



# Frontera de Cristo

## A Presbyterian Binational Border Ministry

### Greeting from the Board of Directors

During our 40th Anniversary celebration six months ago, we took time not just to remember and reflect upon our past, but to also marvel and delight at God's faithfulness in how truly energized we are in this moment of ministry. We are full of fresh vision and vitality for a future of faith to do God's will of building bridges and not walls in the borderlands.

Since our celebration, though, the last few months and recent weeks have been disheartening in relation to our longstanding partnership with PCUSA World Mission. Their announcement of closing the World Mission agency and severing all Mission Co-workers' service with their partners, including Mark and Miriam's service as Mission Co-Workers with us, brings us great pain; and yet, we as a board, together with Mark and Miriam, continue to share a strong sense of renewed call to build relationships of understanding across borders.

As we seek to be faithful to God's call upon our ministry in a time of great uncertainty, we will continue to discern how God might make a way forward for Mark and Miriam's service alongside Frontera de Cristo. They have committed to volunteering with us through the end of the year, which will give us time to develop and implement a financial plan for 2026 that will allow us to sustain their continue service with us into the future. More information about a capital campaign will be coming soon. We are grateful for your continued prayers and support!

In Christ's grace and peace,

The Frontera de Cristo Board of Directors

René Espinoza, Maky Hernández, Jean Tsuya, Jeff Krongaard, Mara Salazar, Jeni O'Callaghan, Jenn Soule-Hill

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### Thank You, Howard and Lee Ann: 35 Years of Volunteering on the Border!

For the past 35 years, Howard Henry and Lee Ann Grace, from University Presbyterian Church in Buffalo, New York, have volunteered with Frontera de Cristo for several weeks each year. In this brief video, they talk about those years, and the "collaborative servanthood" found on the border and at Frontera de Cristo. Even though Frontera de Cristo is a part of Presbyterian Borderlands Ministries, Howard says that "the effort has always been ecumenical. ... The Border does not separate us, but it is where we come in contact with one another. The wall has gone up, tried to separate us, and that has re-doubled the effort to say "We are not separate, we are one people."



Listen to Howard and Lee Ann talk about serving on the border: Scan this QR code or go to YouTube.com and search "Getting to Know Frontera de Cristo Staff." □



**Take Action**—If you'd like to volunteer with Frontera de Cristo, please contact Mark Adams at [mark@fronteradecristo.org](mailto:mark@fronteradecristo.org) or fill out and submit our Volunteer Application which can be downloaded from our website: [fronteradecristo.org/get-involved/](http://fronteradecristo.org/get-involved/)

### Impact of the PCUSA's decision to Eliminate Mission Co-worker Positions: An Update

#### Will Frontera de Cristo close?

**Absolutely not!** Frontera de Cristo is a non-profit organization *independent of* the PCUSA Interim Unified Agency.

Frontera de Cristo is a dynamic ministry that is expanding its ministry in 2025 in multiple ways including: expanding from 4 children's enrichment sites to 5; expanding its Love Mercy, Do Justice

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## Impact (continued)

Ministry to more hospitality centers; beginning a music and art ministry for children and families of the children's enrichment ministry.

### How will FDCs staffing change?

PCUSA will no longer be sending Miriam and Mark as Mission Co-workers to serve with Frontera de Cristo as of March 24. Mark currently serves as one of FDC's coordinators and Miriam serves as permaculture instructor and liaison with Douglaprieta Trabaja and is a vital member of FDC's mission delegation facilitator team. The rest of Frontera de Cristo's staff will continue serving with FDC.

### What will FDC do to address the loss of two staff positions in a time of expansion of its ministry?

The board of Frontera de Cristo has expressed their desire to find a way for Miriam and Mark to continue serving with them. Both Miriam and Mark have a strong sense of call to continue in the ministry with FDC.

FDC was already 5 weeks into its yearly budget when notified of the loss of the Mission Co-workers serving with us. They had not contemplated including funding for these two positions in this year's budget. The PCUSA is providing Miriam and Mark with a severance package during the transition period, and Miriam and Mark are volunteering with FDC while the board seeks to determine whether they can sustainably add two positions to its budget.

The board is working on developing a capital campaign. Email us if you would like to receive information about the campaign when it comes available: [communications@fronteradecristo.org](mailto:communications@fronteradecristo.org).

### How Can You Help?

#### Pray:

- In gratitude for the 40 years of partnership between PCUSA and Frontera de Cristo.
- For wisdom and peace for FDC, our partners, Mark and Miriam, and the IUA in this time of transition.
- For the future of the relationship of FDC and the IUA of the PCUSA.

### Ministry of Hospitality

Join us in continuing to choose the gospel value of welcome here on the border and in your local communities. Even as we grapple with the impacts of decisions from above on us as an organization, we need to continue accompanying vulnerable populations and reminding the world of God's love for all and especially for the stranger, the hungry, the thirsty, the children and those excluded by society. □

## Children's Enrichment Ministry Expands

by Marina Forero, Director, Children's Enrichment Ministry

Eight years ago, Frontera de Cristo began the Children's Enrichment Ministry as a faith response to the drug culture that was targeting younger and younger children not only to consume drugs but to get involved in the trafficking of drugs. While all children are welcome here, we are especially focused on children who are at risk of dropping out of elementary school.

For eight years, girls and boys have been coming, growing, and developing together with us. The light they carry in each game, smile, restlessness, creativity, and ingenuity is bright. Even in times of adversity they are resilient and get up again to gain strength and continue in their mission to be happy.

The Children's Enrichment Ministry has seen hope emerge in the lives of children and their families by providing safe spaces of wide welcome, with the certainty that everyone is important. We provide classrooms full of experiences based on learning, respect, dignity, and love. Children have expressed that here they experience the warmth of a quiet and harmonious home where they like to be.

When a child is enrolled, then their cousins and even friends from their school join, because they share what we do and their mothers like to know that they like to come and learn.



The Cerecer brothers say: "We now get good grades in school and feel smart in our school classes." Elizabeth's mother said "My daughter is shy; she hardly speaks, but she has awakened an interest in sports, she says that it is because the children here play a lot of soccer. She also plays with them and that is the part she likes most about coming here."



Ángel is short and very charismatic; he says: “I am so full of food that now I need to walk a lot, so the teachers do not ask me to sit in the class. I have a lot of accumulated energy and since the food here is very tasty, that is why I come every day.”

Diego dances all over the room and keeps hugging all the children and tells them that he does it because he considers them all as his friends, and incredibly they all follow him. He is a good leader.



We work together with churches, schools, and other organizations in Agua Prieta who want to see children embraced and protected, because life has not been easy for them. We work with 10 elementary schools to support all children in their leveling and in their integral development. But we want to see even more of what God gives in abundance for society. We currently have three sites located in different neighborhoods of the city—our partners, Centro Comunitario Nueva Esperanza, Iglesia Presbiteriana Lirio de los Valles, and Douglaprieta Trabaja, provide space for our ministry. The city’s Children’s Home also has asked us to work with the children under their care. In the process of recovery and



healing together, we share the faith that saves us. We are excited to see the ministry continue to grow because we yearn to spread the Gospel of Peace.

This spring we began a partnership with Cuenca Los Ojos, an Environmental Project that educates based on ecology—teaching us the richness that the earth provides, learning in exploration, approaching the diversity in flora and fauna and outdoor recreation, sharing together the same experiences, and witnessing the harmony between nature and human beings. We are looking forward to learning about the entire process of the agave and the bats that are its main pollinators.



We have had this experience at Rancho San Bernardino on the outskirts of the city. The Cuenca Los Ojos Program welcomes us at each visit of at least 25 children and 10 adults. These trips complement the permaculture classes the children engage in each week.

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## Where Jesus Walks

by Miriam Maldonado and Mark Adams, as published in *Mission Connections*, Summer 2025

“This is a place where Jesus walks.”

—David, a mission delegation participant after spending time at the CRREDA (now CATPSIC) drug rehab center.

The drug rehab center may be a place where Jesus walks, but it definitely was not a place where Mark wanted to be when Pastor Chuy Gallegos sent him there to deliver some blankets early in his service as a Mission Co-worker. As Mission Co-workers, we serve at the invitation of and under the direction of partners. And so Mark went.



The first time Mark entered the center, and the gate was locked behind him, he felt the urge to get out as soon as he could. He delivered the blankets and left without the intention of going back. But Pastor Chuy sent him back and the second time he went back he was even more uncomfortable than the first. As soon as he entered, someone yelled: “Llama Señor Hoyo ya llevo el doctor.”

They thought Mark was a doctor and they were calling out to a 22-year-old man addicted to heroin whom they had baptized “Mr. Hole,” because he had been stabbed in a knife fight, received an emergency colostomy, and had been released after his recovery from surgery, but had not yet recovered from his addictions. Several days later, he “hit bottom” again and ended up at the Rehab Center with a severe infection in his wound. They brought him to Mark to “heal him.” His name was “Jesús.”

Mark called Pastor Chuy and together they accompanied Raul, the director of the center, and Jesús, to the hospital. While Chuy and Raul were talking with the administrators of the hospital, Mark sat awkwardly by Jesús in the waiting room without knowing how to communicate with him.

Finally, Mark just asked: “¿Qué quieres, Jesús?” (“What do you want, Jesús?”)

“I want to live again. I haven’t lived for 8 years, and I want to live again. And I know with the help of God and with the help of the rehab center, I will be able to live again.”

The words of Jesús, struggling with addiction, became the hands of Jesus the Christ, touching Mark’s eyes, beginning to remove the scales and the fear that had blinded him from seeing the humanity of the person sitting beside him. Mark was set on a road toward more healing and wholeness.

As Mission Co-workers, we have cherished the role of helping to cultivate relationships and understanding across borders. One of Miriam’s responsibilities has been to help facilitate border immersion experiences for churches, seminaries, universities, and high schools. A highlight for Miriam is to accompany delegations out into the desert to walk migrant trails with the Agua Para La Vida (Water for Life) ministry led by CATPSIC.



A student delegation from the Menaul School in Albuquerque on an Agua Para la Vida trip with CATPSIC residents.

Many of the young people who lead the walk tell the delegations about the realities of the dangers of migration caused by lack of legal pathways to migrate and because of the US’s “prevention through deterrence” strategy that has pushed migration routes into more and more remote areas using mountains and deserts as lethal deterrents to migration.

On these excursions, PhDs and CEOs, suburban middle-class youth, and seniors in the golden age of their retirement are led, taught, and cared for by mostly young men, many without a high school education, all struggling to overcome addictions in

order to live again. On these excursions, roles are reversed, the proud are humbled, and the humbled are lifted up and community is formed.



CATPSIC is a work in progress. One day we entered the facility and were welcomed by a new “Bienvenidos” mosaic sign, and we noticed that they had covered the gray sidewalks with beautiful mosaics. A resident named Raul told us that they had been working for a contractor to clean up a construction site and the contractor wanted them to take a bunch of broken tiles to the dump. Raul asked permission to bring them to the rehab center and use them. His reply: “If you can use this trash, take it ... it’ll save me money on dumping fees.”

Raul told us, “You know, it’s kind of like us. Society thinks we are trash and not worth anything. But God doesn’t see us that way. And God can take us off the trash heap and form us into something beautiful and useful.”

As Mission Co-workers we were taught to listen to the local community and to listen for the voice of God in surprising places.



Raul served as the Director of CATPSIC until his death in 2017.

One of our New Year’s traditions has been to attend a 12-step meeting followed by dinner and dancing at the CATPSIC. This year we arrived a little late. We did not recognize the woman leading the meeting at first. When she welcomed us, she said, “So good to see you. I am grateful that you believe God can still do miracles. I was one of the first ones to work for Café Justo—you believed in us when no one else did.”

Initially that evening, we still could not place her, because we did not think she had been a barista at Café Justo y Mas, the coffee shop that is a partnership between Café Justo, Frontera de Cristo, and CATPSIC, where they give jobs to folks re-entering society from rehab. And it turns out, she hadn’t been. Myra had been hired by Café Justo 18 years earlier to help them with data entry. She has been sober for 18 years, living in a city about an hour from Agua Prieta. We were able have dinner with her and her daughters and celebrate the miracle that God has done in our lives.



Quinceanera Worship Service in 2012 for a youth in her first year of recovery. She is currently thriving and in her 13th year of recovery.

We are unsure if Pastor Chuy sent Mark there because he didn’t have time to go himself, or because he knew that Mark needed to be there so that God could continue transforming him, but we are glad that he sent us on a path where Jesus walks. Our walk as Mission Co-workers has come to an end, but our call to walk with Jesus into the joy and suffering of the world continues.

We are grateful for each of you who through your prayers, encouraging words, visits with us, and financial support have helped make possible our service as Mission Co-workers, and we pray that wherever you find yourself, your walk with Jesus will take you into surprising, uncomfortable, and life-giving places. □

**Take Action—**You can help provide relief to guests at CATPSIC. Just scan the QR code and select “Drug Prevention and Intervention Ministry” to donate.





## Do Great Things!

by Dora Yesenia Valencia, University of Arizona PhD student and participant in Border Immersion program

I was born in Agua Prieta, Sonora, and was raised in Douglas, Arizona, a graduate of Douglas High School, class of 2013. I am currently a PhD candidate in Clinical Translational Sciences at the University of Arizona, studying the social drivers of health care accessibility of the Nogales, Arizona community. I have been away from my border homes for almost 12 years, but lately, life has been bringing me back – full circle – in various ways; reconnecting me with my past to better understand my present.

I had the great honor to visit with Frontera de Cristo, along with UA instructors and classmates on February 15, 2025, as part of our Border Health Service Learning Institute (BHSI) course. BHSI aims to teach students of diverse backgrounds about the intersection of migration, economics, and health in the US-Mexico border region to foster a human connection to larger policy and public health issues that persist in this area by collaborating with local community partners that address everyday community needs and build community resiliency. We all chose to join this course for diverse reasons but coincide in how the experiences offered by this course expand our knowledge and open our hearts.

As a local to the Agua Prieta-Douglas area, our visit with Frontera de Cristo, Centro de Atención al Migrante Exodus (CAME), Centro de Recursos para Migrantes (CRM), Centro de Atención Psicológica (CATPSIC), and Café Justo y Más, felt like a homecoming that healed a part of my wounded, inner child. As a child, I was overwhelmed and marked by the negative rhetoric surrounding my wonderful hometowns. I grew up to believe that leaving was the only way to achieve “great things,” evidenced by a poem that I

wrote for a scholarship competition during my senior year of high school (see next page). Reflecting now, I realize that this poem was both an act of love and an act of rebellion by my younger self.

My inner child thrived as she learned about the work done by our gracious community partners. You have validated what I have always known to be true, great things are happening every day in Agua Prieta and Douglas! Our community is resilient, innovative, empathetic, and compassionate! I hope that Agua Prieta and Douglas schools take a similar approach to our course and educate our children about the unwavering work of our local organizations. As a child, I yearned to see this side of our community and I am so happy that this wish has finally come true, and I am so thankful to have been able to share this experience with my parents and with classmates from all over the world. Frontera de Cristo, CAME, CRM, CATPSIC, and Café Justo y Más, thank you for welcoming us with a warm embrace and for being a bright light in tumultuous times! □



Inspired by the many artists who have contributed their work to our community, I compiled a picture collage of our group activities. Our unity made the border fence disappear!

Picture collage by Dora Yesenia Valencia

**Get Out of Here...Do Great Things!**

By: Dora Valencia, Age 18

*My home is the U.S.-Mexico border...  
 I speak two languages, but my accent is a little funny in both  
 I love writing and storytelling...  
 ...But I feel like I don't have a great grasp on grammar...nor physics  
 Spanglish is my preferred way to communicate...  
 ...But we sometimes get in trouble for speaking that way in school  
 My whole life I have been told that I am smart...  
 ...And can accomplish great things!...  
 ...If only I can get out of here!  
 Away from the two homes that I was always known  
 So now I am here...  
 ...Writing this poem  
 Opening my heart and mind to those life events...  
 ...That show that I have struggled!...  
 ...But have now made me so resilient!  
 I have to prove to them...  
 ...Those strangers!...  
 ...Sorry... I misspoke...  
 ...Those philanthropists!  
 Prove to them that I am worthy...  
 ...Of scholarships!...  
 ...And accolades!...  
 ...To get out of here...  
 ...And do great things!  
 But what are great things?...  
 ...Have I never before done great things?...  
 ...Because I am here...  
 ...And the great things are elsewhere...  
 ...And we have to get out of here to do great things!  
 But what happens when we all get out of here?...  
 ...Away from the two homes that we have always known...  
 ...Will our houses be torn down to build more factories?...  
 ...Will more mines poison our water?...  
 ...Will the border fence become an impenetrable metal dome?  
 Where will all my favorite birds go?  
 My home has always been two places!  
 But will I have no home...when we all get out of here...to do great things??!!*



Dora Yesenia Valencia and her parents. Photo by Leslie Hawthorne Klingler, RDS/RII, University of Arizona.



**Take Action**—Organize a delegation to the Border. For more information about bringing a delegation to the borderlands and doing life and ministry with us, please contact Angie at [office@fronteradecristo.org](mailto:office@fronteradecristo.org). You can also review our Mission Delegation Manual and get other details on our Website at <http://fronteradecristo.org/delegation-info/> □

Frontera de Cristo  
P.O. Box 1112  
Douglas, AZ 85608

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Our Love Mercy, Do Justice initiative provides coffee for shelters in these locations in the US and Mexico.

You can help!

Go to [fronteradecristo.org/lmdj/](http://fronteradecristo.org/lmdj/) to place your own coffee order or use this QR code.

### Ministries of Frontera de Cristo

- ♦ Collaboration with Churches ♦ Mission Education
- ♦ Just Trade Center ♦ New Hope Community Center
- ♦ Health Ministry ♦ Family Ministry

*Sharing the Good News in Word and Deed*

[www.fronteradecristo.org](http://www.fronteradecristo.org)

*Frontera de Cristo is one of four binational border ministries of the PC(USA)'s Presbyterian Borderlands Ministries. Frontera de Cristo works with churches, presbyteries, and organizations on both sides of the border to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.*

**In Mexico—**  
Agua Prieta, Sonora  
CATPSIC  
CAME  
CRM  
Centro Comunitario

**Nogales, Sonora**  
Kino Border Initiative  
Casa de Misericordia

**Sasabe, Sonora**  
Casa de Esperanza

**Matamoros, Tamaulipas**  
Albergue Dulce Refugio

**Sonoita, Sonora**  
Centro de Esperanza

**Gomez Palacio, Durango**  
Luz y Salvacion

**Tapachula, Chiapas**  
Albergue Buen Pastor  
Casa Hogar para Rehabilitación  
de Adicciones  
Albergue Diocesano Belen



**In the US (added in 2024)—**  
Douglas, AZ  
Douglas Welcome Center

**Silver City, NM**  
Gospel Rescue

**Deming, NM**  
Deming Welcome Center

**Columbus, OH**  
Bethany PC Feeding Ministry

### Connect With Us

- Sign up for our monthly e-letters: Go to <http://fronteradecristo.org> and add your email address at the bottom of the page.
- Volunteer with us on the border. Or organize a delegation from your church, university, or other organization to experience the border firsthand. For details, email [mark@fronteradecristo.org](mailto:mark@fronteradecristo.org)

Connect with us on social media and be part of our online community!



Frontera de Cristo



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