

PAIFUP

News from the fight for freedom, safety and dignity for all immigrants detained in Pennsylvania.

January 2021 | Issue 8

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December Recap

2 NEW CLIENTS
6 HEARINGS
3 CLIENTS RELEASED

Happy New Year from the PAIFUP team!

Last month, we secured the release of three of our clients. Also, we were able to reconnect with former clients in time for the holidays, which included a virtual lesson on how to make a client's own Guatemalan tamales.

We welcome a new year as it is a chance to assess, take stock, and begin anew. In this spirit, we announce that our small but mighty team is gaining a staff attorney.

Lastly, we have begun taking new clients this month and look forward to sharing their stories in the near future.

Client Update: Juan

Remember Juan? We first shared his success story last October and caught up with him right after the holidays. Juan was able to spend Christmas with his family, including his new baby!

Juan is a lawful permanent resident from the Dominican Republic who has lived in the United States for thirty years. He has six U.S. citizen children and has worked in the United States to support his family and his elderly mother. Juan was detained by ICE in September 2019 and charged with deportability grounds. He applied for relief, but the Judge denied his case. Juan appealed, but couldn't afford an attorney, so he went forth pro se. During this time, the prison experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, and Juan became worried about what might happen to him due to the underlying health conditions that placed him at high risk. He tried to give up his right to appeal so that he could get out of detention because he was afraid he would die in prison if he got coronavirus. However, he was connected to PAIFUP through MILPA and decided to keep fighting.



PAIFUP attorneys quickly reviewed his case and determined that Juan should have never been placed in removal proceedings because he was not deportable as charged. PAIFUP attorneys asked the BIA to terminate his case. Seven long months after his appeal, the

BIA agreed, and his case was terminated in September 2020. He was released one year after he was originally detained and had a joyful reunion with his family in Pennsylvania. Juan is grateful for the work of PAIFUP attorneys, writing that he is thankful that God put us in his path because we were able to save his life and allow his children to grow up with a father.

*Client's name has been changed to protect anonymity.

Staff Highlight



Melissa is a staff attorney for the Detention Programs at the Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center (PIRC) and joined PAIFUP in January 2021.

Why PAIFUP?

Immigration Judge Dana Leigh Marks made a now-iconic statement that immigration court cases are like death penalty cases being decided in a traffic court setting. Immigration law is civil (as opposed to criminal) law in name only. Persons detained by ICE potentially face lengthy incarceration and de facto death sentences if deported, without the right to legal counsel...unless, of course, they can afford to

pay. Our American values of due process and fundamental fairness for all require that projects like PAIFUP continue to expand until universal representation becomes a reality. I am happy to become a part of such a critically important initiative to seek "liberty and justice for all."

We Are Stronger Together: Meet Our Affiliates



Aldea provides quality pro bono legal and social services to vulnerable detained and free immigrant populations throughout Pennsylvania and offers universal pro bono representation to every family detained by ICE in the state. Aldea also participates in important and impactful litigation nationwide to protect immigrant children and their families.

In Other News



Immigration, the Civil Rights Movement, and my existence

No one in my family



Migrant Caravan, Tests Regional Resolve to Control Migration

As many as 7,000 migrants from Central America are hoping



Democrats ready immigration push for Biden's early days

Biden's got a plan.

was in the United States in the 1960s. Yet, I owe my existence to the civil rights movement. - Nikhil Trivedi

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www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu)

to reach the United States to escape poverty intensified by hurricanes and the pandemic. President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. has pledged to ease asylum rules.

[Read more
www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

And it's a bold one, immigration advocates say.

[Read more
www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com)

[Catch up on the previous issue here](#)

The Pennsylvania Family Unity Project (PAIFUP) is a collaborative of nonprofit organizations in Pennsylvania formed in order to achieve universal representation for detained immigrants in removal proceedings in PA.