

LETTER TO THE CHURCHES

Our Mission:

TO WELCOME IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES BY PROVIDING FREE HIGH QUALITY IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICE, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.



DEPORTATIONS OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN TO BEGIN

Carol Barton of the United Methodist Women's National Staff has called our attention to the confirmed announcement of the Obama Administration as reported in Reuters on May 12, '16 stating that "U.S. immigration officials are planning a month long series of raids in May and June to deport hundreds of Central American mothers and children found to have entered the country illegally."

In reaction the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) stated: "*The Obama Administration's mistreatment of vulnerable refugees seeking protection from unmitigated violence in Central America is a shameful violation of our*

nations core values and a repudiation of basic principles of due process. Rather than responding to the refugee crisis in Central America with an intelligent strategy to address the root causes of violence in the region, and to ensure that the victims of that violence who arrive at our border have a full and fair opportunity to seek protection, it is clear that the administration has decide to ramp up its indefensible strategy of deterrence through incarceration and intimidation," said AILA Executive Director Benjamin Johnson, May 12, 2016.

At JFON we continue to file Special Immigrant Juvenile Status for unaccompanied minors here in Iowa, which will protect them from deportation.

Find a legal clinic:

Immigrants and refugees can make an appointment by calling the office at 515.255.9809 on Mondays from 1pm-4pm & Fridays from 9am-1pm .

FREE immigration legal clinics are monthly except June&December at United Methodist Churches:

*Lovely Lane UMC in Cedar Rapids

*First UMC in Columbus Junction

*Wesley UMC in Ottumwa

*First UMC in Decorah

*First UMC in Storm Lake

*Grace UMC in Des Moines

www.iaumc.org/jfon

Mailing address:

Justice for Our Neighbors

PO Box 41006

Des Moines IA 50311

ADVOCACY NEEDED

Tell the White House to stop ICE raids on children & families:

1-866-961-4293. Sample script:

I'm from _____ and as a person of faith, I urge President Obama to STOP the inhumane & unjust ICE raids to deport Central American mothers and children. These individuals are feeling violence & should have access to legal counsel so they can apply for asylum in US.

CLIENT STORIES FROM OUR ATTORNEYS.

Laura Mendoza specializes in helping survivors of domestic violence whose abusers use their undocumented status against them. There are immigration benefits that can help out these immigrants: U visa and the Violence Against Women Act provisions for the undocumented.

Here is a story of a recent client who was helped by Justice for Our Neighbors. Please share with your congregation or Missions Committee.

The survivor is a quiet man with very deep religious convictions. He was born in Guatemala. His first contact with Iowa JFON was at one of our regular monthly legal clinics. He knew about JFON services because he attends church and got information there about our services.

His original consultation was related to his options to get legal status in United States but he felt confident and confessed to the attorney that he was victim of domestic violence. It was very hard for him to tell her all he was going through because of the myth that men are not the object of battery. During the interview he said that his wife, who is a legal permanent resident, was abusive to him.

The survivor met his wife and they lived together for several years, but since the beginning she was mean and rude to him. She had him under control all the time and didn't allow him even to go to store alone, nor to talk with friends because she was very jealous. If the survivor did something that didn't please her, she was rude and would yell obscenities at him and hit him. He thought she only was jealous, not abusive towards him, but the situation was getting worse and soon the physical abuse turned out to be also sexual. He was often battered by her.

The survivor talked with his pastor and some of the brothers at the church told him that maybe the situation was the result of living in sin because they were not married by the church. They told him that the situation would change if they got married and then they would live peacefully and happily. So they got married in the church, but the situation, on the contrary, kept getting worse. She continued being abusive, not only to him but also to their little daughter.

Many times the survivor got bruises on his face due to the jabs and he was suffering from increasing sexual abuse. He never called the police because he thought no one would believe him since he is a man, and he thought mistakenly that only women go through this. It was very hard for him to admit he was his wife's victim. She also threatened to report him because he didn't have legal documents and he was afraid to be deported at any moment. So she humiliated him very much and criticized his physical appearance, so he felt inferior thus affecting his self-esteem.

JFON referred this client to a domestic violence counselor, who has helped him to understand that not only women are victims of domestic violence. On the other side, JFON assisted him with his VAWA self-petition with US Citizenship and Immigration Services. JFON worked with him very hard to gather all the needed evidence and his case was soon approved. After VAWA approval, JFON assisted him to apply for a work permit.

At present the survivor is very happy because he no longer has to put up with his wife's physical, mental, verbal and sexual abuse anymore, but although they are now separated, he still feels afraid of her when he visits his daughter and sees her.

Although the immigration process is slow, he will be apply for his legal residency in a few years, and eventually he should be able to apply for his naturalization and become a US citizen.
