



JEWISH COALITION *for*
IMMIGRANT JUSTICE NW

Newsletter

October 17, 2023 • 2 Heshvan 5784

While the Jewish Coalition is and will remain a domestically focused organization, we believe everyone should be safe in their homes. The reality is that many are not. Political unrest and violence are major drivers of immigration.

When people come here because they aren't safe at home, we at the Jewish Coalition welcome and support them - because our work is rooted in Kavod Ha'Briyot; belief in the dignity of every life.

We are heartbroken by the violence in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. We mourn lives lost and the unbearable impacts on families and communities.

We hope and pray for peace even when it seems furthest from reach.

With love in dark times,

JCIJ Board

A DROP OF HONEY

By Rabbi Laura Rumpf

Rabbi Laura serves as Director of Project Kavod for Jewish Family Services of Seattle, one of the largest refugee resettlement agencies in Washington State. She is passionate about the Jewish imperative to support immigrants and refugees seeking safety and is a proud member of the T'ruah, the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

We are called on no less than 36 times throughout Torah, to identify compassionately with the stranger. “You shall not wrong or oppress the stranger,” we hear over and over again. In Parsha Mishpatim, we learn two key reasons for this command -one we know well from the Passover story. “Because you (we) were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Exod. 22:20). In other words, our history is rooted in being displaced. This explanation is significant, but incomplete, in that it implies our sense of “otherness” belongs to a distant past.

The second time we hear the command, however, the meaning goes deeper: “You shall not oppress a stranger, ואתם ידעתם את נפש הגר, ki atem yadatem nefesh ha ger, for you know the feelings (literally ‘the soul’) of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exod. 23:9).

Yadah is one of the most intimate Hebrew words we have-implying an interconnectedness between beings. In this explanation we are called to access the part of our own hearts that still feel lonely or strange sometimes, not in a distant past, but in the present. We are invited to feel compassion for those neglected parts of us, as well as for the stranger in our midst.

When we connect in this way with a stranger, we connect with curiosity to another’s yearnings, sufferings and joys. These encounters can become our greatest teachers, provided we are able to step closer, and pay attention to possibilities for meaningful connection with those who find themselves new to Seattle in this time.

SUPPORT

ASYLUM SEEKERS AT RIVERTON CHURCH



Spread a shelter of peace!

SUPPORT NOW
tinyurl.com/aidriverton

**SUPPORT ASYLUM SEEKERS
AT RIVERTON CHURCH**

Almost 200 people including 70+ children are in emergency shelter at Riverton Park Church in Tukwila.

Urgent Needs:

- Warm Winter Clothing
- Toiletries
- Blankets
- Cleaning Supplies

SUPPORT ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Seattle Times published a second cover page story [“Federal, state, local officials look to help homeless migrants in Tukwila”](#) and Mayor Ekberg took action and declared a [State of Emergency](#) in Tukwila.

An additional editorial by *The Seattle Times* Editorial Board [“A Tukwila church steps up where the federal government fails on migration”](#) stated, “Tukwila Mayor Allan Ekberg issued an emergency declaring Friday evening to seek additional funds and have more flexibility to address the large encampment. Washington’s congressional delegation and officials from the governor’s office, King County, the Port of Seattle and state lawmakers convened a task force to find more housing.”

“We have people who are cold and wet. And we have a continuous flow of people coming in. It is a humanitarian crisis,” said Bolerjack in an interview.



So how can local people help? Bolerjack said grassroots advocacy is needed to prod the federal government to fund local organizations that provide basic services. Without federal aid, it’s almost impossible for small cities and other entities to meet the enormous demands.

Also, donations of warm weather clothing, tents, and tarps are always welcome.

DONATE WINTER CLOTHES & SUPPLIES

JCIJ Is exploring starting a tutoring homework help program for students at Riverton and supporting legal aid.

There are many ways to volunteer and support Riverton. See Volunteer section below to sign up!

VOLUNTEER



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Volunteer at Colectiva Legal del Pueblo

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

Volunteer at Riverton Park United Methodist Church

We are looking for volunteers to:

- Help Venezuelan immigrants fill out TPS applications (Spanish speakers)
- 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
- Sign up for volunteer days at the encampment.

In addition, we are looking for the following legal assistance:

- Lawyers who can provide asylum advice to make pro-se applications, but are not able to proceed with representation in court
- Lawyers who will represent asylum seekers in their court hearings in US Immigration Court.

Volunteer to Observe ICE Flights

In a project from [La Resistencia](#), 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. Language fluency other than English is not needed.

CORRECTION AND APOLOGY: In an email sent to JCIJ subscribers on 9-21-23, we described the ICE Flights Observation Program, but failed to say that it is a project of [La Resistencia](#). We apologize for this error and appreciate the leadership of La Resistencia.

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.

JCIJ NEWS

Wilfredo Won His Asylum Case!



The Jewish community of greater Seattle has supported Wilfredo, a young Honduran immigrant, for more than two years. This support has provided housing and helped him adapt from the mountains of rural Honduras to urban Seattle. We are thrilled that Wilfredo won asylum! The written decision came after a month of nail-biting following the hearing.

Thirteen members of the Jewish community attended the asylum hearing and packed the court room to demonstrate to the judge strong community support. The win will make it easier for Wilfredo's minor brother, Oscar, to remain in the US as well.

Winning asylum does not change Wilfredo's employment options -- he already had work authorization. It is his level of education, and his level of English, that dictate his employment options. He has taken English classes in the past but there is no time for that right now. He's working two jobs to save money to apply for permanent residency. However Oscar, his younger brother, is a sophomore in high school in Seattle and will get more education!

If you are one of the people helping to defray a part of their rent, we hope you will continue to do so. While winning asylum changes everything in terms of their security, it does not change the fact that Wilfredo is supporting his extended family in Honduras (as well as himself & Oscar here) on a dishwasher's wages.

[Join the Jewish community's effort to help subsidize their rent by giving to the JCIJ Urgent Needs Fund today!](#)

SUPPORT THE JCIJ URGENT NEEDS FUND

Let us celebrate as a community what Wilfredo has achieved during the last two years, and what we have done together to help him along his way. -Michelle Mentzer

EVENTS

Josh Tuininga in conversation with Dr. Devin E. Naar and Tom Ikeda — *We Are Not Strangers*



REGISTER

Inspired by a true story, this graphic novel follows a Jewish immigrant's efforts to help his Japanese neighbors while they are incarcerated during World War II.

Third Place Books welcomes author and illustrator Josh Tuininga to its Lake Forest Park store on October 23! Tuininga will be discussing his new graphic novel, [*We Are Not Strangers*](#), an evocative and beautifully illustrated work of historical fiction. Set in the multicultural Central District of Seattle during World War II and inspired by author Josh Tuininga's family experiences, *We Are Not Strangers* converges two perspectives into a single portrait of a community's struggle with race, responsibility, and what it truly means to be an American.

Tuininga will be joined in conversation by Dr. Devin E. Naar and Tom Ikeda. This event is free and open to the public. **Note:** This event has been moved to Third Place Books' Lake Forest Park store to accommodate more guests. Please note that both the original date and venue have changed.

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 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. Click [here](#) and we'll send you sign-in information. All are welcome!

Advocacy

In addition to Advocacy at Riverton Church, we are getting ready for Legislative Session in January with two work groups focusing on 1) Storytelling to build a bank of people's stories navigating our immigration system as well as family stories/history as immigrants and 2) Power mapping our state to grow our base of action takers in key districts to pass our legislative priorities: Unemployment Insurance for Undocumented Workers and Health Equity for Immigrants.

Join our next meeting November 12th from 4-5:30pm! Sign up [here](#).

Community Engagement

The committee's current efforts are focused on two projects. First, we were asked by WAISN to contribute items to care packages which people who have newly arrived in the area can request. **Support the [WAISN Wishlist](#).**

The bulk of our efforts are focused on providing support to the Riverton Park United Methodist Church in Tukwila, which is housing hundreds of immigrants in difficult conditions. The committee is coordinating with the Advocacy Committee and Accompaniment on this multi-faceted and critical need.

Currently committee members are working on several projects to support the people living and working at the church:

- The Pastor, Rev. Jan Bolerjack, identified one need as pallets to help people living in tents stay dry. 50 pallets and 60 sheets of plywood were donated by Home Depot and delivered to the church.
- Thank you to several people who procured and delivered clothing.
- Several people are developing a plan for tutoring and homework support, another need identified by the Pastor.
- We are working with a church employee to provide support for people applying for asylum. Spanish, Portuguese, French and Lingala speaking volunteers are needed for interpretation, and can work over Zoom or the phone if not able to meet in person.
- Riverton Church has identified a need for a volunteer coordinator - contact Beth Fine babfine@gmail.org or Ruth Egger ruthegger@gmail.com if interested.
- We are working with JCIJ supporters to provide items on the [Riverton Asylum Seeker Wishlist](#) for items which people in residence need.

Our next meeting is Wednesday, 11/1 at 10:30am. Sign up [here](#).

Book Club

The November book club will meet on Tuesday, November 14th at 7pm. We are reading *The Wind Knows my Name* by Isabel Allende. This powerful and moving novel traces the ripple effects of war and immigration on two children, one in Europe in 1938 and another in the United States in 2019.

The book club has made a commitment as a group to contribute enthusiastically to the mutual aid wish lists for Riverton Park United Methodist Church and WAISN care packages.

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

NEWS

[Yes, Migrants Have a Right To Seek U.S. Asylum](#)

Vera Institute of Justice, posted in Catholic Legal Immigration Network

For decades, the United States has existed as a refuge for individuals in search of safety from political and other kinds of oppression. Seeking asylum is a legal right but despite that fact, many misconceptions about asylum seekers persist. All too often, they are demonized, criminalized, and incarcerated for acting within U.S. and international law.

[DHS' New Work Permit Measures Are Welcome Change with Potential to Address USCIS Challenges](#)

American Immigration Council

On October 1, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) started to accelerate the processing of some work permits and extended their validity period. These changes are substantial and are likely to have a meaningful impact on the large work permit backlog in the long run. [Read More](#).

TPS Granted for Some Venezuelans

American immigration Council

[Temporary Protective Status: An Overview](#): On Sept. 20, 2023, the Biden Administration announced it will be extending Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for an estimated 472,000 Venezuelans who arrived in the United States before July 31, 2023. On Sept. 21, 2023, an announcement followed extending and redesignating TPS for an estimated 14,600 Afghans who arrived before September 20, 2023.

President Biden Adds to Border Wall

[President Biden Says Border Walls Do Not Work as Administration Bypasses Laws To Build Texas Barriers](#) | [CNN](#)

On October 5 President Biden stated that he does not believe border walls work, even as his administration bypasses 26 laws to build additional barriers in the Rio Grande Valley where Border Patrol reported nearly 300,000 encounters between last October and August. Last month saw over 200,000 encounters — the highest total this year.

SONGS IN THE KEY OF JCIJ

Curated by Dina Burstein

[Peace to you - אתם שלום - أنتم سلام | universal greeting peace hymn - Yamma official](#)

A sorrowful prayer for peace from Yamma Global Ensemble, Israeli artists who sing in Hebrew, Arabic, and Ladino. I'm sending love to Israel and Gaza and praying for peace, justice, mercy.

[Jerusalema Master KG - Compil Dance Challenge - More than 200 dances](#)

I was looking for a song to share from Angola to honor the Angolan asylum seekers at Riverton Church. Instead I stumbled on this amazing line dance song, written and sung by South African artist Nomcebo Nkwanyana, who goes by Nomcebo Zikode, and instrumental track produced by Kgaogelo Moagi, more commonly known as Master KG. The words mean Jerusalem is my home. Guard me, walk with me, do not leave me here.

[ANA ALCAIDE: EL POZO AMARGO \(Videoclip\)](#)

Ana Alcada, a Ladino singer from Toledo, Spain, sings this beautiful and very sad song about forbidden love in medieval Spain.

SING ALONG TIME

[Rhiannon Giddens - Birmingham Sunday \(Official Audio\)](#)

[Aretha Franklin - Respect \[1967\] \(Aretha's Original Version\)](#)

I've just returned from a civil rights tour of the deep South. Sing along to Birmingham Sunday, written by Richard Farina and sung by Rhiannon Giddens, and feel the terrible sacrifices made by so many in this struggle.

Then imagine weary civil rights activists letting loose at a dance party in a safe house in Montgomery, Alabama, dancing to RESPECT.

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

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

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