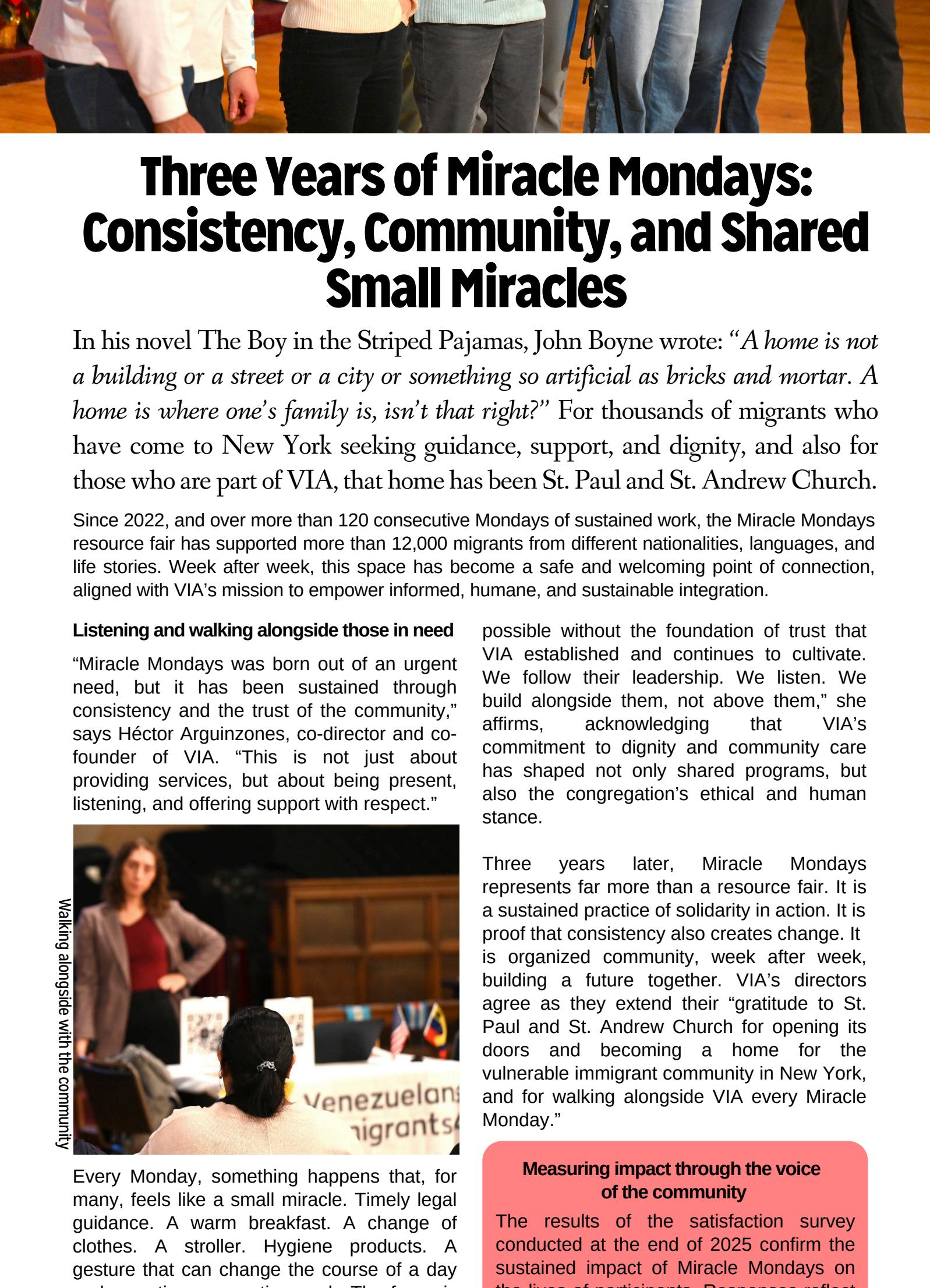


VIAnews

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid Newsletter

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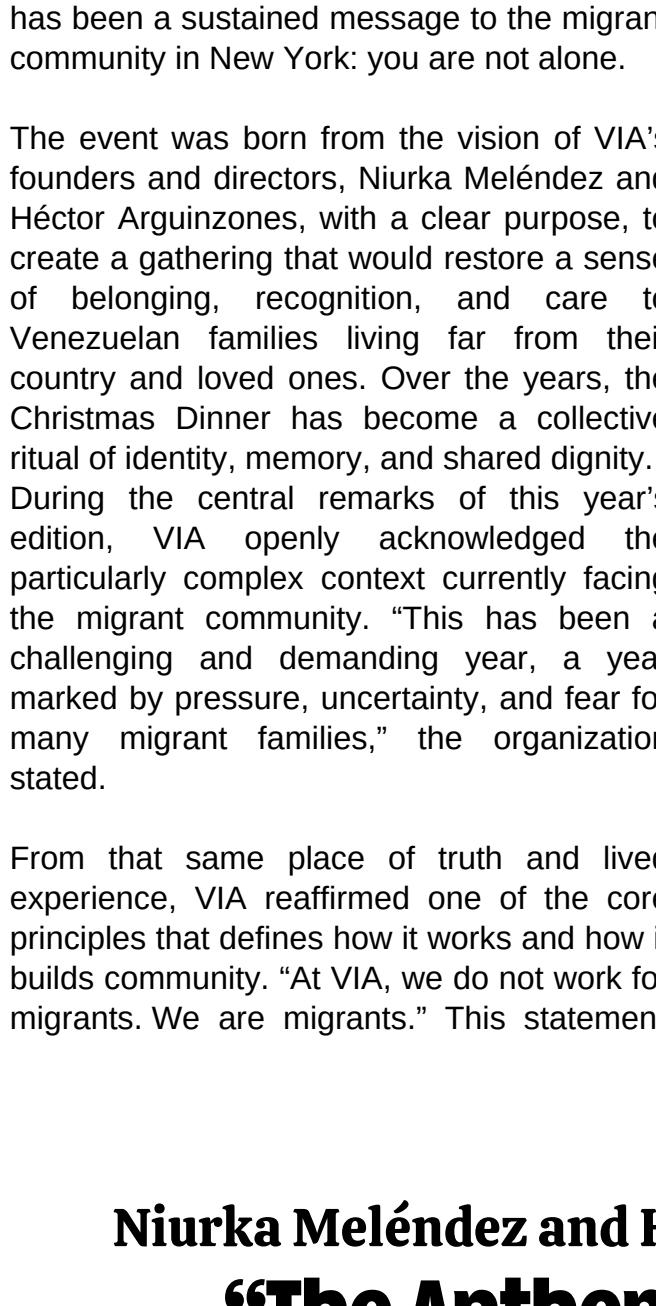
Three Years of Miracle Mondays: Consistency, Community, and Shared Small Miracles

In his novel *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, John Boyne wrote: "A home is not a building or a street or a city or something so artificial as bricks and mortar. A home is where one's family is, isn't that right?" For thousands of migrants who have come to New York seeking guidance, support, and dignity, and also for those who are part of VIA, that home has been St. Paul and St. Andrew Church.

Since 2022, and over more than 120 consecutive Mondays of sustained work, the Miracle Mondays resource fair has supported more than 12,000 migrants from different nationalities, languages, and life stories. Week after week, this space has become a safe and welcoming point of connection, aligned with VIA's mission to empower informed, humane, and sustainable integration.

Listening and walking alongside those in need

"Miracle Mondays was born out of an urgent need, but it has been sustained through consistency and the trust of the community," says Héctor Arguinzones, co-director and co-founder of VIA. "This is not just about providing services, but about being present, listening, and offering support with respect."

Walking alongside with the community

Every Monday, something happens that, for many, feels like a small miracle. Timely legal guidance. A warm breakfast. A change of clothes. A stroller. Hygiene products. A gesture that can change the course of a day and sometimes an entire week. The focus is primarily on legal, cultural, and community orientation, recognizing that clear information and close accompaniment are essential tools for integration. "Accompanying people is much more than helping," says Niurka Meléndez, co-director and co-founder of VIA. "It means walking alongside them, recognizing their dignity, and building community even in the midst of uncertainty."

Reflecting on three years of partnership between St. Paul and St. Andrew Church and VIA, the church's pastor, Lea Matthews, emphasizes that trust and human connection have been the foundation of this collaboration. "Working with Niurka and Héctor has taught me that trust and relationship are not accessories to collaboration, they are its center," she says, underscoring that VIA is not simply a partner organization, but "the heart of all our migration ministries at St. Paul and St. Andrew." Along this shared path, she highlights the leadership of Héctor Arguinzones and Niurka Meléndez, who, drawing from lived experience, "resist narratives of pity and advocate for the autonomy of well-informed individuals and collective power," bringing a calm and steady presence even in highly complex contexts.

Two organizations united by a humanitarian relationship

Building on the work of Miracle Mondays, Pastor Matthews notes that the very understanding of what it means to be a church has been deeply transformed. "Through this partnership, our understanding of 'church' has expanded in ways I never imagined," she explains, pointing to the growth of bilingual ministries, equity-based and mutual community programs, and accompaniment spaces such as Sacred CourtSupport. "None of this would have been

possible without the foundation of trust that VIA established and continues to cultivate. We follow their leadership. We listen. We build alongside them, not above them," she affirms, acknowledging that VIA's commitment to dignity and community care has shaped not only shared programs, but also the congregation's ethical and human stance.

Three years later, Miracle Mondays represents far more than a resource fair. It is a sustained practice of solidarity in action. It is proof that consistency also creates change. It is organized community, week after week, building a future together. VIA's directors agree as they extend their "gratitude to St. Paul and St. Andrew Church for opening its doors and becoming a home for the vulnerable immigrant community in New York, and for walking alongside VIA every Miracle Monday."

Measuring impact through the voice of the community

The results of the satisfaction survey conducted at the end of 2025 confirm the sustained impact of Miracle Mondays on the lives of participants. Responses reflect a high level of gratitude and positive feedback, with comments describing the space as "very good," "excellent," "perfect," and "very kind," along with messages of appreciation for both VIA and St. Paul and St. Andrew Church. These findings show that the program not only responds to urgent needs, but also leaves a positive and lasting impression, strengthening trust and a sense of accompaniment throughout the migration process.

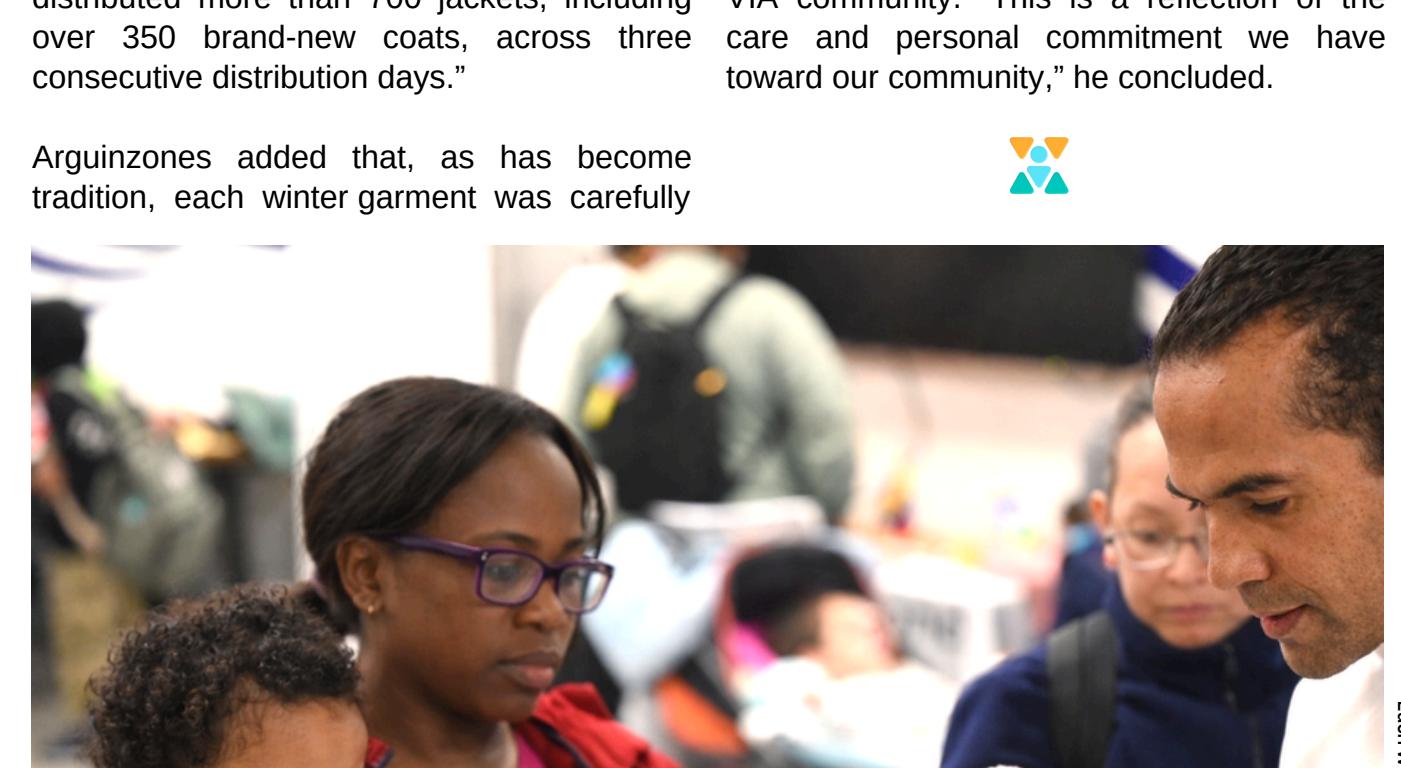
The survey also reveals a strong willingness to participate again and to recommend the program within the migrant community. Of those surveyed, 95.89 percent indicated that they are "very likely" to attend the resource fair again, while 98.63 percent said they are "very likely" to recommend it to other migrants. In addition, 94.52 percent stated that they would "definitely" recommend Miracle Mondays, confirming the high level of trust the program has built over time.

One particularly meaningful data point is that 100 percent of respondents reported feeling heard and supported by the team, a key indicator of the human quality of the accompaniment provided. Likewise, 89.04 percent said that the fair "changed or improved" their perspective on their migration process, reaffirming the value of clear information, respectful treatment, and access to tangible resources. Among the most highly valued supports were clothing donations, legal guidance, a nutritious breakfast, information about half-price MetroCards, and access to health insurance information. Together, these resources contribute to immediate well-being and strengthen migrants' ability to make informed decisions about their future.

Nine Years of Community: A Dinner That Restores Humanity to the Migrant Experience



VIA Celebrates the Closing of the Fifth Cycle of the "Granny Square" Crochet Workshop



More Than 700 Winter Coats Distributed by VIA This Year



Since 2017, this space has been far more than a celebration.

At VIA, we do not work for migrants. We are migrants.

The Anthem Awards remind us that what we do matters.

With the help of our partners, we are making a difference.

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