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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 2021

AAPI Solidarity and Client Feature

Dear Community,

This quarter, as we mourned the murder of six Asian women workers in Atlanta, we were hit with further losses in our Black and Brown community, and continue to grieve. Pangea stands in deep solidarity with the victims, their families, and all those who are impacted by the racism and violence that has united this country, particularly in the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we at Pangea know all too well, anti-Asian violence in the United States not only takes the form of attacks by racists, it also manifests as incarceration, deportation, and poverty. Approximately 15% of the undocumented population are estimated to be AAPI, while AAPI folks make up only 6% of the total U.S. population.

Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have the highest rate of income inequality of any ethnic group in the United States, reflecting the reality that while some AAPI individuals are high income, millions of AAPI folks live in underfunded and marginalized communities, lack employment and educational opportunities, and are undocumented. This segment of the AAPI population is the most vulnerable to the intersectional oppressions of low-wage work, street violence, criminalization, and ICE enforcement. For instance, Southeast Asian refugee communities—whose members fled to the U.S. after a series of American wars in the region—suffer some of the highest poverty rates of any ethnic group in the United States. They were often resettled into low-income neighborhoods, and as a result are more likely to be incarcerated and subject to deportation.

Below, we feature one of the families in Pangea's AAPI community, whose story reflects the struggle many face.

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“You cannot change any society
unless you take responsibility for it,
unless you see yourself as belonging
to it and responsible for changing it.”

Grace Lee Boggs, American author of Chinese descent,
activist, feminist and civil rights leader

Phuoc is a loving Vietnamese-American father and husband who was born in an

Indonesian refugee camp in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. When he was just seven months old, he was resettled with his family in the United States and became a lawful permanent resident. As a youth, he received a drug-related criminal conviction and lost his permanent resident status as a result. After this, Phuoc turned his life around—he got married, became a union electrician, began writing poetry, and became a prominent activist in a local Vietnamese community organization, VietUnity. Even though his conviction had occurred almost 20 years ago, Phuoc was at high risk of deportation during the Trump administration. Thousands of similarly situated Southeast Asians with decades-old criminal convictions were actively being deported. The risk of deportation not only threatened to remove Phuoc from the only home he had known, it would have led to separation from his wife and two young U.S. citizen children, for whom he is the main breadwinner. In the last few months, Pangea successfully reopened and vacated Phuoc's old criminal conviction because he did not receive legally required advice when he accepted a plea deal, then reopened his immigration case and reinstated Phuoc's green card. Phuoc and his family are finally able to live in peace again.



Pangea client, Phuoc Thang, his wife, and his two young children (previously featured in our January Newsletter without the above story).

How can you support? Sign on to this collective AAPI-led community statement calling for community-based solutions that do not increase police or prisons: <https://www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org/aaajcommunitystatement>

"I feel we have the same rights as any of them . . . You've got to make that come about. They are not going to give it to you."

LARRY ITLIONG, FILIPINO-AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, LABOR LEADER, AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE UNITED FARM WORKERS (UFW)

**Here's to Solidarity,
The Pangea Family**

SUPPORT OUR WORK



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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