

# Humane Borders



Cholla and Las Guijas Mountains, at the Figuero Humane Borders Water Station,  
Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge Water Run

## 2016 Annual Report

## **Humane Borders, Inc.**

Humane Borders, motivated by faith and the universal need for kindness, seeks to create a humane and just border environment.



Ironwood Forest National Monument, Humane Borders Water Run

Board of Directors and Staff	3
Greetings from the Board Chair	4
What we Did in 2016	5
Profile of Neil Novack	12
Profile of Stephen Lee Saltonstall	13
Financials	16



## Board of Directors

**Dinah Bear**, Chair  
Tucson, Arizona

**John F. Chamblee**  
Athens, Georgia

**Robert Feinman**, Vice Chair  
Tucson, Arizona

**Norm Baker**  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Rev. John Hoelter**, Secretary  
Tucson, Arizona

**Dan Abbott**  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Ildefonso “Poncho” Chavez**  
Treasurer  
Tucson, Arizona

**Gary L. Christopherson**  
Tucson, Arizona

**Stephen Lee Saltonstall**  
Tucson, Arizona

## Staff

**Juanita Molina**  
Executive Director

**Joel Smith**  
Operations Manager

**Neil Novack**  
Deputy Operations Manager

## Photo Credits

Photo of Stephen Saltonstall © 2016 by Brad Jones  
All other photos © 2016 by Stephen Lee Saltonstall

## Greetings from Dinah Bear, Board Chair



In 2016, Humane Borders continued to get water trucks out to all our stations, and we delivered 19,805 gallons of water to migrants, an increase of nearly 3,000 gallons above 2015. I'm very proud of and thankful for the dedicated work that our volunteers did to make this possible. We have four trucks, all with over 100,000 miles on them, and the pounding they take on the remote and often barely passable roads took its toll on them.

However, the toll on our trucks (and on our budget) is nothing compared to the toll on human beings crossing the mountain ranges and valleys of the Sonoran Desert. Despite a sustained decrease in the number of people coming across the border, migrant deaths remained steady; 158 sets of human remains were found in the Southern Arizona wildlands in 2016. We know that is a fraction of the number of actual deaths. Even if all crossings somehow stopped this very day, we would be finding human remains in the desert for many years to come.

We will never know how many lives we save with our water stations. But every life lost is a preventable tragedy, and every life saved is a blessing. We hope that what we are doing inspires others to feel compassion and to translate that emotion into good works on behalf of the world's many desperate and oppressed people.

## **What We Did in 2016**

Last year, Humane Borders added water stations in the west desert, with several new stations in the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. These include our first mobile water station in the Growler Mountain Valley, a 55-gallon barrel that we stock with gallon jugs filled with water and then cover so that ravens don't peck holes in the jugs and drink the water themselves. The mobile station has been particularly successful, with lots of water use by migrants traversing this almost impossibly forbidding terrain. We also added a water station in the remote Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and maintained our flagging at water sources there.



Desert Terrain in the Growler Mountain Valley

Both Organ Pipe and Cabeza Prieta saw an increase in migrant traffic and in discovered human remains in 2016. We now have 49 water stations, and we plan to increase that number as human and financial resources permit.

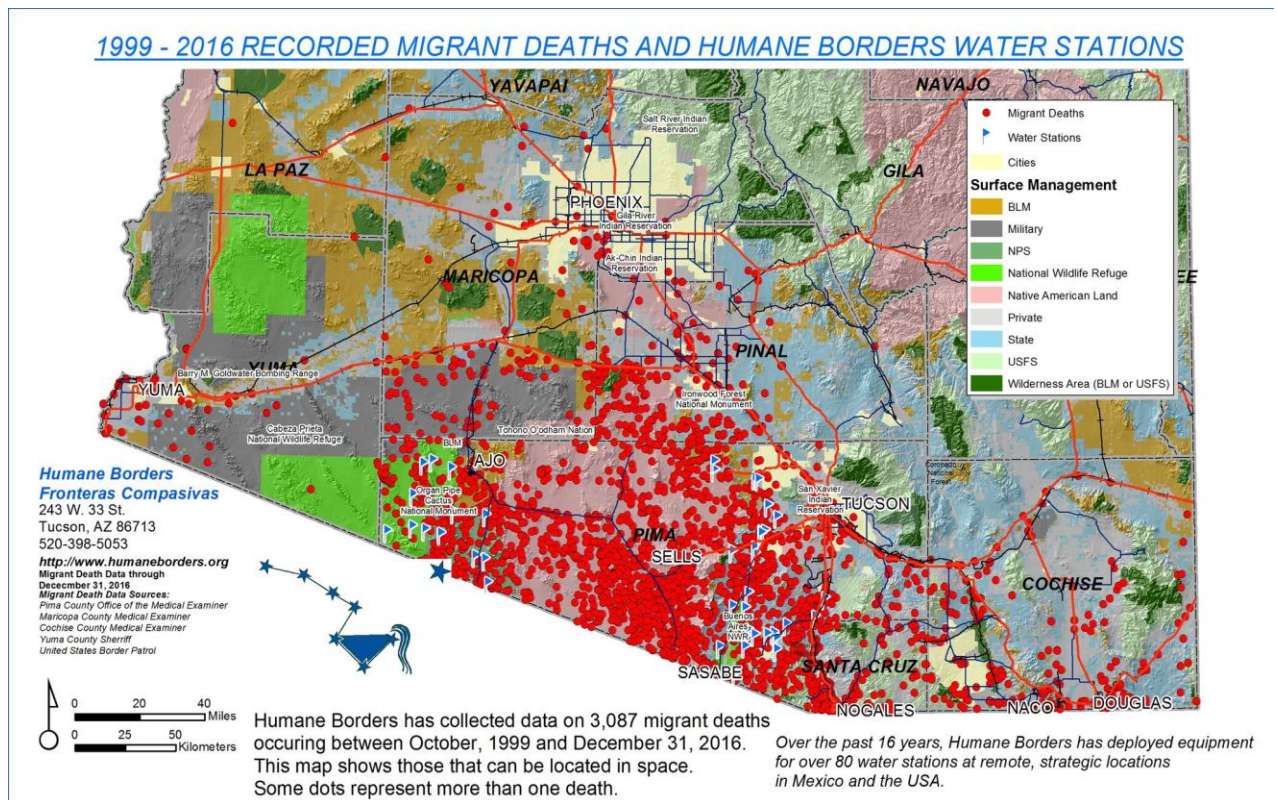
We held our annual Blessing of the Fleet event at our Ninth Avenue truck yard in South Tucson in April, with a capacity crowd that included television reporters as well as our supporters and volunteers. Religious speakers included, among others, Rabbi Stephanie Aaron of the Congregation Chaverim and her daughter Naomi, an aspiring Rabbi; Rev. Steve Keplinger of St. Paul's Episcopal Church; Rev. John Leech of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church; Pastor Mateo Chavez, Iglesia Luterana de San Juan Bautista; Brother David Buer, Order of Franciscans Minor; Father John Erickson, Orthodox Church in America; Buddhist Abbot Ajahn Sarayut Wat Buddhometta; and Rev. Ailsa Guardiola Gonzalez, First Christian Church. Long-time Humane Borders water truck driver and Board member John Hoelter, who is a third-generation Lutheran Pastor, organized and presided over the event.

Although purely secular volunteers who are motivated by kindness and altruism are welcomed and valued at Humane Borders, we have always been a faith-based organization. Christian volunteers may be inspired by Matthew 25 ("I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in."), and the Sermon on the Mount. Jews may draw on the experiences of their ancestors, who wandered in the desert thirsty and without water (Exodus 15 and 17), and from God's command that his people love the strangers among them "as themselves, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 19). Tibetan Buddhism exalts the Bodhisattva, the selfless person who forgoes Nirvana and remains on earth through thousands of incarnations to help others until all sentient beings on earth are freed from suffering. Other religions have similar traditions that stress the importance, above all else, of embracing the needy, the hopeless, and the persecuted.



Given our faith-based ethic, the annual Blessing of the Fleet is a key event for us. It motivates our volunteers to continue our often difficult and exhausting work.

We continued to maintain, in collaboration with the Pima County Medical Examiner, the Arizona OpenGIS Initiative for deceased migrants. This is the only mapping system in the border states showing the exact location of each death, and more information, including the migrant's identity if known and the family has been notified, gender, and the cause of death as determined by the Medical Examiner. It is available to the public, researchers, families, and the media at [www.humaneborders.info](http://www.humaneborders.info).



In the Fall of 2016, we launched a new, much-improved website at [www.humaneborders.org](http://www.humaneborders.org) to provide information about migrant issues on a timely basis, and we are still adding features to it to make it more useful. People who use the website to donate to us on line receive an immediate, IRS-friendly response e-mail.



Juanita Molina, Humane Borders Executive Director

Juanita Molina, our Executive Director, continued her work supporting the families of missing migrants trying to find their loved ones, or at least to learn what has happened to them. It is also Juanita's ever-challenging job to deal with the Border Patrol and other federal officials, with the goal of persuading them to do more to help migrants in distress.

One of the many issues that Juanita has been dealing with is the Border Patrol's use of resources to relentlessly chase and deliberately scatter groups of migrants, a practice that can create more suffering and death. An example of this during June, 2016 is the story of Norberto, a nineteen year-old Mexican migrant from Chiapas who was pursued all night by dogs, all-terrain vehicles, horses, and a helicopter. When our volunteers found him lying under a tree after using one of our water stations, he was so debilitated that he could not go on, and he asked us to help him give up to law enforcement. Later, Juanita contacted Norberto's brother in Alabama to let him know that he had been arrested and would face jail and deportation, but that at least he was still alive.





Norberto, age 19, near Humane Borders Water Station

Juanita also fields many telephone calls from relatives of migrants who have disappeared and are probably dead. In one such case last year, Jacqueline, a Florida resident and niece of one of the missing, asked our help to try to find her uncle, or at least his remains. She told us that one of the migrants in her Uncle's group left him on a road near the Ajo Road. Juanita assigned two Humane Borders volunteers to take this woman and her fiancée to migrant trails near Arizona Route 286, an area that filled the general description of where her Uncle had been abandoned.

Although we were unable to find this migrant, simply conducting the day-long search for him seemed to alleviate some of the overwhelming pain that Jacqueline was experiencing. At least she had made a serious effort, and had done her very utmost, to recover her uncle.





Jacqueline and Fiancee Searching for her Lost Uncle at Bailey Wash  
in the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, Fall, 2016

One of the tasks that our volunteer drivers enjoy most is guiding student groups on our water runs, speaking to them about border issues, and answering their questions. One such group was made up of high school students from United World College a tuition-free boarding school located in Montezuma, New Mexico. The students, who are from 80 different countries all over the globe, compete to get into this school and receive full scholarships to colleges after they graduate. The UWC students who traveled to Tucson spent the better part of a week with us. They listened to an evening talk by a Board member who explained our mission and fielded their many questions. They attended an audio-visual presentation by members of the Border Patrol. But the highlight of their visit was going out on two water runs, including a grueling run in the west desert led by Operations Manager Joel Smith. We were all impressed by the intelligence and inquisitiveness of this group, and we think it likely that their experience with us will have a lasting impact on their minds and hearts and their future actions.





United World College Students Preparing to Carry Water to Mobile Station, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument



United World College Students, at the Humane Borders  
Bishop Minerva Carcano Water Station  
Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge Water Run



## **Profile of Neil Novack, Deputy Operations Manager**

Neil Novack returned to Tucson this summer, and resumed his role as one of our most skilled and trusted volunteers. So much so that he now has a title: Deputy Operations Manager. In that capacity, Neil is responsible for ensuring that our trucks, including the quirky water pumps and hoses used to fill our desert water stations, are in good working order and safe to operate. He loads the trucks with 55-gallon water barrels, flags, and flagpoles before each water run. Neil is also in charge of maintaining our Tucson truck yard and, thanks to his efforts, the now virtually pristine supply shed. Neil is living in a small apartment in the basement of our Tucson headquarters, and his presence has been a deterrent to visitations by vandals who have managed to break in and do damage to our trucks and offices in the past.

Neil is a professional driver who holds a commercial driver's license. He has broad experience, including as a tractor trailer truck driver in the southwest, and as a tourist bus driver in Alaska.

Neil enjoys taking trips to Mexico on his well-worn BMW motorcycle. He says that his motivation to work for Humane Borders stems from his love for Mexico and the Mexican people.

Neil's driving expertise has raised the level of skill of our other volunteer drivers. He is quick to give helpful driving pointers to us, and to correct our mistakes when we make them. His physical strength, which allows him to change tires and reset heavy flagpoles with no apparent problem, is legendary. Whatever Neil does, whether on the road or in our offices, we all benefit from his greatest assets: his wry sense of humor, laid-back attitude, and unerring friendliness.



Neil Novack, Deputy Operations Manager,  
at Humane Borders Headquarters in South Tucson



Neil Novack Changing a Flat Tire at the Ross Mine Water Station,  
Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, with Volunteer Guillermo Jones



## **Profile of Board Member Stephen Lee Saltonstall**

Stephen Lee Saltonstall joined our Board in the Fall of 2016 after a year and a half of driving our Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and Arivaca water routes. A native of Cambridge, Massachusetts and a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Harvard College and of Northeastern University Law School, Stephen spent 40 years as a public interest lawyer. He argued the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court case that abolished the death penalty there. Stephen loves driving our water trucks into the beautiful (but to migrants, ultra-hazardous) desert areas that we service. He says that “working for Humane Borders has enriched my life tremendously.” On each water run, Stephen likes to stop and meditate briefly at one of the crosses set up by the Samaritan organization to mark the place where a migrant died. For Stephen, and for the volunteers who accompany him, taking the time to do this personalizes and brings home what we do in a way that mere words cannot adequately describe or convey.



Stephen Lee Saltonstall, Truck Driver and Board Member, Headed to the Humane Borders K-9 Water Station on the Arivaca Water Run





Sunrise Near the Brawley South Humane Borders Water Station,  
Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge Water Run, Winter 2016



Landscape Near the Humane Borders Rocky Road Water Station  
Arivaca Water Run, Monsoon Season 2016

## **2016 Financials**

### **Income**

Individual Donations:	27,092
Corporate Donations:	1,024
Secular Organization Donations:	12,646
Faith-Based Organization Donations:	14,330
Pima County Contract	22,500
Miscellaneous Income	1,344
<b><u>Total Income:</u></b>	<b>78,936</b>

### **Expenses**

#### **Administrative Expenses**

Including Rent, Office Expenses, Insurance, IT, Postage, Utilities	20,283
---	--------

#### **Outreach and Education**

Including Website, Newsletter, Death Mapping	7,472
---	-------

#### **Water Distribution**

Including Truck Maintenance, Gasoline, Insurance, Fees, Yard and Shed Upkeep and Supplies, GPS Monitoring Service, Field Equipment, Water Testing, and Water and Food for Migrants	39,476
---	--------

<b><u>Total Expenses</u></b>	<b>67,231</b>
------------------------------	---------------

### **Balance**

Carried Over for Use in 2017	<b>11,705</b>
------------------------------	---------------





United States Border Fence Dividing Sasabe, Arizona and Sasabe, Sonora from the Mexican Side, at the headquarters of Mexican relief agency Grupos Beta



Tucson Samaritans Cross Marking the Place Where a Migrant Died, on the Humane Borders Ironwood Forest National Monument Water Run