



DISCIPLES OF CHRIST: WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN IN CRISIS, SEEKING REFUGE

Refugee & Immigration Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a ministry of Disciples Home Missions. Contact our Director of Refugee & Immigration Ministries, Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, at: 202-957-7826, or via e-mail at: ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org. Join the conversations for justice on Facebook with other Disciples and partners at: [Refugee and Immigration Ministries Disciples Home Missions](#), and through Twitter at: @StanleyRea

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been responding in a variety of ways to assist children and their families through during this challenging time of the Unaccompanied Child Crisis. Children are arriving with refugee-like stories, having escaped conditions of extraordinary violence and extortion by gangs and druglords in the primary countries of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. As a denomination, we are coordinating our responses, and are updating resources constantly. Please see the following denominational responses and resources below to stay as updated as possible about available ways you and your church can help.

2014 Initial & Ongoing Responses of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):

- ✦ Our General Minister and President, Dr. Sharon Watkins, continues to be deeply troubled by the crisis, and joined together with leadership from Disciples Home Missions, Global Ministries, Disciples Women, and Refugee & Immigration Ministries to draft a letter that outlines our concern and recommendations, which presented for a congressional hearing about the crisis in late June. See it at: <https://www.discipleshomeissions.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Disciples-Child-Migrant-Needs-Letter-FINAL.pdf>.
- ✦ A crisis background and resource phone calls with Dr. Watkins and related ministry areas occurred with denominational and regional leaders was held July 22.
- ✦ Hundreds of Disciples Women signed the Groundswell letter (see link below) at QA in Atlanta to help protect the children from human trafficking and urge they be given humane care and legal support—and our RIM Director hand delivered it to Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson in mid-July after it was signed by nearly 4,000 ecumenical partners. (See picture above left.)
- ✦ Disciples Week of Compassion responded immediately to a request from CWS in late June to provide funding for religious materials (Bibles, rosaries, etc.) for use by women and children in the Artesia Family Support Center opened late June in N.M., and since supported a CWS appeal for needed children’s support and legal services.
- ✦ Disciples Week of Compassion has recently provided additional outreach and emergency support to two of our vital ministries: Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries and Lilies of the Valley, both meeting needs in Texas. Support Week of Compassion to continue to meet unfolding needs!
- ✦ Global Ministry partners are regularly monitoring the crisis, and are reporting their in-country experiences of the crisis. See globalministries.org for partner reports.
- ✦ Disciples Women continue to provide leadership in fighting human trafficking, which is at the crux of congressional discussions during this crisis. See their new website that seeks to break the chains of human trafficking at: <https://www.discipleshomeissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/disciples-women/linkbylink/>, and then navigate to the “Labor and Immigration” link to see many resources related to the child migrant crisis. Also, go to updated advocacy recommendations at: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/resources/august-recess-actions/> to ensure kids won’t lose the protections of America’s Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA). Call your legislators to urge them to UPHOLD THE TVPRA NOW when it is most needed!!

- ✦ The Disciples Peace Fellowship remains committed to advocating against root causes that have exacerbated the crisis. Contact them at: dpfweb.org
- ✦ The Family & Children Ministries office of DHM has provided wonderful Kids2Kids opportunities for your church's children to assist other kids. See these at: <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/family-and-childrens-ministries/>
- ✦ Church members and leaders throughout the country are learning about the crisis, asking questions, and getting involved! See below for many ways we encourage your involvement:

What You and Your Church Can Do:

- **Our Refugee & Immigration Ministries (RIM) office is beginning to develop region-specific recommendation packets. Check our website on the Disciples Home Missions pages for these updates, and come back regularly for new postings of news, resources, facts, and worship resources:** <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/refugee-immigration-ministries/>
- **Like RIM on Facebook to see constant updates. Find us at: Refugee and Immigration Ministries Disciples Home Missions. Also, follow Refugee & Immigration Ministries on Twitter at: @StanleyRea. Articles are shared constantly here, so it's a good way to receive very current information!**
- **Worship Resources related to the crisis, including prayers and a sermon reflection are available on the RIM website, at:** <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/refugee-immigration-ministries/rim-resources/sermons/>. Please send us your own so we can add them!!
- **Sign the Groundswell Petition to Share Your Voices of Faith to Protect the Children!! Look for both an English and Spanish Version on Groundswell, at:** <http://action.groundswell-mvmt.org/petitions/address-humanitarian-crisis-of-unaccompanied-children-in-immigration-detention>
- **Download this Webinar PowerPoint Presentation about faith responses to the crisis, moderated by Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries Director, from July 15, 2014, sponsored by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition:** <http://interfaithimmigration.org/july-14-webinar-ppt>
- **Download Audio for the Above Webinar to listen to expert presenters, at:**
Download: <http://interfaithimmigration.org/july-14-webinar-audio>. Or, call in for an audio phone play back of the call to: +1 805-399-1099, Code: 104402# (same info. as above)
- **Call Congress & Engage on this Twitter Advocacy Action Page to Demand that Congress Reject Rollbacks to Child Protection Law:** <http://tiny.cc/ProtectKids>
- **Participate in a Weekend of Prayer. Find resources here, including some by our Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries office:** <http://www.calpacumc.org/interfaithweekend/>
- **Consider writing a letter to the fleeing children on The California Endowment website:** tce.org.
- **Engage your family and children in your church in the Kids2Kids opportunities, at:** <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/family-and-childrens-ministries/>

In Your Neighborhoods, Consider These Responses:

- If you hear that a center to help the children is being considered for your area, consider **educating your neighbors and expressing welcome** to assist the children who would be staying there temporarily. Call our RIM office if you would be interested in hosting a center in your area, and we will help you connect with FEMA.
- If you speak Spanish, **consider becoming a foster parent** to allow the release of the child while they wait for their immigrant court date. Additional resources can be found via the [U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops](#).
- **Volunteer with a program** that is helping unaccompanied children throughout the nation, such as the Corporation for [National and Community Service](#), [Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services](#), or [Kids In Need of Defense](#).

Some Region-Specific Opportunities to Assist Include:

- **ARIZONA:** [Casa Mariposa](#) seeks **volunteers** to help women and children dropped off at the Tucson and Phoenix bus stations. Volunteers help contact relatives, provide diapers, food, child care, etc.
- **CALIFORNIA:** If you live near to Naval Base Ventura in Oxnard, CA, contact the San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium, which is collecting donations to distribute to the young refugees, such as baby wipes, diapers, baby formula, baby food, bottles, antibacterial lotions/dispensers, juice boxes and sealed snacks. Also, the Alliance San Diego and the Interfaith Center for Worker Justice of San Diego County are receiving donations that will be distributed to them as they leave the facilities to meet family members or go to foster homes. There is also an emerging need for people with bilingual households to consider providing a foster home to a child waiting for his or her court date.
- **FLORIDA:** Catholic Charities' Msgr. Bryan Walsh Children's Village in Miami, Florida shelters unaccompanied children and provides K-12 education, counseling, medical and legal services. **Volunteers are need Monday-Friday** to help with recreational activities and field trips as well as host birthday parties and holiday celebrations.
- **MARYLAND/VIRGINIA/DC:** RIM has developed a Capital Area Region CALL TO ACTION. Again, see the RIM website, or email to: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org. CALL for Sharon to come speak at your church!
- **NEW MEXICO:** Volunteers are being sought and trained now to assist the CWS chaplain at the Artesia Family Support Center. Contact Sharon at RIM to get connected, and join with other persons of faith!
- **NEW YORK:** **Spend time with minors waiting to meet with their case managers** at local detention facilities.
- **NEW ENGLAND:** [Lutheran Social Services](#) provides **legal assistance** to unaccompanied minors.
- **OHIO:** Contact former Disciples Peace Fellowship intern, Chrissy Stonebraker; co-director of the Inter-Religious Task Force in Cleveland; <http://irtfcleveland.org/>
- **OKLAHOMA:** If you live near to Fort Sill, please contact our RIM office for information related to your area: 202-957-7826, sstanley@dhm.disciples.org
- **TEXAS:** **Bilingual volunteers are needed** to mentor unaccompanied children at St. Michael's Home for Children in the Galveston-Houston area. ALWAYS offer to help Feliberto Pereira and the Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries, at: swgsm.org. If you live near to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, please contact our RIM office for information related to your area: 202-957-7826, sstanley@dhm.disciples.org
- **WASHINGTON:** If you live near to Fort Lewis-McChord Air Force Base, please contact our RIM office for information related to your area: 202-957-7826, sstanley@dhm.disciples.org

Continue to learn more about the root causes, statistics, & resources available to build understanding of why the children are arriving by reading:

New Postings on the RIM Website!: <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/refugee-immigration-ministries/>

Myths and Facts: <http://bit.ly/1n3QOEy>, (contains most of the stats on indicators of violence in the region)

Honduras Asylum Claims: http://www.jesuit.org/Assets/Publications/File/Hondurans_asylum_report_FINAL.pdf

(contains statistics on the increase in murders of women in Honduras in 2012 by 30% even as the overall murder rate dropped slightly)

Smart responses to increased migration from Central America:

<http://ignatiansolidarity.net/smart-responses-to-increased-migration-from-central-america/>

Murder rate steadily climbing in El Salvador since August 2013

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/el-salvador-travel-warning.html>

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