



VIA launches its annual holiday campaign

Donations that Warm Hearts

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) has launched one of its most anticipated annual campaigns: the winter coat drive, toy donation, and traditional holiday dinner for migrant families. Year after year, these gestures have become a symbol of unity, hope, and humanity.

Solidarity with a human touch

“At VIA, every act of solidarity carries a human touch,” said Niurka Meléndez, VIA’s co-founder and director. “These traditions were born from the desire to bring warmth and companionship to those facing winter far from home.”



VIA volunteers customizing dinner boxes

The initiative reminds us that giving is not just about material donations, but about offering warmth, joy, and hope. This December, VIA invites everyone to be part of the true spirit of giving.

[Donate today](#) and share the warmth of a community that leads with its heart.



VIA Named Finalist for the Anthem Awards for Its Humanitarian Impact

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) has been selected as a finalist for the Anthem Awards, a distinction granted by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences that celebrates the world’s most inspiring initiatives in social, community, and humanitarian impact.

Founded in New York by Niurka Meléndez and Héctor Arguinzones, VIA was recognized in the Emerging Organization, Product, Innovation or Service, and Humanitarian Action and Services categories, joining a list of more than 100 finalist organizations from around the world.

“This recognition comes at a very meaningful moment for VIA. We are about to celebrate ten years of continuous work supporting forced migrants and refugees, and being named a finalist for the Anthem Awards validates our collective effort, our team’s commitment, and the love we’ve received from the community we serve,” said VIA’s co-directors Niurka Meléndez and Héctor Arguinzones.

Now in its fifth year, the Anthem Awards bring together leaders in human rights, education, health, culture, and sustainability. Members of this year’s jury include Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association; Heather Malenshek, CMO of Land O’Lakes; Katharine Hayhoe, Chief Scientist at The Nature

Conservancy; Kim Getty, CEO of Deutsch; Zarna Surti, VP and Head of Creativity for Nike Women; and Philipa Cross, Sustainability Lead at BarkleyOKR.

Anthem Community Voice Award

In addition to its official nomination, VIA is also competing in the Anthem Community Voice Award category, a special honor that allows the public to vote for organizations making a difference through their work.

“This award belongs to the community that has believed in us since day one. We invite everyone to vote for VIA and help us raise awareness about the work we do alongside thousands of displaced people seeking protection in the United States,” said Héctor Arguinzones.

The voting period runs from October 14 to October 30, and those wishing to support VIA can do so by visiting the [official link](#) available on the organization’s digital platforms.

“For VIA, this nomination is an opportunity to keep inspiring hope. It motivates us to continue our mission, regardless of external challenges. Our purpose remains the same: to accompany, inform, and provide human and legal support to those who need it most,” concluded Niurka Meléndez.



VIA Raises Its Voice for Human Rights in Venezuela

With more than nine million people displaced and millions more living under threat, Venezuela faces one of the most severe humanitarian crises in its history. Persecution, hunger, and repression have become part of daily life under a regime that uses violence and control as tools of power, leaving an entire nation hostage to fear.

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) warns that there are no institutions in Venezuela protecting its citizens—only an armed and corrupt system that relies on violence as a method of control. “We cannot continue to ignore a reality where justice no longer exists and organized crime has taken over every sphere of the country,” said VIA’s co-directors, Niurka Meléndez and Héctor Arguinzones.

The recent decision of the Norwegian Nobel Committee to award María Corina Machado the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize was interpreted by VIA as a powerful gesture of international validation for the peaceful and civic resistance that thousands of Venezuelans continue to uphold despite persecution and censorship. The award, the organization affirms, honors the dignity of those who refuse to surrender to authoritarianism.



VIA Celebrates Nine Years of Community Work with a Bike Ride through Manhattan

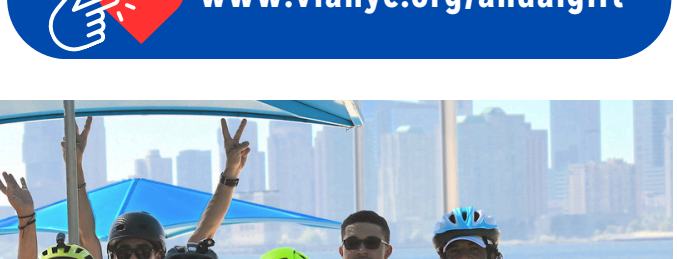
On October 4, Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) marked its [9th anniversary](#) with a special celebration: a 6.8-mile cycling event along the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, guided by We Bike NY. The ride brought together 24 participants, including volunteers and team members, who visited iconic sites such as the Intrepid Museum, Little Island, and Wagner Park, ending the journey with a picnic at South Street Seaport.

More than a recreational outing, the event was a way to honor the commitment and dedication of those who keep VIA moving forward through volunteer work. “This ride was a reminder that VIA keeps progressing thanks to the well-being, mental health, and unity of its team,” said Héctor Arguinzones, VIA’s co-founder and co-director.

Niurka Meléndez, also co-founder and co-director, added that celebrating VIA’s anniversary “is not just about looking back and appreciating what we’ve achieved, but about continuing to create spaces where our volunteers feel supported, valued, and connected.”

With nine years of fully volunteer-driven work, VIA continues to build community and hope for thousands of migrants seeking protection and a new beginning in the United States.

To all volunteers, partners, and friends: thank you for being the heart that drives every mile of this journey. Watch the anniversary video [here](#).



VIA volunteers during the Bike Ride



VIA launched the fifth cycle of its crochet workshop

Art as a Path to Mental Wellness

Venezuelans and Immigrants AID (VIA) has launched the fifth cycle of its crochet workshop “Granny Square,” a creative initiative that brings together 29 participants and has been made possible for nearly two years thanks to VIA’s ongoing collaboration with the James Cohan Gallery.

Each stitch is an opportunity to heal, connect, and learn,” said Niurka Meléndez, VIA’s Co-Director. “In every session, we see how art can be transformative, especially for people who face the challenges of migration and seek spaces of safety and emotional support.”



Granny Square promotes mental health

Part of VIA’s Soporte Entre Pares (Peer Support) program, the workshop blends artistic learning with the creation of emotional support networks and access to reliable information about immigration processes. Throughout each session, participants share food, stories, and skills, weaving together not just fabric, but community.

This space reminds us why we do what we do,” said Héctor Arguinzones, VIA’s Co-Director. “Among experienced hands join new ones to create unique pieces is to witness, quite literally, how solidarity takes shape.”

With this new cycle, VIA reaffirms its commitment to promoting the mental health and well-being of migrant and refugee communities through art. The Granny Square workshop stands as a model of how cultural institutions and civil society can work together to foster healing, inclusion, and resilience.



VIA participates in the 22nd Annual Immigration Law and Policy Conference

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) took part in the 22nd Annual Immigration Law and Policy Conference, held on October 9 and organized by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), and the Georgetown University Law Center. The event brought together legal experts, policymakers, academics, and advocates to discuss today’s most pressing immigration issues in the United States.

Among the key topics were the economic and social impact of mass deportation campaigns, the urgent need to expand access to immigration legal services, and the growing emphasis on border control and enforcement over humanitarian or integration priorities. These discussions underscored how immigration remains one of the most complex

and debated areas of U.S. policy.

Featured speakers included historian Erika Lee, economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin, and Jason Houser, former chief of staff at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Their analyses offered a multidimensional perspective on the challenges ahead, stressing the importance of historical understanding, economic data, and human-centered approaches in shaping more equitable and sustainable immigration policies.

VIA’s participation reflects its ongoing commitment to amplifying immigrant voices and contributing to policy conversations that define the future of migration in the United States.

