

A Child from Guatemala tells Her Story

As we walked across the parking lot my arm began to hurt. I set the bags down in the pavement. In them were all the possessions of four people, including food, diapers, formula and clothing for two adults and two infants. I was not fast enough. Before I could pick them up again the teenage mother, with a one-month-old infant strapped to her chest picked them up for me. Walking beside her was a young father with his four-month-old strapped to his chest. They had just met in The Inn, where there is always room. I knew little of their story. I did know that they had walked most of the way from Guatemala to the Port of Entry in Nogales, Az. Where were these babies born? On the side of a trail? In a village along the way? Where were the other parents? I never quiz people about their stories but listen eagerly if they choose to tell them.

These folks had passed the first screening and had been released from the ICE detention facility...jail. The locator bracelet attached to their ankle made them look like criminals. They had committed no crime.

After a couple of days in The Inn, where they were able to bath, eat, get clean clothes and sleep they were now headed to the Greyhound bus station where they would board a bus for the home of their US sponsor. They could be going anywhere in the US. They are cold and trembling with fear.

Tonight, I entered to find a full house. I had a bag of new, colorful, children's socks. Two hard working volunteers stopped to help me spread them out on a table. The children laughed and asked their parents if it was ok before they each took a pair. Anastacio, a joyful elder, sits at a table with young men playing dominoes. He is here often. His ministry is to be kind, play dominoes and offer words of assurance. We have much to teach each other he says laughingly.

I think of the new group of folks who will be here tomorrow night and the night after that. How will they be received as they move away from the border and into the heart of America. What can I do? I look at the clock. It's time to load my car and take folks to the bus station. One load...one more...Pensacola...Newark...