

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Issue 7, October 2018

Wind of the Spirit

Immigrant Resource Center



Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center, N.J.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF OUR WORK ACCROSS THE STATE



IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 2: At Wind of the Spirit, Youth Lead the way

Page 3: Driver's License Rally

Page 4: Committee information

Page 5: Calendar of Events

At Wind of the Spirit, Youth lead the way

Students of Wind of the Spirit's **Youth Leadership Development (LeD) program** have active roles in climate justice and solidarity-building, leading the way for youth activism and empowerment among their peers.

The Youth LeD program runs Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops that teach students to de-escalate conflict and use effective communication skills to find solutions to problems in their personal life and in communities. Youth LeD nurtures student activism and self-awareness through peer mentorship and anti-violence education, which allows youth the platform to take part in collective change and become active community members.

Youth LeD members meet monthly to participate in special events or group activities that allow them to learn, bond, and grapple with conflicts present in their own lives and their communities. On September 8th, 2018 Youth LeD members attended the People's Climate Rally for Climate, Jobs, and Justice, helping to raise awareness on crucial climate justice issues in their local Morristown community. The following day, members attended a Ramapough Lenape water ceremony to stand in solidarity with the Ramapough of Sweetwater Camp in Mahwah, who are fighting for land rights and against injustice they face from their local government.

At the People's Climate Rally, Youth LeD member Claudia Mejia Sydenstricker gave a rousing speech expounding upon how climate change has devastated Central American communities and led to a surge in climate refugee migrants to the United States. Claudia highlighted that United States corporations are large contributors to the climate change that has led to severe climate disasters which have heavily impacted the lives of Central American populations. She emphasized the violence facing Central American migrants by United State government policy that criminalizes, detains, and deports migrants, while migrant families live in constant fear of having their children separated from their parents.

Claudia, a 13-year-old Morristown resident and student at Madison Junior School, has been an active member at Wind of the Spirit her entire life. She has been attending rallies, marches, and protests since she could walk and is in the process of becoming the youngest peer mentor in Wind of the Spirit's Youth LeD program. Through the Youth LeD program, Claudia has learned to think critically about herself, her community, and the way she interacts and communicates with others. The skills learned through Youth LeD training and Wind of the Spirit activism have empowered her to take a leadership role among her peers and to become one of the leading voices on social justice among youth in the Morristown area.

Wind of the Spirit hopes that the Youth LeD actions at the People's Climate Rally and the Ramapough Lenape Water Ceremony will foster long-term connections between the activist organizations and lead to further actions that will bring solidarity between the peoples most severely impacted by climate change and those most at risk from the violence of US government policies and corporate greed.



Driver's License Rally in Trenton

I remember driving in the car with my father on the streets of Washington Heights in Manhattan. He was undocumented at the time, and still is. We drove in fear because my dad didn't have a valid license to be driving. I remember when we didn't have the car, he would spend money on taxis, buses and subways just to get around. Other times, we used our feet. And like I said, there was always this fear in the air. We had to look out for cops, move from a location if cops arrived and always act undercover in their presence. If I felt all of this as a little girl, I cannot imagine how my father felt everyday knowing that at any second some cop can decide his destiny. They eventually got to my father but I strongly believe that if he had a reliable driver's license, he would have been more safe.

On the 6th of September, members of Wind of the Spirit gathered together — about 30 of them — to go to Trenton in the fight for NJ Driver's Licenses for all. Yes, for all — not just for citizens but for all people regardless of their citizenship status. It was a hot day, the sun wanted to show off before the fall came in. We marched in the heat, chanting and rejoicing with comrades. There were over 600 people at the rally and it was so beautiful to see companions from all walks of life — young, old, working class people, white people, and religious leaders. This was not the first time for this event. Along with other organizations, Wind of the Spirit has been fighting to get NJ licenses for approximately 20 years. The fight has been a long one and it might be coming to an end with the new government that we have in NJ which is supportive of immigrants.

Many spoke at the rally, from religious leaders to people who are affected by not having a license. One of them was Madelyne Montes-Reyes. At the age of 7, she came from Honduras with her mother. Instead of explaining her whole story, Maddy gracefully stood her ground with assertiveness explaining the state of emergency we currently live under. She repeated how we have to unite as oppressed people and fight the battle of all oppressed people: "it is our duty to stand together and lift the voices of those in our community who are looked over and despised." She continued by affirming that, "We will not stop, we will continue to take to the streets, the towns, the boroughs, the cities, the counties, and statehouse of New Jersey." With conviction, Madelyne spoke her truth and inspired others to stand up for something that is important and necessary for the progression of oppressed people.

The political is personal; and politics is always important to oppressed people because it affects them the most. Therefore, if you are an oppressed person, your identity and proximity to politics is very personal. It affects you, people who look like you and people that you love. When we say we want NJ licenses for all, we don't say that because it's irrelevant to immigrant people's rights; we say that because it is a necessity for our communities. It is a necessity that we have our people drive to work, to school, to the doctor's office and to the park just to relax.

Promise me that you will continue to fight and never give up your right to exist.



Wind of the Spirit
Immigrant Resource Center, N.J.



Get involved, join a committee!

Migrant's rights working group:

Every other Monday at 7:00pm

Contact Theresa@Markila.com for more information

Dover and Morristown Immigrant Justice Committee:

Every Monday at 7:30pm

Contact Organizing@Windofthespirit.net for more information

Events/Fundraising:

Every other Wednesday at 7:00pm

Contact Theresa@Markila.com for more information

LGBTQ:

Every other Tuesday at 7:30pm

Contact Theresa@Markila.com for more information

Temporary Protective Status:

Every other Sunday at 4:00pm

Contact Organizing@windofthespirit.net for more information

Newsletter:

Contact Organizing@windofthespirit.net for more information



Wind of the Spirit
Immigrant Resource Center, N.J.

Calendar of Events

Past Events:

Saturday, September 8th- People's Climate Rally

Sunday, September 9th, Ramapough Lenape Sweetwater Camp

Monday, September 10th Books and Bustelo

Saturday, September 15th March for peace and to end Wars

Sunday, September 23rd Educational forum

Monday, September 24th Lobbying at the State House in Trenton

Saturday, September 29th CPR Training

Monday, October 1st Infectious Disease training

Thursday, October 4th TPS Caravan

•

Future Events:

- Sunday, October 21st Educational forum in Dover 2:30pm
- Saturday, October 27th Trip to New York City Museum: Taino Exhibition
- Thursday, November 1st tabling at the neighborhood House
- Monday, November 12th: Books and Bustelo: the first Thanksgiving



Wind of the Spirit
Immigrant Resource Center

T: 973-538-2035
E: office@windofthespirit.net
120 Speedwell Avenue
Morristown, New Jersey



Wind of the Spirit
Immigrant Resource Center, N.J.