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Catholics respond to migrants' humanitarian crisis

Across the United States, Catholics have stepped in to help the unprecedented numbers of children flooding the border despite protests, threats, and government reluctance to give access to detained children.

Immigration officials have detained nearly 60,000 children without their parents at the southern border since October, more than double the number picked up the year before. Until 2011, an average of 7,000 a year was apprehended; government officials now estimate 90,000 will be picked up in 2014 and 130,000 next year. Most are not from Mexico, but from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, and are fleeing violence and crime in their home countries.

In Apopka, Fla., northwest of Orlando, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur's Hope CommUnity Center has been operating program they call Adelante Caminante, which supports children released to friends or relatives by immigration officials while they await deportation hearings. Adelante Caminante, which roughly translates as "Go forward, traveler," lets the children meet others in the same situation and teaches them life skills such as how to use American money and to navigate the city bus system.

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A version of this story appeared in the Aug 1-14, 2014 print issue under the headline: Catholics respond to humanitarian crisis at border .

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