

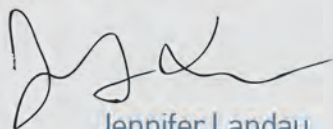
Working to make access to justice affordable for New Mexico's immigrants and to promote knowledge of legal rights and the immigration process.

Dear Friends,

NMILC is New Mexico's only legal services nonprofit dedicated to providing immigration legal services to low-income families facing separation due to deportation. We are also the only organization that provides legal assistance to asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors. NMILC helps to build stable families and increases opportunities for economic security, allowing New Mexico's immigrants to contribute to their community for generations to come.

We aspire to be a dynamic legal service organization with lawyers housed with strategic community partners. We believe that this approach allows us to use our limited resources with the greatest effect. We know that our legal advocacy is most efficient when we are working in collaboration with medical, education, and social service champions who our clients know and trust.

In light of the Obama Administration's recent change in policy that has allowed thousands of young people to obtain work authorization, we dedicate our first newsletter to our work with children and youth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Landau".

Jennifer Landau
Executive Director

OUR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY PROJECT IS LAUNCHED IN THE SOUTHEAST HEIGHTS

In August, our newest attorney, Jessica Martin, with support from United Way of Central New Mexico, launched the Children's Advocacy project to address the immigration legal needs of medically, psychologically, and developmentally vulnerable children and their parents. The Project is a collaborative with PB&J Family Services and other service providers in Albuquerque's Southeast Heights. The overarching goal of the project is to improve outcomes for vulnerable children through the provision of immigration legal services to strengthen family stability and prevent separation.

"I FEEL LIKE A LOT OF DOORS ARE OPENING. I HAVE CHOICES NOW. NMILC IS HOPE FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE"

Jessica developed the project in law school based on her experience representing Nelly, a young woman facing deportation, who is the mother of two special needs children who had been in PB&J's pre school program. If Nelly were to be removed from the U.S., her children would lose specialized educational and therapeutic services as well as the structure and stability they needed to progress. As a law student under the supervision of Jennifer Landau, Jessica collaborated with the children's doctors at the Young Children's Health Center to prepare their expert testimony and represented Nelly at her hearing in Immigration Court. Through their collaborative efforts, the team succeeded in proving that the children would suffer "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship" if their mother were removed from the United States. In October, Nelly's case was approved and she attained lawful permanent resident status ensuring that she will be able to continue to care for her children. The hardship standard for these types of cases is extremely high and this is a huge victory for Nelly's family, NMILC and the community partners in the Southeast Heights!

DID YOU KNOW?

The Department of Homeland Security detains 10,000 children and teenagers annually. Simply being undocumented makes even minors eligible for deportation.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WORK

OUR ASYLUM WORK

“WORKING WITH THE ASYLUM TEAM AT NMILC WAS ONE OF THE MOST GRATIFYING EXPERIENCES OF MY CAREER. IT REALLY MADE ME REALIZE HOW MY ACADEMIC WORK CAN HELP MAKE REAL CHANGE IN PEOPLE’S LIVES”

Violence in Mexico has led to an increase in the number of children who make the dangerous journey across the Mexican border alone in search of asylum. Some of our most challenging, but heartwarming, work concerns children and teenagers who we encounter through our deportation defense project. These children are often victims of trauma, in many cases after courageously standing up to perpetrators of violence and corruption. Teenagers and children are detained and placed in removal proceedings when they arrive at the border seeking asylum. If they manage to be reunited with family living in New Mexico while awaiting removal, they have no where to turn but NMILC to help them to stay with their loved ones. Megan Jordi and team of UNM Latin American Studies and Political Science student volunteers have spearheaded our efforts to defend unaccompanied minors facing deportation.

THE “DREAM” TEAM

NMILC has launched a new program in response to the President’s deferred action initiative for undocumented youth who came to the United States at an early age. We seek to ensure that as many young people as possible have access to accurate legal information about their immigration status. With this goal in mind, we have organized nine legal fairs and workshop events since June, providing information to over 1500 community members. All of these events were organized and staffed by NMILC with support from volunteer attorneys and community partners, Albuquerque Interfaith and El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos. We have also developed new partnerships with area high schools, where we are providing on-site education and direct services. Northeastern University’s Cooperative Education program and NMILC’s donors have provided critical support for this new project.

We are pleased to report that through the support of the WK Kellogg Foundation Impact Grant with partners Prosperity Works, Encuentro, and the NM Immigrant Faith Coalition, we are reducing barriers for youth in our community through the availability of microloans to young people who need assistance with the \$465 filing fee.

“IT HAS BEEN A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE TO WORK WITH NMILC AND LOCAL SCHOOLS TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM FOR YOUTH AT THIS HISTORIC TIME.”

THANK YOU LAUREN!

We are so grateful to have Lauren Garrity. As a full-time legal intern from Northeastern University, Lauren spearheaded our DREAMer work and provided amazing support to our staff. We will miss her greatly when she goes back to Boston to finish her last semester of law school.

THANK YOU CLP

A world of thanks to the NM Center on Law and Poverty (CLP) for providing fiscal sponsorship of NMILC. As this newsletter goes to print, NMILC awaits final IRS approval for 501(c)(3) status. We are grateful for CLP’s commitment to program excellence and mission of keeping New Mexico families united.