



An Interview with Mr. Elmer Magana

Johnny Carollo, Junior Reporter

a small village to living in a very large city. I didn't know the language and it took me four years to be able to hold a conversation in English. My high school, Long Beach Polytechnic High School, had about 5,000 kids and we only had one old fashioned guidance counselor to help us with college.

Q: How often do you go back to El Salvador? Do you still have family there?

A: Yes, I still have family that lives there. The last time I went back was three years ago for my great grandfather's 100th birthday celebration.

Q: What was it like living in El Salvador during their Civil War?

A: The war broke out in 1979. I remember images of the war such as soldiers and platoons and flying bullets. It was very frightening. Sadly, my uncle was killed by the death squads because his son was accused of being a guerrilla fighter for the FMLN radical group.

Q: What have been some obstacles you have had to overcome in your life?

A: One significant obstacle I had to overcome was the language barrier when I moved to America. Another obstacle was that I had no one to tell me how to get into college and, in a way, I was a trail blazer for the rest of my family. I was the first person in my family to graduate from high school and then college, and I am very proud of this. I graduated from UCLA with a dual major in History and Spanish Literature. Later, I helped my sister and cousins get into college.

Q: Why did you choose to become a teacher?

A: Back in El Salvador I had a great teacher. His name was Don Juan. School was closed for four years during the civil war and Don Juan ended up opening the school himself and taught classes. He was always very positive, gave many compliments, and had a very good sense of humor. He was an inspiration to me and a primary reason I decided to become a teacher.

Q: What are some of your greatest accomplishments?

A: Earning my degrees from UCLA and becoming a father are two things I am very proud of. My son, Mateo, is three and a half years old now.

Q: What else do you want us to know about you?

A: I was the fastest swimmer in my village in El Salvador. I decided I needed to learn how to swim after I was rescued from drowning when I was younger. Once I learned to swim, I ended up saving ten people from drowning because I understood the tides of the river.

Q: Is there any other thought you would like to leave us with? Do you have a quote you would like to share?

A: The quote I would like to share is, "It's the time when heroes are made." I say it to my soccer players before a big game and I used to say it before taking big tests in college. It helps me to focus on what's in front of me. When I hear it I think to myself, this is when it counts.

Plague 101

Joanna Rosen, Senior Editors' Assistant

Well, it's happened. MHS has been struck with the plague yet again. And by "plague" I do mean that disgusting, germy, coughing, runny-nosed cold that's going around. No one wants to be infected with this life-zapping illness, but often it cannot be avoided. For this reason, I have compiled some tips for all MHS students in order to make the plague process easier!

The first thing you must do is stock up on cough drops and throat lozenges. Even if you have yet to catch the cold, these will prove very beneficial to you. For example, if a friend of yours comes to class stricken with a hoarse cough you can offer him a chance at artificially-flavored relief. More importantly, however, your friend is now indebted to you. So when you inevitably catch the cold, you now have the right to demand a cough drop in return. The same goes for tissues: if you generously give your tissues to those in need, your peers will then owe you and you can collect when you are in need.

The second thing to do in the event of a plague outbreak is to politely stay as far from any infected individuals as possible. Actually, stay away from any and all persons. You can never tell who will become afflicted next, or who has been infected but is not showing symptoms. Those friendly hugs your best friends exchange all the time? Absolutely not. Holding hands with a significant other? Keep dreaming. And don't even think about sharing a drink with someone. Any and all physical interaction must be kept to a bare minimum.

Finally, I advise you to carry hand sanitizer and use it periodically. If you ever have the misfortune of touching an infected person, just reach into your backpack and apply some cupcake-scented, germ-annihilating sanitizer. Even if you have not come into physical contact with anyone, always maintain maximum cleanliness. This is perhaps the most basic way to avoid infection and to minimize the extent of exposure to the plague.

And if all else fails, please feel free to invest in some industrial grade hazmat suits. They even have suits available for your four-legged furry friends.

I wish you all the best of luck as you navigate the plague-ridden hallways of the Marblehead High School!

The Admission Admissions

Drew Faria, Senior Reporter in the Field

As of November 28, every pumpkin, turkey, and pilgrim hat decoration has been torn down and replaced with the vivid, joyous colors of Christmas trees, presents, Menorahs, candy canes, and everything holiday-related. Meanwhile, fear consumes high school seniors, like me, regarding the fateful date in the middle of the month: December 15th. Why is it so important? Most colleges send out early acceptance results by this time. I spoke to many relatives about colleges on Thanksgiving, which heightened my anxiety. In fact, I just checked the statuses of my applications in the middle of writing this (just in case).

Understandably, seniors can be under loads of stress during this normally happy holiday season. I know that I am particularly a nervous wreck when it comes to this; I was freaking out about college this past April! I remember being anxious to the point where I took an hour-long walk at night to get some ice cream (I would recommend this regardless of whether you are applying to college or not.). Somehow, as I got more accustomed to the demands of college applications, I began to embrace reality and breathe a little more.

Nearly every person to whom I've even brought up the word "college" has instructed me that "it will all work out." At times, I've clenched my fists in frustration after hearing this, thinking that college will only work out for the people who make the application decisions. I have come to accept that everything WILL work out as the application season drags on. I may not get into my number 1 school, or my number 5, but as long as I get into ONE school, then I am all set. After all, I can only attend one school, right? This is not to say that I will not start pulling out my hair if the results are bad on December 15th (because I probably will), but I know that once I calm down, I will accept that an admissions decision from one school does not make or break the rest of my life.

Ultimately, I will choose if and how well I succeed in college and beyond, not some person sifting through thousands of applications that probably look very similar to mine. Going to college is my goal, and I have embraced the fact that my four tedious years of study will grant me a letter from some school that starts with the word "Congratulations!"



Pictured Above: Spanish teacher Mr. Elmer Magana

Mr. Magana's favorite quote is:

"It's the time when heroes are made."

"I say it to my soccer players before a big game and I used to say it before taking big tests in college. It helps me to focus on what's in front of me. When I hear it I think to myself, this is when it counts."

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