



Esperanza Newsletter

Fall 2021



Dear Esperanza Family,

As the end of 2021 approaches, many of us are focusing on fall festivities, family reunions, and reflecting on the year. November marks twenty months since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, and though we have adjusted and pivoted in so many aspects of our lives, 2021 was immensely challenging – especially for the most vulnerable in our communities. In the past year Esperanza provided direct representation to more than 900 clients, and an additional 7,000 individuals received more than 12,000 services, despite the pandemic and the limits on in-person services. With the help of more than 70 pro bono attorneys and over 130 volunteers, we remained committed to and focused on providing inspiration and hope to indigent immigrants in Southern California. Our clients have benefited from holistic support, trauma informed care and zealous advocacy.

We know that we are making a difference one case at a time and one life at a time. For instance, in just the past few weeks multiple clients we have defended in court for 5 or more years, finally received Green Cards! Positive outcomes like these reveal both the impact of our work, and the reality that the path to safety and stability is long and winding. In 2022, Esperanza will expand services for families on the newly created “dedicated” accelerated docket; we will be offering additional holistic support for our unaccompanied minor clients; and we will provide more opportunities for engagement and learning for the community.

Together we will continue to work towards a more just and humane immigration system. Thank you for your solidarity and please support Esperanza today.



Kimberley Plotnik
Program Director

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Recent Win!



Karla, an Esperanza client from Honduras, received her Green Card last month based on Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. We are excited for Karla and the many opportunities that await her!



Remote Services



For general inquiries, please call:
(213) 251-3505 or **(213) 534-7594**

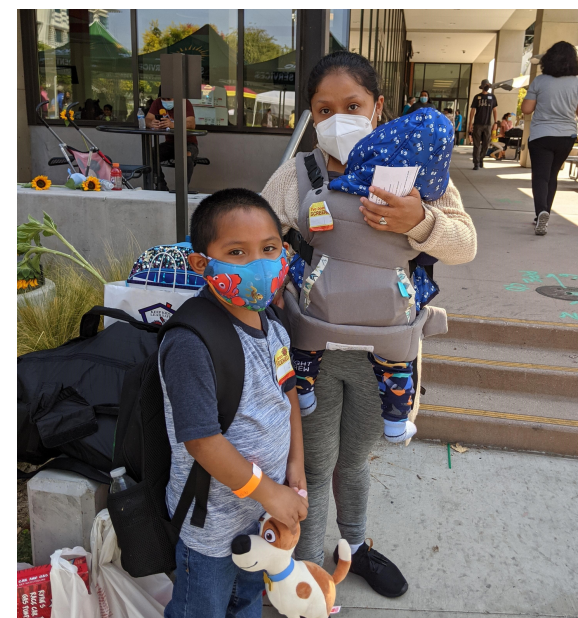
For information on how to contact our community education programs to receive assistance, please visit our website at

www.esperanza-la.org

Latest Happenings

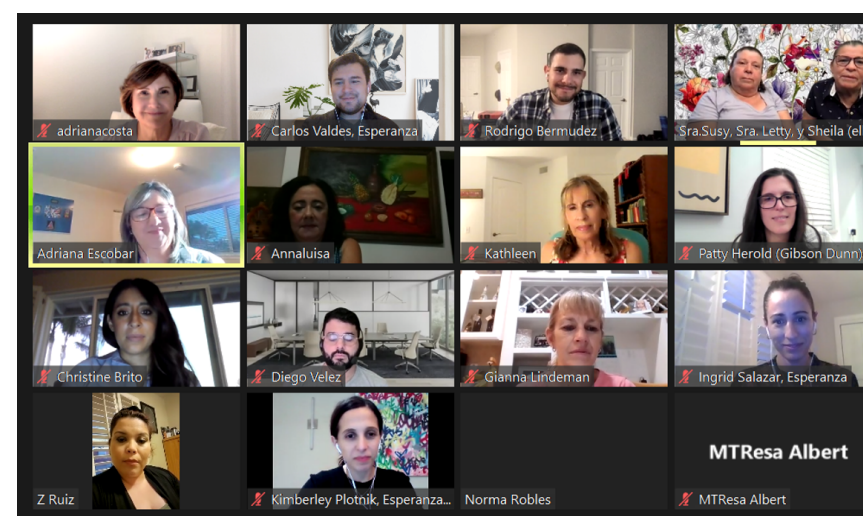
Welcome Fair for Unaccompanied Children

On September 25th, Esperanza - along with LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs, Los Angeles County Chair of the Board of Supervisors, the Mayors office and dozens of other LA City agencies and community organizations – hosted a first-ever Welcome Fair for Unaccompanied Children and Families at East Los Angeles College. It was a huge success, with almost 1,000 in attendance, and Esperanza's Released Youth Program was able to provide free critical legal services to over 230 recently arrived immigrant youth.



Volunteer Appreciation Event

For the second year in a row, Esperanza held its annual Volunteer Appreciation event virtually, as part of National Pro Bono Week this past October. It was such an honor to be able to recognize the amazing contributions of our many outstanding volunteers!



"I had no experience in immigration law when I started searching for a way to help alleviate the suffering at the border, and was thrilled to find Esperanza's program that harnessed the potential of non-immigration attorneys to make a difference for their clients. Esperanza's dedicated attorneys trained and mentored me -- from the first client meeting through the asylum hearing. Representing a Salvadoran family -- mom, dad and four daughters -- who had fled death threats at home to restart their lives in America has been immensely gratifying and meaningful work. I look forward to my next case with Esperanza."

-Laura Diamond, Esq., one of the pro bono attorneys awarded a certificate of dedication for her outstanding work in 2021.

New Community Education Program for Families on the **Dedicated Docket**

What is the Dedicated Docket?

On May 28, 2021, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice announced a **"Dedicated Docket"** in immigration court that has targeted more than 6,000 asylum-seeking families apprehended at the Southwest border. The goal of this expedited docket is for immigration judges to issue a decision within 300 days of the initial hearing, which is significantly quicker than the average non-detained asylum case. Without access to pro bono services and given the dedicated docket's 300-day case completion goal, most of these asylum-seeking families will be forced to present their cases for asylum without counsel.

What is Esperanza Doing to help?

This past September, Esperanza launched a new community education program to assist families on the "Dedicated Docket". This new program, the **Family Group Legal Orientation Program (FGLOP)**, will provide critical legal services including group orientations, family consultations, self-help workshops and legal referrals. Esperanza is the first LA based organization to have a program dedicated to serving this population.

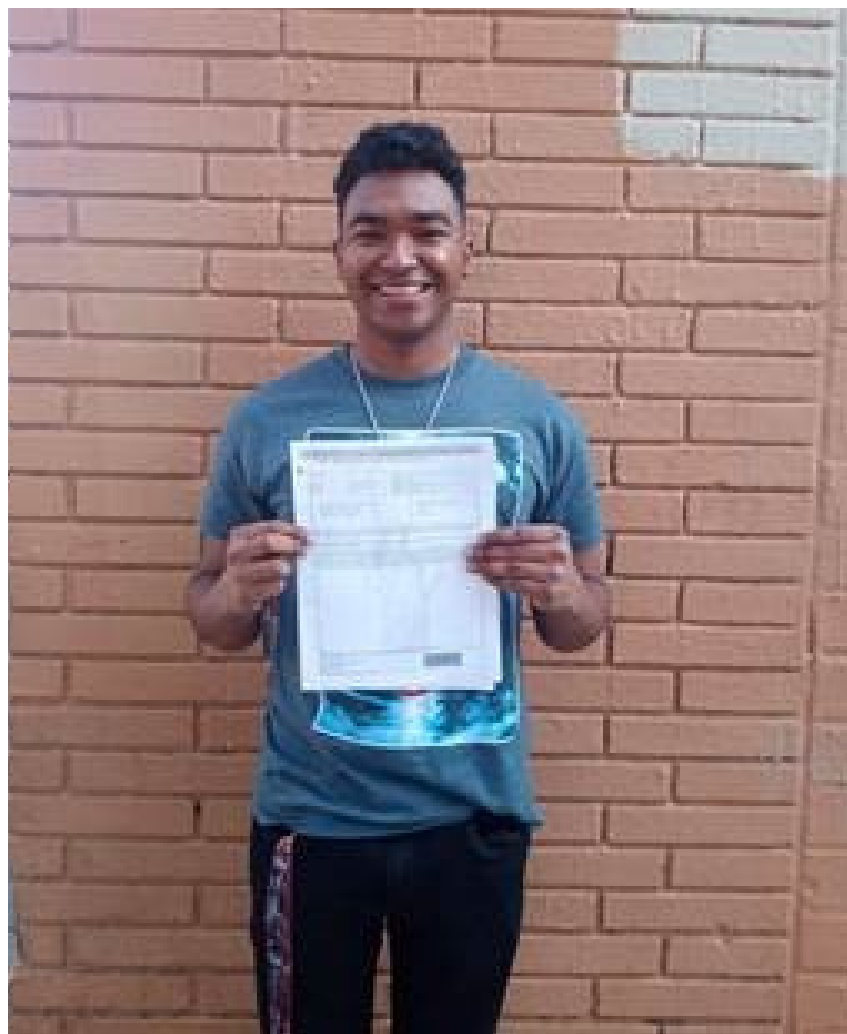
How can you help? Seeking attorneys!

Esperanza is seeking **volunteer attorneys** to represent asylum-seeking families subjected to the new "Dedicated Docket", fast-tracking the adjudication process and limiting the time to prepare their cases or secure representation. These asylum-seeking families are extremely vulnerable and need your help to have a best opportunity to present their claims for asylum and remain safe in the United States. You will receive mentorship and trainings to guide you along your case. **Contact Carlos Valdes, cvaldes@ccharities.org, if you would like more information. Not an attorney? You can also contribute to this work by making a gift of any amount at www.esperanza-la.org/donate.**

Legal Training for Dedicated Docket Cases

December 3rd, 5-7pm, via zoom

Through this special training, Esperanza seasoned attorneys will walk you through the legal practice for these cases, explaining how to actually represent families in removal proceedings from start to end, and will cover their most common forms of relief, including asylum. **Go to www.esperanza-la.org/trainings for more info and to RSVP.**



Meet Erick!

Erick has been a client since 2017. He came to the U.S in 2016, having fled violence and persecution in his home country of Honduras. After Esperanza attorneys obtained Special Immigrant Juvenile Status for Erick, this past month, he finally became a Legal Permanent Resident. Erick's smile is a reminder of why we continue the hard work for our clients so that they can legally remain in the U.S. and pursue their dreams.

Year-End Giving

Help Esperanza help more clients like Erick or families on the new Dedicated Docket facing deportation!

Did you know?

It costs up to \$10,000 to provide full-scope representation to a family seeking asylum. Esperanza is struggling to meet the high demand for pro bono representation for families on the "Dedicated Docket".

Esperanza receives one third of its annual donations in November and December. Please consider making a donation this end of year season.

Double your impact!

65% of corporations have a gift matching program. Double your impact by making a donation and asking your employer to match that gift. Be sure to designate the donation for the Esperanza Immigrant Rights Program of Catholic Charities of LA, Inc. Unsure if your company can match your gift? Just ask your HR! Don't miss out on this opportunity to **double your impact!**

To donate, go to www.esperanza-la.org/donate.



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