

Newsletter

January 8, 2024 • 27 Tevet 5784

Wishing you a Happy & Healthy (gregorian) New Year!

Year End Gratitude

Thank you to those who supported the Jewish Coalition's year end campaign! We met our match and exceeded our end of year goal! We raised a total of \$11,433 including our match. Your support will continue to grow the Jewish Coalition's accompaniment, advocacy, community engagement, and support for newly arrived migrants.



RIVERTON UPDATE

In December, King County Council invested \$3 million to provide six to eight months of shelter in 100 hotel rooms for newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers who have been living in tents at Riverton Park United Methodist Church (RPUMC). By now, the families have moved to their hotel rooms, and more migrants arrive every week.

As of January 2, 2023 180 people live in the encampment. Many of those who now live in hotel rooms and shelters spend their days at RPUMC. As of last month there were 14,000 newly arrived asylum seekers in Washington. The 100 hotel rooms are a good first step, but local and state governments must now step up with more policy solutions and supportive services.

JCIJ and many other community groups continue to help Riverton Park Church provide needed services.

As of Jan 3, here are the Riverton supply needs:

- Peanut butter
- Top Ramen
- Full size shampoo
- Hair brushes
- Men's belts
- Umbrellas
- Paper towels
- Baby wipes
- Adult bath wipes
- Backpacks
- Hand warmers
- Gloves all sizes



Reina looks small in comparison to the piles of coats from Kadima for Riverton



If you would like to donate any of these items, please bring them directly to the RPUMC office or contact Ruth Egger for assistance.

Volunteer at Riverton Church

If you are interested in the following legal volunteer roles, please fill out and submit [this JCIJ volunteer form](#). Reach out to [Ruth Egger](#) with any questions.

Temporary Protected Status Clinics

- Legal clinics once a week on Mondays help Venezuelan asylum seekers, who are eligible for TPS, submit applications.
- Spanish-speaking volunteers are needed to help community members fill out TPS applications. Staff and volunteers will train you.
- Volunteers who do not speak Spanish are needed to help set up the weekly TPS clinic; this includes setting up chairs and tables and copying paperwork.
- Volunteer immigration lawyers are needed to review applications before they are submitted.
- Spanish-speaking translators who can help translate written documents such as birth certificates and ID cards from Spanish into English are needed. This can be done at the clinic on Monday afternoons or from home.

Asylum Clinics

- Legal clinics to help migrants apply for asylum and work permits occur as needed; there were two in the last week of December.
- Paul Soreff coordinates the clinics with Jen Tenorio, who is on staff at the church.
- The clinics are not regular days at this time, but will be scheduled as preliminary asylum applications are completed by the immigrants.
- Volunteer lawyers, paralegals and interpreters work at the clinics filling out the information and assisting the immigrant writing their declarations stating why they are afraid to return to their home country. Each application is reviewed by 2 immigration lawyers.
- More volunteers are needed, especially immigration lawyers and people who speak Spanish, Portuguese or French.

After School Enrichment

- The program serves primarily elementary students from 5-9 from Angola, Venezuela, and Congo, although occasionally middle school students attend to play language games, and high school students drop by for help with math assignments. We usually have a group of about 10-12 children at any given session, but that varies widely. So far, we have served approximately 60–75 students.
- The after-school program runs every Monday and Wednesday in a small room in the church right next to the sanctuary, from 4-6pm. We provide snacks, with the church and one of our volunteers providing donated school supplies – everything from markers, crayons, construction paper, and games to age-appropriate books. The children draw pictures, work on simple art projects, read stories and play language games.
- We continually adjust to current needs. In late December, approximately 100 families moved into the Doubletree Hotel near the airport, with about 20 families moving into the EconoLodge down the street from the church. A number of families still remain at the church, however; new families are still arriving, and many return to cook, socialize, register for school, and get help with asylum claims.
- Currently, we have a full volunteer staff and no more need for supplies, but given the fluid nature of the enterprise, this could change.

Props for Riverton Legal Clinic organizers from a volunteer interpreter: “The clients have endured many hardships to get here, so it is very encouraging to know that you have their backs. The energy you bring is contagious. Even though my role is minor, I live vicariously

through your efforts and it motivates me to be a better person. You treat each client with dignity, professionalism and compassion and set great examples for all to follow."

EVENTS

Register for JCIJ Advocacy Training January 16th 7-8:30pm

You are invited to the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice Advocacy Training!

REGISTER HERE!

Did you know that the Washington state legislature is about to consider expanding affordable health coverage to people without documentation? And that the legislature will soon consider providing unemployment benefits to undocumented migrants? And that they will consider funding supportive services and housing for new migrant arrivals to our state?

The Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice (JCIJ) is offering a free online advocacy event on January 16 at 7PM. Join to learn more about our legislative priorities and make an Action Plan for 2024. [Click here to register!](https://tinyurl.com/jcijadvocacy24)



**Take Action for
Immigrant Justice:
A JCIJ Advocacy Training**

Tuesday, January 16, 2024
7-8:30pm
Virtual Event
tinyurl.com/jcijadvocacy24

- Learn about JCIJ's legislative priorities.
- Hear about top priorities from the WA Immigrant Solidarity Network's Policy Team.
- Make an Action Plan.
- Meet Jewish activists and others taking action for immigrant justice.



Join the Jewish Coalition at WAISN's Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Day in Olympia on February 7.

There is still time to register to attend Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Day in Olympia led by the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network on Wednesday, February 7, 9AM to 6PM. **Be sure to register at tinyurl.com/IRAD2024 before the registration deadline, January 12!**

Let JCIJ know you're coming at team@jewishcoalition.org!

REGISTER FOR IRAD



Faith Action Network Advocacy Day



**Thursday, February 8, 2024
9 AM - 3 PM**

The United Churches of Olympia
110 11th Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Faith Action Network's Interfaith Advocacy Day brings the voices of compassion and justice to our elected leaders. Meeting with your legislators and their staff on this day is putting your faith into action!

On Interfaith Advocacy Day, you will be able to:

- Join plenaries and workshops that will explore the issues on FAN's 2024 Legislative Agenda.
- Meet with advocates from your legislative district to prepare for your legislative visits.

- Meet with your legislator or their legislative assistant! If you register by January 29, FAN will set up an appointment for you and others from your district.
- Lunch will be provided.

Registration deadline is January 29. [REGISTER HERE](https://www.bethshalomseattle.org/hias-2024.html).

HIAS Refugee Shabbat Weekend at Congregation Beth Shalom



Register at <http://www.bethshalomseattle.org/hias-2024.html>.

On Saturday, February 3: Shabbat Learning | 1 - 2 PM | Why we volunteer; lead by CBS members

On Sunday, February 4 from 1:30 - 3:30 PM:

- Wide World of Refugee Voices; poetry, music & spoken word
- Immigration in WA & Beyond; with Nicky Smith, International Rescue Committee Regional Director Mountain West
- Storytellers; individuals sharing their experiences as immigrants and refugees
- Story of Project Feast; we'll be hearing from Executive Director Van Nguyen

Put Advocacy into Action and Make a Lasting Impact! Nibble on Project Feast snacks and visit opportunity & information tables to put your inspiration to work.

Save the Date: La Resistencia Solidarity Day at King County Airport (Boeing Field)

On Saturday, January 20, 2024, bring attention to the [disgraceful use of our County facilities to deport community members](#)! JCIJ will send more details as soon as we have them.



TAKE ACTION

Protect Asylum

WHAT IS GOING ON?

Congress is currently working on a number of pieces of legislation, but one of the main issues holding things up is whether to provide aid to Ukraine. Republicans in both the House and Senate have said that they will not vote to provide aid to Ukraine without drastic changes to border policy.

As a result, Senate Democrats and the Biden Administration have signaled that they are open to supporting a number of changes that would decimate the asylum system.

Republicans are demanding even more harmful changes and currently there is no agreement on the table, though it's being reported that negotiators are close to an agreement.

2/10

ILRC
TRAINING, INTERPRETING
& CHANGING LAW SINCE 1999

Visit fwd.us/callsenate to quickly call your Senators.
Visit ilrc.me/immjustice to send your Senators an email.

Things that are on the table - from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC):

- Nation-wide Expedited Removal, which is currently in place at the border and will put all undocumented folks at risk.
- A heightened fear standard for Asylum Seekers that will make it much harder to be able to access our asylum system and result in more removals at the border.
- A cap on the number of people who can be granted asylum in a year. This would prevent people from being able to access asylum and further increase the backlog.
- A Transit Ban that would deny asylum seekers who pass through other countries who don't apply for protection in that country first.

- An Expulsion Program similar to Title 42 or Migrant Protection Protocols aka Remain in Mexico to expel people at the border.
- Curbing Executive Parole Authority to enact parole programs.

SUPPORT

GoFundMe for Immigrant Couple with Dual Cancer Diagnoses

By Michelle Mentzer and Peter Costantini

This is a **GoFundMe** for a young couple in Seattle who are dear friends. The couple is facing dual cancer diagnoses as they try to support their two young children, with another one on the way, while fighting for asylum. [Please support their GoFundMe.](#)

“Jose” and “Maria” are in their early 30’s. Their real names are withheld to protect their privacy. Jose and Maria fled Peru with their two young children after months of death threats and extortion from a drug cartel. The final death threat was a letter enclosing a bullet and a photograph of their son in front of his school.

We came to know this family by accompanying them to ICE and immigration court proceedings. We did this work as volunteers with the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW (JCIJ) and the Church Council of Greater Seattle (CCGS). They are a most lovely family who were working hard to establish themselves in Seattle and fight for asylum before tragedy struck.

In February 2023, Maria was diagnosed with a large ovarian tumor that was malignant. Because of the surgery, the family lost her work income for the next six weeks.

Then in the summer of 2023, Jose began experiencing severe internal pain. He was unable to work for several weeks over that summer. Then in early September 2023, the pain became so intense that he was incapacitated.

In October 2023, Jose had a kidney removed due to a very large, malignant tumor. Nine cancerous lymph nodes were also removed. He has been unable to work since early September 2023. He hopes to be able to return to work soon.

The final complication occurred when Jose and Maria recently discovered that they are unexpectedly pregnant. The new baby was not planned, and while every child is a blessing, it will entail more time off from work and higher expenses. The parents are trying to support themselves, their two children, and Jose’s mother, who lives with them and cares for the children so they can work.

[We are trying to raise money for rent, so the family can get on its feet.](#) Thank you so much for your generosity!

VOLUNTEER ACCOMPANIMENT

OPPORTUNITIES

If you are interested in participating in any of these volunteer opportunities, please fill out and submit the [JCIJ Volunteer Interest Form](#). We will contact you with more information.

Colectiva Legal del Pueblo

We are looking for a few more volunteers to help Colectiva Legal with clerical tasks, organizing their clothing and diaper bank, and to do in-person accompaniment for their clients to necessary appointments. Training and orientation provided.

Immigration Court, USCIS Appointments, Other Appointments

We are looking for a few more volunteers to accompany community members to court and necessary appointments. Training and orientation provided.

Riverton Park United Methodist Church

We are looking for volunteers to:

- Help residents at TPS and Asylum Clinics
- Help residents fill out forms to change their court case venue to Seattle
- Tutoring and homework help for school-age students
- Translating and interpreting in Spanish, French, Portuguese, or Lingala

Observe ICE Flights at King County Airport

Volunteers observe the flights every Tuesday morning on a screen in the airport terminal, and send statistics to [La Resistencia](#) and the [UW Center for Human Rights](#).

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Newsletter and Fundraiser Planning

Join JCIJ's Communications Committee: Help JCIJ write and produce this newsletter by joining our Comms Committee!

Join JCIJ's Fundraising Committee: Help JCIJ plan a major in person fundraiser on May 19th. Save the date!

If you are interested in participating in any of these volunteer opportunities, please fill out and submit the [JCIJ Volunteer Interest Form](#). We will contact you with more information.

NEWS

An unprecedented year in immigration, and in anti-immigration rhetoric

[Read here](#) for a look back on immigration in 2023, an unprecedented year of [anti-immigrant rhetoric](#). Right now, Democrats will potentially concede on border security and gut our asylum system.

Four Things To Know About Immigration Law in Texas

A new Texas law will test how far a state can go to keep migrants out of the United States. Some key things to know about the law are: who can be arrested, where the law will be enforced, if it is constitutional, and what is happening at the border. [Read more](#).

In New York, migrants crowd into hotels seeking shelter — just like Jewish refugees did after WWII



[This](#) is a powerful article from *The Forward* about the parallels between Holocaust survivor refugees and today's migrants being housed in the same hotels: [At the Roosevelt, the Park West and the Belnord, echoes of Holocaust survivors' stories](#).

Berger [son of Polish Jews who fled into the Soviet Union after the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939] believes that given the opportunity, today's migrant families could also be a positive force. "People who take such risks to come here should be welcomed," he said. "They are people who are looking to build a better life for themselves and their children. They work very hard and contribute enormously to the life we have here."

None of the migrants I spoke to were aware of the Jewish families who were also once refugees starting new lives in Manhattan hotels, but they found comfort in learning that they were not the first.

"It gives me hope," Castellanos, the Peruvian mother of three, told me, "that my family and I will be able to be in a better place in life."

[Support the Tucson Samaritans](#). Their mission: Save lives and relieve the suffering of migrants in Arizona and near the border.

[Donate or purchase supplies here](#).



COMMITTEES

Accompaniment

We invite you to fill out the [JCIJ Volunteer Interest Form](#) to learn more about volunteering with JCIJ at Colectiva Legal del Pueblo, Riverton Park United Methodist Church, Observing ICE Flights, or Seattle Immigration Court.

Please join us at the next Accompaniment Committee meeting! We meet virtually, the third Wednesday of the month, 7-8pm.

We are also having our first ever in-person volunteer gathering over a potluck dinner on January 31. Click [here](#) and we'll send you details. All are welcome!

Advocacy

We are gearing up for our annual Advocacy Training to kick off Legislative Session, create an Action Plan, and dig into our top Legislative Priorities: Health Equity for Immigrants, Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers, and Support for Newly Arrived Migrants. [Register here!](#)

Our next Advocacy Committee meeting is Sunday, January 14th from 4-5:30pm. Sign up [here](#).

Community Engagement

Over the last several months the community engagement committee has focused mainly on efforts to support the people housed at the Riverton Park United Methodist Church. Many individuals and congregations have pitched in with supplies and assistance. As funds from the County become available and hopefully people move into more appropriate housing, the needs will continue to change.

The committee is exploring ways to effectively work with the JCIJ Advocacy committee, including ways to spread the word about advocacy training and other ways to participate in the work. Similarly, the committee coordinates with accompaniment as needs arise for rides and other kinds of accompaniment. Finally, the committee is considering the focus for presentations at congregations in the spring.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month in the morning. Fill out [this form](#) and we will send you details. All are welcome!

Book Club

The Book Club will meet on January 9th at 7 pm. This month, we are reading *The Man of Two Faces* by Viet Than Nguyen.

If you would like to receive Book Club meeting details, [please sign up here](#). All are welcome!

SONGS IN THE KEY OF JCIJ

Curated by Dina Burstein

Tu B'Shvat, holiday for trees, is January 24-25 this year. Here are some songs for Tu B'Shvat!

- [Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway - Crooked Tree \(Live\)](#)
- [Rising Appalachia - Sunny Days \(Official Audio\)](#)
- [Nefesh Mountain | "Tree Of Life" - Live at the Station Inn](#)

Sing Along!

- [Peter, Paul & Mary - Lemon Tree](#)
- [Louis Armstrong - What A Wonderful World](#)



Be in touch with the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW
at team@jewishcoalition.org and follow by liking us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

[Donate](#) to build Jewish Coalition's advocacy, accompaniment and community engagement.

[Volunteer](#) for or learn more about accompaniment, legal support, observing ICE flights, tutoring, interpreting, crafting JCIJ's newsletter, and supporting immigrant-led partners.

Invite others to [subscribe](#) to JCIJ mailings.