



After six years and 103 participants from 25 countries ...

## STILL BUILDING BRIDGES TO HOPE, HEALING & OPPORTUNITY

(For VHH participants and, even, those we'll never meet)

Yusef and Musa, both from West Africa, were ready. And though it was time for them to move on, we knew we would miss them.

Their smiles, kindness and humor enriched Viator House daily. Their drive to succeed in school and work were perfect models for the other young men who call Viator House home.

But the two bedroom apartment was ready, freshly painted by VHH volunteers, and the lease was signed. So after more than three years with us, the two joined the growing list of Viator House participants who successfully moved on with their lives.

While with us, both mastered English, graduated high school and saved money from jobs where they thrived. In short, they were perfect examples of the Viator House difference.

A rare program, Viator House is not a transitional shelter, but a home thousands of miles from home that gives each young man the time and support he needs to build the skills necessary to live successfully outside of Viator House.





Moving in is easier when a VHH board member helps paint your apartment.

#### Since opening in 2017, Viator House has welcomed ...

103 YOUNG MEN





# From January 2022 to March 2023 alone, we helped ten participants move out into apartments, often apartments shared with other participants.

But the move isn't a leap. We build a bridge to independent living by offering staff or volunteer mentors who help participants negotiate those issues they face as first-time renters. Because of generous donors, we also pay the first month's rent and security deposit for participants moving out. And on moving day we load up furniture that our supporters have supplied.

#### But we do more than bridge the gap to independent living that our participants face.

While we have helped dozens of young men move into stable housing since opening in 2017, we have also worked to **build a bridge in our nation to a more compassionate asylum system**. We work for young asylum-seekers we will never meet through education and advocacy events that teach our supporters about our broken asylum system. We also host elected officials to see how the system should support more programs like Viator House.



to hold an immigrant in federal detention for housing, food, case management, transportation at Viator House (we receive \$0 from the federal govt.)



As advocates for a compassionate asylum system, we shared our story with Senator Dick Durbin.

#### *The bridge to independent living for Viator House participants*

The walk along that bridge starts the first day a young man moves into Viator House.

#### Step 1: Safety

Young men have come to Viator House after horrific experiences at home and along the journey to the U.S. Most have also come from U.S. immigration detention. Some have faced homelessness. So greeting a new participant with a key to his private room provides a foundation of safety that allows him to breathe more deeply, relax more fully.

And through the way they treat participants, house coordinators and case managers maintain a house culture where young men can let down their guard because they feel respected and cared-for.

Our efforts to connect young men to their faith traditions also add to that safety, especially since some participants have said that their faith was what kept them going on their long journeys.

#### Step 2: Finding Camaraderie And Community

Races in the swimming pool. Pick-up soccer. Birthday celebrations. Christmas and Eid meals. Hotly-contested video game matches. House gatherings to memorialize loved-ones who've died at home.

All these moments create an international interfaith community of participants, staff and volunteers that reminds each participant on a daily basis that although he might have left everything, he has found a community that cares. All participants are in school, studying English or working. Several are doing all three each day.

## **18 PARTICIPANTS** have graduated from high school

## **11** PARTICIPANTS

have taken college courses, 1 has finished his Associates Degree

## **23 PARTICIPANTS** have earned driver's

70+ VOLUNTEERS

licenses

as tutors, mentors, board members and house assistants

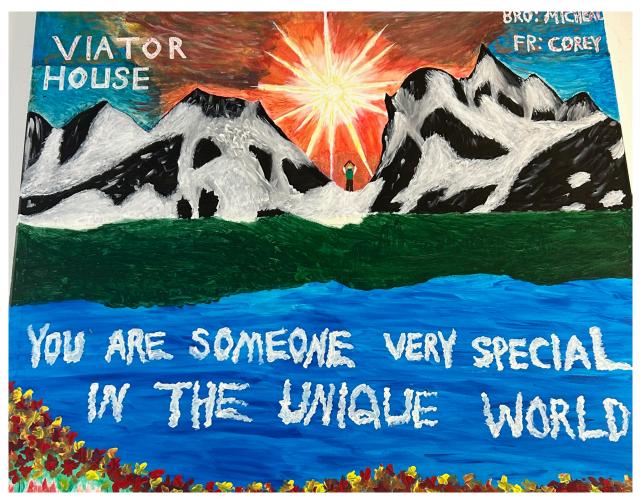
**500+ DONORS** in 2021

#### **Step 3: Recognizing Your Personal Gifts**

The stairwell at Viator House is filled with artwork, all coming from the heart and vision of a former participant from Guatemala. The art reminds us daily that the young people seeking refuge in our nation are gifts. We point out those gifts to them regularly. Especially when we see them. Sometimes they are gifts of kindness, patience and self-sacrifice for other participants. Sometimes they are gifts to people outside VHH during regular service trips.

#### Step 4: Learning

Case managers spend considerable time helping each participant find an educational setting that meets his needs, whether that is a traditional high school, alternative high school, GED program or in-house tutors.



One participant captured our core message in his art.

As a result, **18 have graduated high school and 11 have started community college**. And some men who never thought they were smart enough to learn English now are using it regularly as they navigate life.

**Step 5 And Beyond: Mastering Life Skills That Build Independence** Landing that first U.S. job. Earning a driver's license. Saving money.

Participants walk toward independence at Viator House as case managers and house coordinators do things big and small that teach important life skills.

One day a house coordinator might help two participants settle a disagreement while also helping others cook their first meal or use a washing machine for the first time. Another day a case manager might help a participant fill out a job application or negotiate with an employer over a better schedule. A third day a volunteer might help a young man budget for his first apartment or take a tense ride through the cemetery across the street with a participant just learning to drive.



We are so grateful for the many faith traditions that support our events.

Since opening ... **31** MEN WERE

UNITED WITH FAMILY

In 2022 and 2023, **10** MEN MOVED OUT to shared apartments

**222** local churches, mosques, synagogues and religious organizations now partner with us

High school graduations are a yearly celebration.





Birthday celebrations remind participants their lives are important.



Participants successfully adapt to the U.S. because of dedicated tutors and mentors.

#### **HOLISTIC SERVICES**

In 2022, for about \$90 per day, Viator House offered a young man seeking asylum in the US:

Case management

Housing and food

Clothing

Hygiene products

Educational opportunities

Tutoring

Wellness checks

Referrals for medical evaluations and services

Referrals for counseling

Stress management

Interfaith spiritual accompaniment

Physical conditioning

Community service opportunities

Cultural adaptation and integration

Social outings

Family reunification

Basic employment training

VHH participants form an international, interfaith brotherhood.



### Building bridges that serve all young asylum-seekers

While we are a bridge for young men seeking asylum, Viator House also builds bridges between all young asylum-seekers and those influencing the asylum system they experience.

Each year Viator House sponsors education events about how our asylum system treats young people seeking refuge in our nation. The events are often sponsored by a Faith Community Partner, one of the 22 local mosques, churches, synagogues or faith-based organizations that formally align with us.

In addition, Viator House regularly advocates for a more compassionate asylum system with local, state and national elected officials.

Finally, Viator House also sponsors life-changing immersion trips to the U.S./ Mexico border so that our supporters - from students to retirees - can see firsthand what asylum-seekers face when they seek refuge in the U.S. and also meet people on both sides of the border working on their behalf.

This bridge started as a dream of Br. Michael Gosch, who then invited the Clerics of St. Viator and, eventually, dozens of volunteers and faith communities to walk the bridge with him.

You are part of that journey. You have helped build and maintain that bridge that has led so many to hope, healing and opportunity. And in doing so, you are making the world a better place - both through the impact you have on the men who call Viator House home and on the communities we influence as we share our unique story.

From all of us, Thank You.

God bless you and keep you.



Wanting to dive deeper, VHH supporters dialogued with Tucson Bishop Edward Weisenburger on a border trip.

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**THANK YOU** to PWH Educational Foundation Inc. for supporting Viator House last year with \$75,000 in funding.

**THANK YOU** to the local Muslim Community for supporting Viator House by raising more than \$35,000 during Ramadan, 2022.

**THANK YOU** to all those below who donated in 2022. If you donated, but can't find your name, please contact us and accept our apology for the error. Only because of you can we continue to offer hope, healing and opportunity.

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