



Desert Southwest Conference
The United Methodist Church

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Winter Newsletter

**From Site Coordinator,
Gretchen Lopez**

To All Our Valued Donors,
Friends, and Volunteers,

At this holiday season, we would like to thank all the amazing people who play a part in keeping the doors of The Inn of Southern Arizona open and continuing to provide a welcoming presence for our guests. Since Christmas of 2016 The Inn has welcomed guests from many countries and provided the hospitality that is mentioned in Matthew 25:40. "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." As an organization, The Inn provides food, drink, clothing, and shelter for people who have been marginalized.

As always, a huge THANK YOU goes out to all the committed and tireless volunteers who make our mission possible. As we continue to receive asylum seekers, released from governmental agencies, journey on to destinations throughout the U.S., we could not continue without the hours you donate to this important work.

And to our wonderful, generous donors: as we continue to serve our families in the safety and security of our temporary hotel location, following all CDC guidelines for testing, avoiding congregate settings, and offering vaccinations, we are truly thankful for your gifts. We rely on your generosity to provide this wonderful space for our families. We are grateful.

**Finding Gratitude in Service:
Diane Everhart, Board Chair**

I find that driving people to the airport or bus station gives me the greatest opportunity to spend a bit more time getting to know the families or individuals we serve. When arriving at the hotel they do come to the office briefly, but, when driving, I have additional time to

listen and hear their stories. I am only an advanced beginner at Spanish but through use of Google translate, hand gestures and my poor Spanish, I am usually able to communicate.

When accompanying families to the airport, our general procedure is to first get their tickets (we have their confirmation or locator information) and a gate pass and then proceed through security. At this time, a representative from immigration comes to confirm our family's names and destinations; we explain to our families that their backpacks and bags will be both x-rayed and hand-searched. After security, we locate a departure board and explain that when they reach the airport for their connecting flights, they need to find another departure board to check for gate changes, flight delays, and so forth.

Once we are seated at their departure gate, we explain how much time they have between flights and that boarding usually starts 30 minutes before departure, so when arriving at the next airport, they need to go directly to their gates. Last week I took a mother and her two daughters for their flight. After my usual explanation, the mother thanked me with tears in her eyes and said that she was both happy and sad. She said she was happy that she and her daughters were in the United States, going to her friends where they would be safe, but she was worried about her husband, mother and father who were still in their country.

I understood how hard this must be, not only leaving family you love and not being together this Christmas season, but not knowing when you will be together again and praying for their safety. We hugged as she got ready to board their plane. As I left the airport for my home and family, I prayed that they would soon be reunited. I am so grateful and realize how blessed I am to have my family around me.





A Christmas Story from Gustavo Rodriguez

Hello everyone. For this holiday season, I would like to share a story of a family that was reunited, thanks to the effort of all the people that contribute in one way or another to the shelter.

A couple of weeks ago, we received a young man from Colombia. When he arrived, we saw he was shocked and worried because he had been separated from his mom at the port of entry in Yuma, AZ. His mom was an older woman who completely depended on him, so you can imagine the frustration and all the feelings he was having at that moment. We tried to calm him and immediately gathered all the information we could to look for her on the ICE websites and with the other organizations we work with, but sadly with no success.

During the morning two days later, he told us that his mom had called him and told him that she was being transported to the airport in PHX. He was out of his mind and wanted to immediately go to her. We immediately contacted the Regional Center for Border Health at Somerton, AZ. and let them know the situation. They were able to contact the driver and asked him to leave this mother at the IRC shelter in PHX instead taking her to the airport, where she would have been completely vulnerable. We then purchased a ticket and sent her son to the shelter in PHX. After 3 long days, they were finally reunited.

At the end of this scary and emotional ordeal, the young man sent us a beautiful picture of them together, showing their gratitude for all the efforts we had made to locate his mom for him. This kind of thing inspires me to continue my work at The Inn, helping families being together no matter how difficult the challenge is.



As we continue to operate in our current hotel setting, fundraising is our major priority. We have limited our guest room count to ten nightly, considering our pool of volunteers and our financial capability. We also rent two rooms to use as The Inn offices for administrative purposes, private consulting with families and children, and supply storage. We are paying \$50 per night per hotel room; \$15,000 per month minimum. With careful budgeting, we have been able to keep many costs down; however, base food and fuel prices have in-

creased, as well as costs, not previously necessary, for the safety and well-being of our guests and volunteers. We are truly grateful that, through your generous contributions, we have been able to safely resume and continue our mission.

Support The Inn of Southern Arizona with your Tax-Deductible Donations

Your generosity is greatly appreciated and is what keeps our doors open. We hope you will consider becoming a monthly donor under one of the following sponsorship categories. Sponsorship includes our quarterly newsletter, invitations to special gatherings and activities, and the satisfaction of knowing that your gift is changing lives. TO DONATE ONLINE [The Inn - Online Donation Form - Desert Southwest Conference \(dscumc.org\)](https://www.dscumc.org).

Volunteers Needed!



URGENT NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

Due to the ongoing Covid crisis, and an increase of asylum seekers in need of our services, we desperately need more volunteers to fill all hospitality and driving shifts. If you, or anyone you know, can give four hours or more of your time weekly, we would be immensely grateful. Please visit our website, www.theinnofsa.org, to submit a brief volunteer application form and you will be contacted shortly. OR click here to go directly to the application: <https://tinyurl.com/bdye2zm9>



The Board is planning a Volunteer Appreciation Dessert on Sunday, March 27, 2022; 1:30 to 3 p.m. This event will honor all of our volunteers and donors and help share the word of the mission and ministry of The Inn.

a Heartfelt ♥



TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!



The Inn By the Numbers:

So far in 2021, The Inn has welcomed 3,273 total individuals, including children traveling with their families. We received 179 individuals in October, 277 in November, and thus far, in December. This year we have received families from Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, India, Russia, Romania, Honduras, El Salvador, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua. This December, The Inn celebrated 5 years of welcoming and walking alongside our guests. Over the past five years we have welcomed over 17,000 individuals.

When you light a light for someone, it will also brighten your path. ~Gautama Buddha

**LOCATION,
LOCATION,
LOCATION.**

We are in the process of finding a permanent location, eagerly anticipating the time when volunteers and guests can safely congregate again. If you have time and expertise to help in this regard, please contact our Board Chair at diane.everhart@hotmail.com

A Brief Update as We Close Out 2021

Due to COVID, we moved The Inn from First United Methodist Church and a congregant sheltering to a hotel where social distancing was more feasible. This has precipitated many changes, but our mission of hospitality has remained the same.

We received a grant through Church World Service to hire Gustavo Rodriguez as a case manager and to help with the running of our shelter. He identifies needs and connects families with support such as asylum paperwork, medical issues, and other essential needs when they reach their destinations.

Hellene Henrikson Fund of the Lutheran Church of the Foothills held at the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona awarded The Inn of Southern Arizona a \$15,000 grant for feeding The Inn's guests in response to the quote: Matthew 25:31-40: **"for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."** We are blessed to receive this grant and so very thankful.

We have a faithful group of cooks who provide individually packaged meals for lunches and dinners. They are delivered to the guest's rooms to be refrigerated and microwaved, thus ensuring contact-free handling of food.

We received a grant from the Eloy food bank for \$750 for food, again so grateful.

We received \$1,000 in gift cards for food purchases from Desert Sky United Methodist Church. Thank you! In addition, we received \$9,872.00 from UMCOR for room rentals at the hotel.

We have been blessed with a volunteer grant writer who has contributed not only money to our budget but helped us grow as an organization.

We have a new website...please visit www.theinnofsa.org!



As We Start 2022



- We are in need of more volunteers for hospitality shifts and drivers to help transport guests. Due to Covid, our volunteer pool is more limited so please help if you can! Sign up now to volunteer.
- We would love to have a volunteer coordinator to help with following up on volunteer applications and making sure shifts are covered. Contact Gretchen if you are interested in this position.
- We would like to have volunteers that are interested in participating in committees for finance, fundraising and donations, searching for a new location for The Inn, and looking for grants. If you have any interest in any of these areas, please contact Diane

Everhart at diane.everhart@hotmail.com. We are looking for people who have skills or contacts to further The Inn's growth in these areas.

WHAT WE OFFER: We provide three healthy meals a day, delivered to guests in their rooms, hygiene products, clothing, and assistance in connecting with loved ones, as well as transportation on their day of departure. And, of course, our notoriously friendly hospitality!

The hotel has been wonderfully willing to work with us and our guests. The courageous travelers coming to The Inn express deep gratitude for all we do, how much we care, and how committed we are to supporting them. It is such a joy to interact with them as they check in, come by the office with a question, or say their goodbyes.

Matthew 25:40 "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples. ~Mother Teresa

MEETING THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES:

As we continue to operate in our current hotel setting, fundraising is our major priority. We decided to limit our room count to ten nightly, considering our pool of volunteers and our financial ability. We also use two rooms as The Inn offices for administrative purposes, private consulting with families and children, and supply storage. We are paying \$50 per night per hotel room; \$15,000 per month minimum. With careful budgeting, we have been able to keep many costs down; however, base food and fuel prices have increased, as well as costs, not previously necessary, for the safety and well-being of our guests and volunteers. We are truly grateful that, through your generous contributions, we have been able to safely resume and continue our mission.

The Inn Sponsorship Program 2021-22

Become an integral part of The Inn, providing sponsorship at a level that works for you. If you have given in the past, please consider increasing your support. If you are a new donor, we welcome you at the sponsorship level that suits you best. Your gift ensures that the Inn can provide the necessary support to asylum-seeking families.

Your donation helps provide a bed, clothing, and food in a safe, loving, Christian environment. As a sponsor you will fulfill the call Christ spoke about in Matthew 25:40 when he said, "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

As a sponsor, you will join in partnership with the staff and volunteers who provide for the day to day needs of our guests. You will receive periodic newsletters, invitations to special gatherings and activities in addition to the knowledge that your donation is changing lives.


Please become a sponsor of The Inn. Sign up here: <https://tinyurl.com/3stjppek>

Choose your level of support:*

Type of Sponsor	Monthly	Yearly
Wise Ones	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00
Inn Keepers	\$100.00	\$1,200.00
Angels	\$50.00	\$600.00
Shepherds	\$25.00	\$300.00

We also welcome **one-time gifts**. Please donate online here: <https://theinnofsa.org/donate>

*Donations are tax deductible



WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR STORIES
Put into words what volunteering at The Inn has meant to you or an experience you had with a family. Please send stories to theinnofsa@gmail.com.



"JUST AS YOU DID IT TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE WHO ARE MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY, YOU DID IT TO ME." MATTHEW 25:40

2021 Sponsorship Program

Become a Sponsor today at <https://tinyurl.com/3stjppek>
More at <https://theinnofsa.org>



Checks can be made payable to The Desert Southwest Conference UMC with "The Inn" written on the memo line and mailed to:

Treasurer, Desert SW Conference UMC
1550 E. Meadowbrook Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85014

The Inn of Southern Arizona
P.O. Box 43332
Tucson, Arizona 85719

Sponsorships make an ideal birthday or holiday gift for a family or friend. Helping a family seeking asylum and a new life is a perfect way to tell someone you love them. One-time sponsorship: one guest, \$25.00; family of four: \$100.00 or choose a level above. You will receive a card you can send explaining your special gift.