Friends in Guatemala

Our travel to Guatemala was not a usual tourist trip. My husband and I went to visit the families of friends, and to walk in the land that fills heart and soul for the exiled community we know here, in Centreville. Almost 90% of the people who come to the Labor Center to find work are from Guatemala. We are forever grateful for their families, who blessed us generously with hospitality, time, resources and stories during our 16-day journey.

Families invited us into their homes, and shared wonderful meals with fresh tortillas, chicken, black beans, soup with wisquil (squash), and always beautiful fruit - plums, mangos, strawberries, peaches. Guatemalan specialties are small tamales (chuchitos) and buxboles (tender squash leaves rolled with masa and served with ground pepita sauce). Farming is everywhere, on the hillsides, around the homes, beside the streams, on the patio, which features corn, beans, squash, kale, and various fruit trees. Children begin working very early, and education is not just in the classroom but with family in the fields, market, and at home.

The markets are filled with colors and flavors, and it is easy for this place to live in memory! Watch this spot for a story in the next newsletter.

-Alice Foltz, Board President
This has been a difficult summer as the rhetoric around immigration issues becomes harsher. The “zero-tolerance” policy for people attempting to cross the US border without documentation was a new low-point. Persons caught in “zero-tolerance” faced criminal charges rather than civil ones, and were separated from their children as they awaited criminal proceedings in jail, rather than waiting in detention centers or private homes until hearing dates.

The effects of this policy were devastating. The American Academy of Pediatrics spoke out about the serious developmental effects of separation on children. In just one month (May 5 to June 9) over 2,300 children were separated from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border. When the administration responded to the public outcry and a court ordered that the families be reunited, bureaucratic hurdles still kept many families apart. At the time of this writing the mess is still being untangled. To support children relocated to a juvenile facility in our area, CIF has been collecting items they need. Thanks to the generosity of local residents, CIF volunteers have delivered five carloads of goods already.

In reality, family separation is something immigrants have been dealing with for years. Although the trauma of forced separations is new, parents have long had to make anguished decisions over whether to bring children on the difficult journey to a new home, or leave them in the care of loving relatives. When a child is injured or seriously ill, many parents in the U.S. receive word by phone. When a child has behavior issues, many parents give advice and try to smooth things out by phone. “When are you coming home?” and “When are you going to send for me?” are tearful questions often asked by the children left behind. When families are reunited, there is still healing that needs to take place, as children can carry issues of separation with them for years.

Centreville Immigration Forum offers a three-part class called “Familias Reunidas” or “Families Reunite” to help with these issues. Developed by Fairfax County Public Schools, it is an excellent way for parents and children to meet others in the same situation and discuss complicated issues. The next session of Familias Reunidas will begin in September, please call (703) 543-6272 if you would like to participate.

It’s been a difficult summer, but do not lose heart. CIF is evidence that when we come together as a community, we can make a difference! -Terry Angelotti

Snail Mail - Pt. 2

In the previous newsletter, I started with a description of the numerous snail mailings from various large non-profits soliciting my spouse and I for a contribution. It seemed like as soon as we mailed off a contribution, we received another solicitation from that same organization.

So I started the practice of stockpiling all the solicitations in a basket. Twice a year, my spouse and I go through the basket, review past donations, and decide upon whether to donate. We do this mid-year and sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

We like to donate to local organizations that have a positive impact on our community. So of course, CIF is on our list.

Hopefully, I’ve given you an idea on what to do with all those solicitations. And you can consider allocating your contributions to local, regional, and national non-profits with a mission you support. Please remember CIF whenever you make donations.

- John Kennedy, Volunteer & Finance Committee Chair
CIF partnered with teaching sorority ADK and Wellspring Church to provide twenty-six fully loaded backpacks. These backpacks were filled with all of the items on the child’s school supply list. The recipients ages ranged from six to seventeen. Of the twenty-six backpacks, eighteen were for elementary school, two for middle school and six for high school students. Thank you to all who participated!

CIF has been hosting a collection for children detained at the border. Donors drop off items at the Labor Resource Center and they are delivered to a local youth housing center. There have been over five car loads of clothing, luggage, games, toys, school supplies and much more donated through CIF!

Collection for Separated Children

Children’s Backpack Program

CIF partnered with teaching sorority ADK and Wellspring Church to provide twenty-six fully loaded backpacks. These backpacks were filled with all of the items on the child’s school supply list. The recipients ages ranged from six to seventeen. Of the twenty-six backpacks, eighteen were for elementary school, two for middle school and six for high school students. Thank you to all who participated!
Events

Don’t miss the
Annual CIF Awards Dinner

On Friday, September 21, the Waterford in Fair Oaks is the place to be for all those who support fairness and justice for immigrants and refugees. Your presence at our Annual Dinner makes a difference as CIF friends and supporters gather with elected officials and community leaders, to honor the contributions that immigrants make every day.

Expect to be inspired as you hear the stories of the award-winners, and talk with leaders who can make a difference in public policy. The delicious food and fine entertainment also make this evening a great time to mingle.

Make your reservation now at http://centrevilleimmigrationforum.org

Center Remodel

BB&T bank allocated a $2,500 budget to remodel the member lounge area and offices in the CLRC. This remodel included an entirely new kitchen equipped with new cabinets, counter top, microwave, and refrigerator, three new computer desks for members to use and three office desks for staff. The assembly and installation of new furniture was carried out by CLRC members and volunteers. Stop in and check it out!

Fourth of July

The 4th of July Soccer Tournament is our biggest community event and it has been going strong for several years. The format of the tournament is single-elimination, which means that the team that loses is eliminated and the winner advances. This year our tournament took place at EC Lawrence turf fields and it featured four teams that consisted of CLRC members and friends. The championship game ended 2-1 with Los Pulgacitos upsetting the opposing team and taking the trophy. Once the tournament concluded, there was a friendly match between the all-stars of the CIF Tournament vs the Megamart soccer team. The Megamart team won the friendly match 2-1. This year, our annual tournament included face painting and door prizes for children, music, and grilled carna asada that was prepped and cooked by our members.
CLRC by the Numbers

Yearly Job Placement Comparison
April 1 - June 30
18% increase from 2017 to 2018

Job Performance Reviews
April 1 - June 30
- Average 2%
- Poor 6%
- Good 14%
- Excellent 78%

Jobs by Type
April 1 - June 30
- General Labor 17%
- Landscaping 47%
- Painting 13%
- Moving 8%
- Other 15%

Current Wage and Hour Information

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Wages have increased $1 per/hour over this time period last year.