

**Edwin Chavez, Spanish Director**

I feel privileged and humbled to be a part of Humans of San Quentin. After nearly three decades of incarceration I never imagined there was someone special out there in the community who believes in us, the incarcerated, who treats us with dignity and respect, and not as ‘animals in a cage.’ This is Mrs. Diane Kahn. She has become this superhuman-woman with this invisible cape to us. She continues to generously devote her time and resources in an attempt to humanize the less privileged. I joined HoSQ because I am devoted to give a voice to the voiceless, to help change the narrative when it comes down to the incarcerated regardless of what led them into prison; our past behaviors do not define the person that stands in front of the mirror 10, 15, 20, or 30 years later. Change is possible through the proper channels of rehabilitation. I used to be oblivious to self-love, compassion, empathy, and mainly what it meant to truly treat others as human beings, this set me on a path for self-destructive behavior driven by low self-esteem, self-pity, and hating myself. This made it easy for me to join a gang and be violent- the ingredients for disaster. Now I stand in solidarity with HoSQ. I want to bring awareness to my Latino community in and out of these prison walls. HoSQ is there for us all in creating a space for healing and reconciliation with our communities.

This is important for me because I shot an innocent person and put a family member in harm's way because of my gang mentality. I caused terrible harm to too many people. I know I can never undo the past, but I believe I can make a positive difference for the future, for myself and my community.

Many men and women who are incarcerated will someday be released back into our communities. We need to prepare them as they are about to become our next door neighbors. Please support HoSQ in the fight to educate our communities that we are all humans.

**Michael Moore, Communications Director**

HoSQ was instrumental in validating my existence outside of the walls of prison. Spending decades in prison as those friends and family members I knew well begin dying or forgetting about me creates an intimate disconnect. I began forgetting voices and then faces until the only people I really know are in prison with me. Receiving an invitation from HoSQ to write anything I wanted to be posted for the world to read was an unexpected opportunity to reach those friends and family members in an exciting and new way. I could tell my story as I remembered it and hope for a response, a reconnection. Although it did not lead to reconnections, it did lead to new connections. The validation I felt I wanted other prisoners to feel. I began spreading the positive effects to others and found a way that I can serve others for no other reason than to bring an unexpected connection into their lives. I have never volunteered to do anything without compensation monetarily. Now I do. Instead of spending time in prison feeling forgotten and useless, I introduce HoSQ's mission to everyone I come into contact with and many light up at

hearing that someone wants to read about them. My world has broken the bonds of prison's never ending days and brought a purpose into my life. Through advocating for HoSQ I meet new people all the time, which lightens the burden of missing those that have passed and the sting of being forgotten by others. That is important for a lot of reasons.