

From the Immigrant Justice Ministry Team: The Power of Community

Working with [Action in Montgomery](#) (AIM), our Immigrant Justice Ministry Team hosted a legal clinic at Cedar Lane on Saturday. The clinic provided free legal counsel from four trusted attorneys to some 35 immigrant neighbors under threat of detention and deportation. Volunteers from the Standby Guardianship Project helped families arrange powers of attorney and arrangements to care for their children in the event that parents are deported.

The work was serious. The day was a swirl of activity for our 28 Cedar Lane volunteers. Families arrived. Cedar Lane greeters and organizers from AIM were on hand with lists of names and appointments. Volunteer drivers ferried those who needed rides. Volunteers cared for young ones while their parents spoke with their lawyers. Other volunteers offered snacks and lunch and stayed late to clean up.

Yet what struck most of us was the spirit of the day — the palpable sense of warmth, kindness and ease to our time together. People shared stories in English and Spanish, laughed together, and spoke of what it meant to be neighbors during these times. It felt like the beginning of something.

At the end of the day, one of our neighbors shared her experience: “We are deeply grateful for the free consultation with an immigration lawyer that was provided to my husband and me.... We deeply admire the impeccable work and invaluable commitment shown in supporting our immigrant community.

My family and I are truly grateful from the bottom of our hearts. May God continue to bless everyone who organized this event — as well as their families and the lawyers alike!”

We were touched that she said: “Su trato amable y solidario en estos momentos tan difíciles nos dio mucha paz.” (“The kind and supportive way we were treated during such difficult times brought us great peace of mind.”) And that was our mission.

One of our organizers added, “Days like [Saturday] remind me of the power of community and what we can accomplish when people come together simply because they want to help. It gives me the strength and encouragement to keep going.”

The words of poet Denise Levertov come to mind as both a prayer and a hope: “We have only begun to know / the power that is in us if we would join / our solitudes in the communion of struggle.”