



MINNEAPOLIS REPORT

Every month and every week our work with our Afghan friends brings fresh surprises, possibilities and sometimes disappointments. One evening at the ARC Hive we are discouraged because of chaotic classes, and debating whether or not to stop teaching a student who seems disinterested in regular class, and discussing another who constantly cancels class due to a mysterious illness. The next day a different student arrives at the Teahouse with a friend who wants to learn English. Khoshal (names are changed) is introduced as “Zero English;” his left hand is badly deformed from an encounter with a bomb in Afghanistan. He is young, bashful, and eager. We sit down to get acquainted and begin at zero: “This is a man. This is a woman. This is a boy...”

In the men’s English program, a few of our original students from early 2022 are still coming regularly, and some of those who have been with us for a couple of years are now relatively literate, excited to be able to get up in front of their classmates to read a page of a book or write a paragraph on the whiteboard. Some learn with us for a few months or a year, but then their work schedule or their family situation changes and class is no longer possible. A few begin classes and then seem to assume that we are here to solve computer problems or help them buy car insurance. We help them gladly where we can, but we want them to become fluent English speakers so that they can tackle their own problems someday. We pray for wisdom to know when to go out of our way for their needs, and when to prioritize our teaching.

Quite a few Afghan men here in the Twin Cities are without their families. They are focused on getting the paperwork done for their families to join them here, and the inevitable delays in this process are quite discouraging. We want to know how to be good friends to them as they deal with the constant frustrations of life in a society that can feel impersonal and hopeless.

The women’s classes continue to be quite busy and engrossing. Our four single lady volunteers teach approximately 19 women throughout a week and babysit about 46 children while those classes are happening. They do an excellent job of juggling schedules and relationships as they go into homes and apartments for classes.

We are grateful for our dedicated women students who are earnest about learning. Zara is excited about learning English and brings her backpack faithfully to class to take her homework back with her. She and Susan are also wanting to take math classes with us to further their education.

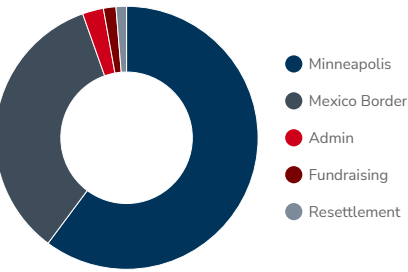
Our women students have had, and continue to have, great hardship in their lives, and it is a privilege and sometimes a stress to be their friend and confidant. They tell of brothers still in Afghanistan who are being hunted by the Taliban. Their families sometimes suffer from long term effects of trauma. And, too often, we go to their homes and find the children being hypnotized by television programs and Tik-Tok, and the mother throws up her hands when the child throws a tantrum for the English teacher.

We ask you to pray with us for grace to persevere in our classes and our friendships, and to show them that there is hope through Jesus Christ for them and their families.

FINANCIAL REPORT
APR - JUNE '24

INCOME	
Donations	\$93,915.08
Building Fund	0
TOTAL INCOME	\$107,415.08
EXPENSE	
<i>Programs</i>	
- Minneapolis	78,345.05
- Mexico Border	44,777.79
- Resettlement	1,680.00
<i>Administration</i>	3,364.59
<i>Fundraising</i>	2,000.16
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$130,167.59
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$82,177.49
ENDING BALANCE	\$59,424.98

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



INCOME VS EXPENSES
- FOR THIS FINANCIAL REPORT -

\$107,415.08	INCOME
\$130,167.59	EXPENSES

arcministry.org
PO BOX 459
Seymour, MO, 65746

For if thou altogether **holdest thy peace** at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art **come** to the kingdom **for such a time as this?**

Esther 4:14

UPDATES
arcministry.org/updates

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NEWSLETTER

ANABAPTIST REFUGEE COMMITTEE

Equipping Anabaptists to engage with diverse cultures creating enduring relationships to express the love of Jesus.

arcministry.org

JUNE 2024

Texas Border Update
SICKNESS, WORRY, DEATH

What does the Bible have to say about migration and what truths can we apply today?

Tuesday, April 16, found Ellen, Delbert, and me on evening shift. It was a slow evening. But little did we know what the next several weeks would have in store for us.

We met Nidia, a sixty-four-year-old Cuban, coming across the border. We gave her our usual fare, which consists of a sandwich, a cold water, a banana, and some Gospel literature. She was distressed and worried. She was the only one of her group that had made it across safely. There were four more still in the immigration office—her sixty-four-year-old husband Jesús, and her two granddaughters who were twelve and sixteen. Also, with them was the mother-in-law of Nidia’s daughter.

Their purpose in coming to the States was to bring Nidia’s granddaughters. Nidia’s daughter, Yimercy, had left six years earlier and made the trek to the States. The plan was to take the girls to be with their mother, who now lives in Florida.

Nidia told us that Jesús’s health was not good. While they were in Mexico, they had been giving him antibiotics. He had also been throwing up. And while they were waiting in line at the bridge, she said that Jesús was very weak. So, while in the immigration office, the officials called the ambulance, and they took Jesús to one of the McAllen hospitals.

I called the hospital to see if I could find out where in the hospital he was located. After being transferred from one department to the next, they finally confirmed that he was there. The hospital at first told Nidia that Jesús had been sent in because of a heart attack and pneumonia. We later found out that he did not have a heart attack.

Now, Nidia waited for her daughter’s mother-in-law and granddaughters to come out. Because they were minors, the granddaughters were going to be taken to a holding facility. (They eventually sent the girls to a facility in Florida.)

All this looked big to Nidia. We tried to console her the best we could. I prayed with her and we also read some verses from Psalm 23 and 91 together. Our shift was coming to an end. It was time to leave. I exchanged my phone number with Nidia, so we could keep in contact.

Nidia waited till her daughter’s mother-in-law came out. Then they took a taxi and stayed the night at Catholic Charities. That night she hardly got any sleep.

Wednesday, Catholic Charities took Nidia to the hospital to see Jesús. She said that she felt all alone and that she needed help. Yimercy had told her that she did not have any money to send. Her daughter also wanted her to come to Florida and leave Jesús. Jesús was not Yimercy’s biological dad. But Nidia wasn’t going to leave Jesús all alone and in a new country he didn’t know! Nidia’s daughter not caring what happened to Jesús added another stress.

Thursday, the doctors did tests on Jesús’s lungs. The doctor told her that

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Giving Opportunity: Funds remain tight due to recent purchases. If you would like to support the work we do, visit: arcministry.org/donate/



SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

- TX:** 1. House parents for Spring of '25
2. Spanish speaking fellows and girls in September.
3. Haitian Creole speaker for this fall.
- MN:** 1. A single man Sept.
2. House Parents for fall and winter
- Resettlement:** Many opportunities to host a refugee family in your community. Call 937-418-8561 (Alex)

Email volunteer@arcministry.org or call 763-358-3816 for more information!



Author with refugee children.

Continued from page 1 (Light in ... Darkness cont.)

Jesús had cancer in his lung. Nidia wanted me to be with her, so I went. I also got to meet Jesús.

Over the next several days, Nidia repeatedly told me that she was lonely and sad. She didn't want me to abandon her. She said that we were the ones who had been there for her and that our presence calms her. I went with her various times to do some errands. Sometimes it would be to get a money transfer, other times it was to buy some items they needed. One time I took her out for coffee, we really enjoyed that! It helped her get out some and not feel so cooped up in the hospital.

The doctor did two biopsies on Jesús. The first biopsy came out negative. But the doctor said he didn't agree with the results. He thought the mass on the lung was large. The doctor wanted to do another biopsy just to be sure everything was ok. They planned a second biopsy to cut in a little deeper this time. The results would come back in about 2-4 weeks.

On Wednesday, April 24, the second biopsy was done on Jesús. Nidia wondered if I would come again that day. She had also been asking for Delbert. He had been on shift the day she had come across the border. So, after our morning shift, Delbert, Shelly, and I headed to the hospital. We got there and proceeded to find the waiting room, where Nidia was. We couldn't find the room, so we asked one of the hospital staff about Jesús. After searching for Jesús's name on their files, they told

us that Jesús had just gotten out of surgery. He was being transferred back to his room. I let Nidia know that we were going to head to his room. She soon followed. Nidia wasn't very impressed that the staff hadn't let her know that Jesús was out of surgery.

The nurses had told Jesús that they were planning to discharge him from the hospital soon. When the nurses told Nidia, she was not very happy. She asked the nurses how they could possibly release Jesús? Couldn't they see that he was still very weak and needed 24/7 care? They said they weren't going to discharge Jesús that day, but that they would be getting things ready for him to be discharged soon.

We were able to talk with a couple of the nurses, a doctor, and social workers. They were very nice and gave us some more information about Jesús. Since Jesús and Nidia didn't have Medicaid or some kind of government help, the hospital couldn't send them to a nursing home or any place where they could properly take care of him. And the hospital couldn't keep Jesús for that many weeks. They told us that they were thinking of releasing Jesús to Catholic Charities. Nidia didn't want Jesús to be taken to Catholic Charities since they did not have the accommodations or the proper care that Jesús needed.

Friday, April 26, I received a message from Nidia. She said that Jesús had low blood pressure and he had had a bad night, but that he was being released to Catholic Charities. However, that night he was transferred right back to the hospital. He had loose bowels and needed medical attention once again.

Sunday, April 27, ARC went over with ABM to Mexico for a church service. I was listening to the group sing Creole, when my phone started vibrating. I saw it was Nidia calling. I walked out of the tent and answered the call. Nidia brokenly told me that Jesús had just passed away. With everything going on, it had been too much for Jesús's body. What a shock!! I went back inside the tent and asked if Darrell and Rhonda could come out. I called Nidia right back, because the first call had been cut off. I also wanted Darrell's to hear what was being said.

We decided to leave before the church service ended. We wanted to be there for Nidia. The team climbed back into the van, and we headed to the hospital, 1 ½ hours away. At the hospital, Darrel and Rhonda, Delbert and I headed inside. The rest of the team waited in the van. We weren't quite sure how everything was go-

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Texas Border

A YEAR IN REVIEW

June is one year of ARC in TX. What has the team learned and where are things going from here?

When we started working at the Texas-Mexico border a year ago, we had a goal to make the initial transition into the US as easy as possible for the migrants. We also had a question: how do we practically do that? What do they need most?

We started by talking to the migrants. The summer was unusually hot, even for south Texas, so we handed out bottles of cold water and asked basic questions. Where are you from? Where are you going? Is there anything we can help you with?

We tried to collect as much context as possible to be better able to understand and connect with them. That required more complicated, abstract questions that had to be answered gradually, pieced together from many conversations with people from many different countries. Why do they come? What do they experience on the trip from their country? What are they hoping to find in the US? In short, what is it like to be a migrant?

At our first team meeting, the five of us sat in Darrell's living room and discussed the needs we'd found and how we could help. We were already handing out water, but what about food? Some of the migrants had been in the immigration office for hours and possibly hadn't eaten much before that either. The next morning, we stopped at Walmart to buy bananas. The following day, we decided to experiment with 15 sandwiches to see if the migrants would appreciate them. They did, and we added sandwiches to our list of ideas to keep.

Many of them also needed money transfers. We often heard, "I have family that can send me money, but I don't have any way to receive the cash." Or the other side of the problem: "I have cash, but no way to book an airline ticket." We learned to keep enough cash on hand so that their friends or families could transfer money to them through us. We booked airline and bus tickets.

They asked us where to find Wi-Fi. Not everyone had a phone plan that worked in the States. They all wanted to contact their folks back home to tell them they made it, and they needed to contact their sponsor to make travel plans to get to their destination city. We bought a Wi-Fi router for the migrants to connect to.

Later we bought a battery pack so they could charge their phones while they waited.

But one of the biggest needs we discovered was simply the need for information. Where is the bus station, the airport, the shelter where we can stay for the night? How do we get there? What should a taxi cost to McAllen? How much is a ticket to San Antonio, to Chicago, to Miami?

Over that first summer we experimented with what worked and what didn't. We spent team meetings brainstorming new ways to provide help. We came up with ideas and tried them out over the next few days, adjusting them until we had a workable method. We critiqued what we were already doing and raised questions about how to do it more effectively. We searched for ways to turn loving our neighbor from theory into practice.

Our team grew, and as it did, so did what we were able to offer to the migrants. A year later, our team size has more than doubled. With twice as many volunteers, we can spend twice as many hours at the border. On an average day, we meet over 100 migrants and give away over 100 sandwiches and water. We've added literature in five languages to our stock- Spanish, Haitian Creole, Russian, Arabic, and English. We have Bibles and New Testaments available for anyone who wants one. We have a better feel for what they need, and a better understanding of how they think. We've answered most of our initial questions.

The first year has been a learning curve of discovery and development. By now we've seen migrants from countries as diverse as Azerbaijan, Angola, and Argentina. We've met people escaping from gangs, religious persecution, or searching for a better life for themselves and their children. We've seen elderly people, hundreds of children, a three-day-old baby, and everyone in between. We've heard hard, sad stories, and we've seen people thrilled and grateful to be here. We've seen families joyfully reunited after years apart.

We hope that the migrants we've met have felt the love of Jesus, though demonstrated through His imperfect followers. Hopefully that is what they remember, more than any physical help we've given.

--Shelly Weaver

Resettlement Update

SETTING TABLES OR BUILDING WALLS?

The Rodriguez family finds a new home! (The Rodriguez Family was mentioned in a previous newsletter)

Near to where we are meeting migrants who have crossed the US/Mexico border and have been processed is a tall border wall. Day after day the border wall presents a barrier for those who would desire to cross into the United States illegally. Governments of the world, including the United States government, have laws by which one must enter their political domain. And walls are built to keep out those who would try to avoid the laws.

Anabaptists are quick to mention that they are non-resistant, that they would resist participation in border wall construction, and they would shy away from running border patrols for the government. Yet it's sometimes easy to discuss how "we" need to secure "our" border. Is this border in the sand God's border or the United States government's border?

Hebrews 11 notes that those of faith sought a heavenly country and that they were strangers (foreigners) and pilgrims on the earth. In Hebrews 13 it says that "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." While many peoples move to and fro upon the earth in migration, we as Christians are migrants ourselves! Our earthly tenure is transitory; we are seeking an enduring home.

As seekers, strangers, and pilgrims then, we Christians have the freedom to let the governments of the world fulfil their calling, while we in freedom fulfill our calling in the Kingdom of God. We have the opportunity to "set the table" as we go—to present Christ and be His witnesses. As Jesus indicated, it is not the righteous, but the sinners, whom He is calling to repentance.

In humility, all of us as Christians, from wherever we are, have the opportunity to testify of Christ to all men, regardless of ethnicity, language, origin, or whether one has crossed over, under, through, or around a border wall, or been legally processed into the US like those we meet. Red blood flows through all of humanity, and Christ is the only way to salvation for us all. At the border, we can share conversation with migrants, along with a few food items, literature and Bibles, as well as offer help in various ways. The "table" is "set."

Some of those we meet at the border need a place, a church community, to take them in and help them get on their feet. Might there be a "table" in your community? Christ forces no one to follow Him; He invites us. Hosting a migrant family for a time can offer an opportunity to "be the church" in a very personal way. Christ does not demand a given fruit or outcome, but he requests us to sow seed.

Jesus invites men and women to His table, to dine with Him. Only some accept the invitation, choosing to follow Him. But are we willing to help Him set the table?

--Darrell Yode



Resettlement Update

IN NEED OF CHURCHES

Who is our neighbor and why aren't churches doing more?

Read Luke 10:29-37. Who is our neighbor? Jesus makes it clear in this parable that it is simply a person we meet that is in need, regardless of their ethnic, religion or color status.

Since we are here with ARC Border Missions, I hear many stories, sad and hard to grasp, about what these migrants have gone through until they get here. Some are willing to leave family, friends and everything they have for a better life. Some were robbed or kidnapped by drug cartels. Some have no place to go when they get here, perhaps because their sponsor had to pay ransom to get them away from the cartel and has no money left to sponsor them; or the sponsor drops out of their life once they arrive in America.

We have lots of Anabaptist churches here in the U.S. but very few are willing to reach out. WHY? My conclusion is:

- We look at them as lesser human beings.
- We listen to politicized news media.
- We miss the vision of Luke 10:29-37.

Here are some responses I receive from other Anabaptist church members when they hear what we do here at ARC: "I hope you take a machine gun with you", "I hope you are hunting them". (I heard the hunting them a couple times.) One asked how many illegals I see, and I said, "I didn't see any yet". Then he asked me if I'm blind.

These are real people with real souls like you and I, in need of a Saviour. We need churches who are willing to walk with them and show them the love of Christ. -Joseph Mast



Please pray for the need for churches to sponsor migrants.