



Stories of Impact

“Presentation People Supporting Migrants at the U.S. – Mexico Border”

The International Presentation Association supports and encourages its global membership as they respond to injustices and build bridges across challenging divides. At the U.S. – Mexico border, a wall stands as a stark reminder of just such a divide. And Presentation Sisters have engaged deeply with local individuals and organizations in an effort to address the immediate needs of migrants. Their stories inspire Presentation People everywhere to act in support of women, children, migrants, and all people in need.

Marge Healy, PBVM, IPA Justice Contact from Dubuque, Iowa, shares her experience of one month in Nogales, Mexico supporting the [Kino Border Initiative](#). This Initiative “strives to respond to the most critical needs by respecting the God-given dignity of the human person and by fostering bi-national solidarity through humanitarian assistance, education and research/advocacy.”¹ With support from a grant by the Hilton Foundation, the Kino Border Initiative was able to invite sisters with experience working in Latin America and proficiency in Spanish such as Marge to live in Nogales, Mexico for a month. The shared living space was occupied by other volunteers and Presentation Sisters, including Yliana Hernandez PVBM, who shares her own insight on this [blog](#). During this time, the sisters work directly with migrants attempting to cross the border, their families, or those who have been turned away from entering the United States.

Marge began her sharing by recalling a man who had saved a collection of all things left behind by others who had passed through Nogales, including photos and letters to loved ones. She included her experiences of the border wall, lined with

“The overall IPA goal is to eliminate the poverty among them, eliminate violence, and part of it is to know that reality, to know those stories...”

- Marge Healy, PBVM

¹ <https://www.kinoborderinitiative.org/what-we-do/>

The IPA gives its appreciation Justice Contact Marge Healy, PBVM for submitting this Story of Impact.

memorials of loved ones lost and artistic commentaries on the wall itself. Most striking, though, were the experiences with the people themselves, many of them migrants forced into poverty and displacement, who had overcome great hardships in an attempt at securing a safer, sounder life. Many of these people were women accompanied by children, families divided by the violence and turmoil of the places they left behind.

The volunteers worked in the kitchens, organized donations, and directed those in need to crucial services offered by the Kino Border Initiative or partner organizations. Some work included intake, which involved documenting the persons name, where they arrived from, and why they left. Countless stories emerged of violence led by organized crime or cartels, forcing people from their homes. When specific aggressors are names, Kino makes this aggression known and works towards accountability with authorities and other organizations. In her time along the border, Marge was able to attend a local mass largely attended by a community of ranchers, many of whom openly supported the border wall. They shared their own perspectives, noting how their lands and livelihoods were at risk from cartels or organized crime, and they are protected by the wall and border security forces. This perspective is important, realizing how all people seek freedom from fear, as we continue to pursue our own commitments to all people made poor and those threatened by violence.

A key element to this work along the border is partnerships, both institutional and individual. Much of the Kino Border Initiative's work relies upon crucial partners in the fields of law, medicine, housing, and faith. The International Presentation Association also shares this commitment to partnerships, even declaring as our mission "To speak and act *in partnership* with others for global justice from a contemplative stance in a spirit of oneness with the whole of creation." Individual partnerships, and the networks that these create, are also valuable resources. Sisters of the Presentation are able to connect and support one another in their work, giving freely of their time, effort, and spirit. We are all encouraged by this example to further our own commitments to women, children, migrants, and all those made poor, and to work together through our local and global networks to further this critical mission.



Marge Healy PBVM & Yliana Hernandez PBVM