



Keeping America's Promise

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



In 2019-20, HIAS PA served 3,277 clients from 129 countries, including:

77 survivors of torture.

358 survivors of domestic abuse.

128 victims of violent crime.

505 immigrant youth.

95 newly arrived refugees.

417 individuals newly granted asylum.

When Luis was in sixth grade, he found out that he was undocumented. Over time, he came to understand that he could be sent back to a country he hadn't seen since he was three years old. HIAS Pennsylvania helped Luis gain protection from that threat through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Now a college student, Luis wants to participate fully in American society, but Congress has thus far failed to create a path to citizenship for DACA recipients. HIAS PA is helping Luis and his mother apply for humanitarian visas that would open up that path, but for now Luis's future remains uncertain.

*"All of my dreams could be foiled.
It is so hard to think about being
pulled back into the shadows."*

— LUIS (COVER PHOTO)

From the President and Executive Director

BACK IN JULY 2019, HIAS Pennsylvania chose a theme for the coming year: Keeping America's Promise. We could not have known then just how clearly events would illuminate the gap between promise and reality.

Our clients came to this country believing in the American promise of an open — and even compassionate — society, but the pandemic left many of them with no safety net at all. Clients who were excluded from all forms of government relief found themselves in dire straits. We are so grateful to all of you who donated generously to our Immigrant Relief Fund so we could help some of them with direct cash grants and emergency social services.

Compounding our clients' distress, the federal government's anti-immigration activities actually accelerated during the pandemic. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stepped up efforts to deport migrants in detention and at the border. A cascade of regulatory changes, such as the pending 81 percent increase in the fee to apply for citizenship, will soon keep hundreds of HIAS PA clients from full participation in American society. Such changes, and many like it, diminish all of us.

Looking back on this difficult year, we are so proud of a staff that pivoted with lightning speed to address urgent needs. Our legal, educational, and social services staff teamed up seamlessly. Volunteers, too, stepped up their roles, reaching our clients with everything from food and Chromebooks to tutoring delivered remotely. And donors, we couldn't be more grateful to you — tuning in and giving during our Virtual Annual Gala, making the gifting of Chromebooks possible so we could lessen the digital divide, and supporting us in every way you could.

As long as you, our friends and supporters, stay with us, HIAS PA will do all we can to keep the American promise. We will adapt and serve, as we have since 1882. That is our promise to you.



Cathryn Miller-Wilson, Esq.
Executive Director



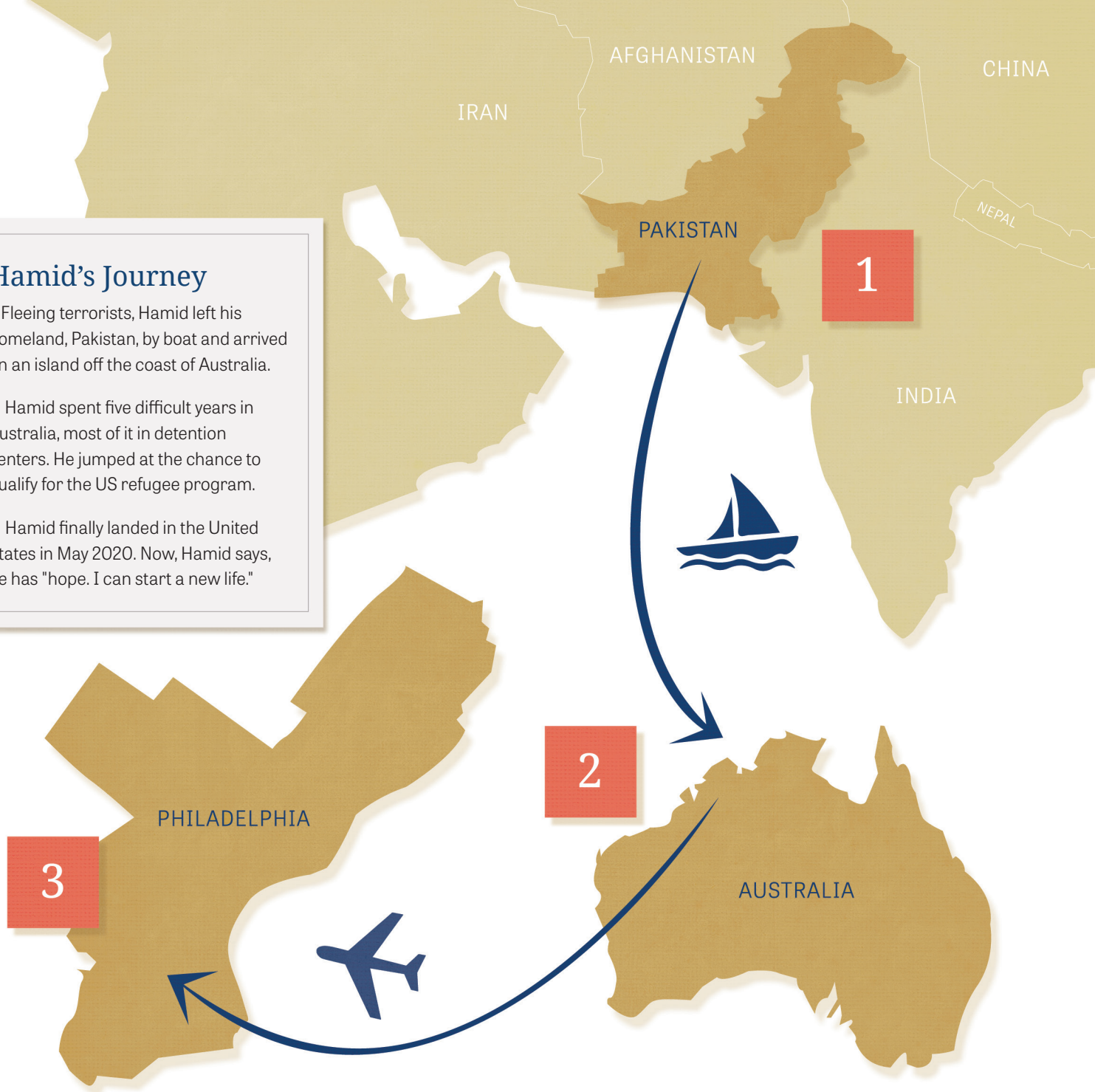
Carol Gantman, Ph.D
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Hamid's Journey

1 Fleeing terrorists, Hamid left his homeland, Pakistan, by boat and arrived on an island off the coast of Australia.

2 Hamid spent five difficult years in Australia, most of it in detention centers. He jumped at the chance to qualify for the US refugee program.

3 Hamid finally landed in the United States in May 2020. Now, Hamid says, he has "hope. I can start a new life."



AMONG THE 536 DIFFERENT SOCIAL SERVICES HIAS PA PROVIDED IN 2019-20, OUR SOCIAL SUPPORT TEAMS:

Resettled 95 refugees.

Delivered social support services to 262 immigrants.



“Hamid has been a pleasure to work with. He arrived during an incredibly difficult time when COVID-19 had shut down many services. Despite these challenges, Hamid has taken the initiative to work toward his goals.”

Jennifer LaMotte, Refugee Resettlement Program Manager

A New Life

HAMID’S JOURNEY STARTED OUT in a tribal area of Pakistan, where terrorists tore apart his family. “They told my father to send two of his sons to help them fight or \$50,000,” says Hamid. “When he did neither, they shot him.”

Hamid fled to Australia, where he spent five difficult years. When the Australian government told him he might qualify for the US refugee program, he jumped at the chance. Even during the pandemic, special diplomatic agreements cracked open America’s door for refugees who had spent time in Australia’s island detention centers. Hamid landed in Philadelphia on May 27, 2020. “It was like letting a man out of jail,” he said. “Here I have friends, and hope. I can start a new life.”

Right now, Hamid is staying in his cousin’s apartment in South Philadelphia. Though he longs to study a profession, he quickly enrolled in a school that trains commercial drivers. “I need financial stability,” he says. “A commercial driver’s license will allow me to support myself, no matter what the conditions.”



Hamid has been surprised at the depth of HIAS PA’s services despite COVID-19.

“I had in my mind that the resettlement agency would not be able to offer much in the midst of a pandemic,” says Hamid. “But I have a case manager, an employment counselor, and a manager who connected me to healthcare services. HIAS PA has given me so much more than I expected.”

To HIAS PA’s supporters, he says, “Your help changes lives. Without your support, I don’t know how those of us who are new to this country would survive.”

Provided English language classes to 179 immigrant youth and adults.

In 2019, 79.5 million people were living displaced from their homes by violence or persecution.



Living in Limbo

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION was such a proud moment for Andrea! Even while fighting deportation, she had studied hard to become the first in her family to earn a diploma. Standing in her cap and gown, she had taken a huge step toward a new life in the US, far from the bare existence that had caused her to flee Guatemala at age 15.

Then came the pandemic. COVID-19 closed the restaurant where Andrea earned a little under the table. Suddenly, she didn't have enough money to feed herself, and her temporary immigration status didn't allow her to qualify for government aid. The courts let her stay in the community until her hearing for a humanitarian visa, but that wasn't scheduled until June 2021. Meanwhile, she couldn't even work legally.

Andrea had a roof over her head because the restaurant's kind owners let her live in their house. Andrea felt terrible she couldn't contribute financially. Then, Andrea fell. She left the emergency room with painful broken teeth she couldn't possibly afford to repair. It was almost the last straw.

Mary McCabe, HIAS PA's Detained Children's Program Manager and Andrea's attorney, turned to the Immigrant Relief Fund to help Andrea. With an \$800 grant from the fund, Andrea was able to pay her dental bills and buy some food. A HIAS PA case manager, through services supported by the Relief Fund, began to work with Andrea to be sure she didn't slip through the cracks and disappear.

Life is a little better for Andrea now. The restaurant opened, so she can earn a little money. She has a goal: to become a nurse so "she can help other people." She doesn't know when she will be able to start nursing studies at community college, but she will wait. Her determination is fierce. About HIAS PA, she says, "You do your work with a lot of love. I don't have the words to say what it has meant to me."

In 2019-20, 217 volunteers contributed 10,245 hours supporting HIAS PA's work.

IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC, HIAS PA:

Provided \$800 cash grants to 121 of the most vulnerable immigrants through our Immigrant Relief Fund.



"A lot of people have helped Andrea, but most of all she has a lot of grit."

Mary McCabe, *Detained Children's Program*

Delivered 178 laptops so clients could attend school and access essential services online.

Engaged 61 volunteers to provide 98 immigrants with much needed groceries.



Resilience, Your Name Is Addae

IN MANY WAYS, Addae seems like any other teenager. He just graduated from high school, loves soccer, and is excited about college. But few teenagers have overcome so much.

Addae grew up in a rural village in Ghana. When his father died after his twelfth birthday, his father's family sold him to a priest of a local religion. The priest beat Addae, who spent his days doing chores and his nights sleeping on the temple floor. After a year, Addae's mother rescued her son, though she still could not support him on her own. She took him to an uncle, but that was no better. His uncle's abusive wife sent Addae into the streets to sell trinkets. Then, Addae's uncle trafficked him to an Ecuadorian as a child worker.

In Ecuador, Addae managed to avoid the trafficker, but he was living on the streets penniless, alone, and without the Spanish to ask for help. He decided to travel north in a journey as harrowing as anything that came before. Addae kept going, until he walked across the bridge to the US and

presented himself to immigration officials. Eventually, officials relocated him to Pennsylvania, where a foster agency contacted HIAS Pennsylvania.

HIAS PA helped Addae gain a special visa for minors deemed at risk of abuse or abandonment if sent home. With this visa, Addae was able to get life-changing documents: a work permit and driver's license. Now Addae holds a job at Walmart and, a gifted student, looks forward to attending community college on a scholarship. He can apply for a precious green card, the symbol of legal permanent residency in the US and the next step on the long road to citizenship. Says Addae, "I didn't think I would ever have a chance at a life like this."





In 2019, 76,020 children & youth crossed the southern border alone.



“Addae is so smart, so remarkably good-natured and sweet and resilient. In the last year, he has just blossomed.”

Noelle Lemon, *HIAS PA Staff Attorney*

AMONG THE 3,818 DIFFERENT LEGAL SERVICES HIAS PA PROVIDED IN 2019-20, OUR LEGAL TEAM HELPED:

1,814 immigrants through legal consultations.

451 immigrants apply for citizenship.

119 immigrants apply for asylum.

395 immigrants apply for other humanitarian visas and other initial immigration status (including DACA).

Donors

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the government agencies, foundations, corporations, and individual contributors whose generosity makes our life-saving work possible. Every effort is given to share an accurate and complete list. Please excuse us if we have made any errors. In the interest of space, we have only included donors who gave at the \$250 level and above. We are sorry that we cannot include the hundreds of donors that gave below that level.

Please note that the following list only includes donors who donated between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020. If you donated after that date, your donation will be acknowledged in the next Annual Report.

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Deepti Sailappan, Youth Advocacy Paralegal (from 8/2020)

Tatiana Albarracin-Fisch, Youth Advocacy Know Your Rights Specialist

Eliav Ehrenkrantz, Youth Advocacy Know Your Rights Specialist (until 10/2020)

Marissa Piña Rodriguez, Youth Advocacy Know Your Rights Coordinator (until 1/2020)

Gerardo Castillo Jimenez, Accredited Rep., Latino Outreach and Immigration Services (LOIS) Coordinator

Citizenship and Family Reunification Program

Lori Alexander, MSW, Accredited Rep., Director of Citizenship and Family Unification Program

Raisa Davidovich, Accredited Rep., Citizenship Specialist

Marina Merlin, Accredited Rep., Legal Specialist

Mary Clark, Esq., P-CAN Project Coordinator

Pamela Roberts, Esq., Citizenship and Family Unification Staff Attorney

Nighat Noel Amir, Citizenship Assistant

Asylee Outreach Program

Shaloo Jose, Accredited Rep., Director of the Asylee Outreach Program

Enock Sanon, Asylee Outreach Case Manager

Gin Sum, Asylee Outreach Employment Coordinator

Jared Gencarella, Augustinian Fellow (until 8/2020)

Isabel Prado, Augustinian Fellow (from 9/2020)

Hanae Togami, Haverford Fellow (until 6/2020)

Sarah Curtis, Haverford Fellow (from 7/2020)

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How You Can Help

DONATE MONEY

You can help us defend the rights of immigrants and refugees by making a donation at hiaspa.org/donate. You can also contact Daniella Scruggs, Director of Development, at dscruggs@hiaspa.org or 215-832-0940 about ways to give and fundraising opportunities.

DONATE TIME

Volunteers are critical members of the HIAS Pennsylvania team. Opportunities range from helping families re-settle in the U.S. to teaching English and moving clients toward citizenship. Please go to hiaspa.org/volunteer to learn more.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Policies about immigrants and refugees are constantly changing. Learn more about the immigrants and refugees we serve by reading our updates, coming to our events, and exploring advocacy opportunities at hiaspa.org/the-issues.

**The financial statement for 2019-20, the period covered by this report will be posted to: hiaspa.org/the-issues/resources/financials as soon as the audit is completed — usually in April. You may review the statement for 2018-2019 on the website now.*



Where Do We Go From Here?

HIAS PENNSYLVANIA LOOKS to the coming months with cautious hope. We have learned so much about how to serve clients in difficult times! We have also moved forward with initiatives that will make us a stronger organization.

As we serve clients coming from every continent, we know well the impact of racism in this country and the world. But do we see its effects clearly enough within our own organization? In solidarity with the peaceful protests of this past year, HIAS PA began an intense review of our policies and practices. We intend to diversify the board and staff, and to make sure we fully benefit from the varied perspectives we gain as a result.

This fall, we also completed a strategic plan that will guide our development for the next several years. That plan affirms a greater integration of legal and social support services, which had already begun. It also directs us to make sure the infrastructure of our organization undergirds our client services with adequate technology and strong administrative practices.

Finally, we completed our move into new offices that will help us work efficiently and effectively. Clients will find an area designed for their children and better privacy in talking with HIAS PA staff. For now, we continue to work remotely, but we look forward to welcoming everyone warmly.

We say again, as we cannot say too often, how fortunate we are in the staff who will take us forward in 2020-21. And we thank once more our awesome volunteers and our fabulous donors. As long as you who read this report stand by us, we will make it through to a brighter side. Thank you.



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215.832.0900

Donate, Volunteer, Subscribe at **HIASPA.ORG**



Photography: Hannah Snyder

