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## **Border Report: Children in Need**

**April 25, 2021, Larchmont, NY:** On Sunday, June 6 at 7:30 pm, Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI) will host a countywide zoom event to educate our community about how to advocate and provide critical support to immigrant children impacted by the situation at the southern border.

WJCI is aware that children arriving at the southern border without their parents have presented a political and humanitarian challenge. These numbers began rising considerably after 2009 when 19,418 children were taken into custody at the border. Unaccompanied minors peaked in 2014, with 68,000 apprehensions. Analysts say 2021 is on pace to break that record, with more than 600 children currently arriving daily at the U.S.-Mexico border.

About the significance of the event, Holly Rosen Fink, President of WJCI, said, "We continue to mobilize the Jewish community to be a strong, persistent, moral voice in support of the fair, humane treatment of asylum seekers as we engage in asylum advocacy in Westchester. We look forward to coming together to create real change on this matter."

The program "**Border Report: Children in Need**" will present expert advice and eyewitness testimony from five key leaders about providing humanitarian assistance to children at the border. Each speaker will highlight concrete steps that Westchester residents can take to support these children and their families, despite the geographic distance from the border.

Speakers will include **Rabbi Shoshi Levin Goldberg** from **Temple Israel Center**, **Andrea Rudnick** from **Team Brownsville**, **Eddie Chavez Calderon** from **Arizona Jews for Justice**, **Bertha M. Rodriguez, Esq.** from **Community Resource Center (CRC)**, and **Marti Michael** from **Grannies Respond/Abuelas Responden**.

- In November 2019, **Rabbi Shoshi Levin Goldberg** visited the U.S.-Mexico border on a clergy mission organized by **HIAS** and **T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights**.
- Since 2018, **Team Brownsville** has assisted refugees *in detention and transit*. Currently, its volunteers help at bus stations every week to 100s of asylum seekers on their way to their new lives in the U.S.
- **Arizona Jews for Justice** is a pluralistic Jewish group that provides a forum for Jews in Arizona to collaborate and foster social justice. They have provided support for asylum seekers released from detention centers at the border.
- **Grannies Respond** is a national organization of groups that welcome asylum-seeking adults and children en route to their sponsors at bus stations throughout the South, Midwest, and Northeast. Volunteer Grannies provide these travelers with food, water, personal health necessities and help with bus transfers and ticket exchanges.
- **Community Resource Center**, based in Mamaroneck, provides legal representation, advocacy, and court services in Westchester County Immigration and Family Courts for immigrant children seeking asylum because of severely traumatic personal experiences in their home countries. Since 1998 CRC has helped 1000s of new immigrants become self-sufficient, active members of their communities with various social, educational, and job placement services.

Ways to lend a hand include:

- Assisting asylum seekers at the bus station or airport.

- Organizing collection and fundraising drives.
- Purchasing supplies.
- Urging elected officials to support programs and legislation on behalf of asylum seekers.

We will also hear about other ways to help children from the border living right here in our community at the Abbott House in Irvington and Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry.

WJCI is also planning to team up with the local refugee resettlement organization Neighbors for Refugees on a postcard campaign advocating for children at the border during their Third Thursday advocacy initiative on June 17.

All community members are welcome and can register at <https://bit.ly/3v163Y2>.

**About Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI):**

WJCI's mission is to advocate for fair, just, and compassionate laws, policies, and programs to support refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrant groups. WJCI is currently composed of approximately 100 individual members, including clergy from across the Westchester Jewish community, including Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Reform, and non-denominational affiliations. [www.wjci.org](http://www.wjci.org)

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