



# Notes from the Rocking Chair

Nola Grannies

Issue #5, November, 2019

Because the Grannies (and Granddads) are rocking!

Edited by Melody Lee and Ann Sayas

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In this season of gratitude for our many blessings,

We salute the Grannies who choose to be of service  
in the face of mounting evil,

We applaud the dedication and hard work of our  
leadership and all those who find many  
ways to further our mission, and

We celebrate the bravery shown by the asylum  
seekers who persevere despite unspeakable  
obstacles.



**Number of care kits in September – 597**

**Number of care kits in October – 351**

**Total number of care kits distributed from August, 2018 to October 31, 2019  
14,558**

The Remain-in-Mexico policy of returning people to Mexico to await their court dates is the reason for the reduced number of asylum seekers passing through the bus station in recent months. Recent news reports state that over 51,000 asylum seekers are waiting in dangerous border towns in Mexico. Human Rights First in the *Guardian of London*, revealed that there have been at least 340 reports of rape, kidnapping, torture, and other violent attacks against the people who have been returned to Mexico to await their immigration hearings. The Women's Refugee Commission says that these reports are just the tip of the iceberg. Legal representation for these people is almost nonexistent. Ironically, this program is officially called Migrant Protection Protocols, but according to many news reports, the asylum seekers are being put in a situation that may be worse than the U.S. detention centers. To learn more, Google "What is happening to asylum seekers in Mexico?"

### **October 12 Meeting Discusses Possibility of Expanding NolaGranny Work**

Over 70 Grannies met at the Keller Community Center to listen to presentations from 4 groups who are doing great work for the Central Americans and Mexicans who were able to cross the border before it essentially closed. These groups offer other ways that we can help asylum seekers.

**Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy (ISLA)** provides direct service to asylum seekers held in the Louisiana detention centers. This is urgent work because no legal representation is provided by immigration services. The two attorneys and one paralegal handle cases primarily at the Pine Prairie Detention Center. They handle an average of six to eight cases at any time. Volunteer lawyers help with appeals. Their needs are great, as Louisiana is second only to Texas in the number of detainees in detention centers. Grannies can help with the paperwork load, fundraising, or grant writing.

Contact information: <https://www.islaimmigration.org>

**Phone – 504-265-0416.** Donations may be made through PayPal on website.

**Familias Unidos en Accion** provides housing and social services to three recent immigrant families for up to three months until they are able to help themselves. Their rented house is located at 2638 D'Abadie St. The Familias encourage the families to find their talents and skills that can help them provide for themselves and their families. For example, they discovered that one of the women they were helping had a talent for baking bread. Using her skills, she is now able to support herself in her own apartment.

Contact information: <https://www.familiasunidasla.org>. Phone: 504-813-4022.

They also have a Facebook page.



FAMILIAS UNIDAS EN ACCION

## **General List of Needs**

### **Basic Needs of CASA FAMILIA**

1. Toilet paper and personal cleaning items
2. Detergents for washing clothes and dishes
3. Disposable diapers from #1 to #6 and baby wipes
4. Infant formula. Enfamil and others
5. Water boxes
6. Some medicines for first aid kit
7. Bedspreads for cold season
8. Toys for girls and boys (educational)
9. Children's books

1. Sewing materials, fabrics, threads, needles, sewing ornaments
2. White paper
3. Notebooks and pencils
4. Sewing pencils
5. Clothing paper
6. Printers and other office supplies

### **Needs for families that are already located**

Home furniture

Beds

Tables

Children's beds

Chair and other things

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**Mujeres Luchadoras** is a group of women helping families whose spouses have been deported. They offer support and recommend other groups that may be able to help. Presently, they are working with 21 families. To contact them **call or text 504-491-8927**. Email: [menola@yahoo.com](mailto:menola@yahoo.com). Suggested contributions are listed on the flyer below.



**La Semilla**, held at First Grace United Methodist Church on the corner of Canal and Jefferson Davis, provides ESL instruction for Immigrants. The all-volunteer organization, a 501(c)3 non-profit, has been in existence since 2007. Four levels of English instruction are offered from 7 to 9 every Tuesday and Thursday evening. In order for the parents with children to receive language instruction, child care must be offered. Contact information: <https://www.lasemillanola.org>. Contact for the director, Carey Dupuis: [director@lasemillanola.org](mailto:director@lasemillanola.org), or **504-493-0480**.

What do Grannies who volunteer for childcare at La Semilla do? Granny **Hillery Gazzanga** volunteered after the October 12 meeting. Here's her description of the work:

The kids {all ages} are really into drawing and coloring, so if any Grannies want to do an art activity when they come, that would be awesome! Or they could come and read, do some music and movement type activities, or just come and hang out. Art supplies and any toy donations would be greatly appreciated, also. An older boy likes to play Jenga and toss a ball around. The younger boys like playing with cars, blocks, and dinosaurs. The twin girls that came one time were happy to have someone to chit chat with and were excited to show us what they were learning at school. The youngest girl that came was 7 months old and is a little snuggle bug of joy! Providing childcare services is an essential part of the program.

## Grannies

If you want to volunteer or donate to these groups, please contact them directly. For holiday donations, please call or contact them to find out their greatest needs.

## NOLA GRANNIES NOTICES

Request from Mary Ann Bohlke, production/inventory lead:

We have a need for “largish” tote bags. Contact her through

[nolagrannies@gmail.com](mailto:nolagrannies@gmail.com)



### Granny Holiday Party

Please save Saturday, December 14th from 12:00 - 2:30 for a holiday party. We will also make cards to be included in the Care Kits.

Details will be available soon.



Welcome to SignUpGenius. Once you sign the Volunteering Guidelines/ Ground Rules form, you will receive an invitation from sign-up genius. This means that you are in our system as a volunteer. Once you accept the invitation, you can create an account for yourself, and access SignUpGenius from anywhere. The SignUp program will remind you that you signed up to be a greeter or a packer 2 days in advance. It also allows you to cancel (please don't!) or swap your time with someone else.

When you sign up, you will be asked in the comment section for your phone number, whether you speak Spanish, and any comment you have. We ask you to answer these questions so the Lead will know who in the group speaks Spanish and how to reach you if necessary. These comments are available to anyone. Only the administrator can see the questions you answered when you first signed up.

We hope you find using this new system easy and helpful. If you are having a problem with SignUp Genius, please email me at [bethnolagranny@gmail.com](mailto:bethnolagranny@gmail.com). Thanks for all you do. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050d44ada82ca3fe3-busstation>

Leads, if you need help getting supplies Chris Wells will be able to help.. If you could let Chris know at least 48hrs before your shift - or even when you sign up for your shift - that would be ideal for coordination purposes.

**Chris Wells, Phone: 504-494-5568.**

Thanks to all who submitted information for the newsletter. The constraints of e-mail boxes have forced us to limit the size of the newsletter. We are not able to include articles by Yolanda Lorio, Martha Ward, and Kate Reynolds. These articles will appear in another newsletter. An annual report with financials will be sent in January.