



HT Migrant Team Q2 Report

At this time we are providing accompaniment for five families as well as additional support to referrals from the Kino Border Initiative and Georgetown University Law Center. The current COVID-19 pandemic poses disproportionate risks to many in our region, including our migrant community. The struggle to acquire basic needs for families due to business and services closures, layoffs, and lack of childcare continues. As anticipated, COVID-19 has been an additional burden to many of the members of our “Migrant Familia.”

Because of you, the HT Migrant Team has been able to respond to the increased needs of our families. Since the outbreak, the HT Migrant Team has:

- Provided funds to keep our families safe and healthy at home with emergency assistance to cover rent, food and utilities;
- Provided masks (thank you Lee Jones) and food donations (thank you Catholic Charities);
- Facilitated short-term housing and support for two individuals granted asylum (partnership with Georgetown University Law Center and Attached Corporate Housing);
- Welcomed a refugee family from West Africa and through the generous support of our community, provided furnishing and required items (including a washing machine from Pennsylvania!);
- Welcomed a refugee from Honduras, and again through the generous support of our community, fulfilled his Amazon clothing wish list in 24 hours.

With your support and prayers, we are accompanying the following individuals:

Mario (Nicaragua; Migrant Team member since 2018)

Mario is completely self-sufficient and now works full-time as a programmer for a government contracting company. Luckily, he has been able to work from his rented room in DC. His asylum hearing is scheduled for 2024. Mario continues to be an inspiration and advocate for all, sending job postings and training resources to other new immigrants and advocating for anyone in need that he meets. He is an active member of our HT Migrant Team, often serving as translator. He misses Mass at Our Lady of the Americas but is using this time to continue playing guitar.

Fredys (Honduras; Migrant Team member since 2019)

Fredys is hard-working and positive, always having a smile and friendly greeting for everyone. He shared his story at our Toolbox for Justice January meeting, and he is currently participating in a Refugee educational effort with the Ignation Solidarity Network. He has regained full-time contract work as an electrician in various construction sites. Fredys is taking ESL classes and working on his English. His goal is to gain his GED. He is also working with a financial coach from Britepaths to help build a sustainable budget for his future goals.

Oneyda and Ludvin (Honduras; Migrant Team member since 2020)

Unfortunately Oneyda and Ludvin’s Demolition company had to be closed due to the coronavirus shut-down. Recently however, Ludvin has secured full-time contract construction work and their renters (immigrants who also lost their jobs) are also now receiving income. Oneyda and Ludvin were married in civil court last year but they hope to have a church wedding next year – a great fiesta!

Enrique, Yosselin and their boys Dennis (13), Jeremy (4), Anastacio (6) and Bryan (3) (Honduras; Migrant Team members since 2019)

Last February Fredys' brother Enrique came with his wife Yosselin and their four boys, also fleeing the drug violence. Enrique and his family had arrived at the Kino Border Initiative Comedor in Nogales, having made their way through Guatemala and Mexico on foot and bus as part of the most recent "caravan" in early January. We have helped this family by providing clothing, vaccinations and medical care, and legal IDs. We found pro bono lawyers through the JustNeighbors organization. There also has been an ongoing team in NoVA to help with the various driving needed to lawyers, ICE, medical appointments, etc.

Yosselin and Enrique are hard-working, and they are incredible parents. This is best shown by their loving and active boys who always greet newcomers with hugs and cheers of "tio" or "tia." Work has been inconsistent during COVID-19 for both Yosselin and Enrique. The boys have been part of the shift to remote learning, and this has been difficult due to poor WiFi, computers and a quiet place to study given the active younger siblings.

Understandably, the parents worry about the coronavirus and their risk. Until they are granted asylum, the family won't be eligible for government benefits like Medicaid, TANF and SNAP. They are currently receiving WIC benefits. Despite all the struggles, they remain a happy, loving family

Bernadette and her daughter Marie (5) (Gabon; Migrant Team Family Member since 2020)

Bernadette is an asylum seeker who came to use through the Georgetown Law School Center. Her hearing has been postponed to July, and her lawyers feel she has a strong case for asylum. Bernadette is a very bright and compassionate woman with a background in IT support. She has been working with an English tutor five days per week, and we can already see a big jump in her communication! Her daughter Marie cannot wait to start Kindergarten in the Fall.

Bernadette has received wide support from our parishioners through donations of furniture, and toys and books for her daughter. Additionally, parishioner networks have helped her navigate gaps in the currently overstressed healthcare system. Colleen Conroy's persuasive networking with her group -- Peace Corps Community for Refugees -- led to matching Bernadette with Debbie Harding, who not only has the time and motivation to work with Bernadette 6 times a week, but also, due to her long career in human rights in West Africa, and her familiarity with the politics and culture of Gabon, is well-suited to be an emotional ally as well. Bernadette is eager to find employment.

Extended "familia" members:

Via accompaniment to ICE visits and support to his sponsor, we have been part of the community for Yanilson, a 19-year-old transgender Garfuno man from Honduras. Working with his Maryknoll lawyer in El Paso, we facilitated housing through Casa Ruby.

We have provided immediate housing and basic clothing, toiletries, food and transportation for two young men (both from Cuba) who were released from detention in the middle of the COVID-19 lockdown. Thank you to Attache Corporate Housing for providing accommodations. Both men traveled to Florida to be reunited with their families.

Because of you, we provided additional financial assistance to the following organizations:

- Kino Border Initiative (directed donation)
 - GRM- Matamoros (directed donation to address COVID-19 health preparations)
 - Catholic Charities Rio Grande Valley (directed donation)
 - Food for the Poor
 - Spanish Catholic Center (directed donation)
 - CAIR Coalition (tithe recipient)
 - Jesuit Encuentro Program, El Paso (redirected deposit for canceled April visit to food insecurity)
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Establishing strong partnerships has been a priority this year, and we are grateful for:

- A developing strategic relationship with an association of Returned Peace Corps volunteers that is beginning to place former volunteers with language abilities at the service of our client groups to help with English learning, tutoring, consulting and accompaniment.
- Food support from Catholic Charities (via Social Justice committee member Tom Roddy). In May we were able to get CARES packages (meat, fruit, veggies and canned goods) to our families;
- Guidance and resources from Ignatian Solidarity Network, the Kino Border Initiative and JRS/USA (Chapel Chat with Daniella Vega);
- Britepaths (financial counseling);
- Just Neighbors (legal support)

Looking forward:

- COVID-19 continues to impact our migrant families in a real way. Like us, they are fearful of contracting the virus, and uncertain about what the coming months may bring. Few of the families we support were eligible for the CARES payment. With things opening up, many of these families have been able to start back at work. As one woman stated when declining support this month, *“Yes, we have little, but please use this money for someone who needs it more.”*
- Healthcare remains a big concern as many of the families work in high risk environments such as construction and restaurants. Free clinics serving the poor regardless of immigration status, have been closed or operating in a very limited capacity. The team is focusing on increasing our medical/health care resources.

Faith-Based Actions:

- Join the mailing list for updates and ways you can help on the ground;
- Be a sponsor (lead person to accompany someone who has just been released from detention and is applying for asylum);
- Be a medical advocate and help our families receive healthcare when they need it;
- Join our advocacy team to help us in addressing the systemic injustice of our broken immigration system.
- Network your community for healthcare and housing resources.
- Join the “Knit for Kino” Club. Knit or crochet blankets for moms and babies who come to Kino in Nogales, AZ.
- Continue your financial support by making a tax-deductible donation to the HT Migrant Support Fund.

Because of you. we have not said “no” to any request for help, near or far. And, **because of you**, the HT Migrant Team’s impact is far-reaching within DC, and at the border. We are accompanying individuals and families during this extremely challenging time, and that friendship makes all the difference.

We are grateful for your support of this ministry. If you have questions about the contents of this report or would like to learn more about how you may support our families, please email aklick@trinity.org.

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