

NEWSLETTER



*“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name”
(Philippians, 2:9)*

Winter 2016

December 30, 2016

Board of Directors

Rev. Luis Centeno
Chair of the Board

Odir Chavez
Treasurer

Rev. Raul LeDuc
Member

Rev. Bob Lundgren, D.Min.
Member

Interim Executive Director

Bryan Dickey



The Joy of the Season

In a child in a manger, wrapped in cloths, in his mother’s arms, with shepherds come to see for themselves what the angels described to them, in the clear night, in Bethlehem—in Him, we put our hope.

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty—when Zechariah spoke these words pointing to Christ, or when Abraham, seeking the Lord’s path, looked across to the splendid cities of his day and pitched his tent instead under the oaks of Mamre, or when Israel trembled at the thought of crossing the Jordan, or when Joshua stepped into the shallow water and found dry places to put his feet—so it was with strength and courage in the times into which Jesus was born.

It is the same today. And though we know that it was not the sword that conquered Rome, we still struggle to bring our hearts to Him.

In the beauty of this simple story of strength and weakness, our faith is continually renewed.

By the Spirit

This time last winter, we shared that after eleven foundational years spent pouring out her heart, preparing a way, and setting the highest standard as our agency’s first Executive Director, Dr. Elizabeth Hernandez, D.Min. prayerfully submitted her contingency strategy to the Board to responsibly transition from her leadership role and start this ministry on its path to a new day.

Those of you who have followed us faithfully in this journey know the extraordinary challenge that loomed before us then, even with Elizabeth’s continued commitment to share her wisdom with us throughout this transition.

Consider everything else: clinical and compliance audits with the city, revalidating our program with the state, normal seasonal changes in staffing—consider all of this and you have a glimpse of the undertaking.

Then consider that the precious heart of this vital work would have to come through intact.

In faith, our staff and Board set about implementing the plan to meet exactly these challenges: to recruit, to renew, and to strengthen this ministry we all love.

With the strong results of our latest audits (again our best yet!), and with five more years of state validation approved, we stepped forward with the city’s full support and with the support of our many faithful partners, from the good doctors of Esperanza Health Center to the congregations who support us in so many ways.

Our Clinical Team

It is such a joy to write that after an exhaustive search, Pastor Centeno, Bryan and Elizabeth were able to interview Dr. Delmina Henry, Ph.D. at the end of this summer. Originally from Jamaica, Dr. Henry is a licensed psychologist and graduate of Temple University who brings over 30 years of doctoral experience in the assessment and treatment of trauma in the urban setting. In October, she joined us as a consultant to supervise the clinical work of our therapists each week.

With this key role in place, we were then able to formally enlist the services of five outstanding clinicians to join the more than 40 therapists who have been the hands and feet delivering this important outreach to our community through Refuge since 2008. These therapists bring a diversity of skills, backgrounds, experience and energy to our multicultural setting. Through careful orientation and training on the intricate beauty of this unique model and under Dr. Henry's supervision, these clinicians are now meeting with the families we serve every day, walking alongside them with the heart of Christ.



Debbie McIntosh, MA
Wheaton College



Carla Contreras, MS
Cairn University



Lorraine Tauriello, LCSW
Rutgers University



Pascuala Shroyer, MS
Cairn University



Rachel Stout, MA
Westminster Seminary /
Biblical Theological Seminary

It is also a pleasure to share that Mrs. Marilyn Gonzalez has now joined us at the reception and intake desk from Iglesia Mundial la Gran Comision (World Church of the Great Commission) here in North Philadelphia.

Our ministry remains in a delicate place, but we look ahead with great anticipation to the year ahead.

Financial Update

This new phase for Refuge has taken investment and much sacrifice. Yet truly, we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. By his grace, He has renewed this work.

At the end of summer, with the commitments of these clinicians, Elizabeth helped with the assignment of over 50 new cases from our waiting list in a single day. The hundreds of appointments delivered in the weeks since have brought us to seventy percent budget coverage by revenue from our counseling work alone—an unprecedented balance.

With the support raised to date, we have come eighty-five percent of the way to a basic level of health—\$1,800 more each month is still needed. We seek your pledge to join us.

The Place of Refuge

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The Place of Refuge is a 501(c)3 non-partisan, non-profit organization that seeks to bring redemptive healing through faith-based trauma treatment and training focusing on urban populations and their caregivers.

Please pray about what it would mean to allow more families in our city to know this ministry.

Consider becoming part of this outreach by making a tax-deductible contribution!

Your gift makes this possible!

**On behalf of the staff and the board, thank you!
Merry Christmas! And Happy New Year!**