

YO SUEÑO
I DREAM



**REFUGEE
CHILDREN
CENTER**

*Offering hope,
comfort
and LOVE
to children
seeking refuge.*

Annual
Report 2023

AW

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and In-kind Support





Photo credit to Frida Ramirez Aldapa

The mission of the Refugee Children Center, which was primarily supporting children and families from Central America, extended in April 2023 to provide a healing embrace and a dignified welcome to refugee children and families from South America and Mexico who have made the perilous journey to the U.S./México border and who identify as Indigenous from Meso and South America, historically, culturally, and through their Indigenous language or who speak Spanish.

This journey of providing support through a holistic approach while amplifying the voices and the needs of this beloved and growing community have not been easy. However, we continue to count on you to ensure that our Center and our staff provide direct support to our refugee, asylum seeker children and their families.

In 2023, we continued providing referrals to non-profit legal assistance and offered in-house legal resource support with preparing certain immigration forms as well as hosting educational presentations facilitated by immigration attorney volunteers.

We also continued providing referrals to medical care, mental health care, vision, school enrollment, educational assistance

In some instances, case-managing with at risk youth and families were provided by our MSW student interns supervised by our Licensed Clinical Social Worker Consultant

In partnership with non-profit organizations, local faith-based organizations, employee resource groups and student groups, we were able to secure and give away diapers, formula, food pantry items, food gift cards, school supplies and personal hygiene donations

We continued enrolling new arriving families in intentional in-house programming such as:

Nest LA that launched in October, 2023 to provide an on-campus free early childhood education program for children ages 18 months to 5 years old in collaboration with Nest Global (up to 5 days a week)

We continued our weekly support groups for caregivers, monthly art interventions led by our amazing core volunteers, student interns and staff and weekly music classes in collaboration with Nueva Vision Community School

Field trips and sport activities were offered to our children and families to the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific, the Getty Center and Skirball Cultural Center

Lastly, we continued creating collaborations with new organizations that are amplifying our mission of providing a dignified welcome and a healing embrace to our beloved population.

Since our incorporation as an official non-profit organization in 2018 to date, The Refugee Children Center has supported over 1,200 children and families in our many programs. It has secured and distributed over half a million dollars in in-kind-support that directly benefited our participants.

Together, we are impacting the lives of children and providing an opportunity for a brighter tomorrow, and for that we are grateful!

Sincerely,

Mayra Medina-Núñez

Executive Director



Photo credit to Frida Ramirez Aldapa



Referred Cases for Support by the Immigration Legal Services Program

194 families with children were served in total, between families enrolled in 2023 and families enrolled in previous years, **70** of those **194** families were new to our programming

67 participants out of those 194 families secured a pro bono consultation

4 families secured pro bono representation for other immigration reliefs that included SIJS amongst others

6 families secured low bono representation

38 families received support with completing and sending immigration applications

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

Referred Cases for Support by the Children and Families Program

175 of all active participants received support at the Children and Families' Program, **33** of those **175** families were new families with children enrolled in our Children and Families's Program

54 of all families attended enrichment activities in 2023

19 community members received support from the Children and Families Program

1,655 breakfasts and lunches were served

Other facts and figures

\$1,000 in pro bono services

The RCC has received an estimated \$2,000 in pro bono services in 2023 that range from bono consultations, 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

\$35,000 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 \$35,000 that was distributed to our participants in 2023

Countries

In 2023, the RCC provided services to our migrant community from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Cuba, Nicaragua



Photo credit to Frida Ramirez Aldapa

Our programming and services were organized in the following ways:

Immigration Legal Services

- Support in completing immigration questionnaires (intake forms) and drafting a statement of facts about what occurred in their country of origin.
- Provide a referral system for legal service providers to carry out up to 2 pro bono evaluations of immigration 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

Social Services Referral Program

- Links to support services, including mental health resources, MediCal enrollment, rent relief 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.

Enrichment Activities Program:

- In-person monthly art therapy for children.
- In-person and virtual music classes with Nueva Vision Community School for children and youth.
- Weekly Support groups for caregivers and monthly Cooking for the Soul; a safe space for participants to share everyday life experiences and connections.

Personal Development Program

- Referrals and case management to support participant's personal and professional goals.
- Referrals to ESL class, free tax assistance, employment resources and more.

Food Relief and Basic Needs Program

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



REFUGEE CHILDREN CENTER

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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

Director of Education, Outreach & Support at Square Group, LLC (ASG)

Charles Laing, Treasurer

Tax Manager at Clumeck 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

2023 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

2023 Staff

Mayra Medina-Núñez

Executive Director

Frida Aldapa

Operations and Volunteer Manager

Carolyn Mendoza | MSW

Program Specialist

Dayna Mendez

Children and Families' Program
Co-Coordinator

Magdaly Vivas-Tirado

Immigration Legal Services Coordinator

Kendra Rivera

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

Natalia Garcia

Special Event's Assistant

Maria Mercedes Dolores

Maintenance Coordinator

Student Interns

*Doctor of Occupational
Therapy Students*

Yerania Venegas

Nicholas Velez

UCLA Undergraduate Students

Guadalupe Martinez

Mia Arteaga

**Karla Alejandra Vasquez
Perez**

Victor Shi

Fyby Gutierrez-Medina

Melissa Monterroso

Ayman Alzhani

CSUN Graduate Students

Cinthia Gutierrez

Yesenia Leon

Wendy Ayala

Jessica Castorena

CSUN Undergraduate Students

Iketra Porter

Consultants

Carlos Long

Graphic Designer

Volunteers

Art Program

KC Porter

Enrichment Programming

Daisy Morales

Ella Graber

Norma Martinez

Brandon Miranda

Alessandra Amati

Axel Mendez

Claribel Orellana

Miranda Brake

Daniela Herrera

Safaiya Commer-Morris

Chiara Lepe

Alexander Rodriguez

Dayshalee Rosario Cruz

Legal Support

Evan Martin

Ixil Language Interpretation

Gerónimo Ramírez

Tierra del Sol

Odette Limani

Olga Solis

Michael Salinas

Erika Garcia

Jonathan Bolanos-Butler

Alexander Rivera

Kenneth Beatty

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

Reverend Joel Hortiales

Pastor Ruben Esponda



Photo credit to Claribel Orellana

Grants

- Capacity-Strengthening Grants from the LA office of Immigrants Affair through the Center for Nonprofit Management
- Pacoima Beautiful
- Levine Family Charitable Foundation
- Renaissance Charitable Foundation

Donors

\$50,000+

The Wilson Family Foundation

\$26,000-\$49,000

T. June and Simon K.C. Li Charitable Fund

\$11,000 - \$25,000

Dr. Lois Henson

Faith-based organizations

- North Hills Hispanic Mission United Methodist Church
- The Baha'i Community of Malibu Canyon
- United Methodist Foundation
- Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church
- First United Methodist Church of Glendale
- First Lutheran Church of Van Nuys
- Messy Church at First Presbyterian Church of Encino
- Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
- Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church

Attorney Referral Network

- Law Offices of Lori B. Schoenberg
- Ghacha Law Group, Attorney Monia Ghacha
- Law Offices of Miguel Mexicano
- ImmPowered Law Office
- Marymount Immigrant Justice Clinic
- Law Office of Cristel S. Martinez

Collaborating Organizations

- North Valley Caring Services
- Nueva Vision Community School
- Baby2Baby
- Center for Family Health & Education
- Skirball Cultural Center
- Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
- The Los Angeles County Office of Immigrant Affairs
- Center for NonProfit Management
- CIELO (Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo)
- National Immigrant Justice Center
- Nature for All
- Pacoima Beautiful
- Allied Cultures
- Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural and Bookstore

- Center for Nonprofit Management (CNM) Southern California
- Valley Nonprofit Resources
- Undocu Brahmas
- North Los Angeles County Regional Center
- Los Angeles Valley College
- Pilipinos for Community Health Fairs at UCLA (PCH Fairs)
- The Claremont Colleges
- Tierra del Sol Foundation
- West Coast University, Center for Graduate Studies
- University of Saint Augustine, Miami Campus

In-kind support

- Latinx ERG and Southwest Asian and North African "SWANA" ERG at Participant Media
- Neu-Self Awakening
- Undocu Brahmas of Pierce College
- Baby2Baby
- Sisters on the Streets
- Miry's List
- Hands4Hope LA



Photo credit to Aimee Porter



Photo credit to Aimee Porter and RCC team



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THANK YOU

