

REPORT OF FINDINGS IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES

INTRODUCTION:

As Jews, we come from immigrants, that is the story of our people. Abraham was the first Jewish immigrant. *Lech-Lecha*. He went from his homeland to the land of Canaan and from there to Egypt and then back to Canaan. *Lech-lecha*.

As we read in the **Haggadah** "in each generation, each person is obligated to see himself or herself [*livot et atzmo*] as though he or she personally came forth from Egypt." We are obligated to treat immigrants with the same respect as the native-born, bearing in mind our own experiences—from Egypt on—as abused and mistreated sojourners in strange lands.

JEWISH VALUES:

We are instructed in the Holiness Code to treat the strangers in our midst with justice and compassion: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33). This teaching permeates Jewish tradition and is echoed 35 times in the Torah – the most repeated of any commandment. The history of the Jewish people from Egypt through the Holocaust until today, reminds us of the many struggles faced by immigrants throughout the world. As a community of immigrants, we are charged to pursue justice, seek peace and build a society that is welcoming to all of God's creatures, regardless of their immigration status. In Genesis, three strangers visit Abraham, and he welcomes them into his home and into his heart without question (Genesis 18:1-22). This virtue of *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming the stranger, drives both our commitment to protecting undocumented immigrants from deportation and our dedication to the hospitality and inclusion of all people.

CAMPAIGN GOAL:

At present, undocumented immigrants over the age of 18 in California are ineligible for full scope Medi-Cal, the public health program that offers free or low-cost health coverage for children and adults with limited income and resources. The goal would be to help ensure that everyone is given access to health care.

PARTNER DESCRIPTION AND PARTNERING ACTIVITIES

Access CA

Located in Anaheim, for many years Access CA has provided services to the immigrant and refugee communities. In a meeting with several of the organization offices, TBS was invited to participate in programs in the following areas:

- Case Management and Advocacy
- Refugee Social Services
- Refugee Health Services
- Employment and Tax Preparation
- Financial Assistance
- Citizenship and Immigration
- Youth Program
- Community Services and Civic Engagement

World Relief

World Relief is recognized by the US Department of Justice and can represent immigration clients before the US Citizenship and Immigration Service. Opportunities for TBS volunteers to work with faith-based groups and civic organizations in the following programs: food security, immigration legal services, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Green Card Applications, Naturalization Services, Deportation Defense.

Border Initiative: Over the past several months, staff members of World Relief Southern California have gone to Tijuana, Mexico to offer free legal consultations to families looking to gain entry into the United States to apply for asylum. They have visited shelters where women and children that are seeking asylum reside.

Uplift Charity

“Uplift Charity is organized and created by Muslims committed to improving the lives of the most dependent members of the local community. Direct service opportunities can include working with their refugee assistance programs such as building food boxes and distribution.

Orange County Jewish Coalition for Refugees

See below information on volunteer opportunities in the OCJCR.

HIAS

OCJCR partners with HIAS. . In recent times, HIAS/OCJCR has been working closely with various organizations and temples in San Diego in addressing immigration and asylum problems on our southern border. A description of these activities is presented on the OCJCR website.

RAC California: STATE ACTION

SB-29 (Lara and Durazo) / AB-4 (Arambula, Bonta, and Chiu) - Health Care for all Text of SB-29 Text of AB-4

These are two versions of the same legislation, fall under the #HealthCareForAll banner. At present, undocumented immigrants over the age of 18 in California are ineligible for full scope Medi-Cal, the public health program that offers free or low-cost health coverage for children and adults with limited income and resources. These bills would allow undocumented immigrants to receive Medi-Cal. The Governor's recently released budget currently has allocated only enough funding to cover individuals up to age 26.

The RAC-CA Immigration Team considered these points in coming to this recommendation for considering these bills:

- Strong partner groups will include CIPC, Health Access (per the Health Insurance Team), and AAAJ.
- Furthers California's national leadership on immigrant rights.
- Aligns with Jewish values of welcoming the stranger, protecting the widow and the orphan, and one law for all.
- Synergy with the Health Care Research Team, who has endorsed these bills but selected others as their priorities.
- Establishes RAC-CA early on as a leader in advocating for Health Care for All.

Additional Opportunities for TBS Volunteers

Orange County Jewish Coalition for Refugees:

The Coalition is an umbrella organization that helps its member organizations pair up with various non-profit organizations that provide support to refugees and immigrants in OC. There are available volunteer opportunities with OCJCR . This is a good way for Temple Beth Sholom to broaden its work on refugee and Immigrant issues. **Jewish Family Service in San Diego** provides a wide range of services to asylum seekers and immigrants at the southern border. For example, it administers a shelter for asylum seekers in the US at the border. JFS partners with HIAS in serving meals. Jewish Family and Jewish Service

and several nonprofits are seeking household and clothing items for immigrant and refugee families.

Friends of Detainees: Trained Volunteers visit detainees in Orange County jails.

Uplift Charity: Volunteers for monthly food bank distribution to locally resettled refugee families and asylum seekers.

Families Belong Together: Christian group sponsors Spanish speaking volunteers who work with children. Donations in US. Mexico does not allow articles passed over the border.

Teen Club: Run by Tarbut V'Torah.

Action Network: have planned events such as an overnight in December 2018 in which they provided relief/support to people who are already over the border (Families Belong Together).

SUMMARY:

By helping Immigrants and/or refugee we would ensure the well being of “new arrivals and strangers to our land.”we would be walking the walk of our biblical ancestors and our own families.

Acting on the words of Torah and our rabbis, we will be walking the walk of our biblical ancestors and our own families and ensure the well being of “new arrivals and strangers to our land.”