

MIAMI VALLEY IMMIGRATION COALITION



June 2022

NEWSLETTER



OUR PURPOSE

As a coalition of faith communities and other organizations and individuals committed to immigrant justice, the Miami Valley Immigration Coalition is committed to promoting comprehensive, humane immigration reform and radical systemic change by working with and on behalf of those who are affected by unjust immigration laws, policies and practices that do not reflect these higher values:

- Dignity of the person
- Unity of the family
- Richness in diversity
- Equitable treatment
- Freedom in the pursuit of purpose
- Democratic process



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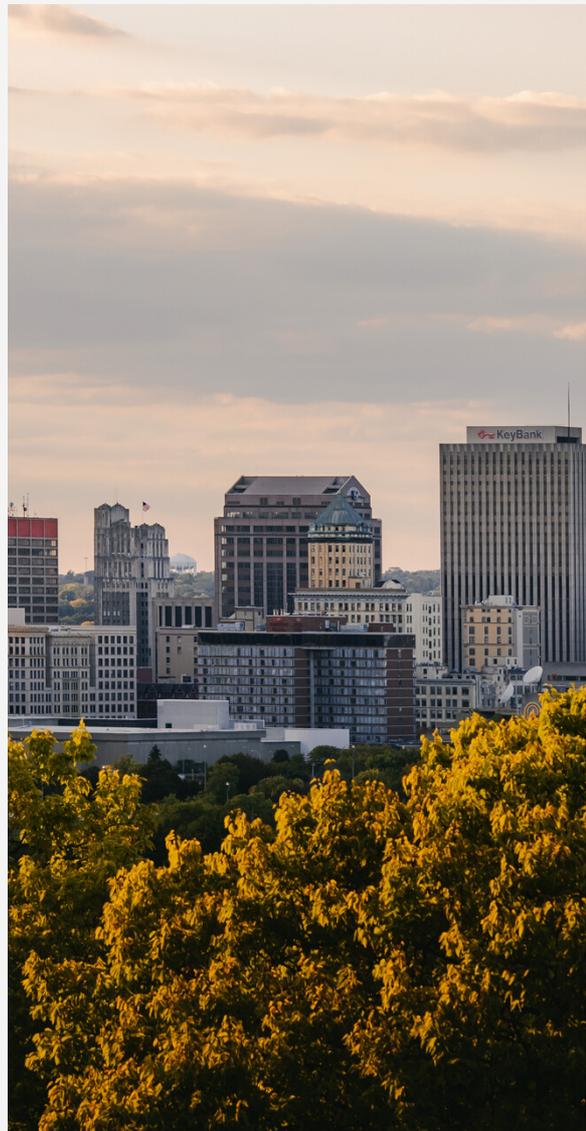
Welcome Dayton Updates

New hires and grand openings!

There are some exciting updates to share from Welcome Dayton! The program is now housed in the Community Engagement Division in the Department of Planning, Neighborhoods and Development with the City of Dayton. A new Coordinator was hired in December 2021, Jeannette Horwitz. Jeannette's background is in higher & international education. She previously taught English as a Second Language and was the Director of the LEAP Intensive English Program at Wright State University. She is from Sweden. Martha-Jeannette Rodriguez, from Colombia, continues to work with Welcome Dayton as a Community Engagement Specialist. Desire Ntwayingabo, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, was hired in January as a Community Engagement Specialist.

Since they started working together, the Welcome Dayton trio has been busy connecting and engaging with the community. They liaise with the city's immigrant and refugee population and **actively work to get them involved in Neighborhood and Business Associations and the decision-making process in their neighborhoods and the city.**

As a result of this outreach, a connection was made between the owners of Umoja East and Central African Market and the President of the



Old North Dayton Neighborhood Association. Umoja held a "Grand Opening" in May with the help of the OND NA, and 91.3 WYSO did a story on the event. Immigrant leaders from the community are participating in this year's Neighborhood Leadership Institute offered by the City of Dayton. **An Immigrant/Refugee forum was recently held with representatives from the City Commission and the Montgomery County Commission,** where community leaders representing various immigrant groups discussed challenges and ways to work together.



Welcome Dayton is also excited to be part of the Miami Valley Community ID Card Program and has participated in the four drives that have been held so far. To date, 262 IDs have been issued. **The next drive is scheduled for July 9 at the Dayton Metro Library downtown.** The Welcome Dayton Board currently has 21 members, with 4 who are new for this year. The five Welcome Dayton subcommittees (Education, Business and Economic Development, Government and Justice, Health and Human Services, and Community Culture and Arts) have close to 100 community members on their rosters. They are busy meeting monthly to work on everything from policy issues to activities and events, all to ensure Dayton continues to be a welcoming city for our immigrant and refugee neighbors.

Welcome Dayton is hosting **World Refugee Day on Saturday, June 11, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM** at Grace United Methodist Church. All are welcome to this free event!

To connect with Welcome Dayton, email WelcomeDayton@daytonohio.gov and be sure to follow the program on Facebook: www.facebook.com/WelcomeDayton

Immigration Fact 1: 60% of the world's population is 30 years old or younger. While Europe, Canada, and US populations are aging, most of these young people live in the global south and far east. Right now, at least 2 billion young people are jobless.





Miami Valley Community ID Card

*262 ID cards issued across
the community!*

The Miami Valley Community ID (MVCID) serves as a verifiable form of identification for all residents of the Miami Valley, especially for those who do not have access to government-issued identification (for example, senior citizens, homeless, new immigrants, low-income individuals, or those returning from prison).

Among the organizations that accept the MVCID card are the Dayton Police Department, Five Rivers Health Center, 7 Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton, FoodBank Inc., HomeFull, Dayton Metro Library, and Dayton Public Schools. Several other organizations are in the process of accepting the card.

The MVCID card is designed to **improve the quality of life and to foster greater understanding, trust, and cooperation** between those acquiring the card and those who use the MVCID to better identify, serve, and protect the community.

Welcome Dayton has been working on creating a community ID card for many years. Now, in partnership with the Hall Hunger Initiative as the financial partner, Westminster Presbyterian Church as the operational partner, and other community members such as Valens Solutions, Dayton Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Larson & Lyons, LLC, **four MVCID drives have been held since October 2021 with 262 identifications cards provided** to Miami Valley residents. The drive is held at different locations, with the next one scheduled for Saturday, July 9, at the Dayton Metro Library (Main). Registration is required.

For more information, contact
WelcomeDayton@daytonohio.gov

*Immigration Fact 2:
For many thousands of years of human life, population grew slowly to about 2 ¼ billion in 1940. 80 years later, population has more than tripled to nearly 8 billion people. It is expected to plateau at around 9 billion humans by 2045.*



Brunner Literacy Center

Empowering adults to lead better lives through literacy

The Brunner Literacy Center is looking for volunteer tutors to teach English to the newest members of our community. These students come from **39 different countries** and have a range of needs, including learning basic English, passing the US Citizenship exam, improving more advanced English skills, getting a driver's license, completing a job application, and understanding their children's report cards. Tutors can meet with students onsite at the Brunner Literacy Center in Trotwood or at any public location, such as the library. **No prior ESOL experience is necessary.**

For more information, go to their website, www.brunnerliteracy.org or call **(937) 567-9600**. Applications can be completed online.



Changing the Predominant Narrative

Two books that may help you

Inaccurate, unjust, and counterproductive stories about newcomers to the U.S. often fill the public airwaves and our personal conversations. (Just listen for one moment to the political races in Ohio.) **Before national and more local policies can change, we need to actively challenge the narrative about migration and the folks who are on the move.** That includes rethinking our own words and ideas, and refusing to buy into the standard line about safe borders and immigration crises. If we can bring good information and new frameworks to the fore, even amongst fearful but often compassionate persons, we can be a part of the change we want to see. In a globally interconnected world, we are truly all in this together.

Two new books have challenged us in recent months and brought significant new information and fuller understandings of migration realities. Based on often similar information and considering worldwide migration patterns and policies, the books are written from very different points of view yet complement each other in intriguing ways.

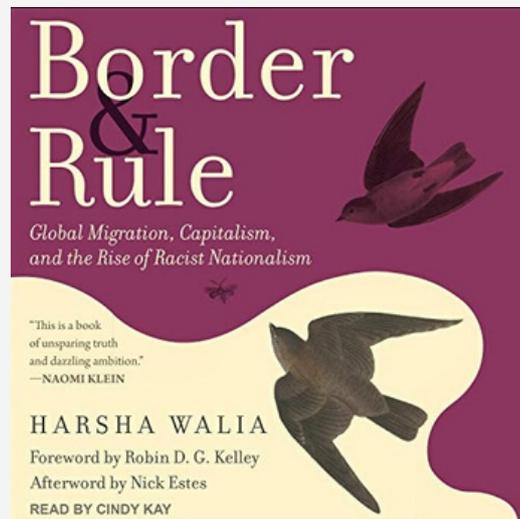
Move: The Forces Uprooting Us

This book by Parag Khanna demonstrates the continual **mobility of humans over the past 60,000 years** and clearly examines the current acceleration of mass migrations due to climate change. As the founder of FutureMap, a global strategic advisory firm, Khanna looks at changing economies, destabilized governments, and technological disruptions that will scatter rich and poor as they continue to seek ways to meet their needs and thrive. In this packed and readable book, he suggests that with new understandings and effective policies, **we can create a future that is mobile and sustainable for all, including the 4 billion restless youth.**



Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism and the Rise of Racist Nationalism

This book by Harsha Walia writes from a more radical point of view that calls for a **“global struggle against capital and empire under a thoroughly racist and patriarchal system.”** (Robin D.G. Kelley in the book’s Foreword.) As an activist organizer in border abolition and migrant justice work, Halia writes a deeply researched and fully footnoted text that focuses on the **inherent violence and divisiveness of current patterns of border and migration control.** Her global analysis also takes climate change and other issues into consideration, while focusing on the planned exploitation of working classes. She imagines a world where all can find home, characterized by **“safety without walls... difference that is prized but unprivileged... and a doorway never needing to be closed.”**



We encourage you to take time with these books and the ideas of their authors. They are worthy of deep consideration and discussion.

Many of the ideas and information in this newsletter came from Khanna and Walia’s writings. Perhaps they are a beginning to help us talk newly about the normality and necessity of migration and to think newly of **the freedom to stay and the freedom to move as a shared human possibility.**

Community Education

Effecting change through community education

The MVIC Community Education working group educates our community on local, state, and national immigration concerns. This is crucial to increase understanding and awareness of the devastating effects of U.S. immigration policies within and outside our borders. **We aim to help both people and institutions in the Dayton region see the inadequacies of the current situation - a whole culture and set of policies impacting our immigrant neighbors that are supposed to work, but don't.** Several important institutional changes are needed to reduce the inequity faced by so many migrants. We have the opportunity to effect change, causing migrants' needs to be more appreciated and met.

As a group, we are looking into multiple ways to **change the narrative and the lived circumstances regarding immigration**, using op-eds, editorials, special interest stories, conferences, workshops, and presentations to churches and other groups.

We invite you to join our Community Education working group. Contact Bob Lewis at bobslewis@gmail.com for more information or to contribute to this work.



*Immigration Fact 3:
Current border and immigration laws are post WWII phenomena, with some borders still in flux. US immigration law as we know it began with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 with major modifications in the 1990s.*



Asylum Sanctuary Working Group

Moving forward in three areas

Area 1:

The Asylum Sanctuary working group continues to accompany several families who are seeking asylum in the U.S. **Colombians Karen, Luciano, and their children have now been living at Lower Miami Church of the Brethren for more than six months.** They have applied for work authorization, as allowed at the six month point, and are awaiting the word that they can be employed. Both Luciano and Karen have job options that they are exploring as they wait. The next step after authorization comes through in mid to late June are to move into a home of their own. They are searching for affordable housing or a temporary house sitting situation while they save for deposits and first months' rent. In the meantime, the Lower Miami congregation continues to provide housing, utilities, and other needs. The working group is paying their legal fees, assisting in some daily needs, and coordinating transportation.



Our Honduran friends, Nancy, José Luis, and their boys continue to try to make their way in dangerous Tijuana. **Because the suspension of Title 42 was prevented by a Louisiana federal court, they are not able to again present themselves at the border as asylum seekers (as provided for in US law).** The working group is sending monthly funds to them, so they can have secure housing (one room in the home of another Honduran family). Nancy works to support the family, while José continues to struggle with health problems.

Recently, the group has been able to facilitate access to legal support and prenatal health care for a Colombian woman who lives in Dayton and is seeking asylum.

Area 2:

In an effort to grow the network of churches and individuals who can accompany asylum seekers, **we are working on a resource packet that will help others to more easily offer asylum support.** Members of the working group who have had experience with hosting and accompanying asylum seekers are available to meet with groups who would like to hear more about this opportunity to welcome others in the Miami Valley area.

*Immigration Fact 4:
Global climate change is vastly reshaping migration patterns and creating mass migrations from the most negatively affected areas, often forcing people to move north.*



Area 3:

Recently we received requests to pay the immigration bond of two people in detention in the southwest, both with family members in Dayton. As a result, **a small group began exploring whether we might start a modest local effort to raise funds primarily for immigration bond.** Because of the current urgent request for a young man fleeing violence in South America, the group decided to learn through doing, and has initiated a trial fundraiser to end in late June. **Please donate [here to help free immigrants with a connection to our area \(select community bond option\).](#)**

Those who remain in immigration detention have limited access to legal assistance and are much more likely to be deported to dangerous conditions and to experience long term separation from loved ones. The young man's partner is in Dayton and, as mentioned above, the working group is already connecting her to resources such as prenatal care.



Changes at Butler Jails

Working to abolish detention in the state of Ohio

In 2021, we had an enormous victory for immigrants' human rights in Ohio when Butler County stopped serving as an ICE facility—and MVIC played a role in the work that led to that.

Inside Butler County over the course of 2020, over fifty detained men from different backgrounds organized—in the face of institutional and language barriers— and collectively sent letters to the public denouncing the conditions they suffered and demanding their rights. Local activists, including members of the Miami Valley Immigration Coalition, Ohio Immigrant Alliance, the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center, and others mobilized in response, and built support for a lawsuit and civil rights complaint brought against Butler County. We also held a solidarity event outside the jail on December 10th, 2020 (Human Rights Day) to let the people inside know we were with them.

Butler County Jail had long been notorious amongst immigrants for its abject and abusive conditions. In the context of a new administration promising greater oversight of human rights for migrants and asylum seekers and in response to pressure from activists, Sheriff Jones of Butler County announced in May 2021 the end of their agreement with ICE.

Our immigrant neighbors will no longer be imprisoned in Butler County! It was a landmark day when the "Arpaio of Ohio" hung up his cowboy hat.

Our pressure worked in that campaign, but we need to remember that many ICE facilities remain, and we know that the same problems of substandard or absent medical care, overcrowding, and denial of legal due process are common. **The struggle for due process and basic human rights for immigrants continues— even here in Ohio.**

Because of this, the Ohio Immigrant Alliance and the Interreligious Task Force on Central America are organizing a campaign to raise awareness and take action for immigrants' rights. **In mid-June, we're hosting a webinar to share lessons learned from the campaign to challenge Butler County ICE detention, and details on the current violations of rights in Seneca County jail's ICE detention facility.** The webinar will include resources for further actions: social media materials, information for direct political advocacy, and an invitation to attend a vigil at Seneca County detention center to be held in late June.

For ongoing information on this June 2022 campaign, contact Charlie at charlie@irtfcleveland.org. To connect in general with Ohio-level organizing on migrants' human rights issues, you can email MVIC member Miranda Hallett at mhallett1@udayton.edu or connect to the Ohio Immigrant Alliance at ohioimmigrant.org



Advocacy – Take Action

You can make a difference

Title 42

Contact your Representative and Senators and ask them to vote NO on all legislative efforts to keep Title 42 in place. Title 42 expulsions have denied tens of thousands the legal right to seek asylum. The Biden administration announced that on May 23 it would finally end this Trump era policy of using the pretense of public health to expel asylum seekers at the southern border. However, on May 20, a federal judge blocked ending Title 42. While Biden's Department of Justice appeals, some members of both parties support legislation to continue these expulsions. Call Senators Brown (202-224-2315) and Portman (202-224-3353). More info and email tools are at tinyurl.com/NoTitle42

Path to Legal Status, Ask and Ask Again:

Calling or emailing our senators is one of the most important and simple actions you can take to address the root causes of injustice for migrants. You do not need to master the technicalities of upcoming legislation. Most important is for the senators to know that immigration justice is a priority for their constituents. You could say:

"I urge the senator to do everything in his power to pass a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients and all immigrant youth, TPS holders, farmworkers, and essential workers." OR "I urge the senator to do everything in his power to pass a pathway to citizenship for all 11 million people who are living and working in our country, but do not have legal status."

Senator Brown (202) 224-2315

Senator Portman (202) 224-3353

Stay in the Loop

To suggest actions or to receive notice of calls to action, please send your email address to Lynn Buffington at ABUFFLG@gmail.com, or text or call (937) 657-0426. In addition to contacting government officials via email and phone, recent MVIC calls to action have included Zoom meetings with aides of Senator Brown and Portman arranged by national immigration advocacy groups, local rallies and vigils such as the Communities Not Cages rally, and adding MVIC to various organizational sign on letters to legislators such as to re-capture visas lost during the previous administration's ban on immigrants from several Muslim majority countries. After declining to sign in 2020, Senator Brown recently added his name to an important re-capture visa letter.



*Immigration Fact 4:
Plants, animals, and humans have always been on the move. Now, more than ever, people and other living things must move to survive and thrive.*

