

# Letter to Our Friends

## Our Mission:

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



### Matching Grant Means We need YOU!

We are asking our supporters to consider a donation this summer in order to help us capture a dollar for dollar matching grant. This match goes up to \$10,000, so it will be a big help to our budget. The grantor is the National office of Justice for Our Neighbors. They encourage us to reach out to individuals, so to count for this grant match, we need individual donors to step up. Each year we

must raise our operating funds again. Although we have help from several sources that are fairly consistent, we raise about half of the budget each year from YOU, our supporters. Even our federal grant requires a match for it.

As a non-profit we rely on volunteers to do many, many of our tasks, so that we can utilize our scarce dollars for salaries and office expenses. Your dollars are translated into immigration legal services so essential to refugees and immigrants here in Iowa. JFON

### Find a legal clinic:

Immigrants and refugees can make an appointment by calling the office at 515.255.9809 Monday through Fridays from 9 am-5 pm .

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-Des Moines

\*First UMC-Marshalls town

[www.iaumc.org/jfon](http://www.iaumc.org/jfon)

Mailing address and donations:

Justice for Our Neighbors

PO Box 41006

Des Moines IA 50311

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO ANN NAFFIER FOR AILA AWARD

Exciting news from the recent annual meeting of the American Immigration Lawyers Association came to us. Ann Naffier, one of our immigration attorneys, was awarded one of the national Pro Bono Champion awards for 2017. Ann was the nominee of the Iowa-Nebraska Chapter of AILA. Here are some of the remarks from the nomination in regard to Ann's service through Justice for Our Neighbors and prior work": "Ann has been a dedicated legal services provider and

leader for immigrant justice in Iowa for more than 20 years. ...Over the years, she has volunteered countless evening and weekend hours at free legal clinics, Know Your Rights presentations and community town hall presentations. Ann has been volunteer mentor to immigration attorneys across the state of Iowa and beyond. Many Iowa immigration attorneys can say they trained or volunteered under Ann's direction and still seek her gracious leadership."

**CLIENT STORIES SHARED BY OUR STAFF FROM JUNE 9, 2017.**

(More stories found at [www.iaumc.org/jfon](http://www.iaumc.org/jfon))

**Brynn Howard shares this.**

Martha and her husband, Marcos had already had been led down several dead-end paths and spent thousands of dollars on attorneys trying to obtain legal status for Martha by the time they came to meet with Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors.

Martha came to the United States more than 20 years ago. Soon after Martha came to the U.S. she was referred by a friend to someone who helped her fill out an application for a work permit. Unbeknownst to Martha, this person was involved in a scam with an immigration official who was fraudulently issuing work permits to individuals in California. This officer later was fired and criminally investigated.

Martha later married Marcos, a legal permanent resident, and they had 3 children. Martha and Marcos paid an attorney thousands of dollars and began the process to apply for Martha. They paid the immigration fees and, after several years Martha received a notice that she was scheduled for an interview in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. At that time Martha and Marcos decided not to continue with their attorney and came to JFON for help.

Martha and Marcos met with a JFON attorney who realized that Martha's brother had also filed a petition for Martha many years ago. As a result, Martha was eligible to

apply for her legal permanent residency in the U.S. and did not need to travel to Ciudad Juarez. Martha and Marcos were extremely relieved to learn that Martha would not need to travel to Juarez. They feared what would happen if she were denied and worried about how they would care for the children while she was in Mexico. Fortunately, with JFON's help, Martha never had to travel to Juarez. She had an interview in Des Moines and her case was approved. After many years, thousands of dollars and several false starts, Martha finally received her legal permanent residency in April and she can finally feel secure in the country that is home to her.

**April Palma shares this.**

Cristian is a 16 year old from Guatemala. Cristian left Guatemala because there were no opportunities for him there. Since the age of 12 he was no longer able to attend school because his parents would not pay for him to go to school. Rather, he was told he had to work in order to help support his younger siblings. He was also having problems with his father. His father is an alcoholic. Shortly before Cristian left Guatemala, he and his father had an altercation and his father hit him. While it was the only time his father has physically abused Cristian, Cristian has witnessed his father abusing his mother for many years. Cristian also left Guatemala because of the growing gang violence. He left when he was 15 years old, which is prime recruitment age for the gangs.

Cristian is now reunited with his uncle in Iowa. His uncle reached out to JFON and

we are currently assisting Cristian with his petition for SIJS.

**Emily Rebelskey shares this.**

Carmen currently works as a bilingual tutor with the Marshalltown school district and hopes to retire soon. She therefore wishes to naturalize so she can collect the retirement benefits that she has earned over the years. Carmen first got her lawful permanent residence in the United States in 1978. Her 70's-style permanent resident card is so old that it has no expiration date. She meets all the qualifications for citizenship: she's been continuously residing in the U.S. for nearly 40 years, speaks fluent English, and is a person of upstanding moral character.

She never naturalized because she did not know what the requirements were, and could not afford a lawyer to help her through the process. Carmen attended one of our first Marshalltown clinics and JFON is happy to help Carmen through her citizenship journey!

To all of our donors, we thank you for your support of our work. Help us capture the matching grant for \$10,000 with a donation to  
Justice for Our Neighbors  
PO Box 41006 Des Moines 50311

United Methodist Churches use Iowa Advance Special #375 to contribute to this ministry of the Iowa Annual Conference.