

Standing With Our Immigrant Neighbors: Ongoing Financial Support Is Needed!

"It takes a village" to heed the biblical call to provide a safe and secure welcome for asylum-seekers in our midst who are "without documents" and thus end up incarcerated in the cruel system of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) detention. Please be part of that caring UCC village by contributing to the NHCUCC Immigrant Bond and Support Fund at <https://nhcucc.org/donate-now> and directing your donation to the "Immigrant Support Fund" -- or by sending a check to the NHCUCC, 140 Sheep Davis Road, Pembroke, NH 03275-3711 with "Immigrant Support" in the memo line. Every contribution will make a difference in the life of one of our immigrant neighbors.

The Immigrant & Refugee Support Group (IRSG), one of the NHCUCC's Justice & Witness Mission Groups, hopes those in our pews will continue to respond generously to the plight of individuals seeking an escape from life-threatening war, violence, or other persecutions in their homeland. Although seeking asylum is an international and federal legal right, far too many immigrants and asylum seekers are denied this right in the most immoral and inhumane ways imaginable; they are often jailed just for daring to request asylum. In our own small way, we in the NHCUCC are trying to do our part to right these wrongs. Through the IRSG's *Immigrant Bond and Support Fund* (made possible by numerous generous donations from individuals and church groups), this NHCUCC ministry has been able to help 15 individuals gain release from ICE detention by paying all or part of an often-usurious immigrant bond.

Some of these bonds are now being set at unconscionably high levels. Here is "Oscar's" story (a pseudonym). Just recently, the IRSG and an amazing array of collaborating groups managed to come up with \$20,000 to bond "Oscar" out of ICE detention. Prior to being incarcerated by ICE, "Oscar" had found long-term work on a NH farm. He has been lauded as reliable, hardworking, and dedicated -- and especially good with animals. Local NH farms desperately need workers such as "Oscar!"

After "Oscar" was freed from ICE incarceration, the lawyer representing "Oscar" sent the IRSG (and the collaborating partners who raised the bond) a note saying, *On behalf of ["Oscar"], I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to ALL of you who made his temporary freedom possible! As a result of your magnanimity and love, he was released yesterday. He called me [after his release], and I was quietly sobbing as he expressed his joy and gratitude. ...Thank you*

so much again everyone. In my world, I see a lot of injustices but these kinds of communing for a just cause remind me that there is so much good in the world."

Please contribute to the IRSG Immigrant Bond to help us continue to be part of this "good in the world" <https://nhcucc.org/donate-now>