



JEWISH COALITION *for*
IMMIGRANT JUSTICE NW

Newsletter

23 June 2023 • 4 Tamuz 5783

A DROP OF HONEY

By Michelle Mentzer

With pride, I've seen that Jews have a significant presence in immigrant support groups. It's not just our hearts that draw us to this work. It's our history. Starting with the 36 times that the Torah tells us to welcome the stranger, for we were once strangers in the land of Egypt. Why did we go to Egypt? To feed our families due to famine in our native country. Why did we leave Egypt? We were expelled due to xenophobia – the fear of “others.” For much of our history, we were the Wandering Jews, forever uprooting, migrating, and being expelled because we were “others.”

Today we are trying to correct how our current home, the United States, treats immigrants. The US lauds itself as a nation of immigrants while exploiting immigrants' cheap labor, dehumanizing immigrants, and forcing them to live in fear of being discovered and deported. Once again, the history is long. From the 1790 Act excluding non-white people from eligibility to naturalize, to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, to the racist Immigration Act of 1924, to the refusal of entry to the MS St. Louis, sending 900 Jews back to the Holocaust. As Jews, we join with many others to counter this history. And in doing so we reaffirm our own history.

CELEBRATE

Jewish Coalition Becomes a Nonprofit!



Thank you to those who came out to celebrate the Jewish Coalition's becoming a nonprofit! It was so wonderful to be together in person after long years on Zoom. We are thankful to you for volunteering, taking action, supporting, and allowing the Jewish Coalition to grow and reach this moment!

Special thanks to Rabbi Jay LeVine, Rabbi David Basior, and Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg for being a part of the celebration as well as movement partners Joey Lopez of the Church Council of Greater Seattle and leaders of the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN) Brenda Rodríguez López, Catalina Velasquez, and Sasha Wasserstrom.

Together we will continue to activate Jewish people in the Pacific Northwest to take action with us, deepen relationships with coalition partners, and to grow this movement for immigrant justice.

Welcoming New Leadership of the Church Council of Greater Seattle and Farewell to Leader Michael Ramos

Joey Lopez and Tara Miller have stepped into the role of Co-Directors at the Church Council of Greater Seattle. We are excited to partner with them and continue to organize for immigrant justice together.

Michael Ramos, the long-time, powerful and inspiring Director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, has stepped down from his role and moved east to be closer to family. Michael was instrumental in mobilizing the faith community on behalf of immigrant justice. He was a catalyst in building Washington's rapid response network to raids on workplaces and community spaces raided by ICE officers and in implementing accompaniment programs that follow the lead of those directly impacted. Michael will be taking the helm of the United Way of Tompkins County in upstate New York.

Malou Chavez Becomes Executive Director of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) as Jorge Barón Steps Down after 15 Years of Powerful Advocacy

Malou Chavez is the first immigrant woman of color to lead NWIRP as Executive Director. She worked her way up starting from being an intern 15 years ago. We are thrilled to be able to work with Malou as she guides and continues to grow the impact of NWIRP.

We honor Jorge Barón, former Executive Director of Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, for his past 15 years of service as someone who shows up to advocate for community whether it be driving to the US/Canada border to ensure Iranian Americans being held were released, to fighting to end the Muslim Ban, or advocating at the NW Detention Center. He grew NWIRP from 36 to 130 employees. NWIRP provides direct legal support to immigrants, systemic advocacy, and community education. It has been a national leader in initiating lawsuits to protect immigrant rights. Jorge is now a candidate for Position 4 on the King County Council.

Both the Church Council and NWIRP have been staunch partners to the Jewish Coalition. We thank Michael and Jorge for their exceptional leadership and for the partnerships we have built. We wish them the very best!

SUPPORT



Lavender Rights Project

To honor Pride month and Juneteenth earlier this week, consider supporting the powerful work of the [Lavender Rights Project](#). Lavender Rights Project elevates the power, autonomy, and leadership of the Black intersex & gender diverse community through intersectional legal and social services. They provide life-saving policy and social change advocacy, comprehensive care, and legal services to LGBTQ+ individuals, with a particular emphasis on supporting Black trans communities in Washington State and across the US.

[DONATE](#)



Entre Hermanos

[Entre Hermanos](#) is a Seattle based organization that promotes the health and well-being of the Latino Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and questioning community in a culturally appropriate environment through disease prevention, education, support services, advocacy and community building. Entre Hermanos attorneys are taking cases for both detained and non-detained LGBTQ+ members of the Latino/a/e/x community to apply for asylum and other forms of immigration relief.

[DONATE](#)

TAKE ACTION

ICE FLIGHTS

King County has filed an appeal to the ruling allowing ICE flights in King County. County leaders expect the appeal process to be lengthy, so ICE flights in and out of King County Airport will continue. As JCIJ reported last month, it is very important to prevent NWDC from becoming a “black site” where ICE can make people appear and disappear without anyone knowing. These flights ensnare immigrants before they can make their case to attain legal status in the US, separate families, and return immigrants to the dangers they fled.

[La Resistencia](#) is working with [Tsuru for Solidarity](#) and Angelina Godoy at the [UW Center for Human Rights](#) to witness every flight.

Volunteers are needed to monitor this ICE activity! If you are interested in learning more about being part of a monitoring team, please complete our [volunteer interest form](#).

VOLUNTEER

Spanish Speakers Needed to Support Colectiva Legal del Pueblo Pro Se Asylum Clinic

Are you proficient in Spanish? Can you support JCIJ's partner org, Colectiva Legal del Pueblo, at their August 26 Pro Se Asylum Clinic? These clinics are offered to provide community members the opportunity to complete their Form I-589, Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal, in a timely fashion, before their one year time limit runs out. Considering the huge demand for legal services, this can be a real worry for community members seeking asylum.

Colectiva Legal requires that accompaniment volunteers attend one Pro Se Asylum Clinic to shadow a legal team employee in order to learn how to fill out forms. The volunteers will be trained to assist clients to complete their Form I-589 in English. Colectiva Legal will then verify the volunteer's ability to work independently with attendees at the next Pro Se Asylum Clinic with an attorney review of all work. Colectiva's legal team will be on hand to answer questions, work with clients with more complicated cases, and review volunteers' work.

To volunteer at the next Colectiva Legal Pro Se Asylum Clinic, Saturday August 26 9:30-4pm, contact reception@colectivalegal.org for more information.

Volunteers Needed to Support Career Re-entry!



On Sunday, July 9 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., the [Jewish Family Service Refugee & Immigrant Services](#) program will host a professional networking event at Highline Community College for refugee clients they work with. They're looking for volunteers to staff industry tables, assist with mock interviews, and help clients with their elevator pitches. Individuals with professional experience in Business, Technology, Engineering, and General Human Resources are the highest need. Read volunteer responsibilities and requirements [here](#). Please email volunteer@jfsseattle.org for more information or to sign up. Please let them know the Jewish Coalition referred you. Thank you!

Jewish Community Found Housing for Honduran Asylum Seekers! Join the Circle of Support

Congratulations to our Jewish community for finding housing for two young Honduran brothers! Thank you to those who rallied to support - especially to the family on the eastside who welcomed them as well! Thanks to your efforts, they have a basement apartment in a home in Wallingford, found by a member of Kadima. The homeowners have cut the rent in half for the brothers, but it is still a stretch. The \$800 rent is half of the older brother's take-home pay (the younger brother is 16 and in high school). That paycheck supports their family in Honduras, as well as themselves. Congregation Beth Shalom's Social Action Committee purchased mattresses for their new apartment.

Contributions. Many people responded to the housing alert by offering to help defray the rent. We are working to set up a mechanism for folks to make automatic monthly donations (eg \$5, \$10 or \$20) that go directly to the landlords. If you're interested in making such a donation, please email michelle.mentzer2@gmail.com.

Rides. We are gathering a list of folks willing to receive an occasional email from Congregation Beth Shalom member Michelle Mentzer when the brothers need a ride. They will rely almost entirely on public transit, but they would like to continue attending their church in Redmond on Sundays, where the older brother teaches Sunday school. (They started at that church when they lived in a host home with a Jewish family in Kirkland.) They also have occasional legal or medical appointments that they may not be able to get to in a timely manner via public transit.

You would have no obligation to say yes to any particular ride request. Just be willing to receive occasional emails. You will be asked to simply delete the email and not reply unless you're able to offer the ride. Interested? Email michelle.mentzer2@gmail.com.

Thank you and kol ha-kavod to our community for forming a circle of support for these young asylum seekers!

EVENTS



AIDNW's July In-Person Community Meeting at Congregation Beth Shalom in Seattle

Date: Wednesday, July 19

Time: 10:30 AM - 12 PM

Location: In person, at Congregation Beth Shalom, Seattle - 6800 35th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115

Lunch will be provided by the Congregation (no outside food allowed)

Speakers: Andrew Hayes, representing Congressman Adam Smith (9th District) and Palmira Figueroa, representing Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (7th District)

Topic: What local government is working on with Immigration issues

RSVP to officeassistant@aidnw.org by 07/12/23

COMMITTEES

Accompaniment Committee

We have launched our new JCIJ accompaniment volunteer outreach project, recruiting volunteers to support the work of our immigrant justice partner, Colectiva Legal del Pueblo and other partner organizations who have reached out seeking volunteer support. We invite you to complete and submit a [volunteer interest form](#) and we will be in touch with next steps. Please join us at the next Accompaniment Committee meeting! We meet virtually the third Wednesday of the month, 7-8pm. Click [HERE](#) and we'll send you sign in information.

Advocacy Committee

As we reflect on this past Legislative Session, shift more into federal advocacy, and plan for the future, join us to engage with one of our Advocacy Workgroups that are forming:

1) Power Mapping: identifying action takers and Jewish individuals and organizations across congressional and legislative districts to help us more strategically mobilize advocacy efforts in the future.

2) Story Collection: building a bank of stories about people's experiences attempting to navigate our broken immigration system, as well as family stories/history in navigating these systems. This work group will plan, design and implement different methods to collect these stories.

JCIJ's Advocacy Committee meets virtually the second Sunday of each month. [Join our next monthly meeting on July 9th from 4-5:30pm.](#)

Community Engagement

The Congregational Collaboration Committee asks you to please [fill out this survey](#) TODAY so we can learn more about your needs and interests.

Sign up [here](#) to join future Community Engagement Committee meetings.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Congregation Beth Shalom's Immigration and Sanctuary Group Meaningfully Supports Community

The Immigration and Sanctuary group at [Congregation Beth Shalom](#) has been busy throughout the Spring. CBS member Shelley Kushner has been hired to be the teacher in the next [International Rescue Committee](#) (IRC) sewing class for Afghan women. She has been busy finalizing the curriculum. Using the generous donations from the CBS community, they have donated the sewing machines, kits, and tools for the students. Through networking with the UDistrict Immigrant Justice Hub, one of the graduates from the first class was hired to sew professionally. Also with IRC, CBS donated children's books for their summer reading program. Members of CBS continue to assist with new apartment set-ups as well.

Travel lunches to [AIDNW](#) have resumed outside the Northwest Detention center in Tacoma. As part of a community effort, CBS supplies lunches the 4th Wednesday of each month.

From CBS Purim donations, they made and distributed 200 snack bags to [JFS Immigrant Services](#). These will be for immigrants who are spending long days navigating the system to receive legal help and other services. The Immigration and Sanctuary Team is now planning for Adult and Youth Learning programs for the upcoming year including the next HIAS Refugee Shabbat. These programs will be highlighting immigration struggles, work with community partners, and immigrant rights advocacy.

LOCAL NEWS

New Legislation May Improve Conditions in the NW Detention Center

As part of the implementation of newly passed HB 1470, members of the Shutdown NWDC Coalition are working with the Washington State Department of Health on rulemaking to begin to create standards for conditions in the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC). Immigrants seeking legal status in the US are detained in horrifying conditions, without access to family or legal counsel. Their goal is to begin inspections at the NWDC ASAP. At least 6 people incarcerated in the NWDC are currently on hunger strike to call attention to prolonged detention, lack of medical care, improper diet for cultural practices, high cost of commissary (for essential care items and food), lack of cleaning of the facility, and mishandling of cases.

Welcoming New Arrivals to Seattle and King County

Although no planes or buses of new immigrant arrivals have come to Seattle from the border, new arrivals come every day to shelters, places of worship, and other community organizations. Immigrants are arriving in greatest numbers from Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Mauritania, Cameroon, Angola, D.R. Congo and other countries in Africa.

The City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) has said that it can not release emergency funds to support newly arrived people because the situation does not meet the criteria for an emergency. OIRA has asked organizations to submit data to help them build the case that there is a substantial need. [Mary's Place](#) is beyond capacity. Riverton Park United Methodist Church in Tukwila has put up as many as 90 new arrivals a night.

The [Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network](#) has begun delivering mutual aid/care packages containing hygiene products, gift cards, Know Your Rights information, and information about the WAISN Deportation Defense Hotline. To date they have delivered 33 care packages including \$5100 in gift cards.

NEWS

What's Happening at the Border One Month after Title 42 was Ended

Watch American Immigration Council webinar on what's happening at the border one month after Title 42 ended [here](#). Title 42 was the Trump-era misuse of public health authority to expel asylum seekers back to their home countries. Here is where to download the resource mentioned during the webinar: [Beyond A Border Solution: How to Build a Humanitarian Protection System That Won't Break](#). There have been [many challenges](#) with the implementation of the CBP One App - even extortion that shut down online appointments in Nuevo Laredo, Texas.

The border crossings have heated the debate surrounding asylum. But what is really behind the situation is the need for a reform in our immigration system. A [new poll](#) from

Data for Progress, the Refugee Advocacy Lab, and Refugees International found that a majority of voters actually support allowing people to seek asylum at the southern border. Congress should work on solutions that prioritize human dignity.



New U.S. Rules Send Asylum Requests Soaring in Mexico

Nonprofit shelters in Mexico City are overcrowded as many migrants are facing uncertainty under new U.S. rules requiring them to first apply for asylum in a transit country and be denied before applying for U.S. asylum. Mexico is receiving up to 1,000 asylum seekers a day who were expelled from the United States. Read more [here](#).

Afghan Nationals Can Renew their Humanitarian Parole

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [announced](#) the process by which Afghan nationals can renew their parole in the U.S. for another two years. "Through this new streamlined and fee-exempt process, eligible Afghan nationals will be able to continue living and working here as they pursue a permanent status," said Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas.

However, this process falls short of a long-term solution for families without a pathway to permanent status and the [Afghan Adjustment Act](#) continues to be stalled in Congress.

Black Immigrants in the South



The intersection of being Black and an immigrant is becoming increasingly common in the South where 1 in 10 Black residents is an immigrant. Black immigrants' experience is rarely centered in national conversations about immigration policy, but they face significant hurdles. For example, in Tennessee, a state with few transportation options, translation and interpretation of driving tests is largely unavailable. Black Americans face racial profiling and are 20% more likely than white Americans to get pulled over. Black immigrants are also disproportionately likely to be deported from interactions with police. Listen [here](#).

SONGS IN THE KEY OF JCIJ

Curated by Dina Burstein

[Two Good Arms](#) song by Charlie King, sung by Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert

Two Good Arms tells the story of the conviction and execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, immigrants from Italy, in Massachusetts in 1927, for robbery and murder. Protests on their behalf occurred all over the world. Xenophobia, anti-immigrant and anti-Italian bias played a large part in the conviction of “these two good men.” The song concludes, “And all who knew these two good men, knew they never had to rob or kill. Each had lived by his own two arms and lived well. And all their lives they have struggled to rid the earth of all such crimes. And all our lives we must struggle to rid the earth of all such crimes.”

[Hungry Yid](#) by Brivele and Bruce (the boss) Springsteen

Tribute to Brivele, the awesome Yiddish anti-fascist klezmer folk-punk trio. Thank you,

Brivele, for singing at the JCIJ picnic on June 4! Go see them every time you have the opportunity!

Ricardo Lemvo and Makina Loca Samba Luku Samba Ricardo

I include a song from Ricardo Lemvo, a Congolese artist who performs Afro-Cuban music in Lingala and Spanish, because volunteers at the US southern border are seeing a large increase in immigration from Africa. This beautiful performance was recorded in 2014 in a park in Ontario, Canada.

Be in touch with the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW
at goforth@jcijnw.org and follow by liking us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).
Invite others to [subscribe](#) to this Newsletter.



Sent via [ActionNetwork.org](https://www.actionnetwork.org). To update your email address, change your name or address, or to stop receiving emails from Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW, please [click here](#).

—