



IE ALUMNUS MAKING A CONTRIBUTION ON THE SOUTHERN BORDER

December 29, 2018

The University of Texas at Austin is very proud of the contributions made by Intellectual Entrepreneurship (IE) Pre Grad Internship students and alumni. On December 28, IE alumnus Sam Garcia, who now attends Harvard Law School, shared the important work he is doing on the Southern Border. The results of his interviews at the Catholic Charities Center in McAllen, Texas are significant and troubling. We look forward to reading his next story in [Forbes](#) which will include additional details.



Wrote Sam:

“Today I went to conduct some interviews at the Catholic Charities Center in McAllen, TX for my next Forbes story. I am prohibited from including my personal opinion in the articles I write for them, which is why I wanted to talk about a few things I encountered. I saw hundreds of people in this center. They were exhausted, some were visibly scared, and most were some degree of ill. The overwhelming majority of people were part of a family. To my knowledge, there was no one there that did not arrive with other family members. Here are the things that I didn’t see:

1. Gang members
2. “Bad dudes” of any kind
3. Terrorists
4. Anyone disrespecting the flag

A lot of people I spoke to had similar stories of their previous detention (before being at the Catholic Charities center). They all spoke of how deathly cold the immigration facility that they were in before this center was. Some even called it “el congelador” (the freezer). I honestly could think of no reason why a facility would be kept at such a low temperature. Although I hope it was not intended to do this, it served as both a form of elongated physical and mental torture.

There are more details that I will include in the final story, but wanted to share those few thoughts. Below is a picture of a Honduran migrant and her son. When the conditions at the immigration center (Center before the one she is currently in) exacerbated an illness her son had, she was denied access to medical care for him. Fortunately, the child is in better health and in good spirits today.”

BACKGROUND:

As part of his IE Pre Grad Internship Sam came up with an award winning business plan to help people in the colonias of the Rio Grande Valley. Instead of keeping it to himself to make a profit, he chose to write a book to inspire readers that complex problems like poverty do not warrant equally complex solutions. Notes Sam:

“As a result of my IE experience I know that I will not have too much time for managing a charity when I am in law school so I wrote a book that details my entire business plan and am giving it to anyone who wants to make their own so people can benefit outside of the small operation I created in the Rio Grande Valley. People often have the idea in their head that a complex problem like poverty warrants an equally complex solution. My book “How Goats Can Fight Poverty” challenges this notion by detailing a plan I came up with to fight poverty in rural areas like the colonias with nothing more than some goats, some plants, and some cooperation. This plan, often referred to as my “goat idea”, has won me the Pal Make-A-Difference Award and has even been the subject of a house resolution passed in the Texas House. Despite these recognitions, I understand that my small operation does not have the capacity to change many lives outside of the Rio Grande Valley—which is why I decided to write “How Goats Can Fight Poverty.” I want to give my idea to anyone who wants to make it his or her own. A quarter of the proceeds from the sale of my book will go to the Knapp Community Care Foundation and another quarter will go to LUPE (an outreach program in the Rio Grande Valley) in order to support the incredible work that they are doing to better our community.”

Sam attributes much of his success to IE: "I would like to thank a few people and programs for helping me to get to this point. First, the IE program helped me to realize that undergraduates could actually write about research and ideas that change the world! I saw a lot of kids actually help with groundbreaking research and that helped to inspire me to try my hand at writing."

Read more about Sam's book:

<http://sites.utexas.edu/shelflife/2015/09/04/qa-with-samuel-garcia-author-of-how-goats-can-fight-poverty/>

Learn more about IE and what students say: <https://moody.utexas.edu/academics/academic-enrichment/intellectual-entrepreneurship-program>