



Oregon New Sanctuary Movement

December 2007

Mission: The Oregon New Sanctuary Movement (ONSM) is an interfaith coalition of over 20 different congregations, called by our faith to respond actively and publicly to the suffering of our immigrant brothers and sisters residing in the United States.

We stand together in our faith that everyone, regardless of national origin, has basic common rights, including but not limited to: 1) livelihood; 2) family unity; and 3) physical and emotional safety. We witness the violation of these rights under current immigration policy, particularly in the separation of children from their parents due to unjust deportations, and in the exploitation of immigrant workers. We are deeply grieved by the violence done to families through immigration raids. We cannot in good conscience ignore such suffering and injustice.

We are committed to lifting up the voices of our immigrant brothers and sisters, working for just and humane immigration reform, and the transformation of the social and economic systems that perpetuate the poverty in immigrants' home countries that drives much of the migration to the United States. The ONSM provides prophetic hospitality to families who are in the deportation process and assists these families with spiritual, material and legal support.

History: In the 1980's faith communities across the nation offered sanctuary to refugees fleeing wars and repression in Central America. Several decades later in August 2007, Mexican national Elvira Arellano sought sanctuary for herself and her 7-year-old son, Saul, at their downtown Chicago church after Elvira was served a final deportation order. Inspired by Elvira's courageous move and troubled by the increasingly virulent attacks on Oregon's immigrant families, the ONSM initially emerged as a small subcommittee of the Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition. On June 12th, 2007 federal immigration agents raided the Del Monte plant in North Portland. 167 workers were arrested and detained. The raid brought a new sense of urgency to our work and mobilized many new faith communities to become involved in the ONSM.

Acting in Faith Since the Del Monte raid, the ONSM has been active in a number of ways:

- Accompanying immigrants to their immigration court hearings
- Hosting a baby shower for four women who were pregnant at the time of the raid
- Inviting women affected by the raid to cook and share traditional Mexican food at our churches and synagogues
- Educating ourselves and others about the roots causes of immigration and the devastating effects of our nation's current immigration policies and practices
- Holding a prayer vigil following the Aug. 19th, 2007 deportation of Elvira Arellano

In the future, we will continue our prayerful witness and educational efforts. Some participating faith communities may also choose to provide actual sanctuary to undocumented immigrants facing deportation.

www.newsanctuarymovement.org.

For more info, e-mail us at portlandsanctuary@gmail.com, call 503.550.3510, or visit us online at www.oregonsanctuary.org. You can also visit the National New Sanctuary Movement at

Common Myths About Undocumented Immigrants

Myth: Undocumented immigrants do not want to be legal residents.

Fact: Immigrants come to the U.S. for a variety of reasons — to reunite with family or to find better employment opportunities — and would prefer to do so through legal channels. However, the U.S. immigration system is extremely limited, and undocumented immigrants in the U.S. cannot simply apply for a visa and obtain legal status.

Myth: Undocumented immigrants are lazy.

Fact: Ninety-six percent of undocumented men living in the U.S. are employed, which exceeds the labor force participation rate of legal immigrants and U.S. citizens by 15 percentage points.¹ Many work two or more jobs. It is clear that employment is a major driving force behind undocumented migration; many industries, such as restaurants, hotels, and agriculture, report that they rely on these hardworking migrants.

Myth: Undocumented immigrants take jobs from Americans.

Fact: Immigrant labor is needed to fill jobs in the U.S. that an older, more educated American workforce is not willing to fill, especially at the low wages and poor working conditions many unscrupulous employers offer.² Currently, there are approximately nine million undocumented workers in the U.S. filling important gaps in the labor market. There is substantial evidence that their presence in the labor force creates jobs and strengthens local economies.

Myth: Undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes.

Fact: Undocumented immigrants pay taxes in a number of ways, including income and sales tax. The majority of undocumented immigrants pay income taxes using Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) or false Social Security numbers. All immigrants, regardless of status, will pay on average \$80,000 per capita more in taxes than they use in government services over their lifetime.³ The Social Security system reaps the biggest windfall from taxes paid by immigrants; the Social Security Administration reports that it holds approximately \$420 billion from the earnings of immigrants who are not in a position to claim benefits.⁴

“Common Myths About Undocumented Immigrants”
(2006) National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
<http://www.nclr.org/content/publications/>

Myth: Undocumented immigrants drain the welfare system.

Fact: Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for the vast majority of state and federal benefits and are only eligible for those that are considered important to public health and safety. In fact, many legal immigrants are also ineligible for most federal benefits. As a result, health care spending for immigrants is approximately half that of citizens.⁵

Myth: The best way to stop undocumented migration is by increasing enforcement.

Fact: Between 1986 and 2002 the number of border enforcement agents has tripled, the number of hours they spent patrolling the border grew by a factor of approximately eight, and the Border Patrol’s budget has increased tenfold. At the same time, the number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. has continued to increase.⁶ Support is growing for a more comprehensive approach to immigration control which combines smart enforcement with measures to create a legal path for those who come to the U.S. to work, and those who are already in the workforce.



Liliana “Santuario” with her children living in sanctuary in Simi Valley, California.

Important Information about 2008 Ballot Measures

In the 2008 election cycle, two initiatives will specifically target immigrant and refugee communities by cutting ESL funding, limiting access to civic participation, and requiring local government officials to cooperate with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. If passed, these measures will heighten the atmosphere of fear and division for many Portland communities. By erecting barriers to education, mobility, leadership, and voting, these measures will effectively silence the voice of individuals from already underrepresented populations and make Oregon a less equitable society.

Ballot Initiative 19

Summary of Initiative: Limits Non-English speaking students who enter the public school system to not have more than 2 years of English Immersion classes; limits the amount of ESL classes a student can receive based on the grade that they enter the public school system.

“Yes” statement: “Yes” vote prohibits teaching public school student in languages other than English for more than two years (exception for teaching foreign language to English speakers).

“No” statement: “No” vote retains requiring English courses for students unable to profit from classes taught in English, permitting multilanguage instruction to assist transition to English.

Filed by: Alan Grosso, Bill Sizemore and Russell Walker

CAUSA, CIO and other immigrant and refugee rights organizations are urging Oregonians to decline to sign the initiatives, to vote against them if they end up on the 2008 ballot, to help make others in the community aware of them, and to attend events and strategy sessions meant to inform and organize the community. Check out our calendar on page 4 for a listing of community events.

Ballot Initiative 112

Summary of Initiative: First time Oregon voters must provide proof of citizenship when they register to vote; driver’s license applicants must provide proof of legal residence.

“Yes” statement: “Yes” vote allows state/local cooperation and resources for immigration enforcement; requires certain documentation of citizenship for voter registration, “legal presence” for driver/identification documents.

“No” statement: “No” vote retains current state/local limits on cooperation and resources to enforce immigration laws, current requirements for voter registration, and grant of driver/identification documents.

Filed by: Mehran Smith and Shahriyar Smith



Beth Poteet supporting hotel workers during the 2007 National New Sanctuary Movement conference in Los Angeles.

Announcements

Welcome to the Movement!

On November 4th, Bridgeport UCC officially declared itself a sanctuary congregation. The congregation came to the decision after a several month discernment process, with sermons, theological reflections, opportunities to meet immigrants affected by our current immigration policies, and lots of opportunity for dialogue and discussion.

Of the more than 20 different faith communities involved in the Oregon New Sanctuary Movement, Bridgeport UCC joins Augustana Lutheran and Ainsworth UCC as the third congregation in Portland to officially commit to the sanctuary movement pledge.

ONSM has a website!

The Oregon New Sanctuary Movement has a website! You will find information about the movement and announcements for upcoming events. Contact us with your immigration related announcements and events.

The address is www.oregonsanctuary.org



Upcoming Events

Tuesday Dec. 18th, 1:00-5:00 pm: Public Hearing on changes to DMV rules for driver's licenses and ID cards requiring valid SSN or proof of legal presence. Oregon State Fairgrounds, Cascade Hall (directions available at: http://www.oregonstatefair.org/maps_services/maps_directions) CAUSA urges you to attend this public hearing on DMV's rules and voice your concerns. The changes proposed in the DMV rules will result in thousands of unlicensed, uninsured drivers on Oregon roads, creating a public safety crises for everyone. For more information, contact CAUSA at www.causaoregon.org.

Tuesday Dec. 18th, 6:30-8:30 pm: Join PCASC and the Center for Intercultural Organizing as we plan our campaign to fight the November 2008 anti-immigrant ballot measures (see page 3). Liberty Hall (311 N. Ivy St.) For more information, call 503.236.7916 or e-mail info@pcasc.net

December 22nd, 10:00 am : Gift drive for families of the victims of the Del Monte raids. If you would like to donate lightly used and/or new toys, clothing, and household goods, collect them within your faith community and bring them to St. Andrews Church (to the sanctuary, other events are happening at the community center). 806 NE Alberta. For more information contact portlandsanctuary@gmail.com or 503.550.3510.

January 18-20, 2008: National Conference for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (Conferencia nacional para los derechos de las y los inmigrantes y refugiados), Houston, Texas. For more information contact www.nnirr.org.

May 18 - June 1, 2008: Witness for Peace delegation From the Roots - Globalization & the Migrant Journey from Oaxaca to the northern border. For more information, contact Jenn Hill at jhill@chicagosanctuary.org or 313.938.1029.