

Catholic Charities' Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Tex, began in 2014 when huge numbers of unaccompanied immigrant children began coming to the United States from Central America. Upon arrival at the center, the immigrant families receive hygiene products, a set of clothes and a snack bag. Next, they meet with a contracted travel agent, who takes care of registration and arranges for getting them to the city in the United States where the sponsor, who pays for their transportation, lives. Many sleep overnight and leave the next morning.

Sister Gloria Haider moved to McAllen last October. She's grateful to be volunteering at the Respite Center. She's impressed with the staff who handles the administrative work and the commitment of the volunteers. Most of the time everything is well organized—except for the days when the center has around 450 people. "Then there is chaos of which we try to bring some order!" Sister Gloria said. "The people who come to the center are very grateful for our help. After a long journey, the center provides a short respite and meets some immediate needs. The newcomers leave happier, knowing they have been treated with respect."



Sister Gloria sorts hygiene products at the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Tex.



Sister Pat Forster works for ARISE (A Resource In Serving Equality). This 32-year-old organization based along the U.S./Mexico border in Texas has a long history of providing services and advocacy for immigrants. Sister Pat (turquoise sweater) is pictured with staff members at the Muniz Center, one of four collaborating centers working to address education, health care, housing, civic engagement, leadership development and the needs of the youth in the small, underserved communities (colonias) in the Rio Grande Valley.

Sister Pat was one of four sisters who founded the mission in San Rafael, Mexico, back in 2003. Her commitment to social justice and to the Latino people in search of a better life continues along the border.