



Healthy Baby
Network

Every mother, Every baby

Safety for Refugee Families

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

by Lauren S. Deutsch, Esq.
Volunteered in Dilley, TX

54 mothers served.

The majority were fleeing gang violence and gang related sexual assault.

1/3 were also dealing with horrific domestic violence.

3 political opinion cases

3 racial violence cases

All served were mothers with young children.

Stories

- One client walked for 35 days with her kids to get to the United States. She was robbed and sexually assaulted on the journey.
- One woman didn't know if her children were alive until she was able to call home and talk to them from the law office.
- The journey to the United States was so terrifying, one client said she prayed every day that no one would sexually assault her 5 year old daughter on the way.

The Room Where They Say the Names

There is a room in South Texas where they call out names.

Names like poetry. Names like lullabies.

Glorious names, rolling off the tongue in a sing song of their native Spanish.

Or else grating against the blunt edge of an American accent, but converted nonetheless into music by their inherent melody.

The names echo across a room with off-white walls, in a large modular building, with a layer of red brown dirt tracked in from the endless open mud field just outside.

Bodies move through, a rainbow of sweat pants and sweatshirts in primary colors.

Neon yellow. Fire engine red. Royal blue. Hot pink.

I say a name like a promise, and a pair of eyes look up.

A hand is tentatively raised. You approach me slowly.

Come with me a while.

I am the unearned keeper of your confidence.

Because we have met like this, and I am me, and you are you, you confess to me. I see you. I hear you.

Though the power and the courage are yours, I borrow them awhile so I can have the strength to listen.

And we won't meet again. In your rainbow clothes. In this off white room, with a layer of red brown dirt on the floor.

But I want you to know, it has been my privilege to say your beautiful name.

- Lauren S. Deutsch, Esq.
Dilley, Texas 2018

