

Date: Monday, August 3, 2015

To whom it may concern,

My name is Barbara de Souza, am a recently retired Missionary to Brasil for Global Ministries. My question is concerning the 57,000 illegal refugees from Central America entering in July of last year. Many were unaccompanied children. This was big news for a while and then died down.

Where are these children now? Where are the mothers who came with children? What can we do to help them so as not to be returned to the violent slum poverty they fled from? My missionary work over a 40 year period was in the shanty towns of Brasil where I lived and worked so I can guess what they are fleeing from-even worse than where I was, I'm sure. Can some of them be sent to towns where they would be welcomed and supported? In the early 80s, our town took in some refugee Vietnamese families and worked with them until they were settled.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your attention,

Rev. Barbara de Souza

Date: Wed, 5 Aug 2015

Dear Barbara de Souza,

Thank you for writing to us and for your desire to assist the unaccompanied minors arriving in the United States. The majority of the minors that arrived in the United States have been sent to live with family members already here in the US. They are now waiting to appear before immigration courts in order to determine whether or not they may remain in the United States as asylum seekers. Many families though still remain in detention centers across the United States, as they wait for their court dates. With these families, while it is difficult to provide assistance for them in the centers, we still are quite active in advocating for their release as well as their ability to find relief in the United States. If you would like to get involved in advocacy, please feel free to contact our grassroots coordinator, Rev. Noel Andersen, who is closely involved with the movement to protect and provide for both minors and all immigrants coming to the United States. He can be reached at [nandersen@cwsglobal.org](mailto:nandersen@cwsglobal.org).

As you mentioned providing for Vietnamese refugees entering the United States, I wanted to also let you know that the program that helped to resettle Vietnamese to the US still exists and works to receive thousands of refugees each year in locations across the country. Each year the US receives over 70,000 refugees, who are assigned to an agency in a local community that

helps to provide housing assistance, job training, language training, and a range of other services. Here is a [list of our offices around the US](#) that engage in this type of work; please feel free to reach out to the one closest to you.

Thanks again and all the best,

Will Haney

Date: Thu, 6 Aug 2015

Dear Noel Anderson,

My name is Barb de Souza and I was a Global Ministries Missionary in Brazil for some 30 years after living and working in the slums of Rio first for 14 years first. I returned finally to the States in 2011 to retire. Persons in the UCC are actively studying the issue of immigration and one of these persons is Rev. Fred Trost. He suggested that I write to you about my dream project.

When my husband and I came to the States in 2012, we settled in North Carolina because I have a daughter there. It was my first experience in the South. There my husband and I found a multicultural church where there were many Hispanics, many of them not legally here. We became quite friendly with some and learned of their plight as well as their fear of immigration. We had had experience with immigration as my husband immigrated in 1981 while I was in Seminary and then again when we retired. So we know some of the feeling of the immigrants we saw go through the process.

Then last July, I read of the plight of the 57,000 Central American refugees arriving in the USA, fleeing from the poverty and violence of their communities. My husband I felt their plight as we lived and worked in the slums of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo for almost 40 years. We know from first-hand experience what these people were fleeing from: gang wars, drugs, prostitution and poverty. The Brazilian movie, "City of God, Cidade de Deus," was made in the shanty town beside ours. That will show anyone what life is like in these communities.

Then I remembered when we were in River Falls, WI. While I was in Seminary, there was an ecumenical project to house Vietnamese refugees. Churches paid the rent etc. for several families, gave English lessons etc, to help them establish life here as there was no return to homeland for them. My husband was part of this group and where he learned English.

On hearing of these Central American refugees, I remembered this and wrote to the English teacher, Bobbie Kuhn who had worked with the Vietnamese and told her my idea--my dream. Why can't we do the same for a few of these Central American refugees? River Falls is an open and accepting city and very ecumenical. So we began our research. Mrs. Kuhn, the English teacher has contacted schools and the college here to find volunteer teachers to help with

English and I will continue to contact churches. Mrs. Kuhn is also contacting the early organizers of the Vietnamese house so we have a basis as to how to start.

So I write this to you, hoping that you can be of help to us in realizing this dream of reaching out in Christian love to some of these refugees. We know from personal experience that no one wants to be far from their homeland and family so there must be suffering and sadness among these families. We want to do something. We feel God calls us to help.

This is my dream and why my husband and I moved a few months ago back to River Falls.

Thank you for any help/advice you can give us as to how to make this dream come true.

Barbara de Souza