



Notes from the Rocking Chair

Nola Grannies

Issue #4, September, 2019

Because theGrannies (and Granddads) are rocking!!

Edited by Melody Lee and Ann Sayas

Total care kits distribution for August, 2019: 675

Total care kits distribution for 2019: 13,610

THANK YOU WITH GRANNY GRATITUDE for all leads who Struggle so creatively with the difficulties caused by the changes in the storage facilities. You are the best of the best!

COMING SOON. Arrangements are almost finalized for a wonderful new home for storage and packing.

A date for a celebration of our one-year anniversary will be announced in October.

BRAVO FOR CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVERS

A Distribution Team of dedicated volunteers - Chris Wells, Kate Maleckar and Frank Aseron - have agreed to offer to bring supplies from the storage unit to your house to save you a trip, when/if needed. This would be worked out on an individual basis, and you would need to reach out to Chris Wells (info below); he will then coordinate with the rest of the team. 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.

Email: cjwells7@gmail.com



General Membership Meeting

Saturday ~ October 12, 2019 ~ 1:30-4:30
Rosa F Keller Library & Community Center
4300 S Broad St, New Orleans, LA 70125

Celebrating the Past...Discussing the Present...Looking Toward the Future

Come join us as we look back on the past 14 months of service at the Bus Station, discuss the current situation and our volunteer needs, and look at new ways our dedicated NOLA Grannies can help immigrants as they transverse our country and the complicated asylum seeking process they face when they get here. We'd like to expand beyond our work with immigrant travelers and use our considerable collective energy to address other needs these folks have. To do this effectively, we need the wisdom and voices of all the NOLA Grannies.

We have invited several local organizations assisting immigrants to attend this meeting and discuss their work and present their visions of how we can collaborate with them.

We are expecting lively discussion and need your ideas as we...LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE!

*Save
The Date*

Saturday, October 12, 2019 - 1:30pm

Grannies Participate in Lights for Liberty

On July 19th, 25 Grannies met at the bus station and walked to Poydras with the big banner to join other participants for an evening vigil in front of the ICE offices. Thanks to Yolanda Lorio for speaking during the vigil. During July, 696 protests occurred in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Over 100,000 people joined together to protest the inhumane conditions faced by migrants. On July 26th, Kate Reynolds, representing the NOLA Grannies, participated in a Covington demonstration. People who attended donated \$400 to the Grannies.





Visitor-Advocate for Detained Immigrants Training

Who we are:

Louisiana Advocates for Immigrants
in Detention (LA-AID)

What we do:

- Visit immigrants in detention
- Monitor conditions in detention facilities
- Advocate for needs of detained immigrants

How you can join us:

Attend our Training!

Saturday Sep 14th, 1-3:30pm
First Grace Church
3401 Canal St. New Orleans

For registration and questions:

Email Julie & Nell at
LAadvocatesforimmigrants@gmail.com

Please purchase a few items on the Target gift registry to help get the "Jena Hospitality House" started. The Jena Hospitality House, maintained by Southern Poverty Law Center, will provide a resting place for immigration lawyers, advocates and detainees in the Jena, LA area and folks leaving nearby detention centers. This initiative is being led by Freedom for Immigrants and *Voces Unidas* is helping!

<https://www.target.com/gift-registry/giftgiver...>

Several Grannies have already visited the house. We'll hear from them soon.



[On September 20](#), there will be a worldwide Climate Strike organized by The Sunrise Movement, primarily run by teens and other young people. Mothers Out Front is also supporting this event. The current immigration crisis is, in large part, caused by the climate crisis, and unless it is dealt with now, will only become worse. Please come out, if possible, and support these brave young people in the fight to preserve the future.

[Friday, September 20, 2019](#)
[12:45 pm](#)
[1300 Perdido Street](#), New Orleans City Hall

You can sign up here:

https://actionnetwork.org/events/new-orleans-us-strike?source=direct_link&

You can read more here:

sunrisemovement.org

Mothersoutfront.org

climatestrike.net



We the People March New Orleans Saturday, September 21, 2019

Mission: To march in solidarity with the We the People March in Washington, D.C. and many others around the country on the same day as part of the continuing fight to save our democracy

We the people are marching to be seen and heard. We are marching to remind our elected officials that they work for us. We are marching because the current administration is a threat to our democracy and values. We are marching to demand accountability. Silence and inaction are complicity.

**March starts at Noon at Armstrong Park (701 N. Rampart)
March ends with a gathering at City Hall (1300 Perdido)**

We want to make sure that the NOLA Grannies are represented!! March with us and wear your Grannies Respond tee-shirt if you have one. The NOLA Grannies will have a display and volunteer sign-up table at the After-March gathering at City Hall. Volunteer to help us staff the table. Contact Granny Kate Reynolds nolagranniekate@gmail.com.

ACLU UPDATES

By [Alanah Odoms Hebert](#), Executive Director
AUGUST 13, 2019 - 12:30PM

Earlier this year, Immigration and Customs Enforcement [quietly opened](#) three new detention centers in Louisiana, all run by private for-profit prison companies. Louisiana's popular justice reinvestment reforms had begun to shrink the state's bloated prison population, but these private prison companies – along with federal immigration authorities – had different ideas.

The number of ICE detention facilities in Louisiana has grown from 2 in 2018 to 11 as of July 2019, shattering our state's commitment to reducing mass incarceration and subjecting thousands of immigrants and asylum-seekers to brutal and inhumane conditions.

Today Louisiana is poised to become the state with the highest number of immigrant detainees.

Many are being held in private, for-profit prisons or in local jails with a history of abysmal medical care and extreme brutality. For years, the ACLU has received serious complaints in these very facilities, where there have been reports of rampant violence, a lack of medical care, and people being placed in solitary confinement. The people being detained are so desperate they are staging hunger strikes and civil disobedience. In at least two facilities, protesters have been [pepper-sprayed](#).

The state that recently shed its title as prison capital of the world is now at risk of becoming the detention capital of the world. This is an unacceptable, inhumane and dangerous trend.

Louisiana taxpayers should not be subsidizing the forcible separation of children from their families or the mass detention of immigrants in brutal and dehumanizing conditions. That's why we're fighting back in court and in the halls of power to combat mass detention and hold public officials accountable for ending these abuses.

In May, the ACLU of Louisiana joined the Southern Poverty Law Center in [suing](#) the Trump administration for categorically denying release to hundreds of people who are languishing in immigration prisons after lawfully seeking asylum in the United States. The suit was filed on behalf of 12 named plaintiffs who, like hundreds of other migrants, sought asylum

at official U.S. points of entry in compliance with federal law and then were confined and sent to remote prisons in Louisiana and Alabama.

Together, we can stop this runaway train of mass detention and restore our commitment to freedom and justice for all.

Stories from the Station



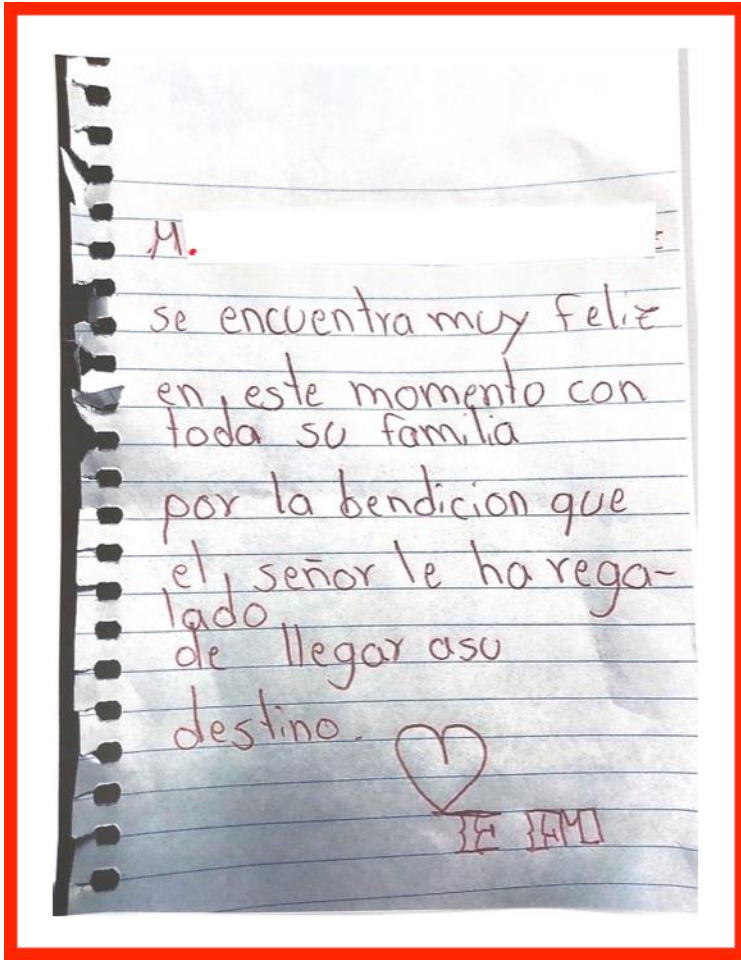
from [Maggie Tidwell](#). We have a bin of shoes now, many of them thong sandals in slightly larger sizes. I saw a young American woman walking around the bus station barefoot and I asked her if she would like to try on a pair. She was very happy, but the sandals were too small. When I turned my back for a minute, our volunteer Frances was taking off her tennis shoes. I asked her what she was doing, and she said "I'm giving her my shoes" like it was obvious. "I can wear those sandals out to my car and I have plenty more shoes at home." The young woman then said she would get out of the way for "the people who really need help." Grateful to witness such acts of grace.

from [Janine Beniger](#).

The long trip to the *el baño*.



from Beth Bochnak



The thank you note was written at the bus station. It reads: “M. finds himself very happy at this moment with all his family, for the blessing given by the Lord to have arrived at this destination. I love you.”

Financial Report

Fundraiser at Vaughan's

Everyone had a great time at the July fundraiser at Vaughn's. The event and silent auction raised over \$20,000! What an amazing job! A big shout-out and many thanks to these generous folks for the time and hard work that made this such a success: Cam Mangham, Valerie Skinkus, Lanie Dornier, Lisa Laursen and especially Cindy Wood, who is the owner of Vaughan's. Many thanks to all who attended and bid on items in the silent auction

Benefit at Buffa's

On July 13, guitarist Fred Goodrich offered a wonderful musical evening at Buffa's while encouraging contributions to NOLA Grannies. Over \$500 and a large container of water were donated. Special thanks are extended to Granny Grace Perrine who made the arrangements and to the Grannies who attended.

PURCHASING POLICY NOLA GRANNIES

It is our policy that the funds our donors entrust to us be expended in the wisest, most cost-effective manner. In furtherance of this policy we will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Except for regular items purchased for kits, all expenditures exceeding \$50.00 must be approved in advance by the Treasurer or the Chief Purchasing Officer.
2. Printing requirements should be brought to the Treasurer or Chief Purchasing Officer. In most cases, commercial printing is much cheaper than printing on a home computer. Ink for home printers will not be reimbursed.
3. If there are concerns about the amount or necessity of the purchase, the Treasurer or Chief Purchasing may confer with the Grannies leadership team for final approval.
4. All expenditures must be supported by receipts and an expense report.
5. Expenses submitted for items not pre-approved may not be honored.

HOW TO GET REIMBURSED FOR GRANNY EXPENSES

Everything NOLA Grannies do starts with the shoppers who buy all the items we distribute to asylum seekers coming through the New Orleans Greyhound Terminal. We recognize your time and hard work, and want to make sure you are reimbursed as quickly and accurately as possible. Once you have completed your shopping, please do the following:

1. **Take a photo of your receipt on your phone.** The copy should show the entire receipt from top to bottom, so that the name of the store, the date of purchase, and every item purchased is clearly visible. Please do this before the receipt has a chance to get lost, crumpled, smeared or put through the laundry. If you pick up personal items on your shopping trip, please have those rung up as a separate order, so that only Granny items are on the receipt you submit. If you use a white background for the receipt when you take the photo, it saves expensive colored printer ink when receipts are printed for file. Expense reports /receipts should be filed within 60 days of purchase.
2. **Complete the Expense Form.** Break the totals into Kits, Toys, or Miscellaneous. Kits are plastic bags and everything that goes into them for the travelers. Miscellaneous includes items like sanitary napkins, diapers or wipes, which are given out on a need only basis. Toys is self-explanatory.
3. **Email the receipt and expense form to pdriscoll1223@yahoo.com.** In the email specify if you wish to be paid by check or Venmo. If requesting a check, please include your mailing address in the email. Checks may take up to a week to get to you, given the vagaries of USPS. For Venmo payments, download the app and send me a friend request @Pat-Driscoll-6. This should bring you to a photo of me in my pink pussy hat. Venmo puts your money directly into your bank account within 24 hours.

So there you have it, easy as 1-2-3. If you have any questions, email me or call at 248-930-9554. I am here to help. Thanks for volunteering.

Pat Driscoll, Treasurer

from Beth Bochnak, Volunteer Co-ordinator

ATTENTION NEW GRANNIES

There will be a training for bus station Greeters on September 12, 5:30-7 pm,

At the Rosa Keller Library, 400 Broad. We hope to see you all there!

RSVP to NOLAgrannies@gmail.com so we know how many training manuals to print.



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. Thanks for all you do. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050d44ada82ca3fe3-busstation>

Book Discussion: *This Land is Our Land, An Immigrant's Manifesto* by Suketu Mehta

The summer heat has driven me inside on these long, hot afternoons, so I decided to spend time each day learning more about the environment, white privilege and all the problems that seem to be coming to a head as we approach 2020. We all have friends and relatives with whom we strongly disagree, and with facts, we can begin to defend ourselves from the bigots and science deniers.

My most recent read, *This Land is Our Land, An Immigrant's Manifesto* by Suketu Mehta, has been an eye-opener for me, as it delves into the historic reasons for the current immigration struggle worldwide. The book begins with stories and personal struggles going on today in the United States and worldwide. It then takes the reader through the nightmares of colonization in which conquerors pillaged and oppressed poor lands and peoples throughout the world, including India, Africa, and South and Central America. The author goes on to explain the new colonialism, which is the rise of worldwide corporations that reap the benefits without paying taxes, and the numbers are supported with good research. Tied closely to these issues are the disasters of wars and climate change which drive people from their homes in search of refuge.

The facts are well documented, with fifty pages of annotations, but the book remains easy to read and is very understandable.

Mehta has included concrete examples, as well as facts and figures that are alarming but indisputable:

--how many people are affected

--how much wealth is accumulated in tax shelters

--how land and resources are exploited to the detriment of indigenous people

--how immigrants are left with little choice but to move

--how different the lifestyles are between the occupiers and the immigrants trying to flee the damage. One image that I cannot get out of my mind is that of an encampment of immigrants waiting months willing to pay all their savings to get on any kind of boat to cross to Spain, and they are camped next to yachts of the uber wealthy who are free to travel anywhere.

On completing this book, we are left with the knowledge that immigrants are coming, because they have no choice, the wealthy countries are causing this, and we will be in the same boat unless we make changes very soon.

by Melody Lee