



Offering hope,
comfort and love
to children
seeking refuge.

Table of contents

1. Standing in solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities
2. Facts and Figures
3. Programming and Services
4. Leadership
5. Donors, Grants and Collaborative Organizations and In-kind Support



Standing in solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities



2022 has been a transformative year in so many ways. As we prepare to increase our services and programs to adapt to the constant changes of migration, we want to pause and reflect on the dangers of hate, racism, and bigotry that continue to be as apparent as they were hundreds of years ago.

In October 2022, comments made by three politicians directly reopened the emotional wounds of Black and Indigenous communities of refugees. It directly affected me, an Indigenous Zapotec woman from the central valley area of Oaxaca, Mexico. These continuing hurtful and demeaning words are a clear sign that there is still so much work to be done in order to dismantle ignorance, hatred and xenophobia against our Black and Indigenous communities in spaces of power and in our everyday lives. From a very young age, I have personally experienced and seen fellow Indigenous

people live through racism, discrimination, and colorism, not only in the United States, but also in our home countries. These comments sadly were not a surprise, but a painful reminder that white supremacist views and internalized bias exists even within Latinx-identified people.

Our Refugee Children Center aims to provide a dignified welcome to refugees and asylum seekers from Central America. In fact, there is a large number of Indigenous people and Afrodescendientes from the Northern triangle (El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala) who are participants of our programs and recipients of our services. As I reflected on these personal experiences and the call to fight bigotry and white supremacist views, I could not help but think about how important it is to also have conversations that





include the intersectionality of migration, especially when trying to understand the cause of displacement of Black and Indigenous folks. Particularly in Mexico and Central America, the rippling effects of colonization are very much present in these communities, toppled with violent foreign and economic policies imposed by economically advanced countries, which have directly contributed to forced migration. Impacts of climate change caused by countries that are the largest emitters of greenhouse gasses are clearly evident in hurricanes, mudslides, and drought. Our collective and individual demand for products affect the extraction of natural resources on ancestral lands, thus affecting the ecosystem for natives whose livelihoods depend on the land. Once we understand some of the causes of migration, we can take a deeper look at the abundance of natural and human-made resources we have in the United States at the expense of others. We can examine ourselves and ask, what role do we play in this notion of superiority that we believe we deserve? My hope is that we collectively use this unpleasant circumstance to take a look at our internalized racism through policies in our city, our county, our state, and our country. I encourage everyone to strengthen the bonds between one another and oppose hate directed towards Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities. I hope you can stand in solidarity with us to pursue a just and equitable world for all.

Gratefully,
Mayra Medina-Núñez
Executive Director



Referred Cases for Support by the Immigration Legal Services Program

111 new families were welcomed at the RCC immigration legal services department in 2022

154 families with children in were served in total, between families enrolled in 2022 and families enrolled in previous years

30 families were admitted to the RCC immigration legal services department in 2022

44 minor participants received support in the immigration legal services department in 2022

50 participants secured a pro bono consultation

1 family secured pro bono representation

6 families secured low bono representation

20 families received support with completing and sending immigration applications

9 translations of birth certificates, marriage certificates and a declaration were made, from Spanish to English

As of May 25, 2022, the Refugee Children Center is now a recognized organization by the Recognition and Accreditation Program (R&A) from the United States Department of Justice (DOJ).

Referred Cases for Support by the Children and Families Program

24 New families with children enrolled in our Children and Families's Program

65 of all active participants received support at the Children and Families' Program

65 of all participants attended enrichment activities in 2022

30 Community Members received support from the Children and Families Program

1,707 breakfasts and lunches were served

Other facts and figures

\$10,000 in pro bono services

The RCC has received an estimated \$10,000

in pro bono services in 2022 that range from bono consultations, support with divorce process, translation and interpretation services, to pro bono training for staff and administration.

5,000 donated hours

Student interns, attorneys and volunteers have donated an estimated 5,000 hours by supporting our children and their families

\$60,000 in kind-support that directly benefited our participants

Our Food and Basic Needs Relief Program secured gift cards, food donations, toys, diapers, baby wipes, hygiene kits and formula totalling

Countries

In 2022, the RCC provided services to our migrant community from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and provided referrals and information on resources to families from Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, Chile, Ucrania, Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Peru.



Our programming and services were organized in the following ways:

Immigration Legal Services

We support in:

- Completing immigration questionnaires (Like legal intake forms) and drafting a statement of facts about what occurred in their country of origin.
- A Referral system for legal service providers to carry out up to 2 pro bono evaluations of asylum cases.
- Provide participants with General orientations on:
- Asylum and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJIS)
- Immigration court proceedings
- specific United states citizenship and immigration services (USCIS) form preparation and support.

Children and Families' program:

We support in:

- Referrals to community resources, including food, housing, mental health, medical, and educational resources
- Enrichment programs for children, youth, and families via:
 - Music Classes
 - Cooking for the Soul
 - Academic Tutoring & Mentoring
 - Support groups for parents, caregivers, unaccompanied minors.

Social Services Referral Program

We support in:

- Links to support services, including mental health resources, MediCal enrollment rent relief information and housing assistance information.
- Continual in-person, over-the-phone support for children who go through everyday life, including crisis management, school enrollment, over-the-phone interpreters and counseling to find information and resources in their preferred language.
- Women Support Group. A safe space for participants to share everyday life experiences and connections.

Enrichment Activities Program:

We support in:

- In-person and virtual art programs every month, including art therapy,
- Virtual youth gatherings, like Sunday Fundays where children get to connect online to visit virtual museums, and more.
- In-person and virtual music classes with Nueva Vision Community School.

Personal Development Program

We support in:

- Referrals and case management to support participant's personal and professional goals
- Referrals to ESL class, free tax assistance, employment resources and more
- Women's Cooperative (COOPERE): An initiative that seeks to inspire and equip refugees and immigrants, in particular women, to become financially independent and self-sufficient by learning to make candles, propagating succulents, tamales sales, event planning, decorating and more.

Food Relief and Basic Needs Program

We support in:

- Food, diapers, toiletries, and other donations to families and unaccompanied minors via:
- Food distribution every 3rd Saturday of the month (9am - 12pm)
- Weekly clothing and general donation distribution (by appointment)



Leadership

Executive Committee

Sumangala Bhattacharya, J.D., Ph.D. **President**

Professor of English and World Literature at Pitzer College, Immigration Attorney at private practice

Anchulee Raongthum, Secretary

Agent & Broker Outreach, Education & Technical Assistance Program, Federally Facilitated Marketplace

Charles Laing, Treasurer

Tax Manager at Clumbeck Stern Schenkelberg & Getzoff

Board Members

Aimee Porter

Early Childhood Trauma Specialist, Children's Book Author and Photographer

Amanda Hillsberg Arya

Director, Documentary Film at Participant Media

Gabriela Lagarda Arias

Director, Creative Marketing at Participant Media

Linda Pillsbury

Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Therapist, Private practice

Monia Ghacha

Immigration Attorney, private practice

Nayeli Perez

Psychiatric Social Worker, LAUSD School of Mental Health

Advisory Council

Ivelise Markovits

Former Chief Executive Officer at Penny Lane Centers
Retired

Ninette Ayala

Chief Development Director for the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

Ivana de Maria

Actress, founder and CEO at StoryPlace

Gloria Myles

Northridge UMC Church Member
Retired

Guillermo Torres

Immigration Program Director at CLUE (Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice)

David Farley

Former Director, Justice and Compassion Essential Ministry Team, Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
Retired

Emeritus Board

Rev. Frederick Birten Morris, Founder

Former Executive Director for the Refugee Children Center and Former Senior Pastor at the North Hills Hispanic Mission United Methodist Church, Retired

Staff

Mayra Medina-Núñez

Executive Director

Frida Aldapa

Operations and Volunteer Coordinator

Dayna Mendez

Children and Families' Program Coordinator

Magdaly Vivas-Tirado

Immigration Legal Services Coordinator

Kendra Rivera

Office Assistant for the Immigration Legal Services Coordinator and Children and Families Coordinator

Maria Mercedes Dolores

Maintenance Coordinator

Student Interns

University of St. Augustine, Miami Campus
Doctor of Occupational Therapy Students

Marlene Vega

Nicholas Velez

UCLA Graduate Students

Amalina Sengupta

Parwana Khazi

Michelle Yan Xie

Mercy Loyo

UCLA Undergraduate Students

Layla Ali

Tanya Solorzano

Kiara Cruz

Fiona Perkocha

Odette Avendano

Nubia Zambrano

Angela Estrada

Sebastian

Abigail Cardenas

Rebeca Quintana

Sara Alghanbar

Cynthia Rodriguez Carballo

Iris Sanchez

Natalia Elizabeth Garcia

Ryan Kiernan

Rosie McGowan

Abdeil Ballines

Christopher Higham

Ishan Modi

CSUN Graduate Students

Clarissa Quintanilla

Carolyn Mendoza

Wendy Ayala

CSUN Undergraduate Students

Iketra Porter

Consultants

Carlos Long

Graphic Designer

Greg Pawin

Donor Analyst

Estefany Ochoa,

Social Media Advisor

Lead Volunteers

Art Program

KC Porter

Food Pantry

Pastor Ervin Aguilon

Gabriela Lagarda

Amanda Hillsberg

Thea Smolinski

Media

Louis Kravitz

Victoria Schiafino

Norman Schwartz

Social Media

Magaly Santos

Website and Platform Development

Victor Avalos

Legal Support

Negar Sabharwal

Judith Bickel

Ixil Language Interpretation

Gerónimo Ramírez

Distribution of surplus of donations at the San Diego-Tijuana border

Reverend Joel Hortiales

Pastor Ruben Esponda

Grants

- TIDES Foundation through the California Dignity for Families
- Grant for Organizational Effectiveness and Staff Wellness/Self-Care
- Capacity-Strengthening Grants from the LA office of Immigrants Affair through the Center for Nonprofit Management
- California-Pacific United Methodist Foundation
- California Community Foundation
- No Kid Hungry

Donors

\$26,000 - \$50,000

Bob and Marion Wilson

\$11,000 - \$25,000

Anonymous

\$6,000 - \$10,000

Doctor Lois Henson

Faith-based organizations

- North Hills Hispanic Mission United Methodist Church
- The Baha'i Community of Malibu Canyon
- United Methodist Foundation
- Saint James Presbyterian Church of Tarzana
- Knollwood United Methodist Women
- San Gabriel Presbytery
- Santa Monica Religious Monthly Meeting
- of the Religious Society of Friends
- Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church
- First United Methodist Church of Glendale
- The Korean Hanyang Presbyterian Church

Attorney Referral Network

- Lutin Law Group
- Antonia Reyes Law
- Law Offices of Lori B. Schoenberg
- Ghacha Law Group, Attorney Monia Ghacha
- Law Offices of Miguel Mexicano
- The Law Office of James Pérez

Pro bono legal services providers

- Esperanza Immigrants Rights Project

Collaborating Organizations

- North Valley Caring Services
- Nueva Vision Community School
- Baby2Baby
- Valley Community Healthcare
- Providence Community Health
- Food Forward
- No Kid Hungry
- Skirball Cultural Center

- Penny Lane Centers
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
- San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc.
- The Los Angeles County Office of Immigrant Affairs
- CIELO (Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo)
- Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)
- National Immigrant Justice Center
- The Help Group
- Chrysalis
- Allied Cultures
- Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural and Bookstore
- Center for Nonprofit Management (CNM) Southern California
- Valley Nonprofit Resources
- Latino Student Health Project at UCLA (LSHP)
- North Los Angeles County Regional Center
- Los Angeles Valley College
- Mayan League
- Asian Pacific Health Corps at UCLA (APHC)
- Pilipinos for Community Health Fairs at UCLA (PCH Fairs)
- The Claremont Colleges
- University of Saint Augustine, Miami Campus

In-kind support

- Participant Media
- Neu-Self Awakening
- Undocu Brahmas of Pierce College
- Baby2Baby
- North Valley Caring Services
- Sisters on the Streets
- County of Los Angeles Public Health: Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention







Thanks

REFUGEE CHILDREN CENTER

www.refugeechildrencenter.org