The Florence Project
Annual Report
2013

MISSION STATEMENT
The Florence Project provides and coordinates free legal services and related social services to indigent men, women, and unaccompanied children detained in Arizona for immigration removal proceedings. The Project strives to ensure that detained individuals have access to counsel, understand their rights under immigration law, and are treated fairly and humanely by our judicial system.

Davis was brought to the United States from Mexico when he was two years old. Growing up in Tucson, he got into trouble as a teenager but was able to get on track and graduated from high school with glowing reviews from his teachers. In 2009, his daughter was born, and Davis and his wife learned that she is deaf. Davis is very involved in his daughter’s life; he religiously attends appointments with her at the Arizona State School for the Deaf and the Blind, learned sign language, and is a loving father. Davis was put into deportation proceedings in 2010 and sent to Eloy Detention Center in 2012, where the Florence Project met him. We helped Davis put together an application for his green card based on his involvement in his daughter’s life and hardship she would face if he was deported, and helped him prepare his testimony for court. Though the type of relief he asked for is notoriously difficult to win, Davis represented himself pro se and won his case in June of 2013. Because of his experience, Davis plans to go to law school so that he can help other people navigate the complicated immigration system. For now, he’s enrolled in community college and happy to be reunited with his family.
A Message from the Executive Director

2013 was a year of transition for the Florence Project. We bid a fond farewell to Lindsay Marshall, Executive Director since 2007, and I transitioned from Eloy Staff Attorney into the role. I am grateful for the warm welcome that I’ve received from our board, staff, and supporters. I am fortunate to lead such a passionate, committed staff and highly respected organization.

Last year brought many challenges and opportunities for us, including another expansion of detention bed space for unaccompanied minors. Our client base of detained youth has more than doubled in the past two years. We’ve been able to grow our Children’s Initiative staff accordingly, though the expansion has kept us very busy. 2013 also brought our clients rumors of true comprehensive immigration reform, which we all continue to wait for. Also, in October we received a stop work order during the government shutdown, for our work with detained men and women. Fortunately, because our funding sources are diverse, we were able to maintain our work throughout the shutdown—because there was no stop work order on deportations.

Despite a challenging fundraising environment, we exceeded our goals in 2013, thanks to supporters like you! We are grateful for your generosity, which enables our impressive staff to tirelessly advocate on behalf of our clients, against all odds. I am also constantly reminded of how resilient our clients are, dealing with such an adversarial system and endless challenges. I am excited and honored to lead an organization that I’ve admired for over ten years. Thank you for accompanying us along our journey—during 2013 and for many years to come.

Amalia is an 18 year old girl from Guatemala. Growing up, her alcoholic father regularly beat her, once so severely that she was bed-ridden for four days. Amalia pressed charges in Guatemala, but her father was released after he threatened to kill both Amalia and her mother. When Amalia was about 13 years old, she was raped by two of her brother’s friends. She became pregnant as a result of the rape, but her parents refused to help her report the incident. Amalia left Guatemala in early 2012 and traveled to the U.S. by herself. While waiting at a drop house in the U.S., Amalia was raped by another immigrant inside the house, and became pregnant again. She was apprehended by immigration authorities and sent to a shelter in Phoenix, where the Florence Project met her. We represented Amalia in her case for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, a form of relief for minors who have suffered abuse or neglect, and Amalia was granted Lawful Permanent Residency. She currently lives in Phoenix, Arizona and is now attending high school.

The People We Serve

The Florence Project provides free legal assistance to the over 3,200 immigrant and refugee men, women, and unaccompanied children held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on any given day in detention facilities in Florence, Eloy, and Phoenix, Arizona. The majority of our clients are monolingual Spanish speakers with limited educational background. We served people from approximately 70 countries in 2013. Many are the primary breadwinners for their families and have lived in the United States for years. Others are fleeing persecution and violence in their home countries. Some clients are children who have suffered severe abuse in their home countries or on the journey to the U.S., and most of the women we work with are domestic violence survivors. Because there is no right to government appointed counsel in immigration proceedings, an estimated 86% of detainees appear alone in their court hearings, pro se. The Florence Project seeks to address this inequity and protect due process for this vulnerable and isolated population, and keep families together.
2013 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Direct Services

704 “know your rights” presentations to 8,255 detained individuals, outlining people’s rights and remedies in removal proceedings. 3,064 of these individuals were unaccompanied immigrant children.

Individual case assessment for all who request it and follow up pro se assistance for individuals fighting their removal cases who cannot afford to hire private counsel. In 2013, we provided case assessment and pro se assistance to 5,588 people.

Direct, in-house representation to 94 people, including successful representation for 64 unaccompanied minors now on a path to U.S. citizenship.

Pro bono placement with volunteer attorneys in the community for 79 individuals, and an additional 276 referrals to pro bono attorney matching organizations across the country for unaccompanied minors reuniting with family members outside of Arizona.

Assistance with release from custody for 110 people, including pro se bond support, assistance with supervised release, habeas corpus petitions, and requests for humanitarian parole.

122 group peer-to-peer workshops for 1157 participants to improve client collaboration and efficiency. Workshops were conducted on topics including cancellation of removal for lawful permanent residents, bonds, asylum, and humanitarian parole.

Social service support to especially vulnerable clients through our Integrated Social Services Program. In 2013, we assisted 212 people with social service needs including emergency housing, access to medical care, and help with urgent child custody matters.

Outreach, Collaboration, and Advocacy

51 trainings to public defenders, community organizations, and immigration lawyers on topics such as the overlap of criminal and immigration law, basic deportation defense, the Florence Project’s work, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.

115 volunteers contributed their time and skills to the Florence Project in 2013, including attorneys, physicians and mental health professionals, interpreters, and country conditions researchers. Seven of these were law student interns from the University of Arizona, Phoenix School of Law, the University of Oregon, Boston College, Cardozo School of Law, and UC Davis.

Partnerships with Casa Mariposa, the Puente Movement, and the Phoenix Restoration Project strengthened the community of support for our clients through letter-writing, visitation, and post-release hospitality.

Participation in local and national advocacy initiatives on issues such as the use of solitary confinement in detention, LGBTQ asylum, comprehensive immigration reform, access to mail and affordable phone rates in detention, and the detention bed mandate, among others.
FINANCIALS

Federal Government Subcontracts 65%
Foundation Grants 10%
Individuals 13%
Other 5%
Law Firms 3%
Religious 3%
Corporations 1%
Total Revenue $1,056,303.42

Program Services 80%
Office Overhead 11%
Building Cost 5%
Management & Fundraising 4%
Total Expenses $1,030,109.29

*Accrual based budget / 2013 audit not yet completed

Annual Giving 2013: Fund Designation

- General Operating Fund 28%
- Adult Project 28%
- Social Services 3%
- Children's Initiative 41%

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2014 AND BEYOND

- **Keeping Families Together**: We will continue to collaborate with immigrant rights organizations and family advocates to ensure that the rights of immigrant parents and children are protected. While past efforts have focused on dependency courts and practitioners, in 2014 we will educate community members on how to fight against family separation in case of contact with ICE, and what preventative steps families can take to be safe and stay together. Inside detention, we will continue to support clients with family based claims for relief from deportation.

- **Increased Assistance for Unaccompanied Minors**: We anticipate that the population of unaccompanied immigrant children held in Office of Refugee Resettlement custody will continue to grow, and our Children’s Initiative will expand accordingly. In addition, we will increase representation of non-detained children eligible for relief who have been released from custody to the care of a sponsor in the Phoenix area.

- **Direct Representation for Detainees with Mental Health Issues**: Building on years of experience working with vulnerable populations, we are increasing our direct representation of individuals with serious mental health issues.

- **Building Community Partnerships**: There is a vast need for social services for our released clients in Arizona. We will continue to work with organizational partners in Tucson and Phoenix and participate in community networks that provide support to clients eligible for release and emergency social services for clients released from detention, including housing and access to legal services, and explore other options to better serve this population.

- **Thinking Strategically about our Future**: Board and staff will work together to update our strategic plan and evaluate our work and our goals for the future.

- **Strengthening our Capacity**: In this challenging economy, we will continue to diversify our funding sources, with the goal of stabilizing funding and enabling strategic growth. We will focus on generating new foundation support and building our individual donor base.

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[Image: Children’s Initiative staff and clients celebrate the year’s victories.]

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