

A BRIEF EXPLAINER ON UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANT CHILD DETENTION

Who is being imprisoned at this Heartland Alliance detention center in Rogers Park, and all across Chicago and the country? Why do children come to the US “unaccompanied?”

Most “unaccompanied alien children” arrive in the US with names and contact info of parents or other loved ones who are already here. The ones old enough to talk have them memorized; the younger ones have them written down on notes attached to the inside of their clothing. All of them are arriving because they are on their way to be reunited with loved ones.

Instead, they are kidnapped and their reunification efforts are sabotaged as a way to gather information about their extended family and connections in the US, who are assumed to be criminals. ICE and CBP hand the children over to agencies like Heartland Alliance that have contracts with the federal government to run detention centers. These agencies hold the kids and do the work of collecting information for the government’s investigation of the children and their families.

The agencies call the numbers the kids come with and say: we have your child, but you can’t come get them, and can’t visit them, see them, or even talk to them until we investigate you—that means the person and their entire household have to give over their information, including records and biometrics. Heartland passes this information on to US immigration enforcement who use it in deportation efforts. **When the children are released to a "sponsor" they still are not free.** They still face their immigration trial. Many times the "sponsor" they are released to is the legal guardian they were trying to reunite with in the first place. Sometimes it's a different family member, if their legal guardian was deemed unacceptable (or even deported) by the US government. Some children are even placed into the US foster care system and may never reunite with their family again. Sponsors are forced to pay all expenses for the transportation of the child. This includes last-minute flights and round trip flights for Heartland Alliance’s “escort,” prices that usually exceed 1,000 USD depending on location and number of children flying.

What happens in these child detention centers is recast by Heartland Alliance and many media outlets as “care,” as a system of “shelters” that are “essentially summer camps.” In reality, **thousands of children, including more than 2,500 children separated under Trump, are held for ransom while the government extracts information on their family, extracts profit from them and threatens deportation.**

While inside, the children’s lives are strictly controlled. This has been well documented in Mother Jones and ProPublica Illinois’ recent article, “As Months Pass in Chicago Shelters, Immigrant Children Contemplate Escape and Even Suicide.” Children who cry or become uncooperative are often medicated without their consent or the consent of the parent. They are disappeared from their families, with no visitation and 20 minutes of phone access per week. **Children are resisting inside.** They frequently refuse food and demand to see a parent; they don't have the language to say so, but these are hunger strikes. They refuse to cooperate in activities or refuse to leave their rooms. They try to run away. And why shouldn't they? They didn't need to be locked up in the first place—and their incarceration and trauma is just a way for our racist and xenophobic government to gain profits and information used to harass and control vulnerable immigrant groups.

Community resistance is working. Media attention and public outcry have already pressured Heartland Alliance to close two of its facilities in Des Plaines. Most of the children in those buildings were released immediately (their cases were mysteriously “expedited”) and some were transferred to other detention centers in Chicago. ICE and CBP do not have the capacity to run this detention system on their own and rely on contracts with agencies like Heartland. Communities stonewalling these contracts is an effective way to stop the expanding system of incarcerating migrants.

DEMAND THAT HEARTLAND NOT RENEW ITS CONTRACT IN 2020. DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE CHILDREN. THESE ARE NOT SHELTERS, THESE ARE PRISONS. SHUT THEM DOWN AND FREE THE KIDS!

WHERE “UNACCOMPANIED” MIGRANT CHILDREN ARE BEING LOCKED UP

BRONZEVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Heartland Alliance - International Children's Reception Center (ICRC) -- Capacity 250
3500 S Giles, Chicago, IL 60653 (312)-326-2000.

ROGERS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Heartland Alliance - International Youth Center (IYC) -- Capacity 15
1628 W. Morse, Chicago, IL 60626 (773)-274-4452
(High security facility where teens that are a "threat" to their captors and jailers are held)

Heartland Alliance - International Children Center (ICC) -- Capacity 78
1620 W. Chase, Chicago, IL 60626 (773)-764-0216

ENGLEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

Heartland Alliance - Casa Heartland At Princeton (CHAP) -- Capacity 19
7351 S. Princeton, Chicago, IL 60621 (773)-966-5742
(Facility for babies and toddlers, aka "tender-age" kids, and pregnant/parenting teens)

BEVERLY NEIGHBORHOOD

Heartland Alliance - International Children's Center-Beverly (ICC-B) -- Capacity 42
1209 W. 98th Street, Chicago, IL 60643 (773)-238-3380

LAKEVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD – **PROPOSED FACILITY**

Chicago Archdiocese – building behind St. Alphonsus Church
1429 W Wellington Ave, Chicago, IL 60657 (773)-525-0709

DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS

Heartland Alliance- Specialized Care for Immigrant Youth (SCIY) -- Capacity 20
1150 N. River Rd. 100/150 O'Conner Drive, Des Plaines, IL (847)-299-2797

****Heartland Alliance* - Casa Guadalupe I, II, III -- Capacity 96***
100-350 Quigley Drive, Des Plaines, IL 60016
RECENTLY SHUT DOWN

Maryville Academy (Chicago Archdiocese) - Casa San Francisco
1150 N. River Rd, Des Plaines, IL 60016

Maryville Academy (Chicago Archdiocese) - Casa Esperanza
951 W. Barlett Rd, Barlett, IL 60103
(combined capacity of Maryville facilities is 55)

Heartland Alliance and the Chicago Catholic Archdiocese receive money for their detention facilities through contracts with the federal government. This funding comes specifically from the Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Homeland Security's "Office of Refugee Resettlement," which took responsibility for the “Unaccompanied Alien Children” program after the Homeland Security Act of 2002. This funding has increased exponentially in recent years: Heartland received \$1.6 million from ORR in 2013 and \$48.8 million in 2018. Heartland's executive salaries have increased too -- the president of Heartland Alliance, Evelyn Diaz, made over \$400,000 in 2018. **Heartland's contract comes up for renewal in 2020.**

THIS IS INCARCERATION, NOT CARE.

HEARTLAND & CHICAGO ARCHDIOCESE PROFIT FROM DETAINING KIDS.