

Broken Borders: A Look into Migrant Shelters in Tijuana, B.C., Mexico

Migrant Shelters - Casa del Migrante and Instituto Madre Asunta, A.C.

Located in Tijuana, B.C. these two shelters have been serving immigrants since 1987 and 1995, respectively. The Casa del Migrante serves men while the Instituto Madre Asunta serves women and their children. The shelters first opened their doors to serve migrants making their journey to the U.S. from the interior and Latin America. Now, these shelters serve deported immigrants from the U.S. These shelters and the communities of Tijuana experience many challenges, especially as the number of deportations from the U.S. increases.

Issues

Instituto Madre Asunta realizes the significant family disintegration that many women experience. Their children remain in the U.S. while they struggle to maintain contact with their children while fighting for their parental rights. Casa del Migrante recognizes that the overwhelming majority of the men in their shelter have been detained and deported for minor traffic violations. Many women, children, and men are separated from their families living in the U.S., creating problems for both the U.S. and Mexico.

Recommendations

The Instituto Madre Asunta urges social workers on both sides of the border to work together to address the devastating impacts of our current immigration policies. Through community organizing, direct services, provision and policy advocacy, American and Mexican social workers can effectively counter the inhumane consequences of our immigration policies.

Impact

For the past five years, these shelters have seen a growing trend; they are now serving more deported migrants than those they originally intended to serve. Tijuana has seen an increase in homelessness, squatting, poverty, robberies, sex trafficking, drug use, and disintegrated families as these women and men have no choice but to remain on the border to stay connected with their families and loved ones.