

**Greetings & Request for Support**  
*from People Helping People in the Border Zone (PHP)*  
~Arivaca, Arizona~



***~Our Essential Work in the Borderlands Continues~***

Many of you have contacted us, concerned about how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our work and our village.

Each day, thousands continue to flee northward, seeking safety and family reunification across borders. Border Patrol agents are arresting and rapidly expelling people to remote border towns, such as Sasabe, Sonora. Immigration enforcement agencies are flying people to Central America who have contracted COVID-19 while being held in deadly conditions within immigration detention, effectively exporting the virus to at-risk communities. We are seeing the build-up of Border Patrol presence and the rapid construction of border walls in the deserts around our homes. While the crisis has shut-down economies and kept many at home, for many of those migrating through Mexico and Central America staying 'home' is not a safe option.

Arivacans continue to encounter those in need on a daily basis; just a few weeks ago, PHP members assisted in locating the remains of a person who perished while crossing the border near the town of Patagonia. We know that our efforts now are more important than ever.

In order to keep those we support and the most vulnerable in our communities as safe as possible, we have rapidly adapted our work at PHP to minimize risk. We developed new sanitation protocols at our office, changing everything from how we clean to how we provide care, from decision-making to laundry duties. We now spend most of our office shifts sitting out on our beautiful office porch, donning masks, and taking care to remain accessible to those in need.



Eli Imadali for HuffPost

## The Border Crisis Doesn't Pause For A Pandemic

Residents of Arivaca in southern Arizona are fighting to save migrants' lives — and scrambling to protect their own — as the coronavirus sweeps the nation.

By Hayley Miller | 04/17/2020 02:53 pm ET | Updated Apr 21, 2020



For some residents of Arivaca, a dusty Arizona town just 11 miles north of the Mexican border, an unexpected knock on the door in the dead of night is as familiar as a

In a recent Huffington post [article](#) (left) , one of our co-founders, Leesa Jacobson said, “We’re the only community in 35 miles or more in any direction. As tiny as we are, we’re the place to come if people need help and they do.”

We remain a loving community committed to providing relief to those in need regardless of immigration status. We continue to support local residents providing water, food, medical care, shelter from exposure to the elements, and search and rescue for those who have gone missing or perished. We have even expanded our open hours, now staffing our office 7-days a week.

### *~Breaking New Ground at the Arivaca Humanitarian Aid Office~*

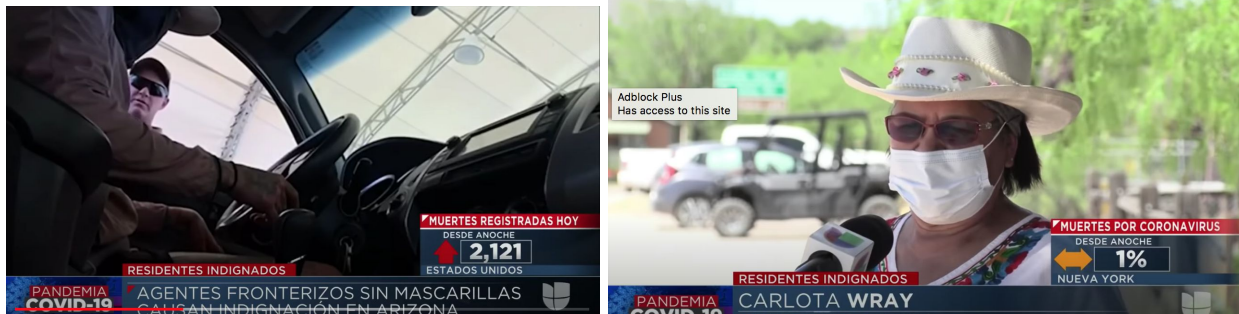


With the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, we realized that we urgently need a bathroom at our office in order to effectively wash our hands! This led us to plan a wheelchair accessible bathroom, with a toilet and a sink with actual hot running water. We are super excited, after nearly eight years in the community, to finally have a bathroom in the works! This will help us improve the quality of care we can provide, as



well as keep volunteers safe . We've already started building!

### *~Speaking Out Together Against Border Patrol Endangerment~*



While PHP volunteers have invested tremendous time and effort in protecting our community from the spread of disease, Border Patrol has not. Hundreds of Customs & Border Protection Employees have tested positive for COVID-19, including at least 6 Border Patrol agents stationed in our area. Nonetheless, we have witnessed Border Patrol agents disregarding CDC recommendations for the use of PPE and social distancing when stopping our cars at the inland checkpoints, often sticking their heads into our vehicles without the use of face masks, coming into our local general store, and arresting migrating peoples without protection.

In response, we joined with residents of our sister border community, Ajo, Arizona, to document and publicize this endangering behavior. We released a [video](#) to the press showing numerous encounters with unmasked and non-distancing Border Patrol agents. Our demands were clear: Border Patrol agents, checkpoints, walls, and immigration arrests are NON-ESSENTIAL and ENDANGERING to our communities. Send them home!

Following news coverage on [Arizona Public Media](#) and [Univision](#), our campaign was successful in compelling Tucson Sector Border Patrol officials to require their agents to wear masks while interacting with the public! An important victory for the safety of our beloved communities.

### *~More Than Ever, We Need YOUR Support~*

As the pandemic has required severe restrictions on interaction with the public, we have been unable to meet with visiting student groups at our office, or receive in person donations and purchases at our aid office, which have been two primary ways that we have funded our all-volunteer work. We thank you for your past generous contributions to our work! Le agradecemos mucho. We are now writing to request YOUR SUPPORT to help us cover our small \$14k/year budget and bathroom building project during this critical time.

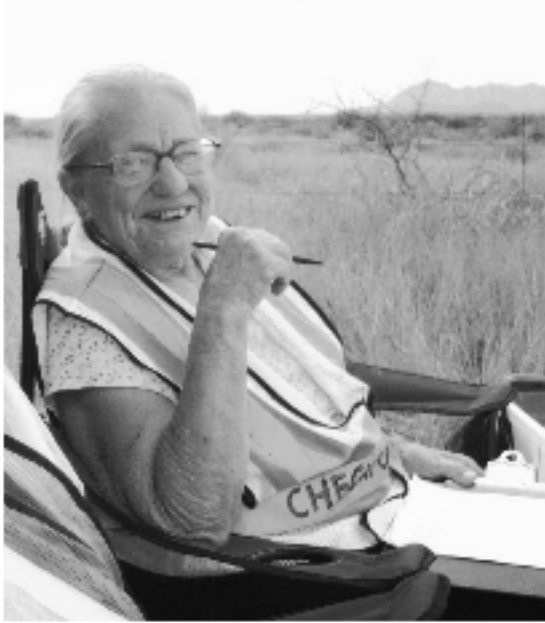
\*\*\* Please consider making a tax-deductible donation! \*\*\*

You can contribute **via paypal at our website [www.phparivaca.org](http://www.phparivaca.org)**

Checks can be made payable to **People Helping People/AFGJ** and mailed to us:  
**The Arivaca Humanitarian Aid Office, PO Box 826, Arivaca, AZ 85601**

***With love and well wishes to you and yours from Arivaca town,***

## *~In Memoriam~*



This last winter our beloved Patty Miller passed away peacefully at home at the age of 77. If you have visited us in Arivaca, you may have had the opportunity to hear from Patty about her 41 years of experience living in the community and the many changes she had witnessed with the onset of militarized border enforcement. You may have seen her joyfully monitoring the Border Patrol checkpoint that lies north of our small town. You may have felt her steadfast conviction that all life is precious. We hold our love for Patty close and miss her everyday.

This past year, Patty spoke on behalf of rural border communities at the federal trial of humanitarian Scott Warren; Scott was later acquitted of felony harboring charges for providing care to two people from Central America. Before a crowd of press, Patty shared the following:

*“Most of us living in rural border communities are holding stories in our hearts. Personally, I’ve met people who were walking through the desert and ended up in Arivaca when it was snowy and when it was 16 degrees outside. They must have walked around all night just not to freeze. I’ve seen people looking frightened, looking exhausted. I know the word for food - comida - and I’ve met people who could barely nod their head yes to show their hunger. When someone is carrying a jug of dirty water, I give them some that is clean. I’ve seen young kids, so young looking and frightened looking - like they don’t know how they are gonna be greeted. I’ve seen them weep when they are received with care. A lot of them are refugees, running from violence and poverty. It’s very emotional. The hugs they give you, and gratitude for water. They’ve got to know how close they might be to dying.*”

*“The government is trying to make it a criminal act to extend kindness to those in need. Yes, it’s scary. But there are human laws and then there is what my heart tells me to do. Border residents like me in Arivaca, like Scott in Ajo, and like those on the Tohono O’odham Nation and beyond live with these decisions every day. We believe every life is sacred, deserving of care, and dignity. And we stand together, unintimidated.”*

