



### A Few Thoughts on Immigration:

The issue of immigration is a complex & controversial one. Although most readers of this newsletter will agree that our immigration system is broken, not all will agree on how it might be fixed. Many push us toward one of two extremes: completely open borders or completely closed borders with a barrier wall across our southern border. I do not propose to have any easy answers, nor can I do anything more than scratch the surface of the problem in this short article.

Christians, in particular, should be able to find common ground on a few points. From the Creation story, we affirm that all persons are created in God's image, with the breath (spirit) of God within them. We can review the many Old Testament decrees given by God to the Children of Israel about how they were to treat the strangers and aliens among them. We can study the writings of prophets such as Isaiah and Amos, declaring God's judgment on those who live lavishly while ignoring the needs of the poor, the alien; the widow. We can review New Testament scriptures such as Galatians 6:10, Romans 12:13, and Hebrews 13:2. Above all, we should consider the teachings of Jesus: *“Who is my neighbor?” as shown in The Beatitudes and the Parable of the Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25. In that passage is a phrase (v. 35c) that has been the driving force in my life over the past four years in particular: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”*

The question of how to reform our immigration system can be approached from many angles.

Our government has the responsibility to restrict the flow of drugs, weapons, and other harmful elements into our country. As has been the case for decades, persons seeking to escape violence or persecution, or those displaced and destitute by natural events such as earthquakes or hurricanes should be allowed to seek asylum at ports of entry. Children should not be separated from parents in an attempt to intimidate asylum seekers. Legislators should consider that many businesses (agricultural, construction, landscaping, etc.) could not survive without immigrant workers. Consideration should be given to young adults who were brought here as children and have known nothing except life in the United States.

One important factor is seldom discussed among our legislators: how to improve the social, physical, and economic conditions of those in countries of origin so there is less urgency to migrate. Undoubtedly the pressure must be great to cause so many to uproot their lives and make the dangerous journey north in search of a better life! As American citizens, we understand very little, from our comfortable vantage point, of the sufferings of many of our neighbors in Latin America: Extreme poverty. Lack of jobs. Threats, bribes, violence, and rape at the hands of drug cartels. Earthquakes. Hurricanes. Floods and landslides. The problems encountered are of such monumental scope as to require assistance from both government agencies and faith-based groups, such as MCC. One excellent example of the latter is the recent work of Rosedale International in Nicaragua. After Hurricanes Eta and Iota struck the country less than two weeks apart in November 2020, many houses and churches lost their roofs. An invitation was given here in the USA to donate funds to buy metal roofing, with the goal of \$30,000 to provide half of the necessary materials. To date, over \$100,000 has been received! Such caring support gives people hope for a future in their own countries.

In addition to the immigration resources available at MCC's website, let me also suggest that you become familiar with the excellent work of the Evangelical Immigration Table (a branch of World Relief). (Visit [www.evangelicalimmigrationtable.org](http://www.evangelicalimmigrationtable.org)) There



you will find many helpful and balanced resources – prayer lists, Bible studies, updated information, ideas on how to contact your elected government officials, and much more.

We, the board and staff of Open Arms, ask you to continue praying for our elected officials; that they could work in a bipartisan way for solutions that are both just and compassionate. Solutions that reform our immigration system here and also promote stability, education, and employment opportunities which allow people hope for safe, sustainable lives in their home countries.

We encourage you to ask God for open doors to share the love of Christ with our Hispanic neighbors.

**-Dan King Chair of Board**

### Remote Tutoring Program: Update

As the first year of the Open Arms Tutoring Program for Hispanic elementary and middle school children moves into the spring semester, we would like to share updates with you. Our program currently has eight students, each with a volunteer tutor, in the Orrville and Green school districts. Tutors meet two to three times a week with students and are in communication with the students' teachers. Due to COVID, most tutoring is being done online. Students are making progress in maintaining grade levels and gaining confidence in their academic abilities as well as creating valuable relationships with their tutors.

Looking ahead, we hope to see the program grow, with the potential need for more tutors and the possibility of in-person tutoring in the fall. Currently, we are exploring ways we can assist families with preschool children by providing opportunities for the children to learn English and be better prepared for their Kindergarten experience. This involves checking into preschools, assisting with enrollment, and figuring out logistics such as transportation, which may require volunteer assistance. We are also considering options after the school year ends to provide continued learning experiences throughout the summer by offering continued tutoring and potentially some extracurricular activities..

Open Arms has also set up a resource library with extra school supplies, supplementary learning materials, and children's books to support our students and tutors.

The tutoring program has had a very successful first year. Open Arms is blessed with dedicated tutors who are making real differences in the lives of their students. We have a lot of room for growth and improvement and would welcome your volunteer help. Seeing the love of learning and the confidence our students have gained is a precious gift and so valuable to both tutors and students. If you would care to find out more about volunteering with the tutoring program, please contact the Open Arms office 330-765-9955 or Cheryl Weiss [cherylapweiss@gmail.com](mailto:cherylapweiss@gmail.com)

## Why I support Open Arms Hispanic Ministries as an Amigo



The United States is now at about the one year anniversary of big changes due to COVID-19. When I look back on how I was feeling one year ago, I am amazed. Last March and April was scary. Many things about the virus were unknown. We weren't sure about the best ways to be safe. Sometimes we didn't even know who to trust for information. Both workers and people who owned businesses were equally nervous. That kind of sudden vulnerability is rare in my life.

During that time, several of the professional organizations that I am a part of became uniquely helpful to me in a way they had never been before. I looked to them for credible information and community with others in my specific situation. I was grateful for the assistance I received. Watching news stories from Italy and New York, I also quickly became grateful to live in Wayne County, where a lower population density and less movement of people slowed down the spread of COVID-19 locally. Also, soon many people were mobilizing to help

others before and after government programs got off the ground.

However in some ways, in the early days of COVID-19, Wayne County was just like larger communities. Besides nursing homes, the disease popped up and spread in locations like meat processing plants where workers had no choice but to work closely together without protection. Also, Hispanic or not, the workers in those locations were invisible to many people. A pandemic that affects the most vulnerable among us, either economically or on the basis of health, becomes a pretty clear window into how Christ-like a community is.

I support Open Arms for many reasons, but one is that I see them as similar to the professional organizations that helped me when I was vulnerable this spring. It is a place where immigrants can find community, a place to get reliable information, and a place to get tangible help when it is needed. I hope more people will "pay their dues" and support this important local ministry. **- Hannah Miedel**



## Open Arms Hispanic Ministries

*Brazos Abiertos*

**Sharing God's love by  
meeting needs of  
Hispanic immigrants in  
Wayne Co., Ohio, and  
surrounding areas**

## Save the Dates

### Community Event

**May 5, 2021 (Wednesday)**

**11 am – 4 pm** Customer Appreciation & Community Event Sponsored by Raber Eye Care & Raber Dental of Kidron

Drs. Philip & Myriam Raber are inviting all patients and local community to a casual outdoor reception at **3693 Kidron Road in Kidron**. Door prizes will be awarded during the day. There will be Mexican Coca-Cola and fajitas from Que Pasa restaurant of Orrville.

*Donations will be received for Open Arms Hispanic Ministries to further their work in sharing God's love. Bring your friends and family to enjoy the food and fellowship.*

### Summer Fiesta

**July 17, 2021 (Saturday)**

Oak Grove Mennonite Church is looking forward to hosting the Open Arms Summer Fiesta on Saturday, July 17, 2021. The congregation welcomes this fellowship with the Hispanic community to learn more of the important Christian ministry of Open Arms. Come for lively music, boxed meals and friendship. A tent will be set up so that the event can happen rain or shine. ¡Bienvenidos, Brazos Abiertos!

Oak Grove is located at:  
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**Open Arms  
Hispanic Ministries**

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