So that's an opportunity to look at ideas of sovereignty, independence, culture, and identity. I am thinking about the ways that art actually can make an impact in our lives in real and tangible ways sometimes and also encourage us to reflect on our relationships to communities. That's why the idea of this postcard project, or whether you're making a painting or other kinds of work, the importance is getting out in the world in some way. There are all different ways to engage and express... The whole thing is about the power of communication. I just think that the work is really intentional. It has the potential to get out there and actually open people's minds and educate. Oscar's story is so important for people to know about. There's a real urgency, es-

pecially now after 32 years, for this thing to get done, for him to be free. I think the more artists we can bring into this [campaign] the better. And there are lots of ways that I think artists can express ideas about freedom and solidarity. Freedom is something we understand universally.



Dolores Thibault-Munoz,
Activist, Massachusetts

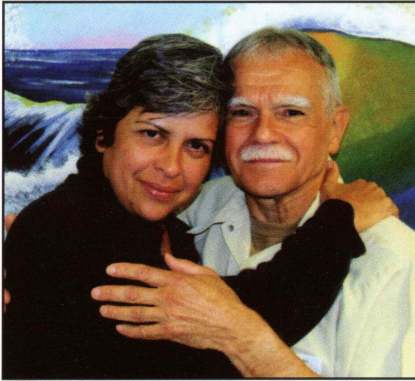
I have to say first that I am not Puerto Rican. However, Oscar represents a lot of things to me. He represents to me the independence of Puerto Rico. For me, he also represents a struggle for community. Oscar defines what it means to give yourself to a movement and serves as an example of giving your whole life to that. It is really hard to think of myself in that light and I do whatever I can to help. It is kind of like what the compañera from Puerto Rico was saying, which is that we give so little compared to what Oscar has done and is doing not just for the Puerto Rican struggle but for the Latino struggle.



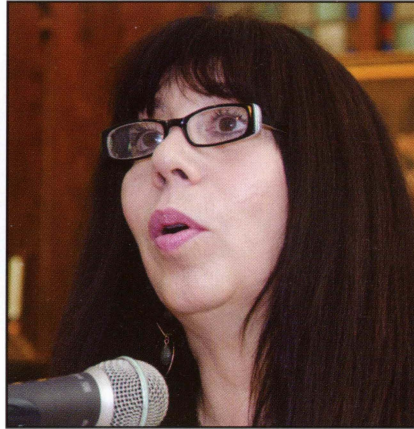
Matt Meyer,
Educator and Author, New York City

To me Oscar is a great symbol of Puerto Rican patriotism, of Puerto Rican strength, of the idea that it is not just about the one. It is about the many, it is about a nation of people for whom justice and peace go hand and hand.

National Boriua Human Rights Reflect...continued...



*Lourdes Lugo,
Niece of Oscar López Rivera*



Emma Lozano, Pastor

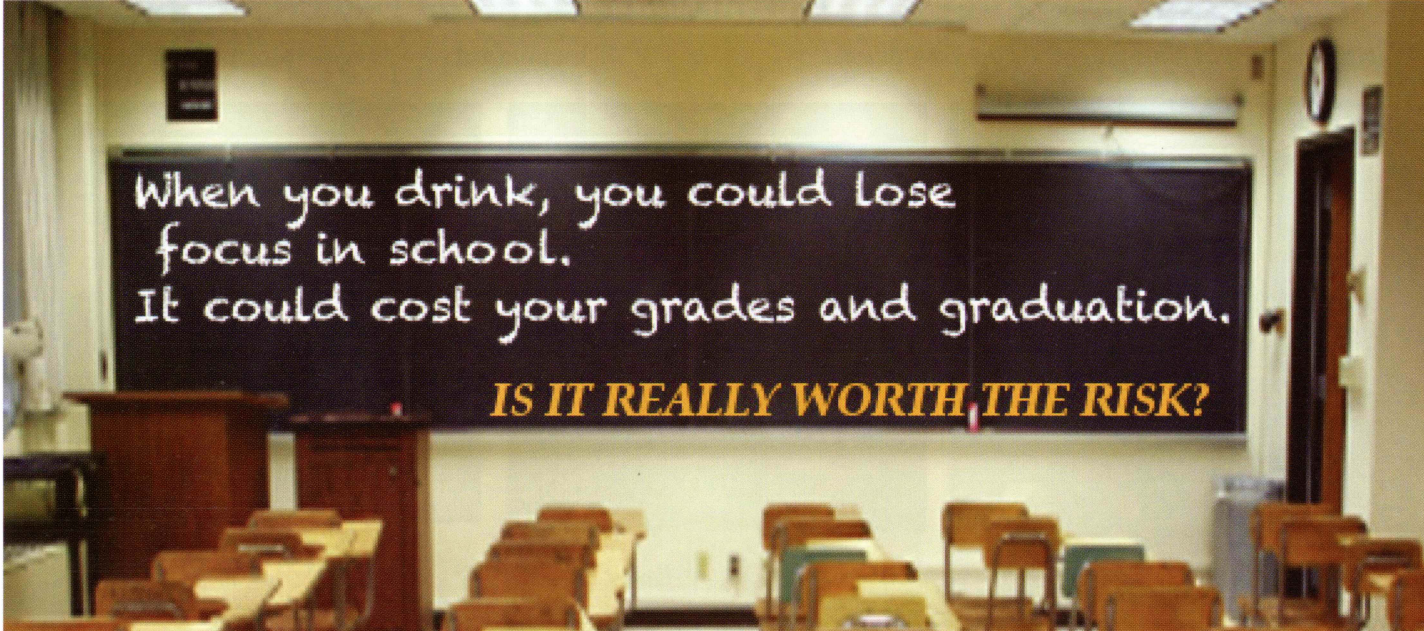


*Ana M. Lopez,
Activist/Educator, New York City*

Oscar means my life. He has been my whole life. He has been the one person that's kept my family unified despite the insanity of his incarceration and the impact of it. His spirit and how correct he has been of the decisions he has made throughout his life has been a big unifying force in my family and has brought us together. It gives our family a different historical course of existence. He is an example to us. We have been able to be part of that movement to free Puerto Ricans because of him.

I think that all of us should be inspired to be like Oscar. He is someone who has principles and who is willing to give his life for his people. Like I said, I think we all should be inspired to be like him but also work to get his freedom because it is freedom fighters like him that are persecuted that the rest of us have the obligation to go out and do the work in order to free him.

I have been involved in all of the campaigns to free Puerto Rican political prisoners since I was very young. I was involved in the movement to free the five nationalist and also involved for 20 years to free the compañeros in 1999. To me Oscar is the legacy of the work that I've done. He's been the role model and the mentor. Oscar in this moment of the campaign has become a symbol of liberation for all people, not just for the Puerto Rican people. I admire Oscar for his commitment and his strength. It's important that we learn from his strength and work and use it to do great work in our own community.

A photograph of a classroom with a chalkboard. The chalkboard has white text written on it. In the foreground, there are rows of wooden desks and chairs.

When you drink, you could lose
focus in school.
It could cost your grades and graduation.

IS IT REALLY WORTH THE RISK?



B.A.C.C.A.

(Barrio Arts, Culture, and Communications Academy)

This campaign is partially funded by the
Illinois Department of Human Services



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A photograph of a green football field with white yard lines. In the foreground, three red footballs with white stripes are stacked.

Think Before You Drink!

Underage Drinking can lead to
serious consequences.
One night of drinking can put you
on the side lines for the season

Can you risk that?

B.A.C.C.A.

Barrio Arts, Culture, and Communications Academy

This campaign is partially funded by the
Illinois Department of Human Services

Maduro Pide la Libertad de Oscar López Rivera

La tarde de este miércoles, el presidente de la República, Nicolás Maduro, llegó al Teatro Nacional, en Caracas, para participar en el foro Por un Puerto Rico libre e independiente. El pasado 8 de enero, el jefe de Estado venezolano informó que la delegación de Venezuela presentará ante la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y del Caribe (Celac) un documento especial para plantear la incorporación de Puerto Rico a dicha instancia regional.

El mandatario nacional le giró instrucciones al canciller de la

República, Elías Jaua, para que prepare y presente el texto durante la Cumbre de la Celac, a realizarse en La Habana, Cuba, entre el 25 y 29 de enero.

“Es tiempo de que Puerto Rico tome el camino de América Latina. Más temprano que tarde veremos la independencia de Puerto Rico”, manifestó en ese momento.

Puerto Rico pasó a ser colonia de los Estados Unidos a pesar de la constitución del Estado Libre Asociado, ratificado en 1952.

Aunque Puerto Rico mantiene

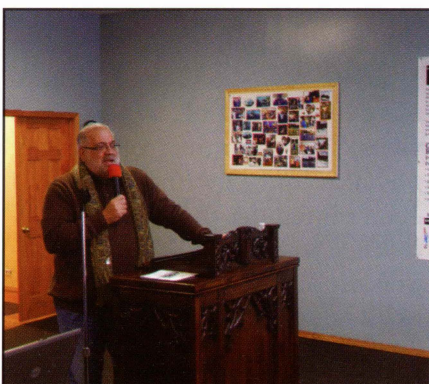
un estatus de autogobierno, los puertorriqueños son ciudadanos estadounidenses y el poder de ejercer su soberanía recae en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos. Durante su participación en el foro Por un Puerto Rico libre e independiente, que se realiza en el Teatro Nacional, Caracas, el presidente de la República, Nicolás Maduro, abogó por la liberación de Oscar López Rivera.

López Rivera guarda prisión desde hace tres décadas por su lucha a favor de la independencia de Puerto Rico.

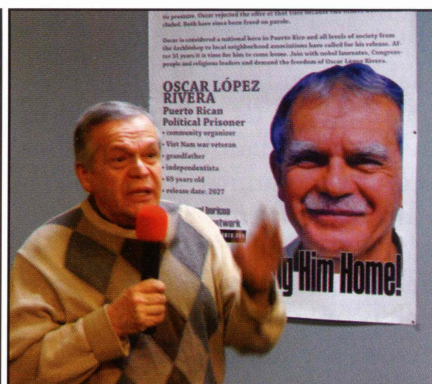
Capilla del Barrio and NBHRN Celebrates Oscar's 71st Birthday



Michelle Morales reads one of Oscar's letters to his granddaughter.



Pastor Winslor of La Capilla del Barrio leads a prayer for Oscar.



José E. Lopez remembering activist Irma Romero.

La Capilla del Barrio and the National Boricua Human Rights Network celebrated Oscar's birthday Sunday, Jan. 5, 2014,

braving over 18 inches of continuous snow and rapidly dropping temperatures. The birthday celebration and Three Kings

Mass, in its 6th Annual Year, began with Pastor Winslor's welcoming and the invocation. The Capilla kids performed an

Capilla del Barrio and NBHRN Celebrate...continued...

original Three Kings skit. Then a delegation from Adalberto Methodist Church read a gift, a message from Rev. Coleman, which Tanya Coleman Lozano read,

"Just as in the time of Jesus, a government kills and locks away in prison those who refuse to compromise with injustice because they fear their example will inspire an oppressed people also stand on their Today, we remember that Joseph acted on faith when he married a single mother. We recall that Mary acted on faith when she received the gift of a child that would come to save her people. And we recall that they risked their lives to protect this child. So today we honor those who struggle in faith to form the family of families, the communities in resistance, from which will come a new generation of struggle, a "messiah" generation, which will inspire the world to stand against injustice and oppression.

Malcolm said, we are all in prison and all of us will continue to live in the shadow of the compromise of human potential as long as we submit to a system in which Puerto Rico is denied self-determination, as long as 11 million people and their families are denied equality under the law, as long as Latin America is kept in dependency - for these are all just symptoms of a diseased society that refuses the Kingdom of God, offered freely to those who will open their hearts. Yet those who stand on their

faith, who walk in the footsteps of Jesus, who accept the mission to organize communities of resistance so that a Messiah generation can be born, - these are living already in the Kingdom of God.

Like Oscar, they are already free. No prison walls, no borders, can separate those bound together in faith and freedom. Today we are with Oscar - today we are free!"

After the worship song, NBHRN member Michelle Morales read the 8th of Oscar's 14 letters to his granddaughter that have been published in the Puerto Rican newspaper El Nuevo Dia, translated into English and posted to the Network website. Michelle read the letter entitled In the Face of Fear, "...My mother was sick and elderly. She was the one who had kept me informed about my brothers and sisters and the rest of the family in Puerto Rico. The most painful was not being able to talk with my daughter, who was then a child. Since she barely knew me, she related little to me over the phone. When I had visits, they kept me from having physical contact with my family. I even remember the first time my mother visited me, your great-grandmother, who broke out in tears when she saw me shackled on the other side of the glass. I told her then that she had to be strong and contain her tears so as not to let the jailers know that this program had affected the whole family. From then on, when she visited me, I saw her press her lips together and contain her

tears. She did not let one more tear fall in my presence. She was a brave Puerto Rican woman."

As the celebration drew to an end, Pastor Windsor called the youth present to gather around the birthday cake La Capilla had made for Oscar, and the crowd sang Happy Birthday to Oscar. José E. López, Oscar's brother and Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, closed the event by bringing forth the memory of our heroic Irma Romero, who passed away Jan. 11, 2013 and her activism in our communities, her solidarity with Oscar and the struggle of the Puerto Rican people, her decades-long struggle with cancer, and her unceasing, optimistic outlook. Pastor Windsor then invited everyone to partake of the birthday cake and said he hoped he would NOT see us next year!

You can watch to video of Oscar's birthday celebration at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-7u9KcRKRk&list=UUXxOHBvKBRoDHiJqPsJfyZg&feature=share&index=6>

Make sure to "LIKE" & "SUBSCRIBE"!

New York City Hosts National Meeting of Campaign to Free Oscar López Rivera



Lourdes Lugo Opening the NBHRN meeting.



32xOscar discusses monthly gatherings.

The National Boricua Human Rights Network organized a national meeting in New York City during Martin Luther King Jr. weekend. Upwards of 50 crowded El Maestro Cultural Center, a youth athletic center named after Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos, which teaches youth boxing skills, as well as regularly organizes patriotic events. Beginning Saturday evening, representatives from 10 cities met to discuss plans for broadening the Campaign to Free Oscar. Lopez Rivera The first presentation was by Alida Millan Ferrer and Annette Diaz from 32xO, a group of women which has organized a vigil on the “Dos Hermanos” Bridge in Puerto Rico every last Sunday of the month since May 29 of last

year. Compañeras Alida and Anette presented a slideshow and explained the beginnings of the vigil, the inspiration for the idea, and evolution of monthly event. The monthly vigils have expanded beyond the core 32 women and the theme changes on a rotating basis so that social workers, lawyers, and young women have participated on separate Sundays. From there, the discussion moved to the possibilities of the Network planning similar events in 6 cities this year. The cities- San Francisco, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Detroit, Orlando and Hartford- presented on their work in 2013 and their future plans. Boston, which was not present, emailed their report. The New York Coordinator

to Free Oscar López Rivera and the National Boricua Human Rights Network NYC chapter presented and together gave a more complete report. On Sunday, the “letters for Oscar campaign”, May 29, 2014 and “Postcards for Oscar” were discussed and goals were set. The meeting ended with a resource and production update that included discussion of a website re-emphasis, t-shirts, new buttons, and a new brochure. Immediately afterwards, meeting members stayed for the 100th Anniversary of Oscar Collazo event.

El Maestro of the Bronx Celebrates 100th Birthday Anniversary of Na- tional Hero Oscar Collazo



El Maestro Executive Director

Fernando "Ponce" Laspina speaking about Oscar Collazo

On Sunday January 19, after a National Boricua Human Rights national meeting, people gathered from Chicago, Florida, Ohio, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Puerto Rico, and Detroit to commemorate the life and celebrate the birthday of Oscar Collazo Lopez, an ex-Puerto Rican political prisoner who spent 29 years in prisoner alongside Lolita Lebron. The celebration took place at El Maestro Cultural Center, named after the Puerto Rican patriot Don Pedro Albizu Campos. Speakers included El Maestro's Executive Director, Fernando

'Ponce' Laspina, president of La Fundacion Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Bomexi Iztaccihuat, ex-political prisoner Ricardo Jiménez, and the keynote speaker Dr. José E. López, the Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Humboldt Park, Chicago. José López spoke about his personal encounters with Oscar Collazo and the influence Collazo had on his life and dedication to the struggle for the betterment of the Puerto Rican people. He brought attention to the parallels between the Oscar López Rivera and Oscar Collazo López and the history of persecution and Puerto Rican ability to resist. All of the speakers invoked the past as something to learn from and inspired us in our continued struggle to release Oscar López Rivera, who has served 32 years imprisoned by the United States.

As part of this historic event, the crowd heard passionate poet Zelideth Diaz Hatch dedicated several heartfelt poems to Oscar López Rivera. Iris Colon Dipini, with Grupo Maestro, passionately sang a decima written by Oscar Collazo López, which he dedicated to the Puerto Rican women in the International Year of Women.

In the Face of Fear

Oscar López Rivera

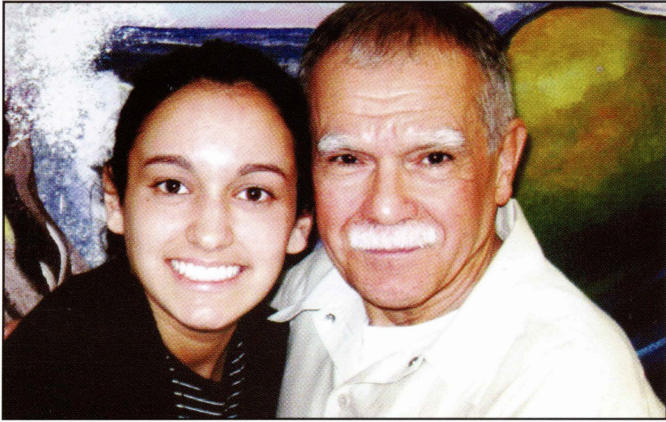
Dear Karina,

We each decide our destiny and risk our souls according to the dictates of our conscience. Fear is always present. In each moment. Day and night. But we learn to use it to our advantage.

In Vietnam, for example, it was fear that helped me be cautious, attentive to everything around me, to unusual movements and sounds. Thanks to instinct, it was months, whole years, that I survived, sniffing the air to be able to detect some danger.

When some new soldier arrived to our battalion and I saw him showing off his strength or bravery, I would keep observing him. I realized that that was his way of impressing others, hiding the panic he felt. Later, when it was his turn to enter into combat,

In the Face of Fear continued...



Karina, Oscar's granddaughter, and Oscar

one of two things would happen: he would remain paralyzed or he would act rashly. In either case, I would pull him aside and explain that we all felt fear and that it was normal. That what was important was to recognize it because not to take precautions or remain "frozen" under fire put his life at risk, as well ours. I think that having been raised in the streets of Chicago was a good preparation for managing fear.

Years later, when I was heading for prison in Marion and I confronted for the first time what they call their "sensory deprivation program," I had no idea nor what I would find, nor with whom I would live. They put me in a gang unit with the most dangerous gangsters in the whole country. No one can honestly say that they don't fear for their life in a place such as this. Incidentally, I recognized a pair of prisoners who had been with me in the prison in Leavenworth and we looked out for each other. They knew that I did not come from the world of gangs and that

would often cut the calls or interrupt them, the punishment weighed me down. My mother was sick and elderly, she was the one who had kept me informed about my brothers and sisters and the rest of the family in Puerto Rico. The most painful was not being able to talk with my daughter, who was then a child. Since she barely knew me, she related little to me over the phone. When I had visits, they kept me from having physical contact with my family. I even remember the first time my mother visited me, your great-grandmother, who broke out in tears when she saw me shackled on the other side of the glass. I told her then that she had to be strong and contain her tears so as not to let the jailers know that this program had affected the whole family. From then on, when she visited me, I saw her press her lips together and contain her tears. She did not let one more tear fall in my presence. She was a brave Puerto Rican woman. Unlike the prison in Leaven-

I was a political prisoner.

As soon as I learned that I would only have fifteen minutes per month to speak by telephone, which in practice were even

less, since they

worth, in Marion they monitored or intercepted all the correspondence and reading material that I received. Sometimes, it would take weeks or months until they delivered my letters, magazines, or newspapers. They would give everything to me all in one day and the next day they would come into my cell to inspect it and confiscate what they called "an excess of paper," many things which I still had not had time to read.

Finally it occurred to me how to save the newspapers — passing them out when they were first delivered to me to the other prisoners, who bit by bit gave them back to me. The papers contained old news but I read them all just the same.

You always have to read, Karina; reading serves to abate fear. I will discuss how to stave off loneliness some other day.

In resistance and struggle, your grandfather,

Oscar López Rivera

Write to Oscar at:

Oscar López Rivera

#87651-024

Born/Nacido: 6 de enero de 1943

FCI Terre Haute

P.O. Box 33

Terre Haute, IN 47808



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