News



David Carlson and Linda Wildman helped collect supplies, including men's belts, for migrants they would serve at Annunciation House, a long-standing ministry to refugees and others in need at the U.S.-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas. Members of the Emmaus Faith Community in Santa Rosa, California, the brother and sister are part of a 10-person volunteer team from the San Francisco Bay Area currently serving asylum seekers and refugees at the border. (Barbara Carlson)



by Dan Morris-Young

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The San Francisco Bay Area grass-roots effort sending teams of volunteers to aid migrants and asylum seekers at the U.S. border at El Paso, Texas, continues to spark widespread interest.

The current 10-member team on site (Sept. 7-15) at El Paso's Annunciation House includes a videographer-producer (David Carlson), a former NCR board of directors chair (Annette Lomont), a founder of a Nuns & Nones movement (Adam Horowitz) , and a former president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (Mercy Sr. Mary Waskowiak).

The supplies the team took with them included a haul of men's belts to replace the ones confiscated at the border by federal enforcement agencies.

The unnamed project arose as "an ad hoc program" of San Francisco's two Jesuit parishes — St. Agnes and St. Ignatius — to address needs "for help at Annunciation House and the desire of our parishioners to respond to the horrific, anti-Gospel policies of the U.S. government toward immigrants," according to Jesuit Fr. Greg Bonfiglio, St. Ignatius' pastor.

He lauded the leadership of St. Ignatius parishioner Lomont and St. Agnes parishioner Judy Reuter.

Lomont told NCR that a half-dozen volunteer teams are calendared for El Paso for the coming months and that she and Reuter are "looking into other border volunteer opportunities," including sites in San Diego, California, McAllen, Texas, and Tucson, Arizona. For information, email ImmigrationSIP@gmail.com.

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A 2013 school science project combined with thoughts of her pen pal Rose in Kenya led to then-10-year-old Jennifer Stuckenschneider launching Walk for Water, an

effort that has since raised more than $16,000 to install water pumps and sanitary latrines in Kenya, Honduras, India and Uganda. A member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Grand Junction, Colorado, Jennifer has teamed with Unbound, an international non-profit founded on Catholic social justice principles. The annual Walk for Water fund-raising event ($10 to walk a mile with a gallon of water) is Sept. 14 at Colorado Mesa University's plaza in Grand Junction.



Rose is the pen pal of Jennifer Stuckenschneider of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Grand Junction, Colorado. Rose lives in rural north-central Kenya. A program founded by Stuckenschneider, Walk for Water, has helped supply clean water and sanitation facilities for Rose and her family as well as for projects in Honduras, India and Uganda. (CNS/Courtesy of Unbound/Nickson Ateku)

Honolulu's St. Augustine by the Sea Parish undergirds the development of the adjacent Damien and Marianne of Molokai Education Center which, when completed, will tell the stories of Sts. Damien de Veuster and Marianne Cope and their ministries to those with Hansen's disease (commonly called leprosy in the past).



A quote from St. Damien de Veuster is featured on a protective wall at the construction site of the Damien and Marianne of Molokai Education Center in Honolulu. (CNS/ Hawaii Catholic Herald/Anna Weaver)

[Dan Morris-Young is NCR West Coast correspondent.]

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