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*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.*



Quarterly Newsletter | April 2019

Pangea Quarterly Newsletter

Direct Representation: Pangea client Joaquin, U.S. Navy Veteran, wins protection against deportation despite felony convictions, setting example for rehabilitated immigrants in the U.S.



Pangea client and U.S. Navy Veteran, Joaquin Sotelo, at a rally in Fresno, CA, surrounded by supporters from ICE Out of Central Valley and other U.S. military veterans (Jan. 2019)

Pangea client Joaquin Sotelo, had two incredible wins in the first few months of 2019: 1) liberty from immigration detention, and 2) post-conviction relief for violations of his constitutional rights.

Joaquin is a U.S. Navy Veteran who has lived in the U.S. for over 25 years. He has four U.S. citizen children and a U.S. citizen wife. After returning from military service in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan in 2006, Joaquin struggled with the trauma of what he had experienced, resulting in substance abuse issues and several felony convictions. However, Joaquin committed to turning his life around. He stayed sober, read dozens of self-help books, converted to Christianity, and dedicated himself to creating healthy relationships. Despite making these strides, ICE detained Joaquin for almost a year and half.

During one of his 16 immigration court hearings, Joaquin finally won his release from an immigration judge, and began living freely and peacefully with his family for over 2 years. Joaquin also became an activist in his community, speaking at conferences, rallies, and with California legislators to advance immigrants' rights. He became a local hero and a leader -- an inspiration to many.

Then, in January 2019, [Joaquin received a letter stating that ICE intended to re-detain](#) him based on old, unlawful orders from the Board of Immigration Appeals. Everyone was scared of losing Joaquin to immigration detention again. Pangea filed a habeas petition on behalf of Joaquin in a federal district court. More than a dozen supporters rallied outside the court to call for Joaquin's continued freedom, including representatives from veterans and faith organizations. The federal judge agreed that the BIA decisions were likely illegal and [issued an order preventing ICE from re-detaining Joaquin!](#)

Just days after the federal judge's order, Joaquin and his family were accompanied to another court hearing -- this one in California State Court in Merced County -- by community members from Faith in the Valley and CIYJA. The hearing intended to address whether Joaquin's rights were violated when he first received his criminal convictions, rather than receiving trauma services after serving in the military. The outcome of his hearing could either mean a greater obstacle to his immigration case or a new legal avenue to relief in the United States. The court granted Joaquin post-conviction relief, giving Joaquin new hope to remain in the US with his family permanently!

Thank you for standing with us, especially those who started making monthly contributions. Monthly donors help make our work sustainable in the long-term.

SUPPORT OUR WORK



Pedestrian bridge crossing into Tijuana's center from the U.S.-Mexico border (Feb. 2019)

International Solidarity and Litigation: Pangea advances its work at the U.S.-Mexico border and supports federal lawsuit to protect asylum seekers

In February, Pangea continued its work at the U.S.-Mexico border. Pangea attorneys met with hundreds of asylum seekers in Tijuana and offered legal information to individuals on both sides of the border. When we took on representation of an asylum-seeker, R.T., we learned in depth about the detrimental impact of the U.S.' hateful policies. R.T. is being processed under one of the Trump Administration's newest anti-immigrant policies known as the Migrant Protection Protocols (or the "Remain in Mexico") policy, announced in late January 2018. Under Trump's Remain in Mexico program, DHS forces asylum seekers like R.T. to wait in dangerous and unhealthy conditions in Mexico while their case proceeds in the U.S. immigration courts.

Thousands of asylum seekers are impacted by this policy. Pangea client [R.T. is not only terrified of returning to Guatemala, he is also terrified of being in Mexico](#) because of the threats on his life. [R.T. voiced this fear of return to Mexico to an immigration judge](#) and spent over an hour describing his fear of remaining in Mexico to a DHS asylum officer. But the government still forced R.T. to return to Mexico.

Almost as soon as DHS announced the new policy, [the ACLU, CGRS and SPLC filed a lawsuit against it](#). Pangea helped plaintiffs like R.T. prepare statements in support of the lawsuit. A

federal district court judge heard oral arguments in San Francisco in late March, and [granted a preliminary injunction](#) to stop the Remain in Mexico policy. The government appealed, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily allowed the policy to continue. Pangea will continue its work in Mexico and will lift up individual cases like R.T.'s for as long as necessary.

Advocacy: Pangea stands with community in defense of sanctuary for all in Santa Clara County



The community stands united for sanctuary in front of the offices of Santa Clara County's Board of Supervisors (April 2019)

In March and April, after a tragedy exposed Santa Clara County's need for better mental health and medical services for the homeless, the San Jose Mayor and Police Chief opportunistically distorted the incident to criminalize immigrants in the media. Anti-immigrant forces threatened to pass local legislation [using divisive rhetoric to dismantle our strong sanctuary policies](#). But the Santa Clara community united.

[The FIRE Coalition lit up and organized](#). Over four hundred organizations, impacted community members, and allies, came together to prevent Santa Clara County from carving away due process rights and protections from immigrants. And the community won! Our sanctuary policy remains in place.

But the fight is not over. County Counsel is currently reviewing Santa Clara's sanctuary policy. In

the coming months, Pangea and our partners will continue to stand united to defend due process for all.

"Fixating on the individual's nationality does a disservice to the victim's family and dangerously misleads the public with racist notions about who immigrants are. Now more than ever, public officials in our county must stand strong against those who would use this tragedy to further President Trump's agenda of hate and bigotry." - Luis Angel Reyes Savalza, Pangea Director



[Vigil led by Colorado People's Alliance](#) outside the Aurora Detention Center where Pangea client, Miguel Angel, is detained. Miguel Angel and fellow detainee Sergio speak to the crowd from inside the detention center about the horrifying conditions at Aurora and about their hunger strike (Feb. 2019)

Community Empowerment and Cross-State Alliances: Pangea organizes in Colorado after California immigration prison shutdown

"I condemn ICE's programs and the way they work trying to squeeze money out of detained immigrants and their family members. That's inhumane, really inhumane."

— Walter, brother of an immigrant detainee

When ICE [terminated its contract at the West County Detention Facility](#) in Northern California last summer, many Bay Area residents like Pangea client, Miguel Angel, were transferred to out-of-state facilities like the Aurora Detention Facility in Colorado. Pangea quickly mobilized and partnered with organizations in Colorado (including the [Colorado People's Alliance](#) and the [Colorado Rapid Response Network](#)) to support in the representation of Miguel Angel. In the process, we discovered the shocking [health conditions and quarantines](#) of people detained in the Aurora facility.

In 2019, Pangea and our Colorado partners shed light on Miguel Angel's case and the systemic problems in Aurora. We facilitated conversations, meetings, press conferences and rallies connecting Miguel Angel and other detained individuals at the Aurora detention facility - Congressman Jason Crow - community organizers and supporters - and media outlets in the Bay Area and Colorado.

ICE is strategically transferring people hundreds of miles away from their families, attorneys and resources, knowing that people in isolation are more likely to give up on their immigration cases and sign their deportation. [California has some of the most robust removal defense resources, and we will continue to take them all the way to Aurora for our California residents, if needed.](#) "We will continue to fight for the liberation of our clients -- wherever they may be transferred -- and for all people detained," said Pangea Director, Esperanza Cuautle.

Pangea's San José Office Warming Party!

Pangea had an office warming party to celebrate our new space in the San José Unified School District building. We thanked and honored our community partners that continue to lead us and light the path forward in the movement for immigrant rights and liberation.



Pangea honored community partners with certificates at our San José office warming party (April 2019)

We were so moved by all our family, friends and clients who came out to warm our new space.

**With Love & Gratitude,
The Pangea Family**

**(Nilou, Marie, Bianca, Celine, Luis Angel, Etan,
Esperanza, Jehan, Mariel, Edwin & Pete)**

Thank you for your continued support and solidarity!

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San Francisco Office

350 Sansome Street, Suite 650 | San Francisco, CA 94104

San José Office

855 Lenzen Avenue | San José, CA 95126

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