la línea
THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE FLORENCE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS PROJECT

SPECIAL ISSUE: WOMEN IN DETENTION

SPRING 2012

Thank You - We Did It!

Thanks to gifts from over 400 contributors to the Florence Project, we are happy to report that we not only met, but exceeded our 2011 fall fundraising campaign goal! It all started with a $25,000 challenge grant from one person, which was more than matched dollar-for-dollar by our volunteer Board of Directors. Our goal was to raise an additional match of $50,000 from external contributors before the end of the 2011 calendar year. With your help, we raised over $70,000 from external sources, surpassing our goal by $20,000. As promised, all funds raised went directly to modest salary increases for all of our staff, effective January 1st, 2012. Thank you to all of our contributors for this instrumental support of our organization and of our hardworking staff.

Much like the need for our services, our fundraising and outreach work never ceases. Our next goal is to sustain and build upon the growing interest we generated in 2011. Our Board of Directors held a planning meeting in January where we discussed not only the state of our current services but also the unmet legal needs in the immigrant community.

The Florence Project will incur expenses of over $900,000 in 2012. Our 2012 budget has a funding gap of $250,000. This means we must raise a total of at least $250,000 through our newsletters, appeals, events, and donor outreach to end the year on budget and maintain all of our programs and services. To date, we have raised nearly $60,000 and have new Board of Director pledges of over $35,000, so we are already making progress. With your help, we will make it again.

Vianka, granted asylum protection, with her daughter

In this issue of La Línea we focus on women. It is a fitting theme given recent media coverage of issues impacting women's health and rights, the prevalence of remarkable young women on our staff, and the growing number of women served by the Florence Project. We hope the stories here will make you proud that you support the Florence Project and may inspire you to give again and spread the word to others about who we are and the important work we do.

With Appreciation,
Tom Broderick, Chair of Board Development Committee
Noel Fidel, Board President

Florence Project Staff Receive Accolades

Congratulations to Executive Director **Lindsay Marshall** and Children's Managing Attorney **Gladis Molina** for their recent recognition from the legal community. In March, Lindsay was awarded the Learned Hand Emerging Leadership Award from the Arizona Region of the American Jewish Committee and in February Gladis received the UCLA Alumni of the Year award from the La Raza Student's Association. We are thrilled to see the commitment and accomplishments of Lindsay and Gladis honored by these esteemed organizations!

Lindsay Marshall with Board Members Milagros Cisneros and Noel Fidel at the AJC Award Ceremony.

Gladis Molina with fellow honorees and members of the UCLA La Raza Student's Association.

Also in this issue:

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Lewis & Roca: Law Firm Leader

Focus Forward

LEWIS AND ROCA LLP LAWYERS

Did you know that the Florence Project may not exist today if it wasn't for the law firm Lewis & Roca? Law firms have always been instrumental to the Florence Project's work, but arguably none more so than this Southwest powerhouse. In 1989, it was the partners of Lewis & Roca who permitted associate Chris Brelje to take a paid sabbatical to start an innovative defender project for the hundreds of Central American refugees detained in the new INS detention facility in the town of Florence. The firm's support and trust in this young attorney not only helped the Florence Project become what it is today but contributed to the growth of pro bono legal services for thousands of detained immigrants across the country, cementing the firm's longstanding tradition of pro bono service.

Lewis & Roca has remained by our side as the Florence Project has continued to grow to meet new challenges, contributing the highest level of financial support among all of our law firm supporters. In 2010, and again in 2011, the firm contributed $10,000 to the Florence Project to inspire and challenge other law firms to increase their financial support of our work.

As the firm's managing partner Ken Van Winkle notes:

"Lewis and Roca's work with the Florence Project began in 1989, and since then our attorneys have devoted more than 9200 pro bono hours to the Project, representing families, individuals and children in complex immigration matters. Lewis and Roca greatly admires the Florence Project and its committed lawyers, staff and volunteers and looks forward to continuing our longstanding relationship."

We too greatly admire Lewis & Roca and thank them for their leadership and support!

Florence Project Receives Prestigious Emil Gumpert Award

The Florence Project has been named the recipient of the American College of Trial Lawyer's 2012 Emil Gumpert Award! This national award recognizes programs whose principal purpose is to maintain and improve the administration of justice. The Project will receive a one-time grant to implement a redesign and update of our self-help legal materials, which are used around the country by pro se immigrant detainees and peer organizations. Look for more to come in our next newsletter as we undertake this important project!

2011 Services Highlights

- Live **"know your rights" presentations** regarding people's rights and remedies in removal proceedings. In 2011, we provided **516** rights presentations to **9572** detained immigrants, including **1147** unaccompanied immigrant children.
- **Individual case assessment** and follow up pro se assistance for individuals who cannot afford to hire private counsel. In 2011, we provided case assessment and pro se assistance to **4736** people.
- **Direct representation**, as resources allow, and **pro bono referrals**. In 2011, we provided direct representation to **134** people and referred **72** cases to volunteer attorneys in the community.
- **Consultations** for indigent immigrants in criminal proceedings. In 2011, we provided **1090** consultations to the criminal defense bar on the immigration consequences of pleas deals and convictions.
- **Trainings and outreach.** In 2011, Florence Project participated in **94** trainings, conferences, and outreach activities. We leveraged our limited resources with the help of **86** volunteers.

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Florentina and attorney Gladis Molina, celebrating her winning Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, a pathway to U.S. Citizenship.

Survivor of Domestic Violence Wins Asylum

Perkins Coie associate and pro bono attorney Fernanda Sayavedra.

By Fernanda Sayavedra, *Perkins Coie LLP*

As a young student, "Alicia" had a promising future. She was a law student on a scholarship at one of the most prestigious universities in Guatemala. However, her life changed drastically after she married. Her husband forced her to quit school and began what would become years of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. This abuse would eventually escalate to the point where her husband attempted to take her life on several occasions. Alicia realized she would have to escape in order to save her life, and began to seek refuge in other parts of Guatemala. But wherever she went, her husband caught up with her and continued to abuse her. On numerous occasions, Alicia appealed to government authorities for help, but her pleas were mocked and fell on deaf ears. In order to survive, Alicia realized she would have to leave Guatemala, so she fled to the United States. Shortly after she arrived in the United States she was detained and taken to the Eloy Detention Center. She applied for asylum protection based on domestic violence and the Florence Project referred her case to the law firm Perkins Coie for pro bono services, where I was assigned the case.

When I first met Alicia and heard her story, I was moved by her plight, and knew deportation back to Guatemala would almost certainly result in her death at the hands of her husband. I quickly learned, though, that we were facing an uphill battle: all similar domestic violence cases from Eloy had been denied asylum and there was very little case precedent in our favor. Notwithstanding this bleak outlook, we were determined to do everything we could for her case. I worked several months to prepare for her hearings. This included tracking down any witnesses I could find in Guatemala who might help her case, drafting numerous legal documents, and preparing Alicia to testify in court.

Drawing from a female detainee

Throughout it all, both Alicia and I rode an emotional roller coaster. At times victory appeared just around the corner, only to be seemingly derailed by unforeseen circumstances. Personal family tragedies for Alicia also took an emotional toll. What added even more to the emotional strain was the indifference to the plights of battered women that we encountered at every turn. Sometimes these emotional highs and lows were overwhelming, but Alicia's unfaltering confidence in our ability to win her case spurred us on. Additionally, the support I received from the Florence Project and other attorneys, including Karin Aldama at Perkins Coie, made victory seem more possible. Finally, after almost 2 years, the Board of Immigration Appeals granted Alicia asylum. We were incredibly overjoyed. When I called Alicia to give her the good news, she immediately began crying from relief, gratitude, and joy. For the next two weeks, I received a call from her every day just so she could tell me how much she appreciated everything we had done for her.

Alma, a lawful permanent resident granted cancellation of removal, with Eloy legal assistant Argentina Iñiguez the night she was released from detention.

Immigrant Women in Detention

On any given day, there are more than 400 women like Alicia detained for removal proceedings at the Eloy Detention Center. More and more women and girls are migrating to the United States to support their children or family members in their home country, to flee domestic violence, and to seek asylum protection. The increase in interior enforcement measures against long term undocumented residents of the United States also significantly impact women.

Women face a number of unique conditions related challenges that detention facilities are often ill equipped to address. For example, a significant percentage have experienced violence or sexual assault at some point in their lives and many are attempting to defend their right to remain in the United States on that basis, but counseling services and education and art programs are non-existent in detention. Many other women are pregnant and suffer from additional stress, discomfort, and inadequate nutrition and prenatal care.

We also find that only a very small number of the women have lawful permanent resident status or a claim to citizenship. It is far more difficult to obtain a successful outcome with the remaining forms of relief, such as asylum, crime victim visas, and adjustment for battered spouses of citizens or nonpermanent residents. These other forms of relief are grounded in complex legal arguments, involve mountains of documentation, or have so many requirements that they are almost impossible to satisfy, especially without the assistance of counsel. As a result, the majority of unrepresented women in immigration detention are ultimately deported.

Social Service Needs for Immigrant Women

AN INTERVIEW WITH SOCIAL SERVICES COORDINATOR CINDY SCHLOSSER

Maria reunified with her children in Phoenix after her release from detention.

Cindy Schlosser (far right) with former client Claudia and former staff attorney Katie Ruhl

Can you describe your work with detained pregnant women?

Since the beginning of this year, I have met with 15 women in different stages of their pregnancy at the Eloy Detention Center. This month, I was assisting a woman who was 5½ months pregnant with a meritorious case, but she gave up fighting because she couldn't face the idea of giving birth behind bars. A lot of the pregnant women I support are being held without charges or hearings as they wait for their credible fear interviews with an asylum officer. Every single woman has expressed fear about the less-than-adequate pre-natal care they are receiving, the absence of nutritious food, and the overwhelming anxiety they face about going into labor while detained. All of the women have told me that they go to bed hungry and that they have trouble sleeping in detention.

In November 2007, The Department of Homeland Security issued guidance, commonly referred to as "the nursing mother's memo", encouraging Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials to exercise prosecutorial discretion in making detention decisions that involve "meritorious health related cases and caregivers." More recently, a June 2011 memo from the Director of ICE specifically noted pregnant or nursing mothers as a class of individuals where "particular care and consideration" should be given in deciding whether to detain or prosecute. I don't believe that the Arizona office of ICE is following the spirit of these directives with respect to the pregnant women I encounter at Eloy.

Please discuss your efforts to help detained men and women defend their parental rights while facing removal.

Many of our clients have United States citizen children who are in Child Protective Services (CPS) custody or living with a friend or family member who does not have legal guardianship. The parents often have no way of appearing at the dependency hearings, communicating with their court appointed attorneys, or otherwise ensuring that their parental rights are not terminated solely due to their be in immigration custody. In my role as the Social Services Coordinator, I push the deportation officers, the CPS caseworkers, and the court appointed attorneys to make arrangements for detained parents to appear telephonically at their state court hearings, to set up visits with their children, and to make sure that parents can communicate with their court-appointed attorneys and their caseworkers through me or by telephone. Our Executive Director, Lindsay, and I have also worked together for the last several years to educate the various stakeholders in the child welfare system about how to maintain contact with parents and navigate the confusing immigration detention system. We are seeing good progress and hope to continue to educate both systems about each other so we can avoid a situation where parents permanently lose their rights to raise their children because they are detained and deported.

What do you enjoy about the Social Services Coordinator position?

Many of the clients I work with – especially women – tend to be more sympathetic to a broader audience, and therefore provide a good access point to raise larger systemic issues in our immigration system and work toward positive change. As challenging as my position can be, I also get to work toward release for many people and see many of our clients after they are released. I get to see how much easier it is for them to have access to legal counsel, to medical care, and to other resources compared with the restrictions they and thousands of others face in detention. It is motivating to see the possibilities of what could be if people were given alternatives to detention and if the barriers to community providers were brought down.

How is your position funded?

Unfortunately, there is no secure funding source for my job from year to year. We started 2012 without any designated funding to cover my position, which was obviously really scary. We've since secured a grant from the Aetna Foundation to cover part of my work but are continually looking for other sources of funding. My position is critical to the Florence Project in part because it permits our legal staff to focus strictly on our clients' legal cases, while I can address the various social service needs that arise. The Florence Project was one of the first organizations to create a position like this, and we're seen as a national model for integrating social and legal services in this way. We hope we can not only continue to do this but one day actually expand our social services program to more holistically assist the thousands of clients who need this kind of support.

Thank You to our 2011 Volunteers!

Thank you to the following wonderful people who volunteered their time and talent to the Florence Project and our clients during the 2011 calendar year!

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Staff Corner

It has been a busy few months for the Florence Project's staff!

In January, we bid farewell to Eloy Staff Attorney **KATIE RUHL** who left the Project after more than four years to join the Law Office of Matthew Green in Tucson. To replace Katie, we welcomed **CHARLES VERNON** to our staff in January as our new Eloy Legal Representative. Charles is a 2011 graduate of the University of Arizona James E. Roger College of Law and a former Florence Project summer intern. In March, Florence Legal Assistant **CHRISTINA VILLEGAS** flew from the Florence Project coop to travel and solidify her plans for law school. Children's Legal Assistant **DORIEN EDIGER-SETO** will move from the Children's Project to the Florence Team as our new Florence Legal Assistant so we'll be looking for a new Children's Legal Assistant as this newsletter goes to print. We wish Katie and Christina the best and are thrilled to have Charles join our staff full time and to transition Dorien into her new role!

Left: Congratulations to Office Manager Michele Dando on the birth of her third grandchild, another girl! Arielle Lizette Tapia was born on February 22, 2012.
Right: Congratulations to Florence Project staff members Cindy Schlosser and Charles Vernon, who married at the Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas in November in the presence of family and friends.

Florence Project Staff, March 2012

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The Florence Project created the Torch of Justice Society to provide individuals with the opportunity to support the Florence Project at higher financial levels and supply donors with certain benefits at all giving levels.

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Dan Pochoda
Gladys E. Portela
Peri Jude Radecic
Amelia C. Regueno
Suzanne Reimolds
Danilo Renderos
Ellen R. Rennell
Glenn I. Reynolds
Carolyn Robbins
Anne C. Ronan
Alyssa Rosemartin (in honor of Casey & Lesley's wedding)
Marian Zapata-Rossa
Alan W Rottenberg
Katharine Ruhl
Michael Saks & Roselle Wissler
Jessica S. Sanchez
Karen Scates
Stuart Siefer
Caitlin Sieh
Mary E Sigler
Elaine Slate
Brian Soucek (in honor of Cindy and Charles' wedding)
Richard M. Spiegel, MD
Lori Spencer
Richard & Linda Staats
Beth Stebenne
Dorothy Steinicke
Richard Stencil
Susan Stern
Jane G. St. John
Dixie & Robert Swan
Naomi Swinton & Robert Mobbs
Ramsey Thomas
Herbert Trossman
Victoria Trotta
Mercy A. Valencia
Richard Van Rhoads
Cruz Villegas
Marco E. Villegas
Susana Villegas
Barbara and Richard Warden
Scott Weinflash
Marion Gregg Whited
Jo Wilch
Jeff and Jenny Winkler
Gloria G. Ybarra
Herman & Leslie Zickerman

Pulitzer Prize winner Sonia Nazario, author of Enrique's Journey, *spoke to Florence Project staff, board, and supporters in March at the home of Board Member Peggy Kirch.*

We have listed contributions received between January 1 and December 31, 2011. Please contact us if you believe your name has been omitted in error or if you would like to make a change to how you are recognized so we can correct any mistakes.

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THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE FLORENCE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS PROJECT

SPRING 2012

SAVE THE DATE: Music For Justice Encore!

On **September 22nd**, KT and The Repeat Offenders will host another benefit concert for the Florence Project at Phoenix's Rhythm Room ~ mark your calendars for another night of great Motown, R&B Rock classics, and good cheer to support the work of the Florence Project! Last year's event was a huge success so we expect to pack the room again! Email us at firrp@firrp.org to reserve tickets.

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.

The Florence Project
is on Facebook –
become our friend!

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:

www.firrp.org

TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE FLORENCE PROJECT:

Call or email:

firrp@firrp.org
520.868.0191 x105

TO CONTACT THE FLORENCE PROJECT OR TO SCHEDULE A VISIT:

Mailing Address:

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T: 520.868.0191 x105
F: 520.868.0192
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