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Our Mission:

The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project helps low-income immigrants improve their legal status and works for more just and humane laws and policies affecting immigrants.



GUEST CONTRIBUTOR:

Sarah Beard, Partner, Pierce Atwood LLP

We're All Learning Something

About two years ago I made a positive career move. My regular job involves assisting mostly business clients with tax law issues. While I find this work fascinating, I wanted a *pro bono* opportunity that would teach me something different. I decided to look into taking an asylum case through ILAP. The experience has been rewarding, far beyond my expectations.

At first I was hesitant, knowing very little about immigration work. But ILAP offers practical brown bag lunch CLE sessions on how to represent asylum seekers, for anyone interested. This was perfect! No commitment! The enthusiasm and positive energy around the conference table was infectious. The ILAP staff and members of the *pro bono* panel have a wonderful sense of teamwork and common mission.

Confident of support from ILAP and other panelists, I took the plunge and agreed to represent "A", a 21 year old woman from Rwanda who was among the applicants that had been screened by ILAP. During a series of once a week meetings, A told me how she came to be seeking asylum, and a little about what she had been up to since arriving in Maine. What emerged was the portrait of a truly remarkable young woman: brave, motivated, intelligent, warm, grateful, giving and, against all odds, positive.

A's father was killed when she was 19. As her family was attempting to flee the country, her mother was raped and beaten in front of A and her siblings, who were also beaten, in two separate midnight raids. A's mother disappeared during the second raid and has not been seen again. A fears that she was killed. A and her siblings continued to receive threats to their lives. A was able to obtain a passport. She made her way to Portland, Maine, because she heard there was help for asylum seekers, including from ILAP. She did not know anyone in Maine when she arrived.

Asylum applicants cannot apply for a work permit until 150 days after their application for asylum has been received by the USCIS. This didn't stop A from starting to improve her situation. Immediately after her arrival in Portland she tried to find ESL lessons and ended up volunteering to teach lower level English to others in need. A found a wonderful English tutor, who became a close friend and has helped her navigate school applications and other obstacles.

Meanwhile A and I worked together to prepare her application. ILAP

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DECEMBER 2, 2014

www.givingtuesday.org

Look for more information soon about how you can impact ILAP's programs on our website and on Facebook.

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Watching the crisis unfold at the border, with over 60,000 desperate children seeking refuge from violence, sexual exploitation and forced gang recruitment in neighboring countries, we are reminded of what our immigration system is supposed to be all about. Family reunification, protecting human rights, due process, and hope for a better life.



SUE ROCHE
Executive Director

It also reminds us at ILAP of why we are here, and why our work is so important. It reinvigorates us to continue helping those who need our services, despite frustrating bureaucracy, unfair immigration laws, and the challenges of working with clients who have been

through so much trauma.

While we are not seeing the same magnitude of cases here in Maine, the stories of these children are familiar because they are the same as stories we hear every day at ILAP. The boy who fled from Honduras after years of sexual abuse and no protection from the police; the child from Congo who escaped her country after being orphaned in the war; the girl who

had been an indentured slave since the age of 12 when she was trafficked into the U.S. These are the stories of our neighbors, children in our schools, and children who, with legal status and some support, can be our bright future. Without legal assistance, they remain homeless and vulnerable, unable to access our system and navigate through the complex laws that could provide them with hope for a future. This is why ILAP's work is so important, and why our country should be focused on helping the children at our border and not expediting their removal.



Susan Roche
Executive Director

Help ILAP With a Smile!



If you are planning to make holiday purchases through Amazon.com, you can change one little thing and help ILAP every time you shop—at no extra cost!

Use this portal instead: <https://smile.amazon.com> and you can designate ILAP to receive a percentage of whatever you spend on eligible purchases. It's easy and it costs you nothing extra. **Amazon makes the donation to ILAP!**

That can really add up during the holidays. *Thanks!*

Donate Now and Double Your Gift

ILAP has received a matching grant in the amount of \$15,000 from the Clowes Fund (www.clowesfund.org) to support our work with immigrants and spur more giving.

For new donors: make any donation by November 1, 2014, and this grant will match it.

For returning donors: make a donation **larger** than your 2013 donation and the increased amount will be matched. Our goal is to raise an additional \$15,000 in donations by November 1 so we can take advantage of this matching grant. See the remittance envelope enclosed in this issue of The Immigrant Beacon to donate today, or go online for faster service: www.ilapmaine.org.



Please pass along your copy of The Immigrant Beacon after you've enjoyed it, and remember to recycle.

ILAP cares.

We're All Learning

Continued from Cover

provided valuable resources and guidance on what makes a winning application. We were fortunate in being able to obtain some medical records and other records that corroborated her story. "Country Conditions" research also corroborated her story. Through this research I learned about Rwanda, its history, politics, and of course, its recent record of civil rights abuses. Through my conversations with A, I learned a great deal more about culture, geography, education and everyday life in Rwanda.

A obtained her work permit and began working two jobs and has continued to help others along the way. She started as a temporary employee but was hired to a permanent position, and not long after was recognized as employee of the month! She is now enrolled in college courses while continuing to work. Her motivation is to do whatever she can to help her family members still in Rwanda.

Much of the asylum process consisted of waiting for the interview, and ILAP was very helpful to keep us posted on possible opportunities for interview dates and other developments. The interview itself occurred in Portland. It was scheduled for early afternoon. A and I waited together nervously, and it was well past 5:00 PM when we were invited into the interview room. The hearing officer was tired, but thorough and professional. A spoke from the heart. I was thrilled but not surprised when, several months after the interview, A was granted asylum. It was the most important victory in my career so far.

I learned about the asylum process. I learned about another part of the world. I experienced the satisfaction of helping an extraordinary individual to a safer place. Most importantly, I gained a dear friend. And now I am looking forward to working with my next ILAP client. ■

ILAP Services

■ "Intake" for all new clients and former clients with new

matters takes place at ILAP every Friday from 9-1 (those outside the Portland area can call us during those hours at 207-780-1593).

Everyone must go through Friday intake in order to schedule a consultation with an attorney, an appointment in the Pro Se Forms Clinic, or to sign up to attend a citizenship presentation.

■ **Attorney consultations** are scheduled in Portland every week and Lewiston once a month. Consultations can also be done by phone for those who cannot travel to Portland or Lewiston.

■ Once a month a **Citizenship Presentation** is held at ILAP. During the presentation, ILAP staff provide information on the requirements for citizenship and information on what one needs to do in order to get ready to apply for citizenship.

■ In our **Pro Se Forms Clinic**, ILAP staff and volunteers assist individuals in filling out their immigration applications.

■ Once a month, ILAP offers a presentation to new refugees on their **rights and responsibilities in the United States**. This takes place at the Catholic Charities of Maine office on Sherman Street in Portland.

■ Once a month, ILAP offers **informational sessions to asylum seekers** applying for asylum on their own without a lawyer. This is done in collaboration with the Justice for Our Neighbors program at Hope Gateway.

■ ILAP also provides **education and outreach events** on a variety of immigration topics to service providers and immigrant groups; and participates in systemic advocacy to improve the laws and policies affecting immigrants.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Cheryl Stevens

Fall 2014



ILAP's Development Department is where Cheryl Stevens dedicates her volunteer time. Cheryl was a development professional at Bowdoin College for many years before semi-retiring four years ago. It was then

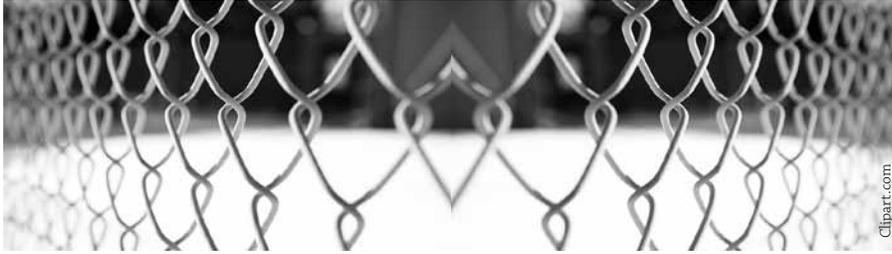
that she realized she needed and wanted to contribute and use her vast skills. This year, she sought out ILAP from a posting at Volunteer Match. In March, Cheryl came on board with the goal of helping us update our donor database, her specialty, and helping to create policies and procedures for its future use.

With extensive training and experience in databases, Cheryl quickly became a valuable part of the Development Team.

She brings an eye for detail and a knack for data management, which are both essential for good record keeping. Supporting ILAP in this way is important to her. Cheryl moved to Maine twenty-three years ago and, coming from a multicultural neighborhood in Washington DC, she immediately felt a sense of culture shock. She says she has enjoyed watching "Maine go from being homogenous to multicultural, especially greater Portland."

Cheryl sees ILAP's work as integral to improving diversity in Maine, and she likes the results. Her work at ILAP has broadened her understanding and interest in immigration issues. She says her favorite moment so far was driving the members of Les Voix Des Anges, one of the performing groups, to CeleSoirée this year. They are a vocal group made up of young African men and women, and during their ride to the event, Cheryl says they engaged her in conversation and "it was magical." As a vocalist herself, she appreciated their art, but afterwards found she was enriched by their humanity and their struggle.

Cheryl calls ILAP's staff "dedicated, hard-working and knowledgeable," and adds "it is my pleasure to come volunteer at such a lean, well-run organization each week." Ever the development professional, she encourages donations to support this important work.



Humanitarian Crisis at the Border

The plight of children and families seeking protection at the border has caused a humanitarian crisis. According to government figures, 66,127 unaccompanied children were apprehended at the southwest border between October 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014, an 88% increase from the year before. The children are coming primarily from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. While some argue the crisis reflects lax immigration policies, researchers identify the primary causes for the children's flight being gang and cartel violence, and a lack of government protections. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reported that Honduras has the highest homicide rate in the world, with a rate of 90.4 per 100,000 in 2012, compared to rates in the war-torn countries of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia of 28.3 and 8 per 100,000, respectively.

Many arriving children qualify for legal status in the U.S., including asylum, special immigrant juvenile status, and "T" visas for trafficking victims. Our laws provides protections that guarantee children the right to a hearing with a judge and the opportunity to apply for legal status if they qualify. Special detention standards protect unaccompanied children, requiring that they be placed in the least restrictive manner possible, ideally with family members.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has determined that these children meet international standards for refugee status, and has encouraged the United States to recognize them as such. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights recently issued an advisory opinion, finding that international law mandates fair treatment and due process for these children fleeing violence and danger in their home countries.

Despite these protections, responses to the crisis threaten to further degrade our broken immigration system. Damaging legislation has been proposed, including the HUMANE Act, which would result in children getting deported more quickly without the opportunity to plead their cases. The House passed a bill eliminating President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and preventing similar programs in the future; this bill was recently blocked in the Senate. These events also led President Obama to delay executive action on immigration until after the elections. Meanwhile, advocates and attorneys representing the children report that their cases are being rushed through the court process, while cases that have been pending for years get delayed. ■

General Assistance for Immigrants in Maine

In May, Attorney General Janet Mills ruled that DHHS Proposed Rule 17A, which would eliminate general assistance benefits for immigrants, was unconstitutional. The next month, Governor LePage issued a directive ordering municipalities to stop providing benefits to immigrants without legal status, or risk losing reimbursement from the State for all general assistance benefits. This policy would apply to those in the legal process of applying for immigration status, including asylum seekers, domestic violence victims, and family members of U.S. Citizens, who are caught in government backlogs and not yet eligible for employment authorization or federal benefits. The Maine Municipal Association and the Cities of Portland and Westbrook filed suit against the State, seeking guidance on the contradicting directives. Maine Equal Justice Partners and the ACLU of Maine moved to intervene in the suit, which remains pending. **Most cities and towns have decided not to follow the directive.** ■

Maine's "most fun" fundraiser

is just getting better...



Look for news on **CeleSoirée 2015** in November on our website and Facebook page!

PRO BONO

PANEL UPDATE

Pro Bono Panel Trainings

A training session for current and prospective pro bono panel members for the representation of asylum applicants before the Immigration Court will be held on **September 26th** at Bernstein Shur at 9:00 AM.

The Honorable Paul Gagnon, an Immigration Judge at the Boston Immigration Court, and Robert Halpin, the Court Administrator for the Boston Immigration Court, are scheduled to present at this event.

Pro Bono Panel Successes:

Congratulations to *Pro Bono* Panel Members **Sarah Beard, Esq.**, of Pierce Atwood, **Thomas Newman, Esq.**, and **Leslie Silverstein, Esq.** on their recent successful asylum grants.

Asylum Office Visits Maine for Asylum Interviews

Asylum officers from the Newark Asylum Office interviewed dozens of Maine asylum applicants during the week of **August 25th**. Following advocacy by ILAP and other groups, the Asylum Office made this second trip to conduct interviews in



... many asylum seekers in the state have been waiting for years to receive an asylum interview.

2014. Last year they came only once, and over 1,000 individuals in Maine are still waiting for their interviews; many have been waiting for over a year.

New Asylum Office Planned in Boston

In an apparent effort to ameliorate the backlog at the Newark Asylum Office for New England-area asylum applicants,

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has announced that the agency will be opening a full time asylum sub-office in Boston. The hopefully soon-to-be open Boston office will be staffed with about seven to eight asylum officers and one supervisor. As a result of the creation of this office, USCIS may stop the current circuit rides to the South Portland USCIS office.



India Street Society: ILAP's Key Contributors

The India Street Society is an informal association of individuals and families who provide crucial financial leadership to help ILAP accomplish its mission.

Your donation means you value the cultural diversity and long-term benefits immigrants bring to our community. And it means you care about social justice right here where we live.

Become a member today!

Membership runs on an annual basis starting on the date you donate. We'll send a reminder for subsequent years' giving.

Membership begins with a \$300 annual donation, and while supplies last, includes a signed copy of Elizabeth Strout's "The Burgess Boys."

**India Street Society
Membership = \$300**

Silver Circle = \$500

Gold Circle = \$1,000 +

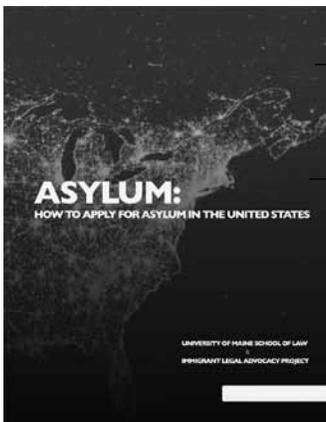
Please use the enclosed return envelope to make your donation today.

Thank you!

ILAP/Maine Law *Pro Se* Manual Now Available in Multiple Languages

The *Pro Se* Asylum Manual created by ILAP and the Refugee and Human Rights Clinic at the University of Maine School of Law is now available in three more languages: French, Arabic and Spanish.

Visit our website for a free download of the manual in English, French, Arabic or Spanish at: www.ILAPmaine.org. Thanks to our partners at the University of Maine School of Law for coordinating these translations.



BIENVENUE!

Willkommen, Welcome!



Maggie Fleming is our incoming Jesuit Corps Volunteer. She graduated in the spring from Tulane University in New Orleans with a BA in History and a French minor, an asset here at ILAP. Her family is

from Mobile, AL, but Maggie was drawn to the work at ILAP because of several college courses she took on foreign relations and immigration history, and sees a future in either the legal or nonprofit sector. She finds the “passion and optimism” at ILAP inspiring so far. Glad to have you on board, Maggie!



Sean Douglas, originally from Schenectady, NY, came to ILAP in June after an immigration internship in Albany with the New York chapter of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. He graduated

from SUNY Geneseo in 2011 with a double major in International Relations and Spanish. He chose ILAP because of its “unique position in a state experiencing significant change in its immigrant population”. Sean’s work as a paralegal entails research, affidavit writing, translation, and intake, all of which make him a valued part of the ILAP team. Bienvenidos, Sean!



YUGU'S STORY

Visit our website to see a story of strength, patience and citizenship from a former client who came from South Sudan to make a new life in Maine. www.ILAPmaine.org

BANKWANA!

Farewell and Well Wishes!



Sam Saltonstall and his wife Linda at CeleSoirée 2014.

Sam Saltonstall is ILAP’s heart and soul and has served the organization in so many volunteer capacities during the past 8 years, it is difficult to count. He is stepping down from the Board of Directors, but will continue his work with the organization as an at-large member of several committees, and as a development volunteer. Thank you for your thoughtful nature, peaceful demeanor, and great humor, Sam, and for every minute you’ve devoted to bettering our organization!

Zach Anderson was our third Jesuit Corps Volunteer at ILAP. JVC volunteers devote a year of their lives to serving the underserved through social justice organizations, living near those they serve and growing spiritually. We wish Zach all the best as he enters law school at the University of Michigan.

Brian Golger was a summer fellow at ILAP through Bowdoin College’s Community Matters in Maine Fellowship Program. He helped clients in the Immigration Clinic with forms assistance and was a key part of the intake team on Fridays. Brian has returned to complete senior year at Bowdoin.

Amber Attalla came to ILAP as a MAPIL summer fellow through the University of Maine School of Law. She helped clients with their applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) and provided support and research to attorneys handling full representation cases. She is back at Maine Law for her final year of law school, with our best wishes.

Maxwell Chikuta served on ILAP’s Board of Directors and has recently made the decision to finish his doctoral work, so has stepped down from the Board. Thank you for your time and energy devoted to spreading the word about ILAP, Maxwell!

2014 Technology Upgrade Complete!

Thank you to our individual donors from CeleSoirée 2014 and our grant funders, **The Broad Reach Fund** and the **People of Color Fund at the Maine Community Foundation**, for your contributions to ILAP’s Technology Upgrade drive. ILAP is now partnering with Pine Tree Legal Assistance for IT support, and they have completed our data transfer from an outdated legal database to a customizable one that is an industry standard. This project helps ILAP build efficiencies with our electronic record keeping and retrieval, and in addition to purchasing several new computers, gives new life to our digital work.



ILAP Staff Conduct Annual Outreach for Migrant Workers

In August, **Andi Summers, ILAP's Board of Immigration Appeals Accredited Representative, and Sean Douglas, ILAP's new paralegal, visited migrant blueberry rakers in Downeast Maine.**

During this annual trip, ILAP collaborated with Pine Tree Legal Assistance and Maine Migrant Health to help workers understand their legal rights. While there, ILAP staff were also able to meet with existing clients from the Millbridge- Cherryfield area, at the office of Mano en Mano. This year, two interns from the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic at the University of Maine School of Law accompanied ILAP staff during the outreach. Many of the blueberry rakers are Spanish-speaking and live in camps owned by their employers. Both Andi and Sean speak Spanish and were able to conduct outreach with the workers at the camps in Spanish.

Sean said of his first-time experience with the blueberry workers, that he witnessed "a widely unknown dimension of life and culture in Maine" compared to what he sees in Portland. For more on migrant workers in Maine, visit <http://bit.ly/migrantmaine>.



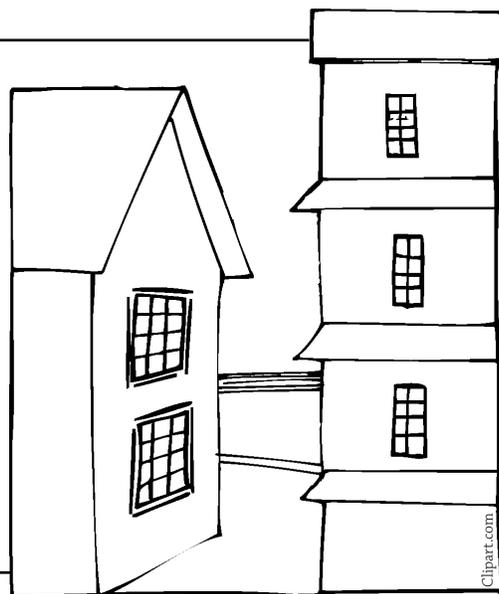
Click to the Annual Report

New this year, ILAP's 2013 Annual Report is available online as a download. This information is usually published briefly as part of the newsletter, but is a separate document for 2013. Go here to find it:

www.ilapmaine.org/annualreport2013.html

JFON Update

Earlier this year, ILAP partnered with the **Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON)** program to present a monthly "How-To" series for *pro se* asylum seekers in Portland. To date, 328 people have attended these free sessions with ILAP Asylum Coordinator Phil Mantis.



ILAP Takes *Pro Se* Help to Lewiston

ILAP Asylum Coordinator Phil Mantis led a *pro se*, or **representing oneself**, asylum application information session in Lewiston on August 14th. During this session, he went over the asylum process and explained how to prepare an asylum application. **A second session will be held in Lewiston in October**, and will cover supplementing an application that has already been filed. Lewiston Adult Education and TriCounty Mental Health have collaborated with ILAP to bring these information sessions to Lewiston, which has experienced an increase in asylum seekers from Somalia, Djibouti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Rwanda and Burundi.





IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT
 309 Cumberland Avenue, Suite 201
 P.O. Box 17917
 Portland, ME 04112

ph 207.780.1593
 fax 207.699.2313
 email: info@ilapmaine.org

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HOW YOU CAN HELP ILAP

Immigrants enrich and enhance our life experience in Maine everyday. ILAP serves immigrants who want to improve their legal status so they can work, bring their families together, travel freely and apply for college financial aid. These are the same things you and I want. When you support ILAP, you support diversity in our communities, a brighter economic outlook for our state, and social justice for all Mainers. We can't do what we do without you! Here are some ways for you to fuel ILAP's essential work in Maine:

■ You may have already seen our Annual Fund appeal. Please consider a first time or stretch gift, and we can **DOUBLE** your new or additional amount from last year thanks to the Clowes Fund (see page 2).

■ ILAP is a United Way partner agency and your support of United Way during the workplace campaign season can be designated directly to ILAP.

■ If you are in the process of estate planning, consider making a planned gift of a tax-deductible donation to ILAP in the form of a bequest, donation of stock or other instruments.

Your planned gift is an important legacy for Maine's multicultural future.

■ Join ILAP's India Street Society, a special group of ILAP donors who provide critical financial support with leadership gifts and multi-year pledges. Meet interesting, like minded people in support of a great cause.

THANK YOU! We thoroughly appreciate the ongoing support of our individual, foundation and corporate partners. Through their generous contributions, ILAP can continue to provide vital legal assistance to Maine's low-income immigrants.



CONNECT ON FACEBOOK
 Like us for the latest news, events, and immigration policy developments.

GIVE ONLINE
 Help us fulfill our nation's promise of liberty and justice for all. Make a secure online donation right now.

Visit www.ilapmaine.org and click "Donate Now" or contact Loretta Prescott, Development Director, at 207-780-1593, #107, or lprescott@ilapmaine.org

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