

Dignity Mission Update

August 22, 2024

Last Saturday we successfully delivered a truckload of basic humanitarian supplies to Dr. Moya in El Paso for distribution to migrant shelters on both sides of the border. Over one third of the three-ton load were the Dignity Kits assembled almost three weeks ago in Placitas by an unbelievable team of volunteers including nine young people from the Youth Volunteer Corps 505 (pictures attached). Those 2,048 Dignity Kits, 2,143 pounds of beans and rice, along with another 1,800 pounds of other items including blankets, tables, children's chairs, 202 backpacks filled with school supplies from United Church of Los Alamos, wheelchairs, toys, clothing, and shoes all were loaded onto the truck last Friday at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church by another unbelievable team of volunteers (picture attached). After Dr. Moya's team (picture attached) unloaded the truck, filled their own personal vehicles to transport supplies to shelters, and placed the remainder in Dr. Moya's garage, we accompanied her to deliver Dignity Kits, rice, beans, diapers, and other donations to three shelters in El Paso—the Welcome Center, Sacred Heart Church, and the Rescue Mission. Attached are some pictures of some of your donations delivered earlier to various shelters in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez.

As we have read and heard, the numbers of migrants in shelters are down. News sources have been reporting over the last two months that since President Biden's move to suspend asylum processing at any location along the border other than at official ports of entry where they will only process those who have applied for asylum using the CBP One app, there has been a dramatic drop in the number of migrants released into the U.S. It appears the time is gone when Border Patrol would release migrants apprehended between ports of entry who claimed they feared returning home and sought asylum in the U.S. According to CBS News last Sunday, this "sharp decrease in releases has coincided with a significant jump in the percentage of migrants placed in 'expedited removal' proceedings. Those proceedings allow officials to quickly deport recent border crossers who don't claim

asylum or who fail asylum interviews.” U.S. Customs and Border Protection data show the number of migrant encounters at ports of entry along the entire Southwest border via CBP One appointments declined by 15% to 38,000 in July. That decline in numbers equates to approximately 150 asylum seekers coming daily through the official port of entry in El Paso. We had been seeing nearly 200 a day crossing the bridge in El Paso before June. That latter number does not include those who previously were detained, successfully completed their asylum interviews, and then subsequently released from facilities in Texas and New Mexico and bused to shelters in El Paso, Las Cruces, and Albuquerque.

We understand the number of migrants seeking shelter in Ciudad Juárez has also dropped. The directors of some of the shelters the Dignity Mission supports in Juárez have relayed to us that they have fewer guests, but those guests are staying longer to seek employment in Mexico, or to await confirmation and scheduling of CBP One appointments in the United States. The fewer migrant numbers in Juárez are more than likely the result of U.S. diplomatic efforts with Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, and Columbia that have resulted in those countries boosting their border enforcement. For example, the U.S. has offered to pay Panama to deport foreign nationals who come into Panama through the Darien Gap from Columbia on their long journey to the U.S.

We believe the Dignity Mission still has a role to play at the border. We believe the Dignity Mission still can bring a sense of dignity and hope to those who, despite barriers governments erect, flee danger and deprivation in their home countries seeking safety and a better life for themselves and their families in our country. We're eager to continue. Members of the Dignity Mission are already planning for the next Dignity Kit assembly on September 7th in preparation for the next delivery of donations to El Paso on September 14th. Las Placitas Presbyterian Church is preparing for a coat drive in anticipation of the colder days along the border and has kicked off a stuffed animal drive in

preparation for the creation of Christmas stockings/bags volunteers will deliver to the children along the border in mid-December.

Diapers, NIDO milk powder, baby food, and new underwear (all ages) remain critically needed items in every shelter. These and other items you may want to purchase can be found on the Dignity Mission Wish List at

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3A8N584B37L61?ref_=wl_share

and shipped directly to:

Dignity Mission
c/o Dr. Eva Moya
6520 La Cadena Drive El Paso, TX 79912

Monetary donations are always welcome, and you can be assured we will use those donations to purchase what is most needed at locations and in quantities necessary to get the most “bang for the buck.” It is only through your monetary donations that we can assemble 2,000 Dignity Kits every two months. Each Dignity Kit, which is a collection of toiletry items and is the hallmark of the Dignity Mission, costs \$4.54. Monetary donations can be made in one of two ways:

1. A check written to Las Placitas Presbyterian Church with Dignity Mission noted in the memo line and mailed to Las Placitas Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 768, Placitas, NM 87043.
2. On-line giving by going to www.lasplacitaschurch.org. Click on “More” in the top right-hand corner of the Home Page, click on “GIVE” on the drop-down menu, click on “CLICK HERE TO GIVE”, click on the box next to Dignity Mission on the Donation page, enter an amount, frequency and start date, and click on “Continue.” Complete the form and submit.

