

## COVID-19 IMPACT AND RESPONSE—APRIL 1, 2020

Since 1987, BorderLinks has worked through a place-based dynamic educational experience with visiting delegations to connect divided communities, raise awareness about the impact of border and immigration policies, and inspire informed action for social transformation and justice.

We remain committed to facilitating the sharing of experiential knowledge from the borderlands. However, our first order of action is to do our part to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus and protect our staff, community partners, and program participants. In keeping with our values-driven mission, we have closed our offices, dormitories, kitchen, and meeting spaces.

Spring and early summer are typically the busiest season for BorderLinks—delegations from high schools, universities, and faith communities flock to BorderLinks' home in Tucson, AZ during this time to take part in our unique educational programming. This year is going to be different. As of today, we've confirmed 18 official cancellations or postponements. This represents about 30% of our annual delegations and 23% of our annual revenue. Our losses are currently over \$160,000. Nonetheless, we remain committed to doing all we can to retain all staff at full capacity as long as possible (hopefully throughout the remainder of the pandemic) so that the economic burden we are facing is not placed on the shoulders of our employees.

While the BorderLinks office is closed, our staff is presently working full-time at full pay. We are, in fact, working hard to convert workshops and established curriculum as well as to create new content for a virtual format. While we know there is no substitute for experiencing, first-hand, the realities of the borderlands, we are committed to continuing to work with our community partners to create critically-informed and creative educational content from and about the borderlands. We also remain as committed as ever to our community partners. Just last week Chukson Water Protectors borrowed the BorderLinks van to deliver food and supplies to elders in their community and we donated much of our store of food toward this effort.

We know you will understand our sense of urgency to do our part to keep our communities safe and healthy. While we cannot yet know the full impact of COVID-19 on our communities and our nation, we do know that communities who are already vulnerable—(im)migrants, refugees, asylees, the undocumented—are more at risk from exposure to the virus, are less likely to have access to health care and health insurance, and more likely to suffer during an economic downturn. We encourage you to stay connected and attuned locally to the needs expressed by vulnerable communities and those who serve them.

We ask that you please keep BorderLinks in mind as you look for ways to give your support. We will be sharing more information soon about the fundraising campaigns we'll be conducting to help us make it through these tough times and ensure the mission of BorderLinks moves forward. For now, stay strong in body and spirit and know we will get through this together. ¡Juntos si se puede!