

# PANGEA LEGAL SERVICES

Quarterly Newsletter | October 2014



*The mission of Pangea Legal Services is to stand with immigrant communities and to provide services through direct legal representation, especially in the area of deportation defense. In addition to direct legal services, we are committed to advocating on behalf of our community through policy advocacy, education, and legal empowerment efforts.*

## **Case Highlight on Pangea Client, Ricardo: Released from Detention After 9 Months Reunites with wife and U.S. citizen daughter in San Francisco**

Pangea's client, Ricardo, was detained in Texas after fleeing politically motivated beatings, threats, assaults, robberies, and a shooting in Guatemala. He fled with his wife, and their U.S. citizen daughter in January 2014. Pangea successfully represented Ricardo's wife, who was detained for about one month, and released after Pangea obtained a low bond for her. Ricardo remained in detention.



Ricardo's wife and daughter asking for safety and to be reunited with their family.

9 Months Later



Ricardo reunites with his wife and daughter after 9 months of detention, and after fleeing severe harm in Guatemala.

The community, led by our partner, Lorena Melgarejo, hosted three vigils, flew Ricardo's wife and daughter to Texas to visit him, and tried every angle to lift up the humanity of this family.

On the legal end, Pangea's attorneys made many dozens of calls to various agencies. Pangea also prepared and filed applications for withholding of removal, U Visa, and other forms of discretionary

and administrative relief.

Pangea's efforts with our faith-based partners culminated in Ricardo's release after more than 9 months in detention. On October 17, 2014, Ricardo joined us in San Francisco. [Click here to read more about Ricardo's story.](#)



Ricardo and his attorney, Marie Vincent, met for the first time after 9 months of representation and communication by phone while Ricardo was detained.

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## Additional Pangea Case Wins & Highlights

This quarter, between August and October 2014, Pangea once again had many successes. Here are a few of our case highlights:

- Pangea **won 7 UAC asylum cases** for children who fled harm from gangs and other forms of violence (from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras).
- Pangea received **approval for an SIJS case** (from El Salvador).
- Pangea **won 2 complex asylum cases in immigration court** (from Haiti and Guatemala).
- Pangea received **approvals for 4 refugee petitions** (from Iraq and Guatemala).
- Pangea **won an interlocutory appeal at the Board of Immigration Appeals** (from Mexico).
- Pangea successfully **reopened the case of a client who was ordered deported** (from El Salvador).
- Pangea **won a bond case** for a detained DREAMer with a complex legal background (from Mexico).



Attorney, Niloufar Khonsari, celebrating with clients and gifts from Haiti.

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## Community Education and Legal Empowerment

This quarter, Pangea continued empowering immigrants, partners, and policy advocates through education campaigns, webinars, trainings, and presentations. Here are some of the education and empowerment highlights.

- Continued participation in the West County Detention Facility to provide immigration consultations to detainees
- Attended two DACA renewal clinics in San Jose with our SBLISN/CRISP partners

- Made appearances on two [Univision 14 segments about immigrant rights](#)
- Presented a 2-hour introduction to immigration training for DreamSF Fellows to empower and educate local Dreamers
- Co-presented a [webinar on immigration advocacy and legal services for children](#) hosted by CLINIC
- Provided an immigrant rights training to newly arrived immigrant youth at Mission High School in San Francisco
- Presented on immigration advocacy to University of San Francisco law students
- Empowered a client and his family to present at interfaith coalition meeting about the impact of the President Obama's hostile fast-track deportation policies



Attorney, Niloufar Khonsari, provides know your rights presentation with DreamSF Fellow, Joseline Gonzalez to high school students in San Francisco.



Mission High School, San Francisco, September 2014

### **San Mateo Clinic: November 3, 2014 (8-11am)**

Pangea is thrilled to announce its [first immigration clinic in the South Bay!](#)

In partnership with the [Sobrato Center](#) and through the support of the [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#), Pangea attorneys will provide bi-monthly clinics in various parts of the South Bay for immigrants in removal proceedings.

[For more information about our clinic visit our website here.](#)

## Local Policy Advocacy Highlight: Ordinance to Fund Legal Services for Children & Families in Removal Proceedings

SF Supervisor Campos presented [certificates of honor to 4x Pangea clients](#), children, who testified at the Board of Supervisors hearing.



Children giving testimony on their desire for all children to have access to counsel in removal proceedings, with Pangea team.



Pangea team at City Hall to advocate for legal services funding for children and families in removal proceedings, San Francisco, Sept. 2014

On September 16, 2014, the City of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors unanimously voted in support of a funding proposal to provide legal services for children and their families in removal proceedings. Pangea was among many groups that advocated for this ordinance that led the City of San Francisco to fund \$2.1 million over the course of 2 years to provide access to counsel to children and their families in removal proceedings.

Pangea helped lift up the voices of the children directly by bringing them and their families to City Hall, encouraging them to speak from their hearts, and share their stories about their needs for safety and protection in the United States.

Pangea also advocated with the [American Bar Association \(ABA\) to request a letter of support](#), that supported the Board of Supervisors in their decision to vote in favor of the access to counsel ordinance for the children.



[For more pictures and information about our efforts and this precedent-setting ordinance, click here.](#)

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## National Policy Advocacy

This was a particularly active quarter for Pangea in advocating for immigrant friendly policies and pushing back against hostile ones.

The Obama Administration's response to the humanitarian crisis in Central America has been to expedite court proceedings for children and their families, with the intent speed up deportations. As a result of the expedited deportation policy (also symbolically known as the "Rocket Docket"), we organized a march to protest this federal policy in late September.



Together with our coalition, **SF Bay for Immigrant Justice (SFBay4IJ)**, Pangea spoke at the march and demanded an end to the Rocket Docket.



In early September, Pangea spoke at a rally organized by Mujeres Unidas y Activas, requesting **administrative relief** for all immigrants in the United States. The Obama Administration has pushed back on his word to take executive action on immigration reform issues, but the community has spoken and will continue to speak up to hold our leaders accountable for ensuring basic human rights.

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## Board of Directors Update

We are thrilled to welcome **Shelby Malvoso** and **Leah Price** to our [Board of Directors](#).

- [Shelby is a Certified Public Accountant](#) at Donna Cohen, an accounting firm focusing exclusively on serving nonprofit organizations. Shelby has also worked as a financial analyst and bookkeeper with CompassPoint and brings with her a wealth of knowledge in nonprofit financial reporting. She previously served on Pangea's Board of Advisors and now joins our Board of Directors as Financial Secretary.
- [Leah is a an Immigration Attorney](#) with APILO, where she focuses on legal services for victims of human trafficking and general removal defense work. Leah brings with her extensive fundraising experience and deep roots in the social justice and human rights community. She previously served on Pangea's

Board of Advisors and joins our Board of Directors as Archival Secretary.

Welcome, Shelby & Leah!

### **Special Gratitude: Juan & Francisca**

"Last year we were worried about Juan's deportation [...] we were lost. We are grateful because you fought for our case and we achieved what we wanted." - Francisca





Francisca is a Pangea client whose approval notice for her refugee relative petition arrived this quarter and whose husband's asylum case Pangea won earlier this year. We are grateful for community members like Francisca and her husband, Juan, for inspiring us and warming our office with kindness and love.

*We envision a world where the fundamental right to move is respected and appreciated by all. Our view is that all human beings are entitled to respect, documents, and a process through which to move, settle, and resettle in the world.*

## Donate Here

Pangea Legal Services is a registered 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are tax-deductible. We will put every dollar of your generous contribution to work by providing direct legal services, policy advocacy, and legal empowerment for low income immigrant communities.

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