

Healing, Hurt, and Hope

Las Familias Solidarity January 11th trip to the Border in El Paso

Healing

The Annunciation House shelters in El Paso are like field hospitals in the long journey of immigrant families. These young parents, babies and children arrive at Annunciation House shelters, after being processed and released by Customs and Border Protection.(CBP) Some of their wounds are visible - other wounds are not. The volunteer staff at Annunciation House shelters work hard to provide a safe, supportive and warm family environment for their asylum-seeking guests.

A young mother with five children is staying at Casa Papa Francisco, the newest Annunciation House shelter. The woman plans to join her husband, who is working in New York while awaiting his Asylum Court date. The children, ages 6 to 11, “are the most traumatized that I have ever seen” Sr Bea explained. One child is epileptic. The 11-year-old has a learning disability and reads on a second-grade level. All of the children bed wet, crying out in the night with anxiety and fear. The mother is constantly stressed and fearful. Sr. Bea’s staff arranged for a counselor to work with the mother and children. The children were enrolled in school after the shelter staff got the children vaccinated. It may be months before this family is stable enough to travel. In the meantime, the shelter staff will work to provide what they need to heal after their long, dangerous journey from South America to our border.

A pregnant asylum-seeking woman, with 4 and 5 year old children, was so thin that her 5 months pregnancy barely showed. A shelter volunteer took her to a doctor, who found that the woman was RH negative. The baby’s life was at risk until the mother received a RH antibody shot later that day. Sr. Bea talked with an organization in New Hampshire that agreed to sponsor the woman and help with her assigned Asylum Court date. Annunciation House volunteer staff work hard to get the asylum seekers sponsors in states that are outside of the El Paso Immigration Court district, which only approves 2-4% of asylum petitions. By contrast, the New York Asylum Court approves over 50% of asylum petitions. More information of the uneven immigration justice is at <https://www.borderreport.com/immigration/denial-of-asylum-often-depends-on-the-region-in-which-migrants-live-report-finds/>

Hurt

An asylum-seeking guest of the Casa Vides shelter was taking a walk outside when he was stopped by officers of the Texas Department of Public Safety, who demanded to see his immigration papers. After the young man explained that his documents were at the shelter, the officers roughed him up, taking his cell phone and Guatemala driver’s license before they released him. Annunciation House staff contacted the El Paso police, and eventually got the items returned.

The mayor of El Paso declared a state of emergency in December, opening the door for Governor Abbott to send in the Texas National Guard and state’s Department of Public Safety. They have been sweeping the city streets, arresting immigrants and creating fear in the immigrant community. All of the asylum-seeking families that we saw sleeping outside on our December visit were rounded up before Biden’s January visit and incarcerated. The El Paso state of emergency order will expire next week. We expect the Texas National Guard and Department of Public safety officers to leave shortly afterwards.

Title 42, which prevents most immigrants from entering the United States and applying for asylum, is under review by the Supreme Court. Last week, this policy was expanded to require Venezuelans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Cubans to also wait in Mexico for the opportunity to apply for asylum. This policy has led to a sharp decrease in immigrants processed by CBP and released into the US to await

their court date. 1,400 asylum seekers per day were processed and released most days in December. 185/day are current released by CPD. The Biden administration has agreed to allow 30,000 asylum seekers per month, from Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Haiti to reside in the US for two years if they meet stringent requirements. Currently, the majority of asylum seekers are from these 4 countries and southern Mexico.

Hope

The lower number of asylum seekers being released each day has ended the politically driven bussing of asylum seekers to distant cities. Annunciation House shelters are now able to allow asylum seekers to stay longer, providing multiple services that these hurting families desperately need. A new phone app, CBP One, allows immigrants waiting in northern Mexico to schedule an appointment with CBP two weeks after filing. Although this app needs many improvements, it eliminates the 3 days of waiting in line at Juarez, braving freezing temperatures. Many more changes are needed in the US Immigration Policy to ensure we are living up to the words on our own Statue of Liberty, which has welcomed immigrants for centuries:

***“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-
tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”***

How to Help

- **Advocate** – Urge elected officials to make needed changes to our Immigration Policy [TAKE ACTION: Tell Our National Leaders to Welcome People Seeking Protection and Reject Dangerous and Immoral Anti-Asylum Policies - CWS \(cwsglobal.org\)](#)
- **Educate** – a tool for talking to others about asylum [How to Talk About the Latest Biden Asylum Bans – Welcome With Dignity](#)
- **Donate** – **Our Next trip to Annunciation Shelters is February 8th. Please deliver all donations by Sunday, February 5th.**
 - **Items needed**
 - **Men’s boxer briefs – small**
 - **Women’s Sport bras – small, medium**
 - **Men’s sweats – small, medium**
 - **Women’s athletic or canvas shoes – 5, 6, 7**
 - **Women’s leggings – small, medium**
- **Donate & get a tax deduction - Go to all-angels.com.** (St. Michael and All Angel’s parish) Hit the yellow donate button on the lower right corner of the web page. On the donations page, hit the arrow to the right of “Use this donation for.” Scroll down to Las Familias Solidarity. Use PayPal or credit card to donate.
- **Send a Check, We Shop** – For a tax deduction, make check to St. Michaels and All Angels. In the memo line put “Las Familias Solidarity.” Mail to St. Michaels & All Angels, 601 Montaña Rd. NW. ABQ, NM 87107 **or** make out & send checks to Liz Hanna, 2 San Juan Trail, Corrales, NM 87048.
- **Venmo - @LasFamilias-Solidarity**

- **Shop & Send** – Bring items to St. Michael & All Angels Parish, 601 Montañño Rd. NW, ABQ. Monday-Friday to parish office or Sunday Morning to church. Deliver or ship to Sharon Palma, 2 Isleta Trail, Corrales, NM 87048. If you drop off, please text Sharon at 505.249.5046

Thank you for being a healer in this world through your compassion and action for asylum seeking families at our border. We cannot do this work without you! If you support what we are doing, please tell a friend. With our gratitude,

Liz, Mike, Sharon, Denise

Sharon Palma, Liz & Mike Hanna, Denise Ulibarri Clauss

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