

PANGEA LEGAL SERVICES

Quarterly Newsletter | October 2015



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.

Supporting the Human Right to Move

Lately, [refugees](#) have been testing the world's moral fabric, not only in the United States, but also across Europe. As politicians determine what small number of refugees to admit, regular [people around the world](#) have responded to the humanitarian emergency with heartfelt concern and love.

At Pangea, we believe in the human right to move. Much of our work focuses on representing asylum seekers, whether it's a Syrian mother fleeing civil war, a Central American father escaping gangs, or a Mexican child fleeing cartel violence. All of these populations are tied together by their shared dream of safety and a better life. Please help Pangea promote the right to move, and ensure the safety of refugees through our asylum work. [Click here to donate.](#)



Original artwork inspired by our vision by Pangea staff Marie Vincent and Alejandra Hilsaca

Legal Services Spotlight: Unaccompanied Teenage Boy On the Brink of Deportation Wins Asylum Case!

We are happy to report that Jorge* won his asylum case! As you might recall from our [April 2015 newsletter](#), Jorge came to the U.S. alone, fleeing family abuse. Although he had a strong asylum case, he almost didn't get to fight it because he was ordered deported after missing a single hearing. ICE quickly detained him and was about to deport him when Pangea filed emergency motions to stop the process. We reopened Jorge's case and got him released from detention. And this quarter, Pangea won his asylum case! For the first time in his life, Jorge says he feels hopeful about his future.

Pangea also won asylum for Elvia, an indigenous Mayan teenager who suffered gender-based violence in her country of birth. She testified courageously at her asylum interview while nine months pregnant, and delivered a healthy baby boy just two days later. When Elvia received the news that her asylum case was granted, she said that it was the second happiest day in her life - second only to giving birth to a beautiful baby son.



Pangea's client Elvia and her newborn baby after winning asylum

In addition to representing asylum seekers like Jorge and Elvia, Pangea also uses other legal avenues to ensure people's safety, stability and family unity.

For example, this quarter, we won 6 family and refugee petitions for family members with complicated matters; liberated 1 person from detention; obtained over 20 work permits for clients fighting their cases; and received lawful status for at least 9 community members. These successes demonstrate the breadth of Pangea's work and our commitment to finding creative ways to keep families together.



Pangea supporters advocating for [Ernesto Reynoso](#) - a grandfather, sole breadwinner for his family, and long time resident of the U.S.- who has been detained for over 4 months (a daily reminder of his days of being tortured in detention in Mexico)

*Name has been changed.

Policy Advocacy: Why Local Police and ICE Shouldn't Work Together

San Francisco and Santa Clara County have long been beacons in the [sanctuary city movement](#), which has its origins in churches and synagogues across the United States [protecting Central American refugees](#) . As the movement evolved politically and was adopted by [cities](#) and counties, it sought to protect the constitutional rights of all residents, by

refusing to let ICE work with local law enforcement, for example. But since last quarter, these due process policies have come [under attack](#) by a small but vocal group of anti-human rights extremists that scapegoat and alienate entire populations, such as immigrants.

Fortunately - thanks to quick community mobilization and advocacy of groups like [FREE-SF](#) - San Francisco voted on October 20th to [uphold its due process policy](#). Santa Clara County will vote on the issue November 17th.



Community members rally in SF in support of keeping ICE and the police forces separate

Pangea believes that strong policies



Pangea client Fatima speaking out about her experience in 2013

separating immigration enforcement (ICE) and our police forces are critical to keeping the community safe. We know first-hand that when local law enforcement becomes entangled with ICE, the entire community suffers - [especially crime victims](#).

Take for example our client Fatima, a mother of three and survivor of domestic violence. In 2013, she was assaulted by a man in San Francisco. She called the police for help, but instead of protecting her, the police mistakenly arrested her for a felony assault and transferred her to ICE. Although Fatima was never convicted of any crime, she ended up spending three days in immigration detention and was placed into deportation proceedings.

Examples like these are [all too common](#). And not only are they fundamentally unfair, they create ripples of fear throughout immigrant communities, eroding public trust in the police and making everyone less safe. Please support the [FIRE Coalition](#) in keeping ICE out of Santa Clara County and the entire Bay Area. [Call your politicians](#) and tell them to support our due process policies.

Legal Empowerment

Here is a quick snapshot of our educational and legal empowerment activities this quarter:

- Presented on Pangea's low bono model at ABA's Client Centric Legal Services Conference in Denver
- Spoke on an NLG Convention panel about using creative strategies to advocate for immigrants in detention
- Led a workshop for Dreamers on the challenges and pathways to citizenship and permanent lawful status
- Presented at Santa Clara School of Law on [birthright citizenship](#), statelessness, and other human rights matters currently under attack by a hateful and exclusionary national rhetoric
- Educated [Univision](#) viewers about the mythical visa for parents of children with disabilities and cautioned against falling prey to notario fraud
- Created a [YouTube training video](#) for first-time volunteer interpreters at the San Francisco Asylum Office



Pangea attorney Nilou speaking to law students about citizenship



Pangea attorney Celine addressing common immigration myths on Univision

Pangea Has a New Team Member - Luis Angel!

We are thrilled to announce that we have a new staff member and law fellow, Luis Angel! A recent NYU law graduate with deep ties to the South Bay, Luis Angel will be helping to grow our Santa Clara County office.

Welcome Luis Angel!

Click here to learn more about [Luis Angel and our team](#).



Luis Angel

Thank You for Your Support

Thank you to everyone who came to our Santa Clara County office warming party last month. For those of you who missed it, we'd love to see you at one of our First Friday open houses in San Francisco. RSVP to Alejandra [here](#).

Happy Halloween y Feliz Dia de los Muertos!

Warmly,

Pangea Family



Pangea intern, Irma, showing off her home-made Pangea cupcakes for our office welcome party in Milpitas



Pangea team celebrating our new Santa Clara County office

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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