

Worldwide Documentaries

Oh Mercy

Reflections on 2021



Reflecting on our commitment this past year to tell the tragic story of thousands of forced migrants huddled on our southwestern border, it is difficult not to feel a sense of alarm and deep discouragement that the overall situation has not in the least bit improved; indeed, it is getting much worse.

As of this writing, both the executive and legislative branches of the US government have essentially said: no movement or meaningful action on immigration; "stalled," "delayed," "dropped" are the words that have been used. In the meanwhile, however, as the migrants and refugees suffer and languish on both sides of the border, there should be no mistaking that 2022 will be even more challenging with respect to making humane immigration reform a reality.

With *Oh Mercy*, which remains one of the only films to tell the forced migrant story from their point of view, Worldwide has been *relentless* in seeking out individuals and

organizations to help spread the word about what is—and is not—happening on the immigration front. **Here is an overview of where we have been and where we hope to go:**

Achievements in 2021:

- February 2021, ***Oh Mercy*** has its virtual premiere/panel discussion attended by over 1,200 people from 19 different countries.
- Added Spanish subtitles to ***Oh Mercy*** and English subtitles for the hearing impaired.
- Created a distribution outreach campaign to over 200 organizations.
- In ten months, ***Oh Mercy*** has been viewed on Youtube over 7,000 times.
- 70 educational institutions have accessed ***Oh Mercy*** for use in classroom curriculum and campus events.
- October, launched a successful ***Oh Mercy - Seeing is Believing*** national awareness initiative. Film was viewed this month almost 700 times.
- November, ***Oh Mercy*** was featured in a national screening/panel discussion in collaboration with the **#WelcomeWithDignity** campaign and **Families Belong Together**.
- The film has been called “**by far the best film on US immigration issues that we have,**” by Lee Gelernt, Deputy Director of the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project, among other leading immigration advocates.
- Completed the R & D, and pre-production phase for ***Heart of the Matter - Is There Hope in the Promised Land?***

We are proud of these successes, and hugely grateful to the donors who have helped us achieve them. But we have to do more, and we need your financial support to do it. Our two main goals for 2022 are:

- ***Heart of the Matter - Is There Still Hope in the Promised Land?***: A follow-up companion film to ***Oh Mercy*** which is now ready to go into production, ***Heart*** asks the hard question, “Has anything changed?” The answer is: nothing has changed. Nothing, that is, but for three things: the numbers are much greater, the borders are tighter, and the future for the migrants themselves is more uncertain than ever. Where is the hope in all this? ***Heart*** will become another vital advocacy tool for groups working to reform current immigration policies.

– ***Oh Mercy* Student Awareness Campaign:** Given the positive response to ***Oh Mercy*** from educational institutions and students themselves, we plan to create and implement a student awareness campaign with ***Oh Mercy*** as the centerpiece. The campus campaign is premised on the fact that if the US is ever going to bring real reform to the current inhumane immigration policies, the engagement and collective conscience of young people is critical—as will be their votes in the upcoming 2022 midterm elections where immigration may well prove to be a decisive issue. As Robert F. Kennedy famously said: “It is young people who must take the lead. The world’s hope is in our youth.”

Where is the hope in all this? We believe that widespread, actionable awareness may well be one answer. Hence the importance of engaging students. Hence the importance of creating a base of knowledge and understanding among the American public.

We kindly ask that you consider making an end of the year, tax-deductible donation to our advocacy goals outlined above. Awareness is not something that can be wrapped in a box, but awareness is the greatest agent for change.

Again, thank you for your support in so many ways. From all of us here at Worldwide Documentaries, we wish you and your family a safe, healthy, and hopeful holiday season.

Robert E. Bilheimer
Worldwide Documentaries