



Herstory Writers Workshop brings unheard voices into the public arena,
transforming lived experiences into written memoirs powerful enough
to change hearts, minds and policy.

Hope for a License Comes True

Dear Friends of Herstory,

In the fall of 2018, Gerson Sermeno joined Herstory's facilitator training institute, with the dream of helping young people to navigate their early days in this country, while charting a path to freedom and justice.

"I want to be the voice for all those who can't speak up, and be the change of all those that want to stand and see a change.. Love is the strongest tool humanity need to learn to use, and learning it with the stories of the unspoken is a beautiful way to make it happen."

This spring, Gerson's dream started to come true, as he and three other young people who had trained in the institute brought weekly workshops for newcomer students to Nassau BOCES Twilight Program in Glen Cove.

Now at the momentous moment of the passing of the Green Light Bill, making New York the 13th state to give drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants, Gerson recalls how it felt to be writing ["No Hope for a License" \(reprinted from the Long Island Wins website\)](#), and how he feels now, as he continues to help others to write to change hearts, minds and even policy.

He writes: of how now "there is a light at the end of the road, where all people can feel safe and comfortable on the streets, roads and avenues, where control can be reachable, no matter where



To help
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Long Island Wins
Stories for
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you from." He writes of how "the hope is gone, because now it is part of real life.

No Hope of a License

By Gerson Sermeno

Written in the fall of 2018

I am driving down the road, starting a brand new day, ready for school, not knowing what comes ahead, feeling confident of my driving skills, but trying to do it all perfect, always on the look to do every stop, never skip a red light, and respect the speed limits. i am checking all my mirrors, with the fear of seeing a police car driving by.

And there it comes, exactly a few minutes after 7 am. I see the lights behind me and pull over to the side, as all my nerves are active. Again? I say from inside me. Another stop? Another ticket on my list? Another day at the court? Another \$700 or more? Why? Why is he stopping me now?

And there he comes, an officer with strong steps, getting out of his car, and walking down to my side, my chest hurting with the fast beats of my heart.

It was such a perfect morning. I was driving fine. I respected all. Now, should I be afraid of even getting to school? Should I have to be scared to do something to give back to society? Sitting in that car trying to understand, why all of that is so hard. But I'll put it all together.



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The police officer came to the window. And there I was, not knowing what to do.

I just asked him, "Why am I being stopped?"

But he just answered with another question. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"I am on my way to school officer" I answered.

"Can I check your license and the vehicle documents?" he said.

Without saying a word, I pulled out all my vehicle documents, but the license was not present.

And he asked for my license again. I had no other choice but to tell him the truth.

"I have no license, Sir," I said.

"Why the fuck are you driving without a license?" he said with strong voice.

With fear in me, I told him that was impossible for me at the moment. And he just said that he has no choice, and gave me four tickets, one for no license, and the other three I never knew why.

There I was, a kid with a government protection document, but without the hope of a license anytime soon, being intimidated by someone who was supposed to make me feel safe, feeling afraid of the one who had to protect me, crying inside

because of someone who is supposed to make me feel calm. Sitting down there, seeing everything I had to go through, seeing and knowing I was stopped or being brown, feeling like someone who was picked out of a pile. Trying to go to school, succeed, give more than what I had, but being stopped by a system that has no feeling for what I am.

And the officer just took my car and left me at the street, walking a few miles to school. The weather was bad, and I was so cold. Walking afraid, and all my confidence that day was gone.

New paragraphs added, June 20, 2019

But there is a light at the end of the road-- 2019, the year when victory was written in New York, where all people can feel safe and comfortable on the streets, roads and avenues, where control can be reachable and everyone can drive under the law.

No matter where you are from, as good residents, we finally reached that hope. Now the hope is gone, because now it is part of real life.

License for all New York.

To read Gerson's story in Spanish, [click here.](#)

The application process is currently underway for Herstory's facilitator training institute, with five or six places remaining for the fall.

To learn more, please reply to this email.



The world needs your stories...

To keep our country a welcoming place...

To protect the human rights our country was founded upon...

As we close our college-community workshops for the season, stay tuned to hear about summer opportunities to shape your stories and bring them into the world. Consider using the summer months to volunteer with our team. www.herstorywriters.org

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Herstory Writers Workshop, 2539 Middle Country Road, Centereach, NY 11720

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