

listening,
witnessing,
& understanding
at the

Border

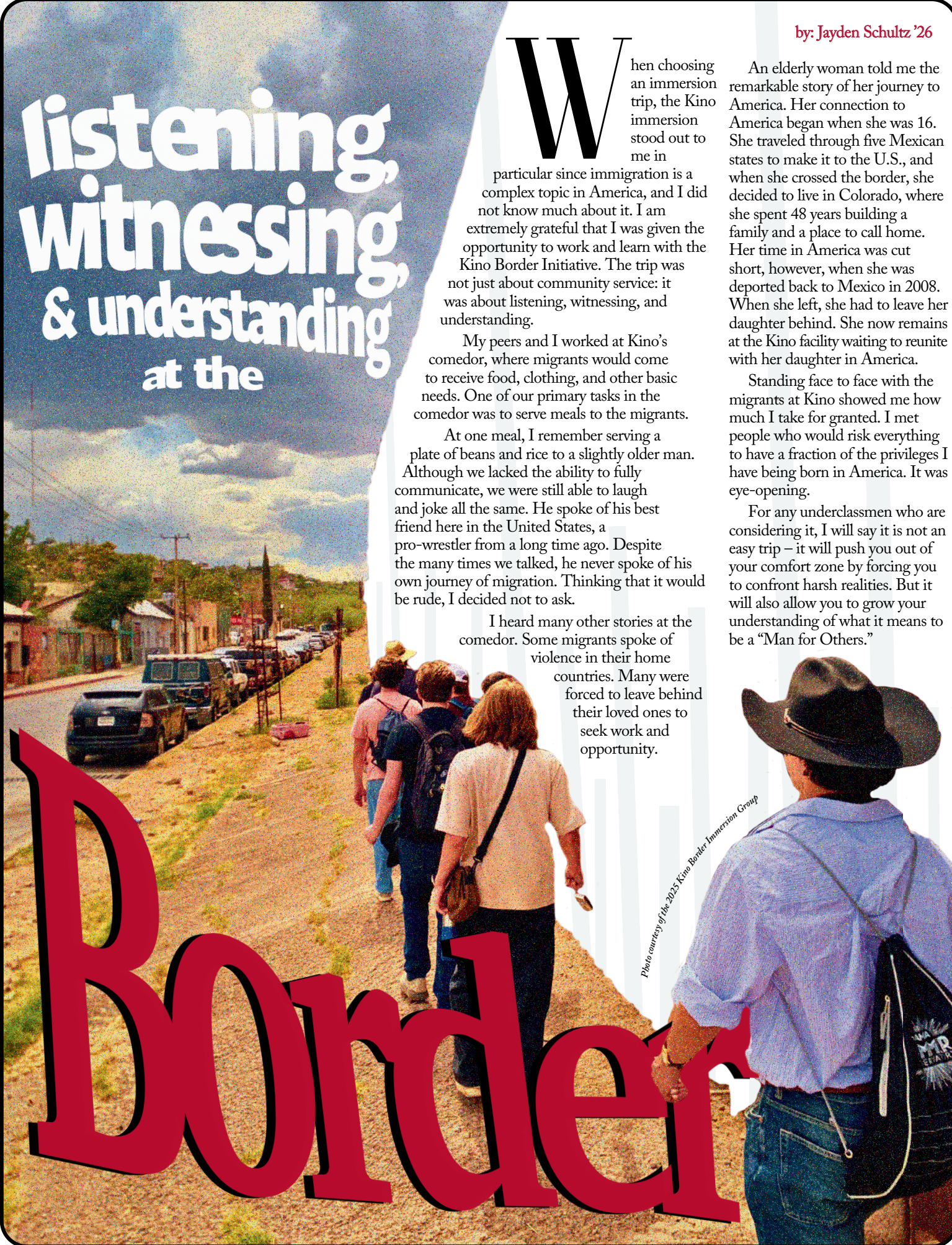


Photo courtesy of the 2025 Kino Border Immersion Group

by: Jayden Schultz '26

When choosing an immersion trip, the Kino immersion stood out to me in particular since immigration is a complex topic in America, and I did not know much about it. I am extremely grateful that I was given the opportunity to work and learn with the Kino Border Initiative. The trip was not just about community service: it was about listening, witnessing, and understanding.

My peers and I worked at Kino's comedor, where migrants would come to receive food, clothing, and other basic needs. One of our primary tasks in the comedor was to serve meals to the migrants.

At one meal, I remember serving a plate of beans and rice to a slightly older man. Although we lacked the ability to fully communicate, we were still able to laugh and joke all the same. He spoke of his best friend here in the United States, a pro-wrestler from a long time ago. Despite the many times we talked, he never spoke of his own journey of migration. Thinking that it would be rude, I decided not to ask.

I heard many other stories at the comedor. Some migrants spoke of violence in their home countries. Many were forced to leave behind their loved ones to seek work and opportunity.

An elderly woman told me the remarkable story of her journey to America. Her connection to America began when she was 16. She traveled through five Mexican states to make it to the U.S., and when she crossed the border, she decided to live in Colorado, where she spent 48 years building a family and a place to call home. Her time in America was cut short, however, when she was deported back to Mexico in 2008. When she left, she had to leave her daughter behind. She now remains at the Kino facility waiting to reunite with her daughter in America.

Standing face to face with the migrants at Kino showed me how much I take for granted. I met people who would risk everything to have a fraction of the privileges I have being born in America. It was eye-opening.

For any underclassmen who are considering it, I will say it is not an easy trip – it will push you out of your comfort zone by forcing you to confront harsh realities. But it will also allow you to grow your understanding of what it means to be a "Man for Others."

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FULLY PRESENT AT L'ARCHE TAHOMA HOPE

by: Colin Lee '26 & Jace Bassett '26

This summer, we spent time volunteering at L'Arche Tahoma Hope in Tacoma, Washington, a community where people with disabilities live and work together. This experience changed the way we view language, learning that sometimes, facial expressions, posture, and body language say more than any words spoken.

Working with others who communicated differently taught us to slow down, pay close attention, and stay fully present in each moment. Even a small reaction, like a smile or a shift in tone, could affect someone deeply, and we became more aware of how our own energy and attitude impacted others.

Patience and focus became an emphasis. Some days were challenging, but we realized that understanding someone doesn't come instantly; it takes time, effort, and genuine care.

Often, when we have conversations with others, we can struggle to pay attention and sometimes zone out. This immersion, however, kept us 100% engaged in our conversations so that we could understand the people at L'Arche on a deeper level.

Outside of the daily interactions, we also worked on the L'Arche farm, where we put in a lot of physical labor. Whether it was weeding, planting, or harvesting, the work was tough but rewarding. We truly left the farm better than we found it, with new plants sprouting and the farm cleaned up.

Those with disabilities who lived at L'Arche were called "core members." They are the heart and soul of this community, which is why they are given this title.

A core member named Drew especially connected with us, and we worked and talked with him every day.

One day, both of us were tasked to mow the lawn. Todd – a non-core member at the farm – gave us this job. He told us that if we had any questions, we should ask Drew. We brushed Todd off because we thought that Drew's help would just slow us down with this apparently simple task.

We were wrong – the task was much more difficult than it seemed. Because the mowers were old and worn down, they were hard to operate.

They would stop working all the time, and we had to start them up again.

Drew asked if he could help. He showed us how to work the old mowers properly, and we mowed for about an hour. The work would not have been possible without Drew's help and knowledge of the equipment.

We had completely underestimated Drew's ability to help us with the task, simply because he communicated in a different manner than we did. This experience taught us that even if someone conveys their ideas differently, that doesn't make their experiences or insights any less important.

The combination of hard, hands-on tasks and the deep emotional connection with others helped us grow in responsibility, empathy, and self-awareness. This summer taught us that strength isn't just physical, but also about being kind, grounded, and open to learning from others, no matter how different they may seem.

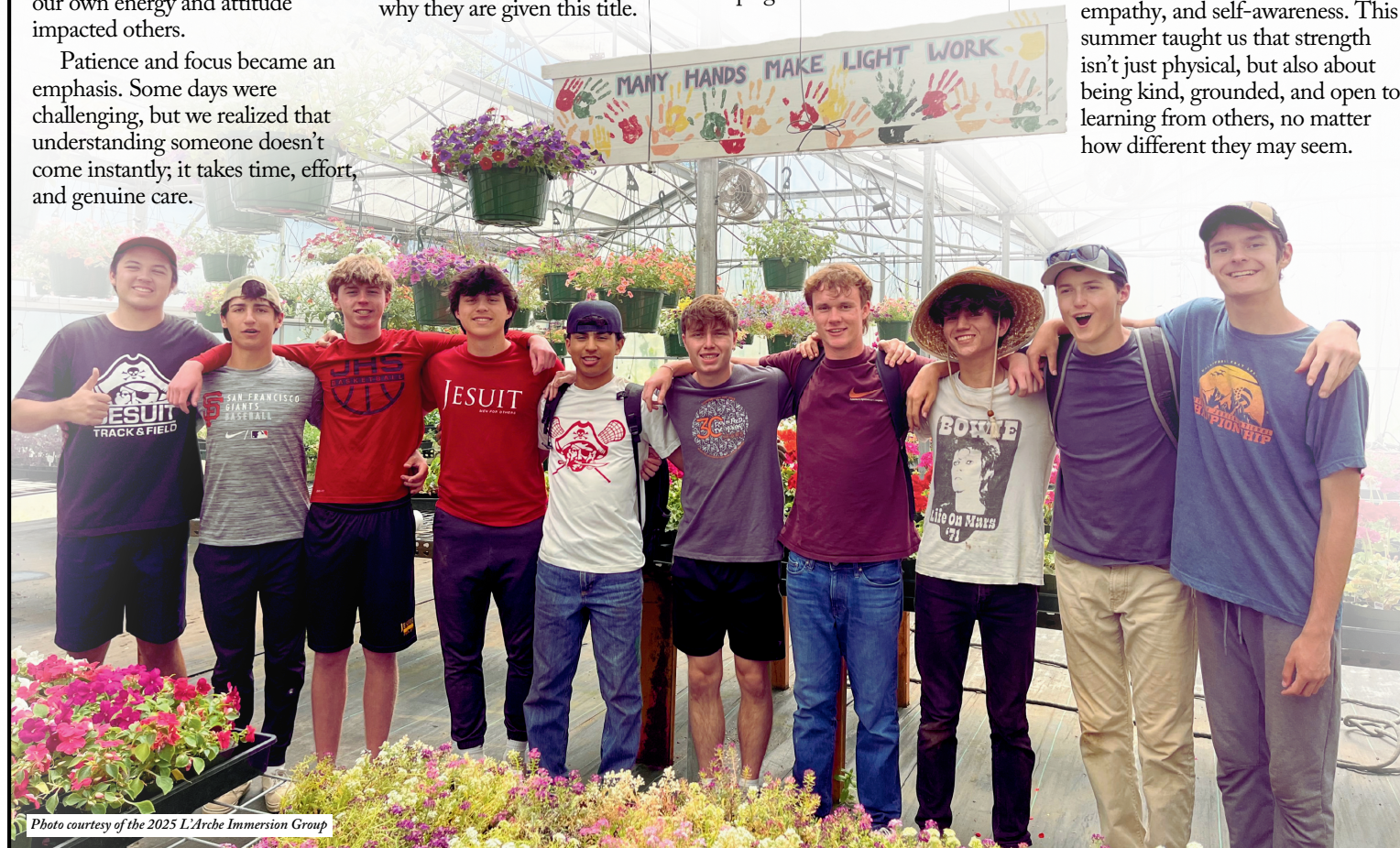


Photo courtesy of the 2025 L'Arche Immersion Group

building courts & community in PANAMA

by: Nick Ryan '26 & Noah Espinoza '26

This summer, we had the opportunity to go on an immersion to Panama. During this immersion, we joined a small community called Palmar Arriba and helped them build a multi-use sports court through a program called Courts for Kids. Our time in Panama taught and challenged us. The time we spent there opened our eyes to a new culture, and it gave us a chance to contribute to a long-lasting cause.

When we first arrived, we didn't really know what to expect. We knew we would be building a court, but didn't realize how much work it would be. For four days, we worked under the sun – handing off buckets of sand and gravel to each other, moving cement bags, and mixing cement.

It was hard work, but doing it alongside the community made it worthwhile. Everyone pitched in. The people we met made this experience memorable. The first night we arrived, kids and families came to the school where we were staying to welcome us. Despite the language barrier, we were able to communicate with laughter and smiles.

The children were unforgettable. They came to the worksite everyday, curious and eager to watch as we worked, and they loved spending time with us after we finished for the day. Being able to play games with them after work was the highlight of each day.

This immersion taught us a lot about perspective. Being in a small Panamanian community, we saw

firsthand how people live with fewer resources than we are used to in America. It made us realize how much we take for granted in our life.

This immersion showed us that happiness doesn't come from having a lot of things but from community, family, and friendships. It is a lesson we won't forget.

We definitely recommend this immersion trip to students. It's not always easy: the labor and not having a phone for 10 days made the trip uncomfortable. However, they also make it deeply rewarding. When you fully immerse yourself into a new environment, you grow as a person. You'll learn more about yourself, other cultures, and build connections with people you'd never thought you'd meet.

Ultimately, you end up gaining a more grounded perspective that promises to stay with you forever.

In the end, Panama was more than just a trip or a vacation. It was a chance to serve, learn, and connect with others. We left with memories we will never forget, a new appreciation for things we take for granted, and an insight into the power of community.



Photo courtesy of Courts for Kids Panama 2025



Photo courtesy of the 2025 Del Norte Immersion Group

Service grounded in gratitude in Del Norte County

by: Brody Bisbiglia '26

This summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Del Norte, California, to work with the Sierra Service Project, an organization that provides home repair and building services for underserved communities. This immersion was one of the most meaningful experiences I have had during my time at Jesuit. Throughout the trip, I worked on a variety of service projects that directly impacted the local community and environment.

One of our main projects was building porches for Tolowa Dee-ni' people who couldn't afford

them or didn't have the physical ability to build them on their own. Knowing that our work would make their homes safer and more accessible gave the project a greater sense of purpose for me and the rest of my group.

We also spent some time helping the environment by removing invasive plant species. One day, we pulled ivy off trees so the local forest could stay healthy. On another day, we worked on the beach to remove invasive beach grass. This project was especially important because it allowed native species, like the spotted plover, to safely return to the ecosystem. Seeing how much effort goes into

protecting the environment made me appreciate the natural beauty of the area even more.

The trip also allowed me to meet many great people. I worked alongside students from different high schools, all of whom were passionate about helping the community. One person who stood out was our group leader, Josh. He was the type of leader who brought everyone together, even though we all started the week as strangers. By the end of the trip, we were a close group of friends who had accomplished something meaningful together.

What I personally took away from this experience was a sense of

gratitude and perspective. Seeing families who struggled with things I often take for granted made me realize how lucky I am to have a home, a supportive family, and opportunities like this trip. It humbled me and reminded me to appreciate what I have every day.

I would highly recommend this trip to underclassmen considering it. It not only gives you the chance to help others and protect the environment but also opens your eyes to the challenges people face in different communities. It's an experience that teaches empathy, teamwork, and gratitude – all while making memories and friendships that last.

TURNING AWARENESS INTO ACTION AT THE CHICAGO DARST CENTER

by: Emmett Gustorf '26 & Luca McGlynn '26

Over the summer, we had the privilege to visit the Br. Darst Center in Chicago. The organization seeks to raise awareness for social issues through spiritual retreats. When we visited, our group was exposed firsthand to the many societal injustices that plague the area.

One of these issues is food insecurity – essentially, when people in an area cannot access healthy foods. Whilst working at the Saint James Food Pantry, we saw how many people were unable to feed themselves and their families.

Our entire immersion group helped gather food for each guest that walked through the pantry doors. Towards the end of our

time at the pantry, Cathy – the director of Saint James – shared her own story and gratitude for our service. She told us how she once suffered from food insecurity after becoming homeless years ago, and it was because of those that were willing to share a smile and a helping hand that helped her get back on her feet.

Another issue we saw was the large problem of homelessness in the city. There are many different factors that contribute to homelessness, which were revealed to us through firsthand encounters. We spent one day of the trip visiting a men's homeless shelter.

The shelter is a men's only homeless shelter because men aren't often given the resources that women and children are when dealing with homelessness.

Women and children are always first in line for any government resources like food and shelter. While this makes sense, it still leaves adult men with few options.

In conversations with the director of the shelter, we learned about many of the reasons the men there had fallen into the situations they were in. Many of them were unable to work due to health or age concerns. Many were also considered too old to be employed.

Debt is another major cause of homelessness. Almost all of the men in the shelter had some large sum of debt that was almost impossible to pay back, further ensuring them not being able to buy basic necessities such as food or housing.

These are some of the reasons why the Darst Center exists. This

program understands the innate dignity in every person, and immersion participants can reflect on the issues they encounter.

All of us can learn from the Darst Center when it comes to tackling food insecurity and homelessness. Being aware of the issue is already a big first step, and we can continue to build on that by donating and volunteering at local food banks and homeless shelters, as we did in Chicago.

To have an even greater impact, we can band together to address the root causes of these topics, by advocating for policies in our government to be approved. It may seem like a big task, but the Darst Center taught us that there's strength in numbers, and we can replicate that here in Sacramento.