



FLORENCE
IMMIGRANT
& REFUGEE
RIGHTS PROJECT

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{ SAVE THE DATE }
PRO BONO HAPPY HOUR

Thursday, October 1, 2009

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Practical Art | 5070 N. Central, Phoenix

Complimentary micro-brewed
draft beer, wine, and appetizers

RSVP by September 25
to firrp@firrp.org

Sponsored by Lewis & Roca,
Osborn Maledon, Squires Sanders,
Fennemore Craig, Quarles & Brady

MISSION AND VISION

The Florence Project provides and coordinates free legal services and related social services to indigent men, women, and unaccompanied children detained in Arizona for immigration removal proceedings. The Project strives to ensure that detained individuals have access to counsel, understand their rights under immigration law, and are treated fairly and humanely by our judicial system.

TO DONATE TO THE FLORENCE PROJECT:

Mail a check or money order to:

The Florence Project

P.O. Box 654

Florence, AZ 85132

Visit our website and contribute via PayPal:

www.firrp.org

TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE FLORENCE PROJECT:

Call or email Jacquelyn Ahrenberg:

jahrenberg@firrp.org | 520.868.0191 x106

TO CONTACT THE FLORENCE PROJECT OR TO SCHEDULE A VISIT:

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 654

Florence, AZ 85132

T: 520.868.0191 | F: 520.868.0192 | www.firrp.org

SUDANESE ASYLUM SEEKER WINS RELEASE

"Jean", a devout Christian, fled religious persecution in his native Sudan in 2003 after his father was killed, his mother was lost and his home was burned to the ground. He traveled on foot to Ethiopia and then through several countries before arriving in South Africa, where he earned money to travel to the United States. When he arrived at the U.S. border Jean asked for asylum. Jean had no criminal convictions and passed his credible fear interview but remain detained until his asylum hearing. Jean grew severely depressed in detention and a humanitarian parole request on his behalf went unanswered. Days before his hearing, a volunteer attorney was found to represent Jean,

but he did not want to spend more time in detention for the needed continuance. Staff attorney Katie Ruhl, who had been assisting Jean pro se, stepped in and represented Jean in his asylum hearing, using an expert affidavit written by Florence Project board member Dr. Coleen Kivlahan, who examined Jean's burn scars. The immigration judge granted Jean asylum, the government waived appeal and Jean is now free and living in Phoenix, where social services coordinator Deb Bergman connected him with Catholic Charities for help with registering for a work permit and asylee benefits.

THE FLORENCE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS PROJECT UPDATE

ADVOCACY & OUTREACH

In addition to our direct service work, the Florence Project has been busy with significant advocacy and outreach projects:

- » The Project coauthored a national sign-on letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder recommending heightened due process protections for detainees with mental disabilities, including the appointment of counsel and guardians ad litem.
- » Executive Director Lindsay Marshall participated in a series of meetings with new Department of Homeland Security officials including Assistant Secretary of ICE John Morton, Border Czar Allen Bersin and the new Director of the Office of Detention Policy and Planning Dr. Dora Schriro.
- » The Project hosted a visit from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in July, organizing visits with detainees and participating in an advocate's meeting with the delegates in Phoenix.
- » Interns Dorien Ediger-Seto and Ana Arboleda reinvigorated our Border Patrol Abuse Project, interviewing 124 unaccompanied minors about their treatment in border patrol custody, filing 9 complaints to the DHS Office of Civil Rights & Civil Liberties, and authoring a report summarizing their findings. Project documents can be found on our website: www.firrp.org.
- » With support from Arizona Humanities Council, the Project is working with two volunteers to produce a multimedia story project called *Letters from Detention: Immigration Detention in Arizona* (www.detentionstories.org). The project will aim to raise public awareness about the effects of detention on individuals, families and communities by recording detainees' perspectives for a radio documentary and book publication.



SUMMER INTERNS

The Florence Project thrived with new energy this summer thanks to an incredible team of interns. Law students Sarah Box (University of Utah), Eric Leveridge (American University), Clara Long (Harvard University), Ashley Waddell (Georgetown University) and Jessica Zweng (University of California - Davis) supported the Florence, Eloy, Children's, and DIP programs. Undergraduate Dorien Ediger-Seto (Vassar College) and Ana Arboleda supported our border patrol abuse project in Phoenix. We already miss our interns and wish them the very best! 