



colibrí center

FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

IDENTIFYING

HONORING

HEALING



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MISSION

02



THE COLIBRÍ CENTER FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS PROMOTES HEALING AND
CHANGE BY WORKING WITH FAMILIES
OF DISAPPEARED MIGRANTS TO
IDENTIFY AND HONOR THOSE WHO
HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES ON THE US-
MEXICO BORDER.

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Starting in the 1990's, the federal government implemented policies, such as Prevention through Deterrence, which sought to control the Southwest border by heightening the risks associated with unauthorized entry. To do so, the agency concentrated enforcement and infrastructure to reroute migration away from urban ports of entry and into the most hostile and desolate areas of the desert. US Border Patrol speculated that border crossers would now find themselves "in mortal danger" while attempting to cross. The increased danger was intended to deter other people from considering the journey, with the overall goal of preventing migration. Overtime, as conditions of poverty, inequality and violence have continued to worsen in countries in Central and Latin America, migrants continuing fleeing and risking their lives on a perilous journey.

REPORTED **DEATHS** ALONG
US-MEX BORDER SINCE
1998

7,805+

REPORTED **DEATHS** IN
PIMA COUNTY SINCE
2000

3,150

UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS
RECOVERED IN THE
BORDERLANDS

1,135

DISAPPEARED PERSONS
INVESTIGATED BY
COLIBRÍ

3,475



MAP OF ACTORS

04



FORENSIC SCIENTISTS & MEDICAL EXAMINERS

These are the authorities charged with examining cases of individuals who died on the border. They are also the agencies who can confirm a positive identification.

Medical examiners in Pima, NY, and Maricopa and forensic scientists are our closest partners. We work together each day to compare cases of missing people to cases of unidentified people.



FAMILIES, FAMILY ASSOCIATIONS, AND OTHER INVESTIGATORS

We work closely with families who report their missing loved ones to us via phone, website, Facebook or email.

We also receive cases from family associations throughout Latin America, as well as collaborate with non-official investigators who provide information they have found online.



PARTNERS SIMILAR TO COLIBRÍ

Other NGOs whose work is similar to that of Colibrí but in different contexts. EAAF focuses on cases of missing people within Mexico and the South Texas Human Rights Center works on cases in Texas. We share information between one another and work closely on these cases.



THE COLIBRÍ CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

We collect detailed missing persons reports from families searching for loved ones. We also collect DNA samples from these relatives to be able to compare their DNA against the DNA of unidentified individuals examined by forensic scientists. We also work to bear witness and offer spaces for families to facilitate community, share their stories, and raise consciousness around this human rights crisis.



CONSULATES

These are the authorities who process the repatriation of remains back to families living outside the U.S. They also send Colibrí reports of missing migrants who were reported to the consulate by family members.



HUMANITARIAN NGOS

Humanitarian NGOs are the leaders in the humanitarian efforts on the U.S.-Mexico border, particularly in Southern Arizona. They offer services like water stations in the desert, medical aid camps, shelters, and food for migrants. They also refer missing migrant cases to Colibrí.



TONY BANEGAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Served as Honorary Consul of Honduras in AZ and served as Philanthropic Advisor at the Arizona Community Foundation and as an Executive with two large nonprofits providing oversight of numerous child-welfare programs in Phoenix. Also serves as the Chair of the Board of Advisors of the Consular Corps of Arizona,



MIRZA MONTERROSO
MISSING MIGRANT
PROJECT DIRECTOR

Worked in Mayan archaeology sites in Guatemala, Belize, and México. Worked as a forensic archeologist, digging clandestine graves created during the Guatemalan genocide. Has been an expert witness in cases of crimes against the civil population. Has taught courses in forensic anthropology in numerous Universities



GIA DEL PINO
PROGRAM & DATA
ASSOCIATE

Co-founder and lead organizer of a grassroots immigrant-led organization called Madres Sin Fronteras, working to ensure justice and protection for communities affected by anti-immigrant platforms. Campaigns included the first ever community bond/bail fund and a 24/7 Rapid Response Hotline to address immigrant-related emergencies.



PERLA TORRES
FAMILY NETWORK
DIRECTOR

Worked as a Case Manager for the Office of Refugee Resettlement working in the reunification of unaccompanied minors in the US-Mexico border with families who reside in the US. She continued her work as the Children's Specialist for the Guatemalan consulate in the Border Protection team.



INTERN TEAM

Colibrí has hosted an internship program since it was founded in 2013. Colibrí has a cohort of 10-15 interns each semester, each with varying levels of expertise to best contribute to each program.



MISSING MIGRANT & DNA

Colibrí collects anthropological data and DNA samples from family members to increase its abilities to help identify people who have lost their lives crossing the border. Data includes detailed physical descriptions plus information about what people were carrying or wearing and where they were last seen. When a positive match is made, a staff member informs families and offers support and resources

FAMILY NETWORK

A network of mutual support and solidarity among families and friends of missing migrants across the Americas. The Family Network includes in-person meetings in cities with particularly high numbers of families who have reported missing relatives (Tucson, Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City), as well as hundreds of families connected online and through the quarterly *Hermanidad* zine created by and for families who've lost a loved one.

HISTORIAS Y RECUERDOS

The Colibrí Center collects oral histories from people whose loved ones disappeared while migrating to the United States. In collaboration with professors from the University of Arizona, Colibrí is developing curriculum for K-12 and higher education to utilize these stories as educational tools. This project is supported by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and the Mellow Foundation.



KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2020
**LOGAN
FOUNDATION**

2019
**SOUTHERN
BORDERS
COMMUNITIES
COALITION**

2019
**ANDREW W.
MELLON
FOUNDATION**

2016
**HOWARD G.
BUFFET
FOUNDATION**

2014
**LETELIER-
MOFITT HUMAN
RIGHTS AWARD**

IDENTIFICATIONS

176

176 identifications made in collaboration with the Pima, New York, and/or Maricopa Office of the Medical Examiners

FAMILY MEMBERS

200+

200+ family members have attended support group meetings, and hundreds of others have participated in a secure Facebook group.

DNA SAMPLES

1,266

1,266 DNA samples collected, representing 558 families (as of 2020)



IN 2006,

Dr. Robin Reineke, then a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Arizona interned at the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner. She saw a great need to help identify the remains of migrants found in the Arizona desert, and created the Missing Migrant Project.

IN 2013,

co-founders; Robin Reineke, William Masson, Chelsea Halstead, and Reyna Araibi grew the Missing Migrant Project into the organization now known as the Colibrí Center for Human Rights; an expanded and more comprehensive effort to address the needs of families of the missing and to continue to work on the cases of missing and unidentified individuals, building on a legacy of humanitarian work in southern Arizona done by organizations such as Coalición de Derechos Humanos, No More Deaths, and Tucson Samaritans, all concerned with upholding human rights and human dignity throughout the borderland

COVID-19 IMPACT

Colibrí's work has been impacted by COVID-19. The work has shifted to relying on DNA mail kits to continue the DNA collection efforts. The Family Network now hosts online meeting to support the families. Colibrí continues to receive missing persons reports each week and human remains are still being discovered along the border.



Do Colibrí staff search for or collect remains?

Remains are usually discovered by ranchers, hikers, hunters, humanitarian aid workers, search and rescue groups, residents of tribal reservations, & Border Patrol. Colibrí does not recover remains. Colibrí's works with the families of missing loved ones to collect necessary information to help identify remains.

Who pays for migrant remains to be repatriated— consulates/embassies or families?

If an identification is made, after the family is notified, the family works with the consulate of their country to obtain a death certificate in order to begin the repatriation process. Consulates are responsible for repatriation of remains and covering the cost to do so. Depending on the consulate, the time it takes to repatriate remains varies.

Why don't families work directly with governmental agencies?

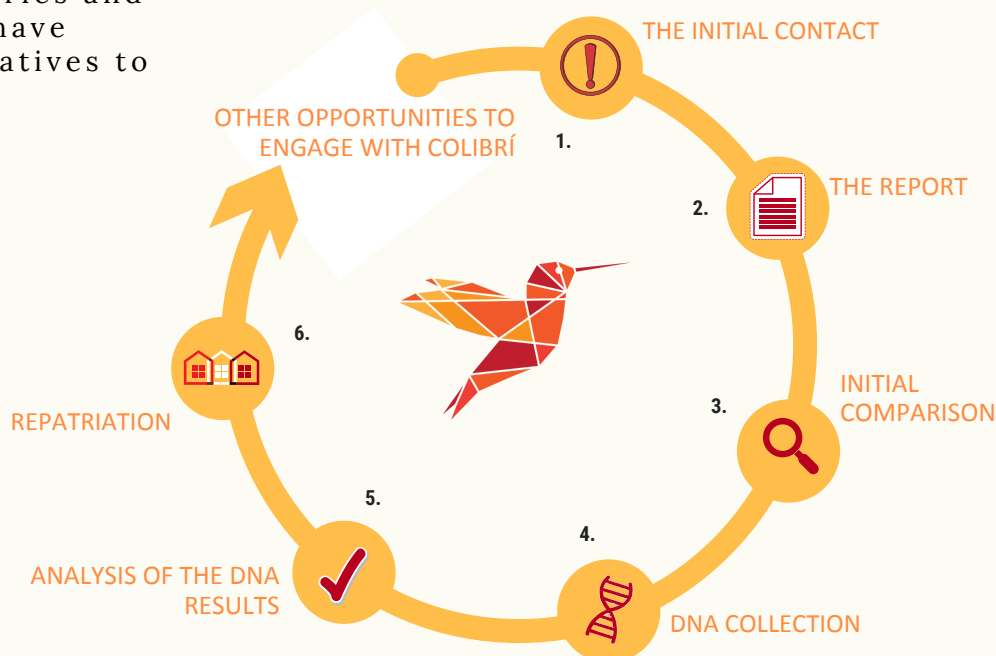
Families often tell Colibrí that they are the first organization that has listened to them. They tell of contacting law enforcement agencies to file missing persons reports and being turned away, of getting no response from embassies, of having no place to turn that will help share their burden.

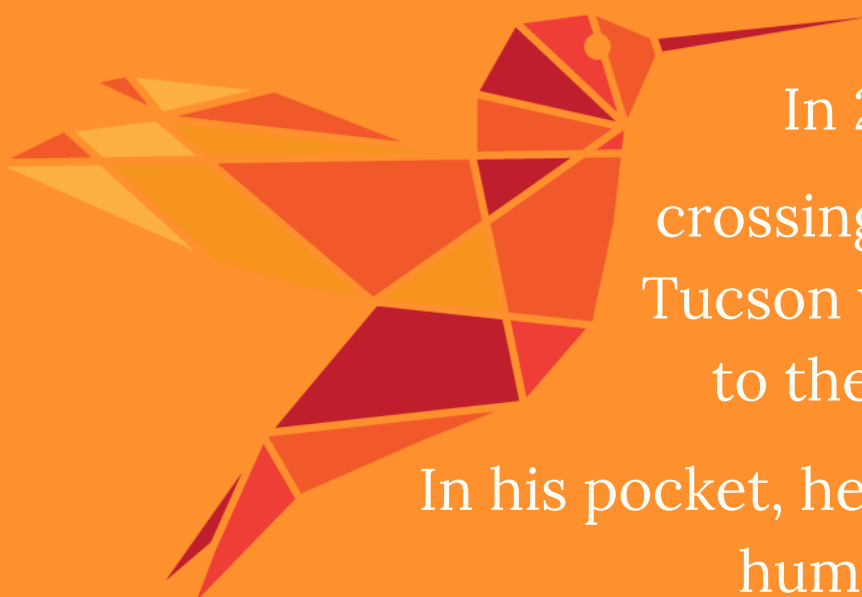
How long does it take for a family to receive DNA results?

Colibrí collects DNA samples and sends them in batches. Due to pricing and timelines of the private lab that Colibrí uses, there has to be ~80 samples per batch in order to send to the lab, and time to gather full batch can vary. After that, it takes between 6-12 months for the results to come back. This sampling and analysis process constitutes most of Colibrí's DNA work and are called "blind matches."

What country are families involved with Colibrí from?

Families living in 14 countries and 43 states across the U.S. have reported disappeared relatives to Colibrí.





In 2009, A man who died crossing the borderlands near Tucson was found and brought to the medical examiner.

In his pocket, he carried a small, dead hummingbird.

In Spanish, “colibrí” means hummingbird.

In some cultures in Latin America, the colibrí is a symbol of strength, hope, and migration.

The Colibrí Center for Human Rights was named after the hummingbird in the spirit of its symbolism and in remembrance of this man, the thousands more who have lost their lives on the border, and their families everywhere.