



Lasallians Without Borders Committee: National Migration Week Statement

At a time when many people are forced to flee their home countries due to natural disasters, political differences, war and genocide, the concept of migration is an increasingly complex one. With our society facing multi-faceted issues affecting migrant populations, as Lasallians we are called to consider those who came to the United States as children and young people, due to similar circumstances. How we respond now will affect the way society will be shaped in the future.

The Lasallians Without Borders committee embraces the 2003 invitation from the Bishops of the United States and the Bishops of Mexico to “stand in solidarity with our migrant brothers and sisters” (*Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*). Additionally, we realize our responsibility to be active participants in the structuring of our society and our schools in a changing world brought upon by the forced movement of people. We call attention to this immigration issue of great importance in the United States, especially in relation to young people from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and the lack of opportunities they experience due to their involuntary migration status. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program created by the federal government of the United States has shielded almost 800,000 young immigrants from deportations. This program evolved from a long history of the government's attempt to develop comprehensive immigration reform; the current phasing out of the program risks a return to the shadows for some, mass deportations, and family separation.

Documents resulting from the 45th General Chapter call us to create sustainable communities that are “economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resistant” (Lasallian Reflection 3, pg.6). Therefore we stand alongside those individuals who are in our schools either as students and/or as family members who hold a DACA status. We recognize our bond with them and strive to do as Jesus did during his process of human growth, to “leap beyond cultural borders and place [ourselves] in a new and different perspective” (pg.9). We are also called by the Catholic Church and Pope Francis to move and go beyond ideology, our self-imposed borders and the borders imposed by society (pg.10). The 2003 Pastoral Statement from the Bishops reminds us that “the Church must welcome all persons regardless of race, culture, language, and nation with joy, charity, and hope. It must do so with special care for those who find themselves—regardless of motive—in situations of poverty, marginalization, and exclusion.” As such, we affirm the rights of DACA recipients and respect and protect their dignity.

As National Migration Week draws to a close, the Lasallians Without Borders committee invites our school communities of the District of San Francisco New Orleans to continually be attentive and responsive to the needs of migrants who have benefited from the DACA program. We invite schools to be creative and assertive in their response to support laws and programs that positively impact the most vulnerable in our communities. The committee offers the following as possible Lasallian responses to support those affected by the now uncertain status of the DACA program:

1. Host an immigration clinic at your school.
2. Dedicate a school wide assembly to educate your student body on the topic and suggest actions they can take individually.
3. Invite social justice and service groups to present at a town hall meeting or organize activities in support of immigration rights and education.

Please refer to the DACA Resource file for additional resources.

Live Jesus in our hearts, forever!