

Project Oak Tree

Program Description



Providing Refugee Families with Christian Hospitality

Summary of Project

The Roman Catholic Diocese in response to providing hospitality to refugees, who are being released from custody into the El Paso community in order to transition to family living in the United States, has agreed to facilitate the creation of temporary shelters to provide basic Christian hospitality to the family as they transition to family living in the United States.

Project Staff

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Each Shelter will have a Shelter Manager who oversees the project in that facility.

Release from ICE Custody

Each week we will be contacted with the number of refugee families requiring our assistance. ICE will then transport these refugee families to the shelter where they will receive the assistance they need to travel to their receiving family.

Duties & Responsibilities of the Shelter

The main duty and responsibility of the shelter is to provide Christian hospitality to the refugee family as they transition to family in the USA. This hospitality consists of the following;

- Clothing
- Meals
- Lodging
- Showering
- Facilitation of medical care as needed
- Assistance in making the travel arrangements
- Sack lunch to take with them as they travel
- Transportation to the bus station
- Documentation

Clothing

Clothes have been gathered and separated into bins so that when the families arrive, volunteers can help receive two sets of clothes and underwear. This way when the family bathes they have a set of clothes to change into.

Meals

From our experience in the past we learned that the families from Central America enjoyed simple foods; chicken, fish, corn tortillas. Invite the parents to help prepare meals and clean up. Many of the families did not eat well while in custody as the food they were given was very foreign to them. Many of them did not care for spicy foods. We encourage shelters to include the parents of the refugee family to

assist in meal preparation and cleanup. Shelters provide the refugee family with three meals and healthy snacks for the children. As you work with various families you will become familiar with the foods they tend to eat.

Lodging

Sleeping Arrangements: The Shelter will provide a cot, sheet and blanket to each person for sleeping. From our experience, the families prefer to sleep together. We believe the best setup would be to provide an area where the family can sleep together.

Bathing/Showering: Please be prepared to allow the family to bath/shower. This was often something they wanted to do right away. The shelter will provide the towels and necessary toiletries for bathing. You may need to stock up with toiletries for infants and children as well as extra toothbrushes to give away.

Supervision of Children: The parents are totally responsible for the supervision and care of the children. This is done so as to lower the risks of liability. Children should always be in sight and sound of their parents. If you have a yard where the children can run and play, please allow only under the supervision of the parent.

House Rules: Although on average the family will be with you less than 24 hours it is still important to go over your rules for the shelter. Are there places that are off limits? Are there things that shouldn't be touched or moved? It is better to communicate these up front so that there are clear expectations for your guest.

Medical Care

Currently nothing has been established under medical care. Should it be necessary you can take them to the ER where they can receive indigent care. Should there be a need to have a prescription filled, please contact the project coordinator to make the arrangements with Walgreens on El Paseo, the pharmacy that will be used by the project. Most of the illnesses you will see will be symptoms related to dehydration and upper respiratory illnesses. You may want to have children's over the counter drugs for this available in your home. Please do not give these to the children, rather have the parent give any medication prescribed or over the counter to the children.

Travel Arrangements

One of the things we found most important in working with refugee families is that they wanted to get to their family as soon as possible. This is a priority for them. As soon as you get your family you need to begin making travel arrangements for them. The quickest and easiest way is to have the receiving family provide you with a credit card to use in making the arrangements online. Second would be having the receiving family make the travel arrangements and provide you with the confirmation number. Third would be to have the family wire money to you via Walmart to Walmart, MoneyGram or Western Union. We suggest the following process.

1. Contact the USA family with whom they will be staying. Have the parent make the phone call and introduce you as someone who is providing them lodging and assisting them in making travel arrangements to arrive at their destination. After the introduction, you will need to gather the following information:
 - a. Person's name

- b. Address where they will be staying in the USA
 - c. A phone number where they can be reached
 - d. Mode of transportation (Bus or Airplane)
 - e. City or airport to where they will be traveling
 - f. Will they or will you be making the travel arrangements (If they will be making the travel arrangements by plane, let them know the family will travel out of the El Paso International Airport. If traveling by bus that they will be traveling out of Las Cruces, New Mexico. If you will be making the travel arrangements ask how they would like to pay for the travel. The easiest and fastest way is by a credit card. The other way is by wal-mart to wal-mart or other electronic transfer of cash. It is usually quicker and faster if you make the arrangements.
2. Greyhound Information:
- a. For you purchasing the ticket online go to; <https://www.greyhound.com/en>
 - i. Once you know the cost of the ticket you will have the parent contact the receiving family with the amount of the ticket. They are to ask the receiving family if they would add an additional \$50 for a pre-paid phone and \$50 additional traveling money. They are to wire the money as soon as possible to the diocese.
 - b. If the receiving family will be purchasing the ticket they need this information taken from the website: "Gift Ticket Orders (GTO) A non-refundable \$18 Gift Ticket fee will be applied at the time of purchase. This fee is per transaction, not per ticket, so it's the same no matter how many tickets you buy. The tickets can be printed at home or picked up at the bus station they'll be traveling from. GTO's are only applicable at US Greyhound locations. To pick up their tickets at the station, the person traveling will need to provide: Photo ID or password chosen by the person purchasing the ticket and the Confirmation Number.
3. Southwest Airlines:
- a. If you will be making the travel arrangements go online to; <https://www.southwest.com/> Once you know the price of the ticket follow the instruction under 2.a.i.
 - b. If the receiving family will be purchasing the ticket please make sure they provide you with the itinerary as well as the confirmation number. Also please refer to the guidelines under 2.b.i
4. American Airlines: <https://www.aa.com/booking/find-flights?tripType=roundTrip>
5. Delta Airlines: <http://www.delta.com/>

Snack Lunch

Prior to transporting the refugee family to the airport or bus station please prepare them a sack with food so that they may eat on their journey to the receiving family. This is especially important if the refugee family is traveling by bus as this is often a 24-48 hour trip. No water for families going on airplane and empty water bottle can be filled after they go through security.

Transportation

The host family will also in collaboration with other host families provide transportation for the refugee family to either the El Paso Airport or the Greyhound bus station. They will make sure that the refugee family has their tickets, have cleared security, and know at what time and out of which gate they will be

leaving. This is to assure that if there is a problem, we are there to assist the family. If the family has purchased a cell phone please ask them if it is ok for you to call them to make sure they have arrived safely.

Follow-up

Documentation

Below is a list of Documents you will complete as a host family.

1. Summary of Services will be completed by the host family on the web at.
<http://dioceseoflascruces.org/hospitality>
2. If you hear a great story from the refugee family or you have a moving experience that you would like to share with us please do so online at the following web page.
<http://www.dioceseoflascruces.org/narrative>

NON- NEGOTIABLES

1. No photos, videos or electronic postings.
2. No ongoing contact with the family
3. No personal gifts or money that is not documented and provided to the project coordinator.