

Sisters of Charity Action and Advocacy on Immigration, Asylum Seekers, and Refugees

► In 2013 the Congregation passed a Public Stand on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

In faithfulness to our call to incarnate Charity in our world and building on our long tradition of ministry with and for new immigrants, we, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth of Convent Station, New Jersey, join the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in calling for comprehensive immigration reform that would:

- provide undocumented immigrants already in the United States with a path to residency and citizenship;
- expedite family reunification by increasing the number of family-based visas available and reducing the waiting times for separated immigrant families;
- provide a path to legal work for future immigrants by increasing the number of employment visas available;
- legislate border protection policies which prevent the entry of terrorists and dangerous criminals while respecting human rights and due process.

► Banners publicizing the Congregation’s advocacy for immigrants and refugees have been hung regularly at the gates of the motherhouse, Villa, and other Congregation ministries.



► The Sisters of Charity have a long time collaboration with First Friends of New Jersey and New York; First Friends office was once housed in St. Mary's Convent, Elizabeth, NJ; sisters have served on the board; regularly participate in Stamp Out Despair campaign and vigils and rallies outside the Elizabeth Detention Center.

<https://firstfriendsnjny.org/>

► Asylum seekers have been housed in several SC communities; Assumption-All Saints, Jersey City; St. Columba's, Newark; the motherhouse is willing to house someone but hasn't to date.

► A number of the Congregation's sponsored ministries serve heavily immigrant populations: Josephine's Place in Elizabeth; St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center in Paterson; Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth; St. Vincent Academy in Newark; the College of Saint Elizabeth.

► Sr. Maureen Sullivan is currently Director of Ministry Services and Volunteers at Catholic Family and Community Services of Paterson Catholic Charities. She also works with Immigration Legal Services which provides consultation and other legal immigration services at a much lower rate than some other organizations and private lawyers. <http://www.catholiccharities.org/>

► The Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity sponsors *Las Samaritanas* (The Samaritan Women at the Well) Ministry to immigrant Hispanic women which offers retreats and workshops on spirituality, leadership training and personal growth issues. *Las Samaritanas* also includes the *Agua Viva* (Living Water) support groups. Currently there are four groups of approximately 15 women each who meet monthly.

<http://www.scnj.org/images/justicepeace/samaritanasmission.pdf>

► Sisters of Charity and associates volunteer at the Passaic Neighborhood Center for Women which serves a largely immigrant population, offering ESL classes, computer and craft instruction. <http://womenscenterpassaic.blogspot.com/>

► Seton Associate Mary Gannon and her husband Gerry were instrumental in starting RAMP (Refugee Assistance Morris Partners) which settles and supports refugee families in Morris County. Sisters and associates belong to various RAMP committees and have worked to provide household good and clothes, ESL, and other services.

► The Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity publishes Action Alerts whenever legislation regarding information is pending. The PJEI Office also provides regular prayer and education resources on immigration and offers workshops on immigration issues in a variety of places, e.g. St. Helen's Church, Westfield; for the nursing students of the College of Saint Elizabeth.

If you would like to add to this list, please email the information to tmoran@scnj.org