

# Sin Barreras/Without Barriers 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

## Introduction

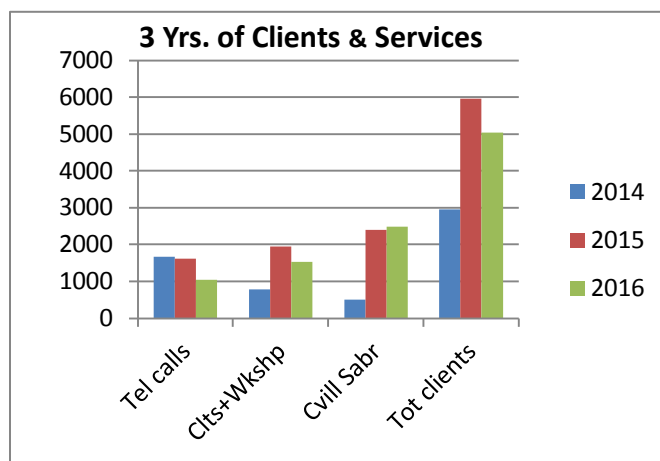
Sin Barreras is a small NGO offering services to the immigrant, mostly Hispanic community. It was founded in 2012 by five Charlottesville-area residents concerned that immigrants were not benefitting from available social services because of language obstacles and lack of information, and that there was no organization adequately addressing Hispanic issues. It was awarded its 501(c)(3) status in May, 2015 and for almost four years was a completely volunteer organization. With grant funding in 2016, it began paying its first part-time office person. It is composed of a five-member Board, several long-term volunteers, and several dozen short-term volunteers. This is its second Annual Report.

## I. Executive Summary

In December 2016 Sin Barreras completed its first Three-Year Strategic Plan focused on: 1) improved service provision — workshops on topics of interest to the Hispanic community, and one-on-one client services; 2) improved functioning of the young organization; and 3) improved advocacy with like-minded organizations.

Continuing 2015's substantial expansion of scope and consultations, Sin Barreras provided direct services to 5,100 people and indirect services to another 2,500 in the year. Summarizing:

- Two hundred and ninety-five individual clients were served, the same as in 2015.
- Fifteen workshops were presented with 1,120 attendees. Forty-five percent were Mexican citizens renewing documents through SB's ongoing relationship with the Mexican Consulate.
- A 2016 Help Fair was carried out with 28 services providers assisting 250 attendees.
- We answered over one thousand telephone calls with a new computer-assisted answering service.
- As in 2015, we co-hosted *Cville Sabroso*, Charlottesville's only Latin American dance and music festival. Nearly 2,500 people attended, a dramatic success.
- We conducted our first-ever voter registration campaign, signing up 45 new voters.
- Total clients reached were augmented by *Cville Sabroso* attendance (2,480), voter registration contacts (2,100), and outreach in colleague-hosted events (400).
- We were successful in accrediting two volunteers to the Department of Justice to represent clients in U.S. immigration court, as well as attracting the pro bono services of an immigration-specialized lawyer. Our combined legal/immigration consultations increased by 56% year-on-year while immigration consultations increased fourfold.
- At DOJ suggestion, volunteer time was tracked: 4,780 hours in 2016, an increase of 25%.
- We won a second grant from the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation (CACF) to hire part-time staff, and from the Virginia Coalition of Immigrant Rights (VACIR) for our voter registration campaign. Unrestricted assets almost doubled in the year.
- Also see human interest successes in Section III.



## II. Accomplishment Detail

### Workshops

Hispanic-interest workshops continued as a significant activity for Sin Barreras in 2016. We put on fifteen such events (as in 2015) with over 1,100 attendees. Three of these were facilitated for the Mexican Consulate – offering to over 500 people the opportunity to process their Mexican government documents without an all-day trip to the Embassy in Washington, D.C. Three events attended by two hundred people were co-hosted with the Albemarle County and Charlottesville Police Departments and explored the police’s “*Know Your Rights*” campaigns, improved Police/Hispanic dialogue, and enhanced drug awareness. Other workshops dealt with health themes, DACA<sup>1</sup>, and driver’s licenses. Late in the year, we co-hosted a “workshop/sleepover” to address improved parent/child communication in our community.

### Annual Help Fair

Twenty-eight organizations and service providers participated in this year’s Help Fair. Approximately 250 people attended, about the same as in 2014 and 2015. Among the services:

- 53 patients were seen for eyeglasses; 48 needed glasses and 28 ordered them; 4 were referred to the UVA Medical Center for glaucoma & other pathologies.
- Another 60–70 patients were seen by three pro-bono optometrists.
- 60 patients received UVA glaucoma and eye pressure screening.
- 58 patients received cardiovascular and diabetes screening.
- 50 patients received audiology screening.



Most agencies reported from 15-40 visitors at their tables. The majority rated the facilities, location, attendance, and timing as excellent. We will offer this event again in 2017.

### Voter Registration

As an important exercise to strengthen Hispanic participation in US civil society, Sin Barreras carried out its first-ever voter registration campaign with a small grant from the Virginia Coalition of Immigrant Rights. Originally planned as a high-school-led, door-to-door campaign in Hispanic neighborhoods but unable to win permission to do so, SB volunteers manned voter registration tables at the three busiest Hispanic-patronized stores in Charlottesville. The campaign was carried out during the last six weekends of the voter registration period in Virginia. Investing over 170 hours of volunteer time, we asked over 2,100 people the question:

---

<sup>1</sup> **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals**—which allows young people who came to the U.S. before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday to work lawfully and finish their high-schooling without fear of arrest, and even to attend Virginia universities at in-state tuition rates. [See last year’s Annual Report for three success stories.] As purely an Obama Executive Action, the program could be rescinded at a moment’s notice in the new Administration.

“Are you eligible and do you want to vote?” We signed up 45 new or re-registering voters, 75% of the project goal.

### Other Agency Events

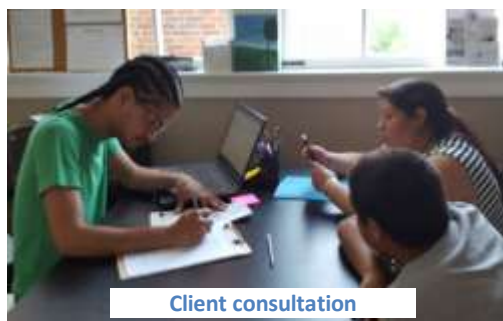
We also participated in events put on by partner entities: the Charlottesville Festival of Culture, the Southwood “Back to School Fair,” the Jefferson School “Day Soiree,” and others, providing SB information to over 400 people.

### Telephone Responses

Sin Barreras responded to over 1,000 telephone calls in 2016. This is down from 2015’s 1,600 calls because the Mexican Government established a computer-assisted registration system that relieved us of this major appointment planning task. It will be recalled from last year’s report that we were striving to reduce the burden of telephone responses on our President who in previous years had answered every one of these phone call personally. We installed computer-tracking software that answers all calls and immediately refers them to a human respondent, or registers a call-back number that is answered during office hours. We anticipate that our level of calls will now grow organically rather than suffer the wild swing it did from 2015 to 2016.

### One-on-One Clients Served

One of Sin Barreras' most life-changing activities is the work we do with individual clients. In 2016, two hundred and ninety-five such consultations took place, the same as in 2015. Four topics represented three-quarters of total office visits. We had 75 people who received low-cost legal advice (about the same as last year); 58 people who received advice on immigration issues (see below); 49 people who received miscellaneous services, and 47 people who received DACA assistance. In this last category, as last year, it is remarkable that every one of these DACA candidates was eventually approved, 100% success.



Though the seventy-five legal consultations provided by SB pro bono attorneys covered many topics, among the most important ‘quality of life’ changes have been the following. In 2016 several SB clients were spared jail time for second or third offenses of driving-without-a-license, thereby avoiding the vastly enhanced risk of deportation that comes with jail time. Another client was offered [quote] “compassionate and caring” service in dealing with her alcoholic husband. Several cases referred to us from Legal Aid Justice Center resulted in Sin Barreras representing indigent immigrants. Other clients were assisted in preparing Powers of Attorney for child care in case Immigration raids re-start and lead to parents’ summary deportation.

### Enhanced Immigration Services

Sin Barreras has long recognized immigration as one of the most important issues facing Charlottesville Hispanics. The U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), the guiding legal authority of the U.S. immigration system, has a well-established mechanism to certify non-profit organizations to



offer immigration advice with non-attorney staff. Last year Sin Barreras received BIA recognition as an NGO authorized to engage in such activities, and in 2016 two SB (non-lawyer) volunteers were accredited to do so. With the arrival late in the year of a second pro bono lawyer specialized in immigration law, Sin Barreras now has four volunteers capable of representing Hispanic clients' issues to the US Customs and Immigration Service. Noted in the summary, we have thus been able to quadruple our immigrations consultations in 2016, 58 clients compared to last year's 14.

### ***Cville Sabroso***

The *Cville Sabroso* festival was another great success this year, with nearly 2,500 attendees.



**Cville Sabroso**

As last year, City Councilmen Bob Fenwick kicked off the day with a welcome speech. Attendees were a diverse audience: Latinos and non-Latinos, families with young children, students, and people of all ages. Different nationalities performed their countries' music dressed in colorful national costumes. The audience was completely engaged, dancing to the music, clapping, and



**Cville Sabroso**

singing along. Abundant ethnic food was provided from Hispanic-owned food providers. UVA volunteers sat under a large tent and offered kids' face-painting. *Cville Sabroso* is the only Latin American festival of its kind in this part of Virginia and represents our opportunity to show to the wider community the richness of Hispanic culture. We look forward to an equally successful event in 2017.

### **Grant Awards**

In 2016, Sin Barreras received a grant from the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation to defray a portion of the part-time salary of Sin Barrera's first employee, who began work on March 1. For the first time ever, this allowed us to have the office open during regular business hours. That grant was sufficiently successful that we were able return to CACF for follow-on funding, recently awarded, that allows us to hire a second part-time person, almost achieving 40 hours-per week coverage during normal work hours. As mentioned earlier, we were also the beneficiary of a small grant from VACIR to undertake the Voter Registration campaign.

### **Police Outreach**

Seeing ourselves as an important bridge between the Hispanic community and law enforcement, Sin Barreras continued last year's outreach to the Albemarle County and Charlottesville City police departments. In January we hosted a follow-up event to last year's "Know Your Rights" campaign. In March we hosted a forum between the police and young

Hispanics discussing drugs in the community. In the spring, Board members met with the two newly appointed Chiefs of Police in “Get to Know One Another” sessions. We also interact with the police in other events such as the Southwood Back to School Fair and *Cville Sabroso*. We will be strengthening this relationship in 2017.

### **Advocacy: the Virginia Legislature and VACOLAO**

The Virginia legislature convenes in early January each year. In 2016 Sin Barreras organized a “Visit-Your-Legislator Day” and was able to encourage about fifty people from Charlottesville to accompany Board members in presenting Hispanic priorities to our lawmakers.

As reported last year, late in 2015 we hosted a workshop put on by the Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations, VACOLAO, a Virginia NGO lobbying for drivers’ licenses for all regardless of immigration status –as was legal in Virginia prior to the 9/11 attack. To our and VACOLAO’s astonishment, attendance at that event was **345**, many times our normal draw. Twice during 2016 we hosted follow-up visits from VACOLAO to continue the campaign, and we participate in VACALOA meetings and events throughout the year.



VACOLAO Drivers’ License Workshop, Dec 2015

### **Volunteer Service**

Volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Total volunteer hours for the year were 4,783, almost 400 hours per month. Using the Virginia in-kind valuation of \$24.90 per hour<sup>2</sup>, the monetized value of this volunteer contribution was \$110,100. Board members and highly active volunteers offer 40, 50 or 60 hours a month. Additionally we have almost thirty other volunteers, many of them UVA students who because of their academic commitments contribute single digit hours per month or only during certain periods during the year. Total contribution from this cohort was almost 500 hours. We are enriched by each of these contributors. Sin Barreras is able to offer the services we do only because of these people. We are constantly on the look-out for more volunteers: each brings special skills we draw on to respond to many different needs.



Sin Barreras Board

### **Financing**

At the start of 2016, Sin Barreras had \$6,300 in accumulated assets. The year’s expenditures were \$21,700 while total service income, grants and donations summed to \$43,200. At the end of the year our unrestricted assets are \$11,500, double what they were last December.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.vaservice.org/go/volunteer/statistics/2014>

### III. Human Stories behind Sin Barreras

[*Translated from Spanish*] First I want to give thanks to God for the life-change He has given me. Before, my life wasn't the same: I felt I lived in a world that wasn't mine. Leaving the house for work, or to go shopping, or to take my daughters to school was a fear to drive without a license and a fear I felt every day. I can only imagine what would happen to my children if one day Immigration would grab me or even just the Police. It would break my heart and fill me with desolation to think if one day we were separated. But now everything has changed from my life of gray to a life of color; and all thanks to Sin Barreras for its great help, thanks for its efforts and for the time it gave me. Thanks to you I have achieved my dream to be in this country legally. Now I can leave the house without fearing anyone, without thinking the police could take me off to jail for driving without a license. All of this and more is a great change that has happened to my life and to my daughters. Thanks to your grand organization, Sin Barreras, we are even better. Thank you for your help, too, to my daughter who got her Green Card and I got DACA.

My name is M.... I am from Mexico. I'm like every ordinary girl who has a dream of becoming a successful woman in the future. .... Some reasons we came to the U.S. are because we want economic opportunity, we want a better life, or some flee from danger. Many go through a big struggle just to get here and it's upsetting to leave family members in our homes and having to start a new life. ... Sin Barreras was the best thing that has happened to me, but most of all I thank Fanny who introduced us to Sin Barreras. Without her, we wouldn't have known, she helped us with every step we took.



My name is U.... Sin Barreras has helped me a lot with DACA. The people at Sin Barreras showed me all of the documents I would need ... [and] helped me fill out the necessary paperwork. The lawyer that was helping me ... would call me and we'd be really excited. It was great knowing that someone else was excited for me getting my work permit! Sin Barreras is a non-profit organization, so I only needed to pay for the DACA form and a small donation for Sin Barreras. That small donation mostly paid for all the copies of the different forms they gave me. I eventually got my work permit approved. Now, I'm trying to get my driver's license. Sin Barreras guided me to becoming a legal worker in the U.S. I am very thankful that Sin Barreras didn't just help me obtain my work permit but they told me how to make sure I don't lose my legal status....

[*Translated from Spanish*] My name is A.... I thank God for Sin Barreras who assisted us in making our dream and our goal come true. And thanks to the great people who helped me and I give thanks for Fanny who recommended me to Sin Barreras [and] gave me the opportunity to get my residence .... I am very thankful to God who helped me accomplish my dreams and to my Dad who always contributed his part and always helped me.

### IV. Conclusion

Sin Barreras has had gratifying success in 2016: substantially increasing its client directly and indirectly served, growing in organization maturity, becoming a more articulate voice of Hispanic issues in central Virginia, and becoming better known and respected in the Charlottesville community, both Hispanic and Anglo. We are enormously grateful to our volunteers and individual and foundation donors. As we steel ourselves for what may become a very difficult 2017, we commit to even further dedication to our cause, a better life for Charlottesville-area immigrants.