



National & Local Refugee Relief Efforts for Unaccompanied Children

The **Border Kids Relief Project** is a nationwide effort to build awareness and support for organizations providing relief aid in Texas, California and New Mexico. The project includes a clearinghouse of relief efforts across the country and an extensive online and social media outreach campaign to drive donations for critical items needed for children and families and to recruit volunteers for various relief efforts. The project is spearheaded by the Dolores Huerta Foundation, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Kids in Need of Defense, Speak Hispanic Communications, Alliance San Diego, Family Is Familia, the Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley, DREAMers' Moms, La Casa Azul Bookstore and many others.

Targeted Cities: San Diego; Brownsville, McAllen and San Juan, Texas; and Las Cruces, N.M.

Website: www.borderkidsrelief.org

LULAC's Targeted Cities: Davenport, Iowa; Milwaukee; Miami; and Dallas and Houston

In addition to the Border Kids Relief Project, LULAC has partnered with Feeding America to drive food donations. Throughout National Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15–Oct. 15), LULAC will be hosting national days of action to raise awareness and drive donations for the humanitarian relief efforts.

Website: www.lulac.org/relief

The **#CHCICares** campaign is spearheaded by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. Short-term goals of the campaign include changing the dialogue around the children at the border, raising funds, offering expertise and expressing support to the children and families in need.

Website: www.chci.org/news/pub/be-a-part-of-the-chcicare-campaign-in-response-to-the-border-humanitarian-crisis

The **Mothers Know That Love Has No Borders** campaign is spearheaded by We Belong Together: Women for Common Sense Immigration Reform to support refugee mothers and children. This is a social media and letter writing campaign to counter the messages of hate and fear that threaten the lives of thousands of women and children. There are currently more than 1,000 women and children in immigration detention centers, and more are arriving daily.

Website: www.webelongtogether.org/letters

The **Protect Our Children and Reunite Families** campaign is spearheaded by the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities. The four-pronged campaign consists of national advocacy, local relief actions, collaborations with faith communities, and sending delegations to Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

Targeted Cities: Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, New York and Texas

Website: www.nalacc.org/nalacc-summer-of-action-protecting-children-across-borders

The **Refugee Enrichment and Development (READ) Project** is a nonpartisan humanitarian effort focused on helping to change the national narrative about the root causes of the crisis, and on helping refugee children from Central America cope with their situation through reading, playing and praying. The initiative is spearheaded by the Hispanic Heritage Foundation and its partners Entravision,

Univision, Qlovi, Catholic Charities, Elevare International, First Book and actress America Ferrera. On July 27, 2014, the Hispanic Heritage Foundation led a delegation of humanitarian advocates, including Ferrera, to assess the situation at the border and work with a shelter in McAllen, Texas. Its current focus is on raising funds to make sure children have basic essentials like toothpaste, shoes and clothing, as well as comfort items like Spanish-language books, blankets and stuffed animals.

Website: www.hispanicheritage.org/read-project

The **Catholic Charities Refugee Relief Project** is spearheaded by Catholic Charities agencies across the state of Texas and partners like the [South Texas Refugee Response](#). The various agencies are providing children and families with basic essentials like clothing, food, water, medicine and toiletries, as well as case management and legal services. The Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley and the Catholic Charities of Southeast Texas have established family assistance centers at the Sacred Heart Church in McAllen and the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Brownsville. They are seeing 300 immigrant families per day and are in desperate need of volunteers and supplies, including Spanish Bibles, clothing for women and children, travel-size toiletries, water, deodorant wipes, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Services vary by location.

Targeted Cities: Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Galveston, Houston, Lubbock, San Antonio and San Juan

Websites: www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org, www.catholiccharities.org/uac, www.txcatholic.org/component/content/article/13-policy/447-unaccompanied-children-refugees

The **Migration and Refugee Services (MRS)** agency, spearheaded by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, is the largest refugee resettlement agency in the world, and is one of only two agencies authorized by the U.S. Department of State to resettle unaccompanied refugee children. MRS serves as a leader in the protection of unaccompanied children by providing both family reunification services to children who enter the United States alone without immigration status and specialized placements in community-based settings to refugee and immigrant children with no viable family reunification options in the United States. MRS has served unaccompanied children through culturally appropriate programs nationwide since 1980.

Family Refugee Support Centers: Fort Worth, Galveston and Houston, Texas; San Jose, Calif.; Richmond, Va.; Rochester and Syracuse, N.Y.; and Miami

Website: www.usccb.org/mrs

Foster Care for Unaccompanied Refugee and Immigrant Children, spearheaded by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, is federally funded and state licensed to provide familylike placements for children. The Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) foster care program includes a comprehensive set of services and financial supports designed to assist youth through their transition process to the United States. These services are specially geared toward the needs of foreign-born youth, with a focus on blending their cultural identity with their new environment. Services provided include indirect financial support through the provision of housing, food, clothing and other necessities; educational supports; health, mental health and legal services; intensive case management; cultural and recreation activities; and mentoring and life skills training.

Foster Care Program Sites: Phoenix; San Jose and Fullerton, Calif.; Washington, D.C.; Denver and Colorado Springs, Colo.; Miami; Newton and Worcester, Mass.; Grand Rapids and Lansing, Mich.; Jackson, Miss.; Rochester and Syracuse, N.Y.; Fargo, N.D.; Philadelphia; Houston and Fort Worth, Texas; Salt Lake City; Richmond, Va.; and Seattle and Tacoma, Wash.

Website: www.usccb.org/about/children-and-migration

Southwest Key, which operates the **Immigrant Youth Shelters** program, is an affiliate of the National Council of La Raza and has been one of the largest providers of services to unaccompanied children in the United States for many years. Its programs encourage the development of personal and academic skills, honor and respect individual cultures and traditions, and provide humanitarian services in a nurturing and homelike environment. During their stay, children receive crisis stabilization, legal and medical services, and they attend an on-site, nontraditional, closed K-12 school while awaiting the resolution of their legal case. The ideal length of stay in these shelters is 45 days, as arrangements are made to either reunite the youth with relatives living in the United States or back in their home country. *Locations of Unaccompanied Children Shelters:* Glendale, Phoenix and Youngtown, Ariz.; El Cajon, Lemon Grove and Pleasant Hill, Calif.; and Brownsville, Canutillo, Clint, Conroe, El Paso, Houston, San Antonio and San Benito, Texas
Website: www.swkey.org/programs/shelters

Legal-Aid Relief Efforts:

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) is a national organization focused on providing unaccompanied refugee and immigrant children in the United States with pro bono legal services. KIND ensures that children understand the legal proceedings and deportation process, and that sponsors are properly screened so children do not end up in abusive or unsafe homes, and it matches children with a pro bono lawyer. KIND, along with its partner the Global Fund for Children, also helps ensure that children returning to their countries of origin have access to the basic services they need to be safe and secure, as often the conditions that caused them to leave remain the same. KIND was founded by Angelina Jolie and the Microsoft Corp.

Field Offices: Baltimore; Boston; Houston; Los Angeles; Newark, N.J.; New York City; and Seattle
Website: www.supportkind.org/en

The **Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)** is a legal-aid nonprofit that was founded in 1986 to help Central Americans who were fleeing the civil wars and social upheavals of El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. RAICES provides children and families with age-appropriate “know your rights” information. In order to make room for the more than 900 children in its system, RAICES has had to change its usual mission of helping all immigration applicants, and now serves adults only in emergency situations. Now in its third decade, RAICES has a dedicated team of attorneys, accredited representatives and legal assistants, in addition to volunteers, student interns and partnering pro bono attorneys.

Targeted City: San Antonio

Website: www.raicetexas.org

The **ProBAR Children’s Project**, founded in 2003, is a project of the American Bar Association, the State Bar of Texas and the American Immigration Lawyers Association. The focus of the project is to provide age-appropriate “know your rights” information to children, and to assist them with pro bono legal representation. The ProBAR Children’s Project currently has a team of 10 attorneys, two Board of Immigration Appeals–accredited representatives, 20 paralegals and two full-time volunteers. It serves more than 1,000 unaccompanied children who are detained at shelters in South Texas.

Targeted Cities: Harlingen and most of South Texas

Website:

www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/immigration/projects_initiatives/south_texas_pro_bono_a_sylum_representation_project_probar/immigrant_childreassistanceprojectcap.html

The **Immigrant Children’s Protection Project** is spearheaded by the National Immigrant Justice Center and provides services to unaccompanied children held in Chicago-area shelters. Members of the Immigrant Children’s Protection Project visit all of the facilities on a weekly basis to interview the children, conduct legal assessments and deliver “know your rights” presentations, which provide an overview of the immigration court process. This on-the-ground experience provides the National Immigrant Justice Center with a unique, in-depth perspective on the realities children face when they enter the United States alone, and on the need for systemic reforms to ensure that children’s human rights and due process are not compromised when they enter the complex immigration legal system.

Targeted Cities: Chicago and other parts of Illinois

Website: www.immigrantjustice.org/issues/unaccompanied-immigrant-children

Statewide Efforts:

The **Children Seeking Refuge Program** was launched by Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley to meet the needs of the unaccompanied children entering the state. Maryland has had more than 2,200 unaccompanied children arrive since January 2014, of which 92 percent are from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. While Maryland does not have a direct role in the placement of children, the state is working with the federal government to help support efforts to place these children in family homes and ensure that they are given the due process available to them under the law. Gov. O’Malley has organized a multi-stakeholder task force of healthcare providers, legal-aid organizations, educators, and residential and foster care providers to address the immediate and long-term needs of the unaccompanied children.

Website: www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=12148