

## The Net

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### **Mission Trip Update: Refugee Support at the US-Mexico Border**

This past March, a five-member team from St. Barnabas', Wilmington had accepted the Lord's call and planned to travel to Brownsville, TX, to work in the refugee camps across the border in Matamoros, Mexico. They were inspired by parishioners at St. Nicholas' and St. Thomas', both in Newark, who had made the trip last November and provided guidance to the St. Barnabas team. In addition to prayers, the team received enthusiastic financial support, raising over \$6,000 dollars from the parishioners of St. Barnabas', donations from St. Nicholas' and St. Thomas' of funds left over from their trip, and other generous sources.

Then, of course, the country went on a lockdown due to the global coronavirus pandemic, and the mission team reluctantly concluded that the risks to both themselves and the refugees at the border were too great. Team Brownsville, the not-for-profit humanitarian organization with whom they would work at the border, also requested that travel plans be put on hold, as no one was being allowed to cross the border. The situation in Matamoros became increasingly dire as Team Brownsville tried to figure out how to continue the tremendous scale of their service operations without volunteers coming to pitch in. The specter of Covid-19 also loomed, as an outbreak would be devastating to the already vulnerable residents of the refugee tent camps.

Though aid workers on the American side are still not allowed to cross the border, the work has never stopped. In fact, it has increased due to all the logistics involved in serving those in need. With monetary donations, Team Brownsville continues providing all the essential elements of daily living: food, clothing , shelter, and cleaning and hygiene supplies. The group also continues to support asylum-seeking teachers and students at the Escuelita de la banqueta (refugee encampment school).

The team of five intended to retain the donations they received until they could safely travel to volunteer at the border, never imagining that, come November 2020, the pandemic would not only still be here, but getting worse. As travel is no longer realistic in the foreseeable future—and as the needs are still so great—the team has decided to send the funds to Team Brownsville so that the mission for that money can be fulfilled, even if they cannot be the ones to fulfill it. With colder weather approaching and Covid's spread worsening, that \$6,000 will be immediately used in critical ways.

For those who donated spiritually and financially to this trip, the team thanks you for supporting its decision to donate the funds to fulfill the Lord's mission for their use — to feed, clothe, shelter, and support vulnerable refugees on the US-Mexico border. Please keep both the refugees and those who serve them in your prayers. If you would like to support Team Brownsville's work directly, please visit their website at [www.teambrownsville.org](http://www.teambrownsville.org).