Sending love in a time of COVID-19

SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS AT STEWART DETENTION CENTER

Immigrants at Stewart have shared with us that they feel afraid and alone. They are unable to protect themselves via social distancing. They have limited access to masks, hand sanitizer, and soap. They do not have access to hot water. If they tell a guard they feel sick, they are at risk of being sent to solitary confinement.

A letter with a message of solidarity and hope can help a person feel less alone.

"Thank you for the letters I received on Father's Day. I like to spread them out on my bed and look at them."

--- A detained friend

PLACE YOUR LETTERS IN UNSEALED, STAMPED ENVELOPES, AND THEN PLACE IN ONE LARGE ENVELOPE.

MAIL TO:
EL REFUGIO
P.O. BOX 1166
DECATUR, GA 30031

You may decorate your letter with markers, but avoid glitter and stickers.
Dear friend,

Greetings from (city/state). My name is (first name).

It is difficult for me to understand all the challenges you face in detention, but I want to let you know that you are not alone or forgotten. I stand in solidarity with you, your family, and all immigrants who are facing detention and discrimination, especially in this confusing time of pandemic.

I celebrate the love and strength of immigrants like you and wish you the best in life.

Warmly,
Your friend at El Refugio

Querido amigo,

Saludos desde (ciudad / estado). Mi nombre es (primer nombre).

Es difícil para mí entender todos los desafíos que enfrenta durante la detención, pero quiero que sepa que no está solo ni olvidado. Me solidarizo con usted, su familia y todos los inmigrantes que enfrentan detención y discriminación, especialmente en este momento confuso de pandemia.

Celebro el amor y la fuerza de los inmigrantes como usted.

Afectuosamente,
Tus amigo de El Refugio

*Please note on the envelope the language of your letter. We primarily need Spanish and English. For other language needs, contact sarah.silverman@elrefugioministry.org.*
Your Role as a Letter-Writing Volunteer

Living inside of an immigrant detention center is hard. Our friends tell us they feel lonely, confused, bored, and afraid. Being separated from family, friends, and all that is familiar is stressful. Being treated like a criminal, while awaiting an unknown outcome, takes a toll.

Cards and letters can provide a means of support for detained immigrants who may have little contact with the outside world. Your role is to be a friend who is concerned for their well-being.

Guidelines

- Do not share your phone number, address, or photo.
- Do not make promises, especially about the outcome of their immigration case.
- Do not make commitments you can’t keep.
- Do not romanticize or victimize detained immigrants. Many have worked as professionals, survived horrendous situations due to their resourcefulness, traveled the world, learned languages, attended university, and served as leaders in their communities.
- Your letter may be read by a guard. If you talk about immigration or detention with anger, the detained person may suffer.
- The person reading your letter may make inferences due to their circumstances. Loneliness, power differences, and language differences could play into the person misunderstanding you or feeling more intimately connected than you intend.
- Do not try to convert anyone to your religion.
- We support people with different gender identities. Some people have fled their country because of attempts on their life due to their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

Questions: sarah.silverman @elrefugioministry.org