

# JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

<i>WIN network</i>	2
<i>Breaking Bread and Barriers</i>	3
<i>Cornyn visit</i>	3
<i>Aledo book signing</i>	4
<i>Interfaith prayer vigil</i>	5
<i>Evening of compassion</i>	5

**Dallas Clinics:**

- September 8, 2009
- October 13, 2009
- November 10, 2009
- No December clinic

**FTW Clinics:**

- September 11, 2009
- October 2, 2009
- November 6, 2009
- No December clinic

For volunteer opportunities, contact us at:

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## JFON CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF MINISTRY IN THE METROPLEX

Hundreds of Justice For Our Neighbors’ staff, volunteers, task force members, current and former clients, and other JFON supporters gathered together to celebrate 10 years of ministry in the metroplex. The celebrations took place on April 26<sup>th</sup> in Fort Worth and on May 3<sup>rd</sup> in Dallas.

JFON Fort Worth and JFON Dallas were two of the original pilot sites when UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, began the program in 1999. Ten years and thousands of clients later, Justice For Our Neighbors continues to offer high-quality immigration legal services to low-income immigrants in the metroplex.

Among those honored at the anniversary celebrations were: JFON attorney Mary Beth Garcia, case managers Imelda Esparza and Catalina Lizalde, volunteers, task force members, the Central and North Texas Conferences of the United Methodist Church, and our host churches Polytechnic UMC and Pleasant Mound/Urban Park UMC.



Attorney Mary Beth Garcia receives accolades at 10-year celebration

One of the highlights from the events were the personal testimonies of clients whose lives had been changed by the work of Justice For Our Neighbors. What an inspiration it was to hear their stories of hope and transformation!

The festivities included delicious food from around the world, as well as the vibrant

music of live mariachi bands. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and celebration.

Thank you to everyone who made ten years of ministry possible. We look forward to many more years of fruitful ministry in North-Central Texas!

## “IMMIGRATION AND FAITH” SYMPOSIUM SET FOR SEPTEMBER 19TH

Justice For Our Neighbors is thrilled to announce “Immigration and Faith,” a symposium to be held on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, from 8:30 to noon at Arapaho UMC. The symposium will be

followed by an afternoon screening of the documentary “Made in L.A.” from 1 PM to 3 PM.

“Immigration and Faith” is a follow-up to the symposium that was held in October 2007

at FUMC Grand Prairie. That event, sponsored by the North Texas and Central Texas Conferences, had more than 90 participants and generated in-

(Continued on page 4)

WELCOMING IMMIGRANTS NETWORK (WIN)  
 COMPASSION, HOSPITALITY, JUSTICE...IN ACTION

*“The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you”*

—Leviticus 19:34

*“Anywhere the  
 welcoming spirit  
 lives, WIN  
 belongs.”*

Welcoming Immigrants Network (WIN) is a faith-based network of caring Texans who reach out in love to immigrants in the United States. The Christian scriptures direct us many times to welcome the sojourners among us, and we feel this value should be reflected in all of our policies, customs, attitudes and relationships. Many times it is, but too often it is neglected or even violated, sometimes tragically so.

WIN began as a United Methodist movement, and still claims those roots by use of the United Methodist “Welcoming the Migrant to the United States” resolution as the guiding document. Today, as an inter-faith organization, WIN openly embraces persons of many denominations and faiths. Anywhere the welcoming spirit lives, WIN belongs.

Members of WIN are advocates for the immigrants among us, taking action both socially and politically to bring Christ’s love to life for the vulnerable and powerless. WIN works in conjunction with other organizations, such as Interfaith

Immigration Coalition, Catholic Charities of Dallas, United Methodist General Board of Church and Society, Justice For Our Neighbors, and Border Friendship Commission.

Currently, WIN is primarily focused on efforts to achieve comprehensive immigration of the U.S. immigration system. We hope to effect change which will:

1. Provide a pathway to citizenship for immigrants.
2. Re-unify immigrant families separated by immigration itself or due to workforce raids, detentions and deportations.
3. Increase the number of visas for short-term workers to enter the U.S. to work in a safe, legal and orderly way.
4. Extend legal protection to all workers who come to the U.S., whether for a certain period of time or permanently, including

the right to bargain for fair wages, to protest poor working conditions, and to preserve their human rights, whether documented or undocumented.

5. Eliminate privately operated detention centers, which are not regulated by federal or state governments.
6. End all immigration enforcement raids.

WIN has become an effective way to distribute information about upcoming events in the area and to collaborate with other people of faith in support of immigrants in our communities. In addition, WIN distributes the “Friday Files” every Friday, which includes a list of relevant news articles from the week.

We invite you to join us! Contact us at [rdr17@me.com](mailto:rdr17@me.com) to learn more or to join us in this faith-based cause. WIN is also on Facebook, we invite you to become a fan.



*“Give me your tired, your poor,  
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

## BREAKING BREAD AND BARRIERS

On Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, over 80 people from diverse races, ethnicities, nationalities,



Willy poses with his "Welcome friends" gift

and languages congregated at Pleasant Mound/Urban Park United Methodist Church to break bread and fellowship together. They gathered around the table to celebrate and enjoy each other's cultures, providing a picture of our vision for the future of the United States, one that celebrates God's diverse creation living in Shalom.

The event was sponsored by the North Texas Conference United Methodist Women Social Action, Justice For Our Neighbors, Catholic Charities, and Pleasant Mound/Urban Park UMC.

After words of welcome from Reverend Annelda Crawford, Pastor of Pleasant Mound/Urban Park UMC, participants enjoyed the potluck-style feast, which included a wide-array of foods prepared by the hands of those in attendance. Many conversations and stories were shared over the meal as neighbors got to know each other.

The program began with testimonies from several clients of Justice For Our Neighbors. One by one, immigrants came to the microphone and told about their journey to reunite with family members. Some have been waiting for more than a decade to see their children...and are still waiting. While they did not hesitate to point out the extremely long wait times they have endured, each one spoke with hope and solidarity, encouraging listeners not to lose faith as they wait for a solution to the broken immigration system.

David Mullins from Catholic Charities addressed the group, speaking about the current state of immigration

law and highlighting changes that would benefit so many like those who shared their testimonies. Those gathered there were encouraged to take action and advocate on behalf of our immigrant neighbors. The gathering concluded with prayer, offered by Sally Vonner, Associate Director of Connectional Ministries of the North Texas Conference.

Breaking Bread and Barriers was held as part the General Board of Church and Society's nationwide "Month of Action" campaign.



Margarita Mendoza (left), one of several immigrants who shared the story of their journey through the immigration process

Join the WIN network on Facebook to see more pictures from this wonderful night.

*"...our vision for the future of the United States, one that celebrates God's diverse creation living in Shalom."*

## WIN MEMBERS VISIT SENATOR CORNYN'S OFFICE

Eleven members of the Welcoming Immigrants Network (WIN) met with Flora Hernandez, staff member of Senator Cornyn's Office in Dallas, on May 28th to express their support of comprehensive immigration reform.

Senator Cornyn stated in an April press release: "Comprehensive, common-sense immigration reform

remains a top priority for me. Any legislation must protect our borders, promote economic prosperity in Texas and throughout the United States, and be consistent with our American values of compassion, family, and opportunity."

The WIN network shares this common goal of "common-sense" immigration reform that is consistent with these

American values.

A postcard campaign is currently underway to let Senator Cornyn know that people of faith support this type of legislation. For more information on how you and your church can join us in this effort, contact Amy Spaur at [amyspaur@hotmail.com](mailto:amyspaur@hotmail.com) or at 214-381-0901/817-534-3293.

## AN EVENING WITH SONIA NAZARIO AT ALEDO UMC



Sonia Nazario, author of  
*Enrique's Journey*

Aledo United Methodist Church will be hosting an Evening with Sonia Nazario, the author of UMW Reading Program book, *Enrique's Journey*. The event will be held on

Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM.

Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, *Enrique's Journey* is the timeless story of families torn apart, the yearning to be together again, and a boy who will risk his life to find the mother he loves. Sonia met Enrique, a young boy from Honduras, at a shelter when he was attempting to come to the US to locate his mother. In her

quest to document his story, she rode on top of trains, slept in cemeteries, and spent time in INS Detention Facilities.

Sonia will be sharing on Monday, September 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel of Aledo United Methodist Church, located on the corner of Oak and Pecan in Aledo. A book signing will follow her presentation.

For more information, contact Aledo UMC at 817-441-8329.

*“Enrique’s Journey is the timeless story of families torn apart, the yearning to be together again, and a boy who will risk his life to find the mother he loves.”*

## “FAITH AND IMMIGRATION” SYMPOSIUM

interest in offering similar conferences in the future.

The “Immigration and Faith” symposium aims to provide an opportunity to learn more about immigration and to help determine how we as a church community respond to the great need.

The symposium will include a plenary session led by Mary Beth Garcia, JFON attorney, who will give an overview of our current immigration laws. Participants will have the opportunity to attend two of the following four workshops:

1. Biblical reflections: Welcoming the sojourner—led by Reverend Owen K. Ross, Pastor of Christ’s Foundry Fellowship of the North Texas Conference.
2. Why Enrique Journeys: The social and economic contexts of unauthorized immigration, led by Dr. Ron Wilhelm, Professor of Teacher Education and Administration, University of North Texas.

3. Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors: Congregations in ministry among immigrants, led by Reverend Albano Tayengo, Pastor of Kirkwood UMC in Irving, TX.
4. Making Our Voices Heard: Basic principles of advocacy, led by Amy Spaur, Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator for Justice For Our Neighbors.

After a break for lunch, there will be a screening of the documentary *Made in L.A.* followed by time for discussion. The documentary’s website gives the following description: “*Made in L.A.* is an Emmy award-winning feature documentary (70 minutes) that follows the remarkable story of three Latina immigrants working in Los Angeles in the garment sweatshops as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from trendy clothing retailer Forever 21. In intimate observational style, *Made in L.A.*

reveals the impact of the struggle on each woman’s life as they are gradually transformed by the experience. Compelling, humorous, deeply human, *Made in L.A.* is a story about immigration, the power of unity, and the courage it takes to find your voice.”

Justice For Our Neighbors is grateful to Reverend Jack Soper and Arapaho United Methodist Church for being the gracious host of “Immigration and Faith.” Arapaho UMC is located at 1400 W Arapaho Road, Richardson, TX, 75080. For more information on Arapaho UMC, please visit [www.arapaho-umc.org](http://www.arapaho-umc.org). Thanks to the generosity of a grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the symposium and screening are being offered free of charge.

To register for the symposium, simply email Amy Spaur at [amyspaur@hotmail.com](mailto:amyspaur@hotmail.com) or call 214-381-0901.

Please join us for this exciting event!

## “MORAL VOICES UNITE”- NTC UMS HOST PRAYER VIGIL FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

“I’ve been an immigrant from Zambia. to [the Democratic Republic of] Congo, Then Zimbabwe and now to the U.S.,” exclaimed the Rev. Kalaba Chali, “Being an immigrant is no fun!”

“I thought Christians were people at the forefront of this issue, because Jesus was an immigrant,” said the Rev. Kalaba Chali, associate pastor of prison ministries, Lovers Lane UMC and pastor of Heart of Africa United Methodist Fellowship. “People forget that Jesus was an immigrant with his family because they were forced to flee for their lives.”

Rev. Chali made his plea for comprehensive immigration



Rev. Kalaba Chali addresses participants at prayer vigil

reform in the U.S. during an Interfaith Prayer Vigil on Sunday, Aug. 23, 2009 at Northaven UMC. It was called “Moral Voices Unite for Immigration Reform: Tour of the Faithful.”

A United Methodist who is associate pastor of prison ministries at Lovers Lane UMC, Rev. Chali is pastor of Heart of

Africa United Methodist Fellowship, also at Lovers Lane. He came to the United States in 2005 as a student from UMC-sponsored Africa University in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe. He enrolled at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. He graduated and was ordained an elder in June, 2006.

“I am excited to join Lovers Lane ...and work with the Heart of Africa Fellowship and the prison ministry,” he continued. “My interest of working in diverse communities is a result of the opportunity to learn at Africa University where I met students and staff from more than 20 different countries. Such a multicultural exposure helped me to appreciate and eventually celebrate diversity among human creatures as gifts from God. It has been a joyful journey of faith to know that all creatures are created in God’s image and that all people deserve justice and peace.”

Additional persons giving public prayers were the Rev. Eric Folketh, pastor, Northaven UMC; Dr. Gurdarshan Brar, president, American Sikh Worship Place; the Rev. L. Charles Stovall, association pastor for social justice and community development, St. Luke “Community” UMC; Samanda Gonzalez-Gronstal; co-chair, Dallas Area Interfaith Action Team, Holy Trinity Catholic Church Catholic Charities; Khalil Meek, Islamic Association of North Texas; and Sally



Moral Voices Unite was part of the nationwide “Month of Action” campaign

Vonner, associate director, Connectional Ministries, North Texas Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church.

African songs of praise and worship were presented by members of the Heart of Africa Choir. The Rev Bill Matthews, Dallas Peace Center and board member, Dallas United Nations Association, led the congregation in hymns and folk songs.

The prayer vigil was part of “The Month of Action,” a nationwide effort led by people of faith calling on their elected officials to enact comprehensive immigration reform this year. Other local coordinators of the prayer vigil were Lori Stafford and Wendy Campbell of Lovers Land UMC, representing the North Texas Conference United Methodist Women; Justice for Our Neighbors Ministry; Welcoming Immigrants Network (WIN); and Northaven UMC.

Article written and contributed by Denise Johnson Stovall

*“People forget that Jesus was an immigrant with his family because they were forced to flee for their lives.”*

—Rev. Kalaba Chali

## AN EVENING OF COMPASSION-SEPTEMBER 27TH

Polytechnic UMC will be hosting “An Evening of Compassion” on Sunday, September 27th, 2009, at 7 PM in the evening.

There will be a prayer vigil, as well as a screening of the

Emmy award-winning documentary *Made in L.A.*, followed by tips on equipping advocates for action.

Polytechnic UMC is located at 1310 S. Collard in Fort Worth. For more information, contact

Rev. Robert Flowers at 817-534-0278.

Do not miss this exciting opportunity to join with other people of faith in supporting our immigrant neighbors!



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**Amy Spaur**  
Volunteer/Outreach Coord.

Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON) is a faith-driven ministry, welcoming immigrants into our churches and communities by providing free, high-quality immigration legal services, education, and advocacy.

Justice For Our Neighbors is housed at Polytechnic United Methodist Church in Fort Worth and at Pleasant Mound United Methodist Church in Dallas. JFON also partners with Refugee Services of Texas in both Dallas and Fort Worth.

For more information on how you or your church can become involved with Justice For Our Neighbors or to schedule a speaking engagement at your local church or community organization, please contact Amy Spaur, Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator, at 817-534-3293 (FTW), 214-381-0901 (Dallas), or by e-mail at [amyspaur@hotmail.com](mailto:amyspaur@hotmail.com).

