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### Hospitality House guest J. speaks about his family's experience in detention

Originally from Colombia, J later moved to Chile where he lived with his wife and family. In Chile it became dangerous for them to stay, as there were people trying to assassinate their son.

**[paraphrased from an interview with J]:** With a Colombian passport we were able to fly to Mexico City, and then to Mexicali, where we crossed the border into the USA. It was a very rough journey. It took about a week to get to the border, and we had to pay someone to help us cross the border.

When we reached the border we had to jump and climb walls, and then wait for the border patrol to find us. When they found us we asked for asylum, and we were sent to a facility where they interviewed us. That is where they separated me and my wife. I tried to show the immigration officers our marriage certificate so they would not separate us but they told me to be quiet, to stop talking. They constantly belittled my wife and I during the interviewing process. Every time one of the immigration officers would yell at me the others would laugh, encouraging him. I explained to the officers that I cannot read or write and this angered them more. I believe this was because they wanted me to sign some papers. After the interview process we were sent to different detention centers. The first one I stayed in was in California, the second one was here in Tacoma.

In the detention center the hardest part was not being able to contact my wife. I would constantly ask if there was a way for me to find out where she was and they would ignore me. I even had one of my friends in the center write letters for me to try to contact her and I never got a response back. I was really worried about my wife, especially since she had hurt her hand when we climbed the wall. Not knowing if my wife was ok was one of the worst experiences for me.

### YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK FEBRUARY 2022

Immigrants Served	95
Hospitality House	10
Coats Given Out	90
Welcome backpacks handed out	44
Letters written to detainees	132
Transportation	85
Volunteer hours	878.75

When I was released, I was not completely happy because I still had not heard from my wife. I did not have a place to stay. But luckily for me the people at the Welcome Center brought me to the Hospitality House where I was able to stay or else I would have nowhere to go. I was treated wonderfully by the Welcome Center, I was able to use their services such as wifi. I received a coat and was welcomed; their service was excellent.

Everyone at the Hospitality House has been welcoming and inviting. I thought I was only going to be at the house for a couple days. The office was able to help me contact my wife's family members who were able to contact her at the detention center. Through my wife's family I was able to talk to my wife. The AIDNW office allowed me to use their phone to talk to her and my wife's family gave the AIDNW office phone number to my wife. The office also helped me contact a lawyer, and through the lawyer we were able to get my wife out of the detention center. The office also was able to help find me and my wife a place to stay in Texas.

I am very thankful to AIDNW. Words can't explain how thankful I am for all this organization has done for me and my family. I am very grateful that AIDNW was there for me.



## SHOUT-OUT TO THE SANDWICH BRIGADE

Thank you to the many groups and individuals who

answered our call to feed our WELCOME CENTER guests. All of our guests now have generously-stuffed sack meals to accompany their overnight journeys to destinations across the US. **Eighteen faith and service organizations** and **16 individuals** responded to a request to donate, assemble, and deliver sack meals to the Welcome Center -- more volunteers than we needed!. So we've recruited them for other hands-on projects to help our friends inside the NWDC. What an incredibly generous community!



## AIDNW Executive Director Position

The Advocates for Immigrants in Detention NW (AIDNW) Board of Directors is recruiting a talented, high energy individual to fill the new role of AIDNW Executive Director for the AIDNW organization. The selected individual will work with the Board to promote the AIDNW mission, expand the awareness of the work of AIDNW, and secure the future financial and volunteer base. The position will require excellent communications skills, marketing experience, fundraising experience, and some non-profit management experience. If interested, please submit a cover letter and resume to [EDapplicant@aidnw.org](mailto:EDapplicant@aidnw.org)



### NEXT COMMUNITY MEETING



**MARCH 16, 2022**

**9.30 AM**

**REGISTER NOW!**

@

[officevolunteer@aidnw.org](mailto:officevolunteer@aidnw.org)

**Daryl Morrissey**, the new Resettlement Director for the Lutheran Community Services NW office in Tacoma, will be speaking on Afghan refugee resettlement.



Awareness is a critical part of the work of AIDNW.

Our Speakers Group is currently presenting **VIA ZOOM**

to Churches, Synagogues, Temples, Mosques, Service Clubs, Schools and others who might be interested in learning about immigration, detention, the Northwest ICE Processing Center and the work of AIDNW. If you would like a presentation please contact:

[dcruz@aidnw.org](mailto:dcruz@aidnw.org)

Donate

