

**BORDER  
NETWORK  
FOR HUMAN  
RIGHTS**

**Annual Report 2019**

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# **BORDER NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CELEBRATES MILESTONE 2019**

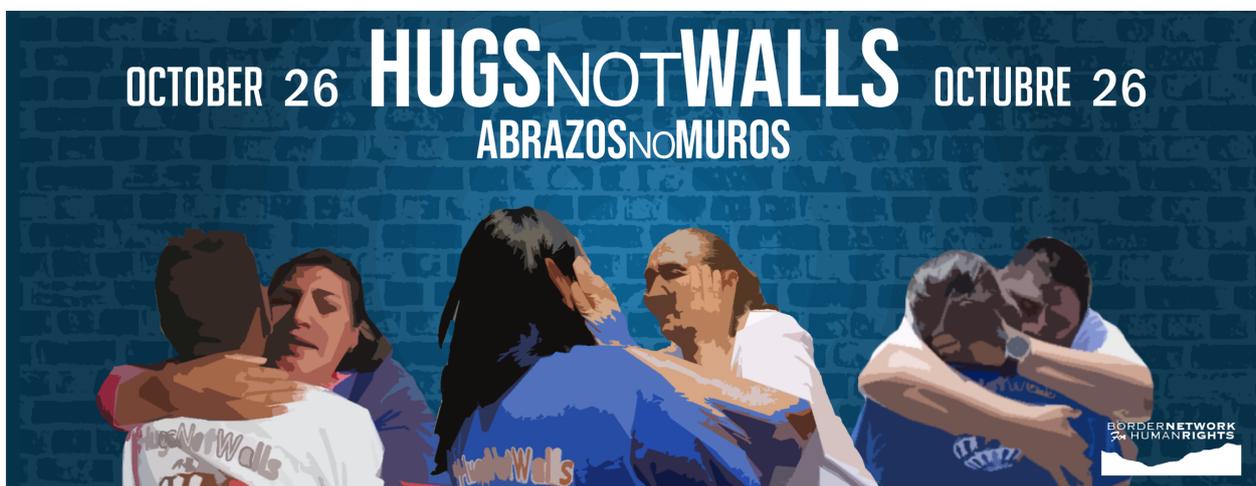
## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR BIGGEST YEAR YET**

From El Paso all the way to our nation's capital, 2019 was a year for the books here at Border Network. This year was one of great triumphs and exposure for our border communities and we are so proud to be closing 2019 out having made such waves which will carry on into the new year. Here are some of our biggest accomplishments and proudest moments of this year.

**BORDER NETWORK**  
*For* **HUMAN RIGHTS**



# WE PROMOTED ‘HUGS, NOT WALLS’ BETWEEN FAMILIES SEPARATED BY THE BORDER



On our third year of reuniting families from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, *#HugsNotWalls* has become an important symbol of love, hope, and resilience bringing together families to see, embrace, and hug their loved ones from across the border. The event is a demonstration of the ties that have held border communities together for hundreds of years but are now blocked by broken and ill-conceived immigration policies and practices that separate families.

*#HugsNotWalls* has been held seven times in the last three years and has been a time for reflection within our border community and the nation. Our last event, held on October 26, was successful in bringing together approximately 300 families thanks to the more than 18 years of dialogue between our organization and the United States Border Patrol in El Paso.

## Mother Jones

POLITICS ENVIRONMENT CRIME AND JUSTICE FOOD MEDIA INVESTIGATIONS

POLITICS OCTOBER 30, 2019

### Separated Families Were Allowed to Hug on the Riverbed of the Rio Grande—for 3 Minutes

"Every time we do this, it could be the last one."

JULIA LURIE and FERNANDA ECHAVARRI



For full article, click headline.

# WE WERE FEATURED ON A **NETFLIX** ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY



To watch trailer, click blue link below.

We are honored that last year's *#HugsNotWalls* reunification event was memorialized in a powerful [Netflix documentary - \*A 3 Minute Hug\*](#) - which captures both the joy and heartbreak of families separated by U.S.-Mexico border policies. The short but bittersweet reunion that took place during the unique event sent a strong message of love, hope, and resistance. The documentary was directed by Everardo Gonzalez and executive produced by Gael Garcia Bernal. The short film was released globally on the streaming service on October 28.

# WE SUCCESSFULLY STOPPED FURTHER CONSTRUCTION OF TRUMP'S BORDER WALL

This October we won an important battle in the fight against the U.S. Administration's national emergency declaration and the building of Trump's border wall. In February, we filed a lawsuit along with El Paso County against President Trump's state of emergency declaration at the border. After months of deliberation, we were elated that the Texas Federal Court sided with us by declaring the proclamation illegal and blocking further construction of the wall. This ruling was a major victory for us and all border communities, confirming what we already knew - there was never any emergency at the border and the use of military funds for the construction of a border wall was useless and illegal. For ruling and other case documents, click [here](#).



**Protect**  
**Democracy**

# WE WON THE PASSING OF THE **HOMELAND SECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT** IN THE HOUSE AND CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR ITS PASSING IN THE SENATE

Another success from this year worth noting is the passing of the *Homeland Security Improvement Act* in the House, sponsored by our very own Congresswoman Veronica Escobar (D-TX). Passing with a 230-194 vote in September, this bill establishes the position of Ombudsman for Border and Immigration Related Concerns within the Department of Homeland Security to increase collaboration and transparency.

Just last month, we visited Washington, D.C. with a delegation of 40 border residents to seek support for the corresponding Senate bill aiming to improve relations between law enforcement agencies and border communities by increasing accountability, transparency, and oversight.





In addition to lobbying for the *Homeland Security Improvement Act* in the Senate, our trip to Washington, D.C. aimed to shine a light on the stories of those who have experienced first-hand the impact of harsh law enforcement, policies that ignore local communities, and the trampling of Constitutional rights. Members of our delegation, many of whom were experiencing their first time on an airplane and/or in Washington, discussed the daily problems faced by border residents due to border enforcement strategies with no accountability and the expansive militarization within communities.

Our group was welcomed and given a platform on which to share their stories with a press conference at the House Triangle followed by meetings with Senate staff. The visit concluded with a White House action in which border residents protested against the racial profiling, warrantless searches, wrongful detentions, verbal and physical abuses, and other life-changing adversities they have faced from federal border enforcement institutions. For livestream footage of press conference, click [here](#).



# WE MADE HISTORY AS FIRST-TIME RECIPIENTS OF THE GRASSROOTS CHAMPION AWARD

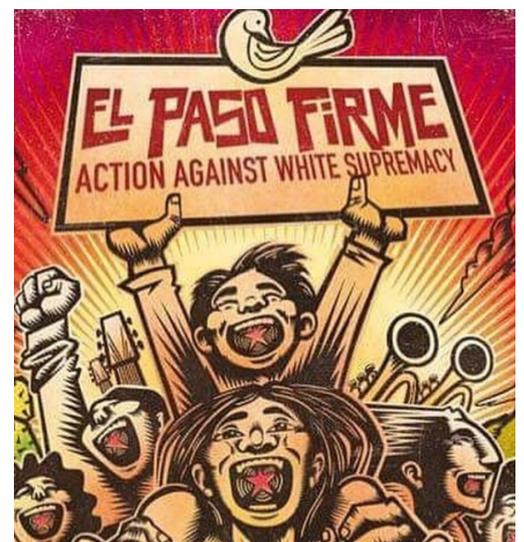


For the first time in our organization's over 20-year history, we were honored to receive the *Congressional Progressive Caucus Center's* Grassroots Champion Award at this year's Progressive Strategy Summit in Washington, D.C. The Progressive Strategy Summit is a cornerstone event for the progressive movement, bringing together members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center, state and local elected leaders, grassroots organizers, activists, strategists, researchers, policy wonks, and artists from every corner of the movement to connect, reflect, and plan. Border Network for Human Rights was one of two award recipients recognized for our tireless work on behalf of immigrants at the border and the fight against white supremacy. For livestream footage of summit, click [here](#).



On August 3, our country witnessed yet another fatal and senseless mass shooting fueled by hate and white supremacy. The El Paso shooting was caused by the uncontrolled access to weapons of war that have continuously enabled mass atrocities in cities across the country, converged with the white supremacist political agenda. Since the shooting, our goal at Border Network has been to magnify our message of love and show the resilience and strength of our border communities.

In an effort to demonstrate this, Border Network hosted a series of events as part of our #ElPasoFirme campaign and the 'We Must Do MORE' Tour. These events included a march, call to action, and concert as an exercise of collective compassion and solidarity with those who were affected by this tragedy and the hateful rhetoric that has infected our nation.



For livestream footage of concert, click [El Paso Firme poster](#).

# WE MARCHED FOR TRUTH AGAINST THE PRESIDENT'S BORDER WALL AND INHUMANE BORDER AGENDA



On February 11, El Pasoans took to the streets to show their resistance to President Trump's inhumane border agenda and his plan to declare a 'national emergency' at the U.S.-Mexico border. BNHR, flanked by dozens of partner community organizations, led more than 12,000 people in the 'March for Truth' - a mass mobilization against the President's border wall, his anti-immigrant rhetoric, and his lies about El Paso and the border. Impressively, this march, the largest political mobilization in El Paso since the 2006 immigration walkouts, was convened with only 5 days advance notice - a true collective effort. That evening we saw a community and region galvanized against exclusion and hate, and instead offering a call for America to 'build bridges not walls'. For livestream footage of March for Truth, click [here](#).

# WE BROUGHT THE **FIRST** CONGRESSIONAL HEARING TO EL PASO IN MORE THAN A **DECADE**



The six Members of Congress and six community witnesses who gathered on UTEP's campus on September 6 marked a milestone in the work of the Border Network to bring the stories of the border to Washington - or in this case to bring Washington to the Border. This hearing, a formal convening of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship, marked the first Congressional hearing in El Paso in more than a decade; this was an event that happened only because of the persistence of organizations like Border Network. This was a valuable opportunity for Members of Congress to hear directly how harsh border enforcement and virulent anti-immigrant rhetoric have been hurting us - and of the opportunities possible if we can imagine the border differently. BNHR was thrilled that our Executive Director, Fernando Garcia, was invited to testify, and we are proud of his work to ensure that the needs and perspectives of our border communities were heard.



# WE MORE THAN TRIPLED IN MEDIA COVERAGE

The year 2019 is closing out as one of our biggest years yet. Our organization was covered in more than 3,550 articles this year, most notably by the *El Paso Times*, *Rolling Stone*, and *The Hill*.

**Rolling Stone**

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OCTOBER 11, 2019 12:56PM E

### See Families Separated by U.S. Border Reunite in Powerful '3 Minute Hug' Trailer

Documentary short film premieres October 28th on streaming service

By DANIEL KREPS

Netflix has unveiled the powerful trailer for the streaming service's short film *A 3 Minute Hug*, which documents the brief reunification of families separated by the U.S. and Mexican border.

"On May 12, 2018, the border between El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, was opened temporarily for a breathlessly-awaited reunion. On a barren embankment along the Rio Bravo, family members who had been denied asylum, deported, or separated for more than 10 years were allowed to meet at the border for a precious few minutes." Netflix said of the documentary. "Organized by the Border Network for Human Rights, the Hugs Not Walls reunification event gave over 300 separated families the opportunity to connect — to embrace, kiss, and lovingly admonish each other as only families can."

The minute-long trailer captures moments from that three-minute reunion as families tearfully embrace before the authorities call out, "Time's up!"

*A 3 Minute Hug*, directed by Everardo González and executive produced by Gael Garcia Bernal, premieres globally on Netflix on October 28th.

**THE HILL**

### Federal judge declares Trump border proclamation unlawful

BY HARPER NEIDIG - 10/11/19 03:10 PM EDT

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**El Paso Times**

### El Pasoans in Washington push for ombudsman focusing on complaints against border agencies

Lauren Villagran, El Paso Times Published 11:09 a.m. MT Nov. 19, 2019

El Paso Congresswoman Veronica Escobar talks about her reelection campaign after filing for the El Paso County Democratic Party primary. Vic Kolenc, El Paso Times

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A delegation of 40 El Pasoans traveled to Washington, D.C., this week to support legislation creating an ombudsman within the Department of Homeland Security to resolve complaints against border enforcement agencies.

The nonprofit Border Network for Human Rights has been documenting the occasional friction between border residents and border enforcement agencies for years, collecting stories of alleged racial profiling, warrantless searches and verbal and physical abuses.

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