

ISSUE 9, DECEMBER 2018

WIND OF THE SPIRIT

IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTER

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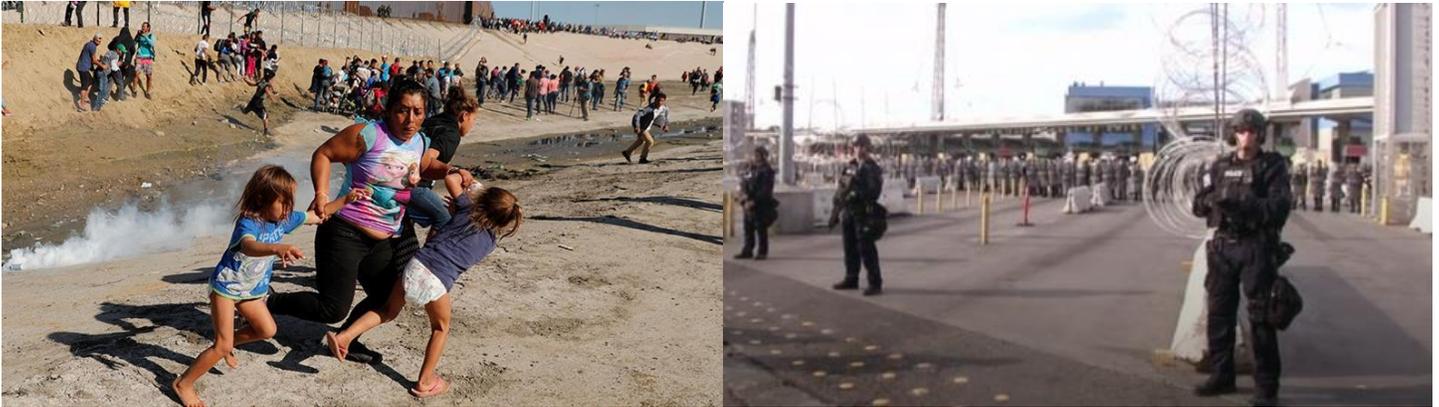
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Wind of the Spirit
Immigrant Resource Center, N.J.

OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF OUR WORK ACROSS THE
STATE



U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PATROL – TURNING MIGRANTS INTO MILITARY TARGETS

On November 25, Central American migrants and refugees were fired upon with teargas by United States Customs and Border Patrol agents for attempting to reach the United States. Reportedly, migrants attempted to remove a section of barbed wire fence that was placed by the United States military in recent operations. Border Patrol agents shot canisters of tear-gas at crowds of migrants forcing men, women, and children to flee for safety.

Meanwhile, the United States–Mexico border was temporarily shut down for 5 hours with no vehicle or foot traffic allowed through the border, with United States and Mexican border patrol blocking entry. U.S. President Donald Trump has authorized troops to use lethal force against migrants who throw rocks, and has threatened a complete shutdown of the United States–Mexico border.

This past week, a Border Patrol agent, who shot and killed a Mexican national across the U.S.–Mexico border in 2012 for allegedly throwing rocks, was acquitted of any wrongdoing after more than 5 years of trials. The ardent refusal of United States Customs and Border Patrol to hold its agents accountable for violence and abuses, and the increasingly violent rhetoric of U.S. politicians toward migrants, creates a frightening precedent for U.S. policy: extreme violence is the preferred method of dealing with migrants and refugees.

Migrants and refugees must not be criminalized and transformed into military targets by the U.S. government. These are families and people seeking safety. We must find a humane solution to respond to people attempting to seek a better life in the United States. We must focus our efforts on supporting positive solutions to the fundamental crises that cause migration from our neighboring nations. We must also recognize the United States’ historical and current geo-political responsibilities in nurturing conditions that fuel the migration and learn how to better support poor populations in the United States.



MILITARIZATION and CRIMINALIZATION AGAINST MIGRANT FAMILIES

Over the past month the United States has increased militarization along its 1,900-mile border with Mexico. The “migrant caravans” of refugee families fleeing food insecurity and extreme violence mainly from the “Northern Triangle” nations of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador have been made into a political flashpoint for United States politicians, seeking to criminalize the migrants in an attempt to stop their migration into United States territorial lands.

The United States government has sent over 5,000 military personnel to bolster border security and use the threat of violence and imprisonment to further dissuade migrants from entering the United States. This has followed actions such as slowing to a trickle the processing of asylum-seekers at legal ports of entry, imprisoning migrants who cross the United States – Mexico border through non-sanctioned entry points, separating arrested migrant parents from their children, and the increased arrest, imprisonment and deportation of “illegal” migrants already settled and living in the United States.



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FOOD INSECURITY, and EXTREME VIOLENCE in the NORTHERN TRIANGLE

Over the past 15 years, the “Northern Triangle” area comprising Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador has been affected by severe changes in weather patterns that have resulted in a collapse of local agriculture and sustenance farming. Increasingly severe droughts and rising temperatures over the past 10 years have resulted in widespread food insecurity among sustenance farmers, affecting staple crops, maize, beans, and coffee.

International economic treaties have further degraded the ability of small farmers to recover from collapse; allowing international corporations to occupy large tracts of land, diverting resources, and controlling the market for staple crop production. As a result, there has been a steady increase in small sustenance farmers selling their land to feed their families and being forced to move into dangerous urban areas or to migrate out of the country.

The urban centers of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala are among the most dangerous in the world, with extreme violence and insecurity caused by drug traffickers and gangs, paired with the violence, instability, and corruption of government institutions.

Current conditions in the Northern Triangle nations are causing an exodus of migrants to surrounding Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, Belize, Mexico and the United States.

FOR MORE ON THIS ARTICLE PLEASE VISIT: WWW.WINDOFTHESPIRIT.NET

THANKSGIVING FOR WHO?

Indigenous culture and customs have been passed through generations and this is seen through different communities. Bartolome de las Casas a Spanish historian wrote about the Native Americans' "hospitality and their belief in sharing". Thanksgiving, a holiday celebrated in the United States as the first shared meal between Native Americans and the pilgrims holds a more brutal, violent truth. The Native Americans shared turkey and in return received bloodshed, rape and a price tag. Members of Wind of the Spirit gathered in Panera Bread of Morristown on Monday, November 12th to discuss the interactions between the pilgrims and the Native Americans. As an initiative to elevate consciousness, every month members of the organization gather to discuss socio-economic, political and cultural topics, in depth.

Thanksgiving is a day of sharing, and hospitality, a quality held close by the natives of the land. The power and spirit of hospitality and kindness continues through generations and is still celebrated today. From the arrival of the first Europeans, there was a mindset of acquiring property, thus, they divided and conquered. In stark contrast, the Native Americans lived "in large communal bell shaped buildings, housing up to 600 people at one time" (de las Casas).

This cultural difference is still prevalent in Latin America, however at a much smaller scale as grandparents live in homes with their children and grandchildren. This quality is important to the human experience because the need to bond is a core human drive. Community is a necessity for support and survival. Their living arrangements and interactions amazed Columbus as he wrote in his journal, "They brought us parrots, and balls of cotton and spears and many other things. The Indians, are so free with their possessions. When you ask for something they have, they never say no. To the contrary, they offer to share with anyone" (Columbus). The Native Americans strength was also their weakness. Columbus and his explorers came in search for gold and seeing the hospitality of the Arawak people, it was too easy to take advantage of their ways of living and use it to their benefit. In New Jersey, there is a community of Ramapough Lenape near the center and it is important for the community to stand in solidarity and learn about the resistance, hospitality and struggle of the Native Americans.

It is important for us to stand together and create communities that support, and protect one another. The Native American community has undergone exploitation, extortion and violence. Indigenous women continue to go missing and it is our duty to stand together and be a fountain of protection, information and resistance.

#Missingandmurderedindigenouswomen #MMIW

Stay tuned for the next Books and Bustelo where members will discuss Christmas and Consumerism on Monday, December 10, 2018 at 7:00pm in Panera Bread of Morristown.



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THE FIGHT FOR DRIVER’S LICENSES CONTINUES

On the night of November 17th, about 15 members of Wind of the Spirit gathered in Morristown on Speedwell Avenue to hold a vigil for the Let’s Drive NJ campaign. The vigil began with general reflections on the driver’s licenses for all movement, discussing the history of the campaign, and holding signs to educate people on the cause. Members of Wind of the Spirit engaged passersby, who could support the campaign by signing up to become more involved in organizing efforts and sign the petition in support of the bill.

Alex Reyes, a volunteer with Wind of the Spirit for around a year, attended the vigil because he is “extremely supportive of fighting and pushing forward on driver’s licenses for all and standing with the immigrant community.” Reyes reflects that one important facet of the licenses for all campaign is educating those who do not support the bill, either because they aren’t educated about it, misunderstand it, or because they oppose this cause. Reyes also says it motivates him to see fellow members of Wind of the Spirit and others fighting to support our people and communities.

There was a generally positive response from the Morristown community at the event, with drivers honking their horns in support and pedestrians signing on to tell their legislators they support this issue and get further involved with Wind of the Spirit, Reyes shared. The vigil attendees spoke with many people who were unfamiliar on the issue, educating them on the bill and gaining support.

Reyes wants to show people who are unaware or unfamiliar with the campaign that our community is motivated to organize and the importance of fighting for this campaign. He says this bill is for everyone—undocumented people will benefit and everyone on the roads will be safer because of it.



The driver’s License legislation has been Introduced!
 Urge your representative to put it on the agenda
A4743/S3229



PAST EVENTS

November 4th Know your Rights training at the First Methodist Church
 November 4th YouthLeD Meeting: Discussion of the Pittsburgh Synagogue
 November 5th Morristown Immigrant Justice Committee
 November 6th Newsletter Committee Meeting
 November 7th State Aid Presentation at East side High school in Newark
 November 9th TPS caravan Grand finale in Washington D.C.
 November 17th Driver's License Vigil Morristown
 November 19th IJC Potluck Dinner
 November 26th Vigil and rally in Woodbridge in support of the Driver's Licenses
 December 3rd Press Conference at the State House
 December 4th New volunteer orientation
 December 4th Newsletter committee meeting
 December 7th Morristown Unitarian Fellowship Holiday Fair- YouthLeD jewelry sales
 December 8th Morristown Unitarian Fellowship Holiday Fair-YouthLeD jewelry sales
 December 9th Morristown Unitarian Fellowship Holiday Fair- YouthLeD jewelry sales
 December 10th Lobbying at the State House for Driver's License bill
 December 10th Books and Bustelo: Christmas and Consumerism

FUTURE EVENTS

December 17th: Final Driver's License march of the year
 Trenton Turning Point Methodist Church 11:00am
 December 22nd: 18 to Infinity, La Lucha Sigue. (WotS18th Anniversary Party)
 Saint Margaret of Scotland Basement 8:00pm
 January 6th: Know your rights training
 United Methodist Church Dover 2:30pm
 January 10th: Know your rights training
 Shrine of Saint Joseph, Stirling 7:00pm





Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Immigrant Resource Center

120 Speedwell Avenue

Morristown, New Jersey

P. 973-538-2035

E: Office@windofthespirit.net

Get involved, Join a committee!

Events and Fundraising:

Third Wednesday

of every month 7:00pm

Contact: volunteer@wotsnj.org

for more information

Temporary Protected Status:

Every other Sunday at 4:00pm

Contact: organizing@windofthespirit.net

for more information

LGBTQ and Immigration:

Fourth Tuesday

of every month at 7:00pm

Contact: volunteer@wotsnj.org

for more information

Migrants rights working group:

Third Tuesday at 7:00pm

Contact: volunteer@wotsnj.org

for more information

Dover and Morristown Immigrant Justice Committee:

(D) Every Sunday at 2:30pm

(M) Every Monday at 7:30pm

Contact:

Organizing@windofthespirit.net

for more information

Newsletter Committee:

Contact: organizing@windofthespirit.net

For more information



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