

# Indiana AID

# THE INSIDE VIEW

December 2, 2022 / Vol 2

## Javier's Story\*

*\*The name has been changed to protect the author's identity and the story is translated from the original Spanish.*

It was born in Santo Domingo, where poverty, delinquency and injustice abound, and this is my story. We were 13 people who lived in the home of my grandmother and she worked every day to provide for everyone. I began to work at the age of 8 years old, cleaning shoes in the street and homes on Saturdays and Sundays. Weekdays I went to school in the morning. We never had money to eat at recess and we'd have to escape to pick up trash in order to get money to eat. I didn't like the idea because I always liked studying but when I'd get home, it was never a sure thing if there'd be a plate of food waiting for me. I went to school with the same uniform for 5 years straight. The taunting and comments began to annoy me a lot and the fights with schoolmates began daily. My grandmother always told me, "Son, don't let the teasing cause you emotions because it's not the uniform that's studying or learning, it's you."

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## November Monthly Report

- 11-12 initial outreach messages were sent, along with ongoing partner communications
- Books purchased: \$144.27
- Commissary items purchased: \$1,388.80
- We had to restrict commissary help this month & deny some requests due to low funds, but thankfully with some donations, we're back on track to assist.

## Prayer Vigil

Indiana AID has been seeking in-person visitation at the Clay County jail for nearly three years. There is a federal program called "Community Stakeholder Visitation" that allows groups like ours to visit facilities that detain immigrants and speak with people there in-person. We started inquiring about this program in early 2020 but our plans were delayed by the pandemic. Fortunately, our friends from ICDI taught us how we could connect with detained immigrants through video visits, which has been very valuable but not a full substitute for actually seeing people in-person.

ICE announced a "phased return" to in-person visitation in May 2022, and we filled out

a new request for a Community Stakeholder Visit and submitted it on July 22. However, the Chicago Field Office delayed in responding and eventually denied our request for no particularly good reason. We have been appealing their rejection of our request ever since, and we hope that we'll be able to visit in-person someday.

In the meantime, although we couldn't see the actual people face-to-face, a group of 11 people met in front of the Clay County jail to pray for those inside - which was a moving experience for everyone involved. Physical presence matters, and we invite all people of faith to join us in praying that the barriers will be removed that keep us from visiting our friends who are locked up in jail.

~ Pastor Brian Bither



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But everything was very dark in my life at an age that I couldn't really understand why I had to live a life of poverty to such extremes.

In cleaning shoes, I met a family who helped me. I went every weekend to wash their car, pick up dog poop, and clean their shoes. What I earned was a big help and, in that way, I began to help my grandmother with food for the house. In the neighborhood there was a gang called Blood ("Sangre"). I grew up in the middle of them because they held their meetings beside my house. At 10 years old I had to leave home; my brother and I decided we were too much of a burden for my grandmother. We lived on the beach under some stairs and during the day, we'd leave to ask for food from the restaurants and to wash windshields of the cars in the street. At that time, I learned of and began to smoke weed, then my brother began to sell drugs. We decided to return home but nothing had changed; we were mistreated, tortured at the hands of my grandmother's husband and their children. My uncle always saw us as different; I believe that was the reason why my brother left for the street. He became a gang member and did the dirty jobs for his boss. I was with him most of the time during the day but at night, I never saw him. One day he invited me to go with him to collect some money and that day my brother was killed by some police officers who belonged to the gang. My friend and I were able to escape; my brother and another guy died. I got a bullet in the leg and my friend, who had escaped with me, was found dead a month later. I left the city and I spent three years running from these people until my contact, who told me that they'd found me, said that he couldn't protect me any more and that I needed to leave the country. This was the reason why I had to leave my country so urgently.

# Immigration Snapshots

## National Snapshot

- On October 21, 2022, DHS designated Ethiopia for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) due to ongoing armed conflict and humanitarian crisis
  - Available to Ethiopians who were physically present in the US as of October 20, 2022
  - In place for 18 months
- There is continuing TPS designations for El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and for Haiti and Sudan there is ongoing litigation, so current work permits have been extended to 6/30/2024
- DHS announced it will begin sending Venezuelan migrants who crossed between ports of entry on the U.S.-Mexico border to Mexico.
- DHS also announced a new parole process for up to 24,000 Venezuelans who are seeking safe haven within the United States due to the conditions in their country.
  - The Venezuelan Parole Process is modeled after "Uniting for Ukraine"
  - Many requirements, such as:
    - be outside of the US
    - have a financial sponsor

## Regional Snapshot

- 2 new judges were appointed for immigration courts based out of Chicago, in recognition of the backlog of cases.
- A new immigration court is set to open in Indianapolis in 2023 to help address the 40,000-case backlog of immigration cases in Indiana and around the country. This will also make the court more accessible for many Indiana residents.

## Volunteer

Currently, our greatest needs are for...

- Spanish-speaking visitation partners
- Financial support
- Volunteer drivers (add your name to an "on call" list to consider transportation requests)
- Website and social media specialists

## Contact Us

- Email: [indianaaid.contact@gmail.com](mailto:indianaaid.contact@gmail.com)
- Phone (voicemail only): 317-721-4044
- Donate: <https://www.indianaaid.org/donate>