

Letter to the Churches

Our Mission:

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



November Schedule of JFON Legal Clinics at United Methodist Churches.

Nov 1 - Columbus Junction
 Nov 9 - Ottumwa
 Nov 10 - Decorah
 Nov 12 - Storm Lake
 Nov 14 - Marshalltown
 Nov 27 - Des Moines
 Cedar Rapids to be announced.
 October legal clinics have been cancelled to focus on DACA .

OUR MINISTRY IS YOUR
 MINISTRY!

Thanking the Churches

For 2017 we are very humbled by the generosity of the United Methodist Churches of Iowa who have donated from January to September over \$34,000. This contribution is an important source of donations that enables Iowa Justice for Our Neighbors to carry out this ministry. These contributions have come from 29 churches and two groups of churches in Marshalltown and Decorah. All contributions to JFON go to the work of the staff to contact, to counsel, to represent and otherwise to serve low-income refugees and immigrants. Our goal is \$50,000 for this year. We thank your church for helping.

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-4 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-Marshalltown

www.iaumc.org/jfon

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Meet Our New Coordinators at the Cedar Rapids Legal Clinic, Lovely Lane United Methodist Church

The Cedar Rapids JFON legal clinic held at Lovely Lane UMC is now being coordinated by Kay Graber, long time supporter of JFON. Ms. Graber retired as Director of Community Relations and Public Information at Grant Wood AEA in Cedar Rapids and is eager to begin a new focus on service and advocacy for immigrants.

She is supported by Amy Guardado, who with her husband, is a former JFON client. She is now a Family Services Coordinator for HACAP in Cedar Rapids with a wealth of knowledge about human services in that community. States Ms. Graber, "She will be invaluable as a JFON assistant coordinator." Kay and Amy are active members at the Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church." Kay and Amy are stepping into the shoes of Dave and Dorothy Higdon, who retired after having served since the CR legal clinic started. We can't thank them enough for a job well done!

Iowa has a board member on the National Justice for Our Neighbors board. Here John Rothlisberger shares a reflection on JFON's mission.

The work of Justice for Our Neighbors is a fascinating effort on the part of many diverse groups throughout the country. A challenging job is made harder in a climate of fear and suspicion such as we see surrounding us in these times. Even those that truly qualify for legal status and assistance approach completing the required tasks with caution from apprehension about what might change tomorrow. Such is the world JFON serves. The honor of serving on the National Board of Trustees has helped to open my eyes to the amazing work being done by the attorneys in the sites located across the country. Although the needs may be similar, the environments are many and varied. The shortage of financial resources is never ending and sadly impacts the number of clients JFON is able to serve. The needs for providing education concerning immigration and those facing refugee status along with advocating for the needs of the many that do not qualify for services are either beyond the scope of our legal work or exhausting to the limited staff giving there services to these causes.

It would be easy to become disillusioned were it not for the tireless efforts of those involved. I am continually amazed with what is accomplished for so many with such limited resources. The staff members working at the JFON

centers are compassionate and caring individuals. Add to that the hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers who donate so much to the coordination and operation of each of the clinic sites, one cannot but be humbled and encouraged about the possibilities for the future. A simple thank you is totally inadequate to the appreciation owed, but must be tirelessly expressed. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!!!

Client Story of Ann Naffier
(not clients' original names)

Juan Espinoza* and his wife Yulissa* are originally from Central America. They came to the United States more than 15 years ago, and have three children who were born here. Juan works hard in a factory in eastern Iowa, but also is receiving training to become a lay pastor at a mainline denomination congregation where he and his family have been attending and offering leadership for years. Unfortunately, several years ago, Juan and Yulissa fell prey to an attorney from California who was helping people apply for political asylum even though they were not qualified. Juan and Yulissa ended up in deportation proceedings.

I met Juan and Yulissa in Cedar Rapids in 2015, and began to assist them in preparing for a fairly complicated legal procedure called "Request for Prosecutorial Discretion and Administrative Closure." This

request asked Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to voluntarily allow the judge to close Juan and Yulissa's removal cases, even though they did not qualify for any specific immigration program. It would grant them a work permit and temporary protection from deportation. After months of document collection and brief writing, JFON was able to submit Juan and Yulissa's Request to ICE. This legal procedure, once quite rare, had become more common in the last few years, because President Obama had created a policy instructing ICE to carefully consider and approve, if possible, these Requests. Unfortunately, by the time we had completed the Request, it was mid-November, after the election, and we knew the days of being able to get such a Request granted were numbered because of the radically different immigration policies of the incoming administration. In a beautiful moment that redeemed my faith in the goodness of all people, including ICE personnel, the supervisor of ICE and I met to discuss their case (and several other Requests we had made for other clients), approved them quickly, and got them before an Immigration Judge to get the official order closing their deportation cases, just days before the inauguration. Juan and Yulissa are now as safe as they can be, in temporary but stable and indefinite legal status, ready to weather out the next few years of potentially stormy immigration policy.