Every once in awhile, a big decision comes down from a higher court that dramatically changes the outlook for many of our clients. But while media attention often highlights the decision itself, there is little in the news on what happens after a judgment is rendered or a bill becomes law. At the Florence Project, a large part of our work takes place in that aftermath; it is our job to make sure that people detained in Arizona can benefit from substantial changes in immigration law when they happen.

Rodriguez v. Robbins was one such influential decision. In Rodriguez v. Robbins, litigated by the ACLU of Southern California, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that it is unconstitutional to detain a person for more than six months without access to a bond hearing. Almost one year later, we are happy to report that this decision has been a helpful tool in our long-term effort to help people get released from detention. In light of the recent decision, we wanted to share a glimpse of what happens in our corner of the world when a big lawsuit is decided.

1. Assess what impact the decision will actually have.

From the outset, we knew that Rodriguez v. Robbins would be transformative for many of our clients, and that we should prepare accordingly. Before Rodriguez, not every immigrant was entitled to a bond hearing in front of a judge. Around 40% of the people detained by immigration authorities on any given day are subject to mandatory detention. Established in 1996 as part of Congress’ last overhaul of the immigration system, mandatory detention basically prohibits an immigration judge from giving a person a bond if they were deported previously, requested asylum at a port of entry, or have certain convictions (including convictions like a simple possession of marijuana). Under mandatory detention, people lose their liberty without ever getting a day in court to determine if incarceration is appropriate.

While some people subject to mandatory detention take deportations early on in the process or are released by ICE, many others are detained for long periods of time because they have cases to fight or compelling arguments to make on appeal. We estimate that about 25% of the adults detained in Arizona have been detained for more than 180 days, and that around 7% of the people detained have been detained for more than a year. Because of Rodriguez, many of these people are now eligible for a bond hearing.

2. Identify clients who will immediately benefit.

As soon as Rodriguez was decided, we combed through our cases to identify who might immediately benefit from the decision. Every open file was reviewed to verify how long that person had been in detention and if they were newly eligible for a bond hearing. Once identified, we informed our clients of the news and helped them to prepare for their bond hearings, in addition to other assistance we were providing. Since bond is a separate proceeding from a deportation case, the types of supporting documents and level of preparation is different than what many people face in their regular court hearings.

3. Prepare materials to assist people in preparing their Rodriguez bond requests.

Since news spreads like wildfire inside detention facilities, we knew that as soon as we started working with people to prepare their requests for bond, others would reach out. We created a special packet of information about Rodriguez, with a sample motion requesting a hearing. We also made sure to incorporate information about Rodriguez into our weekly Know Your Rights presentations and bond workshops so that people acquired the tools they needed to get a low bond early on in their detention to make the process go as smoothly as possible.


As with any substantive change in the law, Rodriguez was an adjustment from normal procedures in immigration court; now, a vastly larger number of people were eligible for bond than before. As our clients started to get bond hearings, we paid close attention.

**...Continued on page 2**

**AJANI’S STORY**

By Cindy Schlosser, Social Services Coordinator

Ajani fled his home in Africa, seeking safety in a country that, in his mind, stood for justice and freedom. When he was greeted by U.S. Immigration officials at the port of entry where he had asked for asylum, and whisked to detention, his dreams of safety disappeared and were replaced once again with fear.

Because he has no family in the United States, and because he was considered an “arriving alien,” Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) told Ajani that he would remain in immigration detention, which he refers to as “the concentration camp,” for the entire duration of his court proceedings. For Ajani, this was a horrific thought.

**...Continued on page 3**
PRO SE GUIDES UPDATED!

The Florence Project earned a national reputation early on, based in large part on its ground-breaking work developing readable immigration law guides for people navigating the deportation process without the help of a lawyer. Over the years, these materials have been distributed to thousands of people detained in remote facilities throughout the country, and we have periodically added new guides and updated old ones.

Thanks the American College of Trial Lawyers’ Emil Gumpert Award, which we received in 2012, we were able to revise all of our pro se guides, and complete new ones. We are happy to announce that 25 new and updated guides for immigrants facing the deportation system alone are now available on our website, www.firrp.org.

As part of this massive project, our office contracted with Kathy Budway, ESL instructor and adult education specialist at Pima Community College, for feedback on content. Former and current Florence Project staff attorneys reviewed materials for accuracy. Lastly, we retained Jaime Fatas, Director of Translation and Interpretation at the University of Arizona, and several of his students to complete professional translations of all 25 guides from English to Spanish. Please visit our website at www.firrp.org/resources/prose/ for more information about how to download the guides.

Florence Project staff, interns, volunteers, and former clients celebrate recent victories in Tucson: all three clients pictured used the Florence Project’s pro se guides and other expertise to fight their cases and leave detention!

RODRIGUEZ V. ROBBINS’ IMPACT IN ARIZONA

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to the outcomes of their cases to get a sense of how broadly judges were interpreting the decision and what standards they were using to determine bond amount. We also asked people to contact us about their experience asking for a Rodriguez bond so that we could ensure our advice stayed as relevant and specific as possible.

5. KEEP ON FIGHTING.

Rodriguez is a huge victory, and we have incorporated Rodriguez bond support into the spectrum of services we provide. However, there is still work to do; just because a person has a bond hearing doesn’t mean that they will be given a bond or that their family will be able to pay it. The minimum bond amount is $1,500, but we regularly see clients assigned bonds of $6,000, $10,000, and more. Many of our clients are unable to pay due to financial hardship, often exacerbated by their detention. So, as we’ve spent time educating people on Rodriguez bonds, we also keep up our work helping people access relief from deportation to keep families together and ensure that those fleeing persecution have a safe place to live their lives. After all, there is no need to pay a bond if a person is released because they fought their case and won!
MORE UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN HIGHLIGHT NEED FOR INCREASED LEGAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Rampant violence and poverty in Mexico and Central America are driving more and more children to cross the southern border. In fact, the federal government predicts that 54,500 unaccompanied children will cross the U.S.-Mexico border in the 2014 fiscal year, more than double the number of kids who passed through the immigration system in 2013. Many of these children travel without an adult, and are detained by Customs and Border Protection once they get here.

The Florence Project Children’s Initiative (aka our Kids Team) has seen a significant increase in non-detained children in the Phoenix area who are eligible for legal relief seeking our services. “There’s a big demand,” says Laura Belous, the Kids’ Team Pro Bono Coordinator. “These kids are often eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, for a T-visa, or for asylum. But there’s not a lot of resources—both legal and social services—out there for them. The Florence Project is trying to fill that gap.”

Even without any increased or new funding to support our work, the Florence Project’s Kids Team has successfully represented a number of these minors, but the challenges are significant. “These kids don’t have a case manager like the ones in Office of Refugee Resettlement custody (whom the Florence Project also serves),” explains Golden McCarthy, Kids’ Team Staff Attorney. “They don’t have someone who drives them to court, who takes them to appointments. They’re struggling with how to enroll in school, how to support themselves, how to get around the Phoenix area, how to adjust to life in the U.S. For kids who come from rural parts of Guatemala or Honduras, it’s a huge change.”

We are currently working to raise funds in order to hire a social services coordinator for our Children’s Initiative. Golden McCarthy says, “We need someone here who can help kids deal with the enormous challenges they face once released from custody. Attorneys can only do so much to help. We would love to implement the same integrated legal-social services model that we have in Eloy and Florence. It would make a huge difference for these clients!”

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

AJANI’S STORY*

both because he fled his home country partly due to harsh imprisonment and because he is living with a medical condition that causes pain and muscle and bone weakness.

After meeting with Ajani, the Florence Project connected him to Jason Odhner, a volunteer and member of the Phoenix Restoration Project. Jason and Ajani became friends by exchanging letters with one another, and Jason agreed to host him upon his release from ICE custody. Although he was eligible for release on humanitarian parole under ICE’s authority in October 2013, ICE refused to release him multiple times, citing his lack of family ties in the United States. It wasn’t until March 24, 2014 that he was granted a bond by an immigration judge under Rodriguez v. Robbins. Now, the only thing standing between Ajani and being welcomed into a compassionate, supportive community is bond money. Our fabulous local community of support for people in detention is still working on raising the funds to pay for his release through the Rainbow Defense Fund, which supports and raises bond funds for LGBTQ people in immigration detention.

With the support of the Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service and the Presbyterian Church USA, the Florence Project has deepened our connections with individuals and housing and social service networks in Phoenix, Tucson, and across the country to assist individuals upon their release. Like Ajani, there are many individuals who remain in detention because they do not have family or friends in the United States, they are unable to contact family or friends from detention, or because the requirements for release are too complicated for families to navigate on their own. As the Florence Project has learned in our nearly 25 year existence, having a legal path to release is only helpful if a person has the money to pay a bond or a place to go after it has been paid. Thanks to the incredible generosity and dedication of friends in Arizona and all over the country, freedom can be a reality for people like Ajani. Until then, we will continue to advocate for release, educate community members about detention and its alternatives, and mobilize our amazing community networks of support.

*name changed to protect privacy
As the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, my first pro bono case with the Florence Project was a visceral reminder of the importance of protecting children in the immigration process. Soon after joining the law firm of Lewis Roca Rothgerber LLP, I represented an unaccompanied minor named Selena*, who grew up in a small village in Guatemala. She left her home at the age of 11 and after years of sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather, forced to support herself with few resources and without a family, she decided her best option was to make the harrowing trip to the United States alone. The journey to the United States was dangerous, and she walked through the desert for three days before she was arrested by the Border Patrol.

When I heard Selena’s story, I wanted to make sure she stayed in the United States. For the next four months, I litigated this case and worked hard to gain Selena’s trust. As we talked through the facts and details of her case, we also became friends. And when Selena was finally granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (and with it a path to U.S. citizenship), we could not stop smiling.

Helping Selena was rewarding on so many levels that it inspired me to keep volunteering with the Florence Project. Each case has its own highs and lows, but in the end it is always worth it. The great work that the Florence Project does every day also inspired me to join its Board of Directors. In this new role, I am able to help the organization meet its overall goals and needs, which is an equally rewarding experience.

With the support of my firm, I am able to donate my time as both a Florence Project Board Member and a volunteer attorney, giving me the opportunity to use my career to make a difference in the lives of many immigrant adults and children caught up in the deportation process.

Meet our two latest additions to the Florence Team: STEPHANIE QUINTANA-MARTINEZ and LUIS MANCHENO.

Nine months in, we asked them to reflect on their time at the Florence Project by asking two simple questions:

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE FLORENCE PROJECT, AND WHAT KEEPS YOU HERE?

STEPHANIE QUINTANA-MARTINEZ was born and raised in Puerto Rico and holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Puerto Rico. After graduating in 2012, Stephanie moved to Arizona as part of the Young Adult Volunteer program of the Presbyterian Church. She served as a volunteer and community organizer for the Southside Worker Center and the Tucson Protection Network Coalition. Stephanie enjoys chocolate, books, poetry, and silly jokes.

LUIS MANCHENO was born and raised in Quito, Ecuador, where he attended law school for four years before coming to the United States and permanently settling in this country after being granted refugee status. A Pride Foundation Scholar and an Arthur C. Helton Fellow, Luis received his J.D. Cum Laude from Roger Williams University School of Law in Rhode Island. When he isn’t writing motions and supporting people in deportation proceedings, Luis spends his time creating beautiful paintings.

The Florence Project drew me because of the possibility to make a difference in the lives of one of the most disenfranchised groups of people in the country. I stay because of an incredibly talented group of co-workers and the experience I share with the clients I work with.

The Florence Project is not only a great organization that is providing legal orientation and direct services to detainees in Arizona, but is also an amazingly helpful partner to the affected communities and their families. The inspiring commitment of my team members and compañer@s at the Florence Project, and the fierceness of detainees and family members to fight to stay together are what keeps me here.

“STAFF PROFILE: STEPH AND LUIS TAKE FLORENCE BY STORM”
THANK YOU TO OUR 2013 VOLUNTEERS!

Thank you to the following wonderful people who volunteered their time and talent to the Florence Project and our clients during the 2013 calendar year!

- Matt Adams
- Bami Adelayo
- Jonathan Allred
- Kayla Alvarado
- Al Arpad
- Elizabeth Balfour
- Anna Benvenue
- Thomas Boerman
- Stephen Brookman
- Don Carlos
- Jorge Castañeda
- Leah Jo Carmine
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- Anna Finn
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- Mi Mi Jones
- Raha Jorjani
- Elizabeth Juarez
- Kathleen Kahn
- Coleen Kivlahan
- Rachel Kling
- Melanie Lane M.D.
- Celia Lara
- Clifford Levenson
- Nancy Linh Le
- Victor Lopez
- Mike Mehr
- The Restoration Project at Casa Mariposa
- Jeff Madden
- Mavi Marin
- Domingo Martin
- Laura Murray-Tijan
- Meredith Marder
- Maquette Ndiaye
- Kyle Nelson
- Brittany Nuñez
- Rosaleen O’Gara
- Karina Ordoñez
- David Quimette
- Laura Pasqualone
- Anthony Pelino
- Martha Peñunuri
- Phoenix Restoration
- Project
- Caroline Picker
- Sarah Plastino
- Ana Leticia Poroj
- Christina Powers
- Matthew Price
- Kelsey Provo
- Nina Rabin
- Nathan Regenold
- Elsa Rivera
- Juan Rocha
- Wally Ruehle
- Katie Ruhl
- Mercedes Ryden
- Jesse Salen
- Erica Sanchez
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- Amanda Schuft
- John Shaw
- Udham Singh
- Kelly Sith
- Margarita Silva
- Sandra Sheridan
- Jessica Svensen
- Elias Tzoc
- Brad Tenbrook
- Kylie Tenbrook
- Shelley Tolman
- Victoria Torrihon
- UC Davis Immigration Clinic
- Jennifer Understahl
- Amelia Valenzuela
- John Vryhof
- Tanner Warnick
- Golden McCarthy
- Cyndi Whitmore
- Fernando Wytrykusz
- Stephen Yale-Loehr
- Keren Zwick

Thank you to the following wonderful people who volunteered their time and talent to the Florence Project and our clients during the 2013 calendar year!

STAFF CORNER

Since our last newsletter, we’ve welcomed some wonderful new people to our FIRRP family and said goodbye to old friends. In December, Casa Grande resident CHRISTIAN AVILA joined our team as Office Coordinator, gracing our Florence office with his meticulous bookkeeping and organizational talents.

Up in Phoenix, we said goodbye to staff attorneys JENA GUTIERREZ, who now cheerfully accepts our client referrals in her position at KIND in Boston, and CLAUDIA GONZALEZ, who left immigrant defense to be a public defender in Yuma, AZ. Filling their positions are VANESSA PINEDA and ROCÍO CASTAÑEDA. Vanessa, a Phoenix native, graduated from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago, then worked at a private immigration law firm there before joining us in January. Rocío arrived in March. Originally from Nogales, Sonora, she also has Chicago connections, having obtained her J.D. from Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Before law school she worked with unaccompanied minors at the National Immigrant Justice Center in Chicago and ProBAR in Harlingen, Texas.

Beyond fond farewells and warm welcomes, the winter has seen a fair amount of celebration.

GLADIS MOLINA was married in December, and ANGIE CANALES and Vanessa soon joined her in celebrating their own respective marriages in March! Less life-changing but also exciting, GOLDEN MCCARTHY, Children’s Staff Attorney, was admitted into the Arizona bar.

Congratulations to Gladis, Angie, Vanessa, and Golden, and welcome to our new staff!
The Florence Project relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, faith-based organizations, foundations, and law firms to provide its multitude of legal and social services.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
- Susan Anderson
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- Margaret Kirch
- Margarita Silva
- Andy Silverman & Starr Sanders

**ORGANIZATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND LAW FIRMS TO PROVIDE ITS MULTITUDE OF LEGAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES.**

**FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**
- Little Chapel of All Nations
- Lutheran Immigrant & Refugee Services
- Presbyterian Church USA
- Westminster Presbyterian Church

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**CORPORATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS**
- Academy of Business Immigration Lawyers
- APS Foundation
- BorderLinks
- Dailygood
- Indigo Girls, Inc.
- Practical Art
- William K Perry Farms

**FOUNDATIONS**
- Arizona Community Foundation
- Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation
- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education
- Combined Federal Campaign of Maricopa County
- The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region
- Helder Family Foundation
- JSW Charities
- Karuna Foundation
- United Health Group
- Valley of the Sun United Way
- Vera Institute of Justice

**INIVIDUALS**
- Torch of Justice Society
  - The Florence Project created the Torch of Justice Society to provide individuals with the opportunity to support the Florence Project at higher financial levels. Contributions of all sizes enable us to serve thousands of detained men, women, and children facing removal proceedings.

**BENEFICIARIES OF JUSTICE ($500 AND OVER)**
- anonymous (2)
- Joseph & Susan Arpad
- Louis Barsky & Valerie Gomes
- Neil Barsky
- Nadine Basha
- Ellen Basso
- John & Bonnie Bouma
- Christopher & Linda Brele
- Jose & Virginia Cardenas
- Neyma Chacon
- Miriam Choca
- Thomas Dasse
- Joan Davidson
- Margaret Diaz
- Katherine Dwight
- Paul & Flo Eckstein
- David Gaona
- Nestor Guzman
- Craig & Holly Hansen
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- Jonathan James
- Mary Ann Kirch
- Sharon Kirsch
- Humberto & Czarina Lopez
- Pat Miles
- R.A. & Rebecca R. Montaño
- William & Mary Novotny
- Arthur Piccinati
- Roberto Reaves
- Jose De Jesus & Nina Rivera
- Claire Sargent
- James Seward & Julie Karcis
- Alice Snell
- Florence Wagner
- Nancy White
- Patricia White
- Daryl Williams
- Margaret Zateman

**ADVOCATES ($250-$499)**
- Dennis & Margaret Awtrey
- Jean Beal
- Sarah Buel
- Sebastian Cormier & Kara Hartzler
- Steenton Danielson & Christina Powers
- Jaime Fatas
- Ronda & Mark Fisk
- Pamela Jole Franks & Bram Jacobson
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- Matt Linderman
- Patricia Manning
- Sandra Masetto
- Michael McGrath
- Michael & Lynn Murphy
- Adam Rumenblatt & Amanda Levinson
- Howard & Judith Peters
- Jerzy Rzenblit
- Edwin & Teresa Ruhl
- Nina Sachdev
- Craig Soland
- David Stern
- Kelly Wells
- Lawrence & Patricia Winthrop

**SENTINELS ($100-$249)**
- anonymous (2)
- Peter Akmajian
- Delfina Alvarez
- Alice Vaex Aranda
- Alice Atkinson
- Barbara Atwood
- Lina Austin
- Galie Baack
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- Alice Gartell
- Diane Greiner
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- Jeffrey Lubbers
- Elizabeth Lundquist
- Genie Mancuso
- Lindsay Marshall
- Toni Massaro
- James Matthews
- Jane McCullan
- Nancy McCahren & David Bellama
- Joseph McGarry

**Congratulations Mr. Renteria!** A client’s family celebrates their father’s recent victory with Florence Team staff Luis Mancheno and Stephanie Quintana-Martinez and intern Nate Regenold, while they anxiously wait for him to be released from detention. The whole family made the trip to Florence to testify on his behalf and stopped by the office to thank the Florence Project.
SNAPSHOT OF FLORENCE PROJECT SERVICES IN 2013

» 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 5,588 individuals fighting their removal cases who cannot afford to hire private counsel.

» 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 1,157 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 212 especially vulnerable clients through our Integrated Social Services Program, including emergency housing, access to medical care, and help with urgent child custody matters.
ABOUT THE FLORENCE PROJECT
The Florence Project’s work is carried out primarily through five programs: the Florence “Justice and Efficiency” Model, the Eloy Pro Se Model, the Detained Immigrant and Refugee Children’s Initiative, the Defending Immigrants Program, and the Integrated Social Services Program. As part of its direct legal services, the Project has created “Know Your Rights” videos and self-representation packets as an educational resource for non-profit service providers and detained people nationwide. Nationally, the Florence Project advocates for positive change in federal policies and practices towards those detained and it serves as a resource-development and training center for detention program “best practices.”

MISSION & VISION
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.

TO DONATE TO THE FLORENCE PROJECT:
Mail a check or money order to:
The Florence Project
P.O. Box 654
Florence, AZ 85132
Visit our website and contribute via PayPal:
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Call or email:
firrp@firrp.org
520.868.0191 x105

TO CONTACT THE FLORENCE PROJECT OR TO SCHEDULE A VISIT:
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