



Update from the OSP-IHM Border Mission

A Small Project with Big Benefits

by Sister Candyce Rekart, IHM

My time in McAllen, Texas, with the IHM inter-congregational community and the mission to migrants on the border, was marked by many noteworthy events. Sisters Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM Scranton, Rose Patrice Kuhn, IHM Immaculata and Carmen Armenta Lara, IHM Monroe open their home and offer an opportunity to join them in their ministry with migrants on the border between McAllen, TX, and Reynosa, MX. One of the outstanding and very practical and concrete images I have is of their project with the people waiting in the shelter in Reynosa, Mexico.



Sister Candyce Rekart speaks to a migrant couple at the Humanitarian Respite Center.

Imagine the long hours of waiting for paperwork, appointments, and connections which sometimes take months. Imagine long hours in the heat. When I was there it was 104 degrees Fahrenheit. There is little to do for children, expectant mothers, and anxious fathers and teens but wait. Time on their hands is just another of the challenges of their long journey; hard journeys, sometimes precarious, and often traumatic.

So, among the other activities that they do in the shelter, these IHM sisters created a project, seemingly small, but with big benefits. This project entails the use of a variety of colors of yarn, a needle, and plastic shapes. I saw migrants working enthusiastically. Adults and young people engaged in a project not only for their hands, but also to engage their minds, and energy, channeling tension and frustration productively, inspiring creativity, and focusing attention on their abilities to create something beautiful as well as promoting socialization as they share their designs and chat among themselves. At a Mass we attended in the shelter, crafters placed their handcrafts

on the altar. The blessing of hands followed. What a beautiful moment to see the joy on their faces and celebrate these accomplishments!

What a project! What a sense of empowerment!

Gracias, McAllen IHM community, for your commitment to the border and for making possible this project among the many other things you do to benefit migrant families and those who are invited to work with you.



Father Flavio Bravo, SSJ, blesses the hands and hand-crafted articles of migrants during Mass.



OSP-IHM Core Community and volunteers: Sister Carmen, Candy, Kieran, Mary Elaine, and Rose Patrice.



The OSP-IHM Border Mission invites IHM and OSP sisters and associates to consider volunteering for two weeks at the US-Mexico Border.

The SOAR! Foundation awarded the Volunteer Program \$25,000 to pay for the airfare and food stipend of sisters age 65+ who wish to volunteer side by side with the core community in McAllen, Texas.

We encourage sisters to take advantage of these funds before the grant ends in January 2025.

Sisters of any age who would like to volunteer may speak to their congregational leader about financing their trip and time of service.

The dates that are available to volunteer in Fall 2024 are:

September 7 - 21

October 5 - 19

November 11 - 24

December 7 - 21

Please contact Sister Rose Patrice Kuhn (215-313-7753) or Sister Mary Elaine Anderson (570-575-2325) to make sure that your preferred dates have not been filled.