

February 14, 2021

Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW) - Review of 2020 Activities

The year 2020 was certainly marked by significant turbulence, especially for Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest (AIDNW). The combination of the Covid-19 pandemic and Federal immigration policy changes significantly impacted the manner in which we offer assistance to the immigrant detainees.

- **Visitation Program:** In person visits are no longer allowed. Instead, AIDNW volunteers support immigrants in detention through cards and letters. Art supplies are provided in bulk for distribution within the detention center. Telephone communications credit is given to detainees through collaboration with the Northwest Immigrants' Rights Project (NWIRP).
- **Welcome Center:** The RV parked outside the NW ICE Processing Center has been augmented by a heated tent to encourage "6 foot separation" while assisting released immigrants. Personal protective equipment is available for both volunteers and released immigrants. Those immigrants who must remain in the area awaiting transportation to their final destination are offered housing in area hotels paid by AIDNW with a modest meal allowance.

In 2019 AIDNW welcomed and assisted **1,327 immigrants** from **69 countries**. The total for 2020 was **469 immigrants** from **30 countries** (largest numbers from Mexico, Cuba, Cameroon, India).

- **Hospitality House Program:** After the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Hospitality House was essentially empty with the exception of the office and the AIDNW Host Coordinator. The AIDNW Board recently expanded the opportunity for longer-term immigrants to reside in the Hospitality House, based on a negative Covid-19 test. The house currently has **three (3)** such residents. By comparison, in September 2019 AIDNW hosted **21** residents of varying lengths of stay.

We are currently undertaking a pilot project to assist immigrants with financial housing assistance through a collaboration with the Tacoma Community House. We have provided three (3) months of rental assistance to two area families from Venezuela and Peru. The AIDNW Board has recently approved an additional three (3) months of rental assistance to these families. These families are not eligible for governmental assistance. We will be evaluating the project for possible expansion.

The AIDNW Board continues to evaluate other opportunities to assist immigrants.

We are fortunate in being able to recruit new volunteers able to fill-in for those among the 200 active volunteers who are unable to participate in the person to person activities because of Covid-19.

The health of our most valuable asset--the AIDNW volunteers and staff--is of utmost importance. To the extent possible AIDNW has implemented measures to ensure the safety of all. The immigration courts continue to operate. The need for the services provided by the AIDNW is still present.

AIDNW is financed 100% through donations from private organizations and individuals.

Thank you for your financial support.

Sincerely,



Timothy Chen
Chair, AIDNW Board of Directors

Advocates for Immigrants in Detention NW is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible, non-profit organization (27-1031009) that serves immigrants detained in the Pacific Northwest through assistance, advocacy, and increased awareness.