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YEAR IN REVIEW

NEW SANCTUARY COALITION





**THOUGH WE TREMBLE BEFORE  
UNCERTAIN FUTURES, MAY WE MEET  
ILLNESS, DEATH AND ADVERSITY  
WITH STRENGTH. MAY WE DANCE  
IN THE FACE OF OUR FEARS.**

*—Gloria Anzaldúa*

# NSC BY THE NUMBERS

**587**

This year, 350 Clinic volunteers worked with 587 Friends to file hundreds of asylum claims, work permits, motions to reopen, and change of venue applications.

**272**

In 2020, we worked with 272 detained Friends, offering crucial support and advice during their incarceration.

Through the L.I.F.E. Bond Fund and collaborations with other bond funds, as well as habeas petitions, NSC liberated 26 Friends.

**1,000+**

Volunteers wrote more than 1,000 letters to immigration judges in support of detained Friends.

**8,000+**

Staff and volunteers placed more than 8,000 phone calls to EOIR (Executive Office for Immigration Review) on behalf of Friends.



# 725

725 individuals tuned in to the live and recorded versions of the newly launched New Sanctuary Academy, deepening their understanding of the intersection of the Abolish ICE and broader abolition movements, and exploring the path towards abolishing ICE in practical, tangible ways.

# 586

Through the social work program, 586 Friends got the support they needed to access health care, mental health, eviction protection, food and child care.

# LESS THAN 5%

Of the thousands of individuals who have come through NSC's *pro se* immigration clinics in the past three years, fewer than 5% have been deported.

# ZERO

ZERO is our goal.

ZERO detentions.

ZERO deportations.

Abolish ICE. Dismantle DHS. Free them all.



# CLINIC

When the stay-at-home order was announced in New York City, staff and key technology-savvy volunteers worked around the clock for days to ensure that the weekly pro se immigration clinic could **continue its essential work without any interruption**. The weekly in-person clinic was held as usual on Wednesday March 18, and by the following Wednesday more than 200 volunteers were ready and able to work with 50 Friends through the digital Zoom clinic and its breakout rooms. **This work has continued without ceasing throughout the pandemic, and will inform the ways we work in the future**, though we look forward to the day we can gather in person for clinic again.

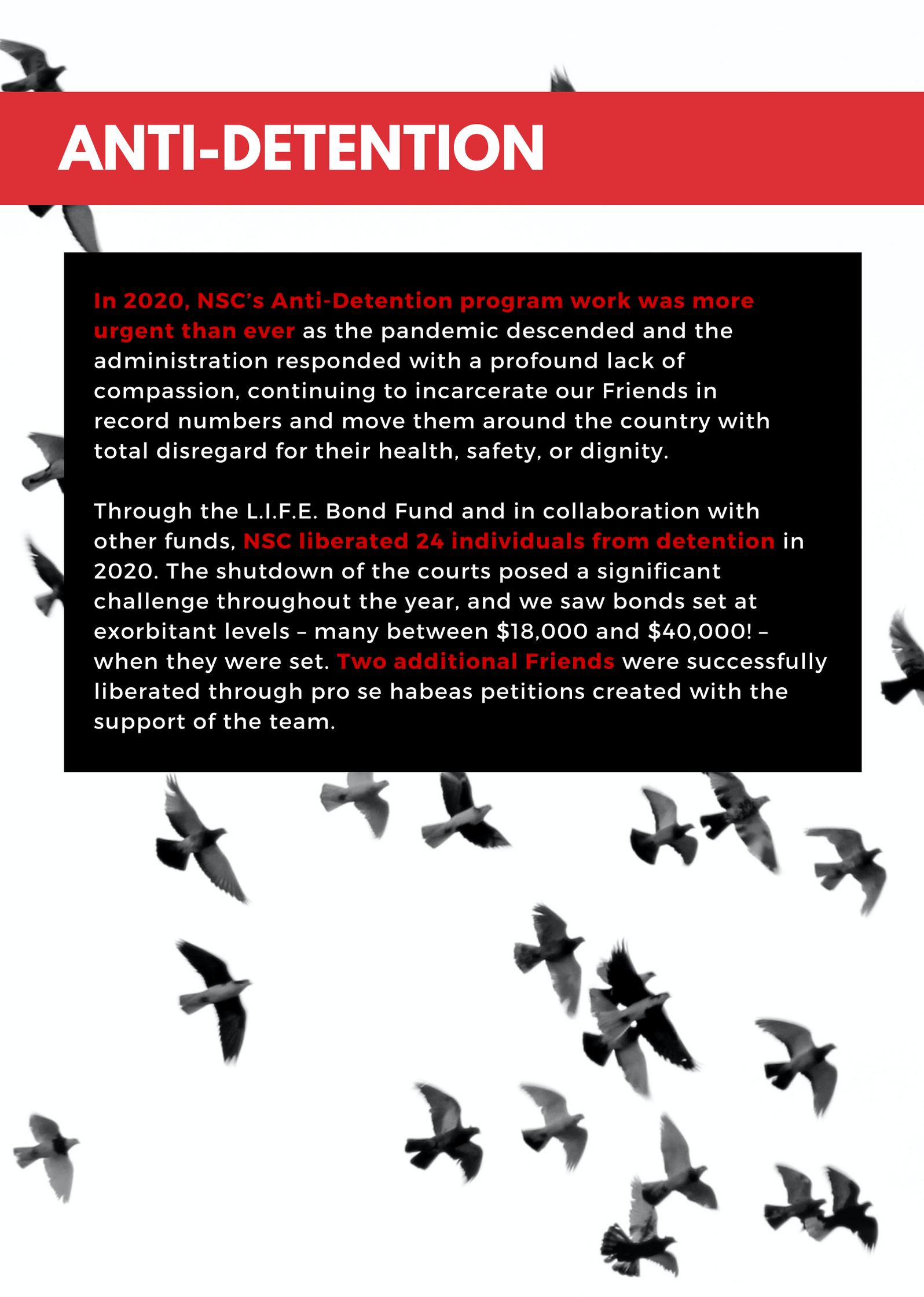




So far this year, **more than 350 trained and dedicated clinic volunteers have worked with 527 Friends.** They filed 348 asylum applications and prepared Friends for their final hearings, and created hundreds of work permits, appeals, motions to reopen, and change of venue requests to ensure that Friends would not be required to travel across the country during a pandemic to appear in court far from their actual place of residence.

The **constantly shifting policy and regulation environment in 2020** confronted the team with the challenge of ensuring that Friends were able to receive the support they needed to, for example, file asylum applications before dramatic new restrictions went into place, and work permit applications before that process was upended in order to make it more difficult for newly-entered individuals to acquire the documentation they need to work legally and avoid exploitation by predatory employers.

# ANTI-DETENTION



**In 2020, NSC's Anti-Detention program work was more urgent than ever** as the pandemic descended and the administration responded with a profound lack of compassion, continuing to incarcerate our Friends in record numbers and move them around the country with total disregard for their health, safety, or dignity.

Through the L.I.F.E. Bond Fund and in collaboration with other funds, **NSC liberated 24 individuals from detention** in 2020. The shutdown of the courts posed a significant challenge throughout the year, and we saw bonds set at exorbitant levels – many between \$18,000 and \$40,000! – when they were set. **Two additional Friends** were successfully liberated through pro se habeas petitions created with the support of the team.



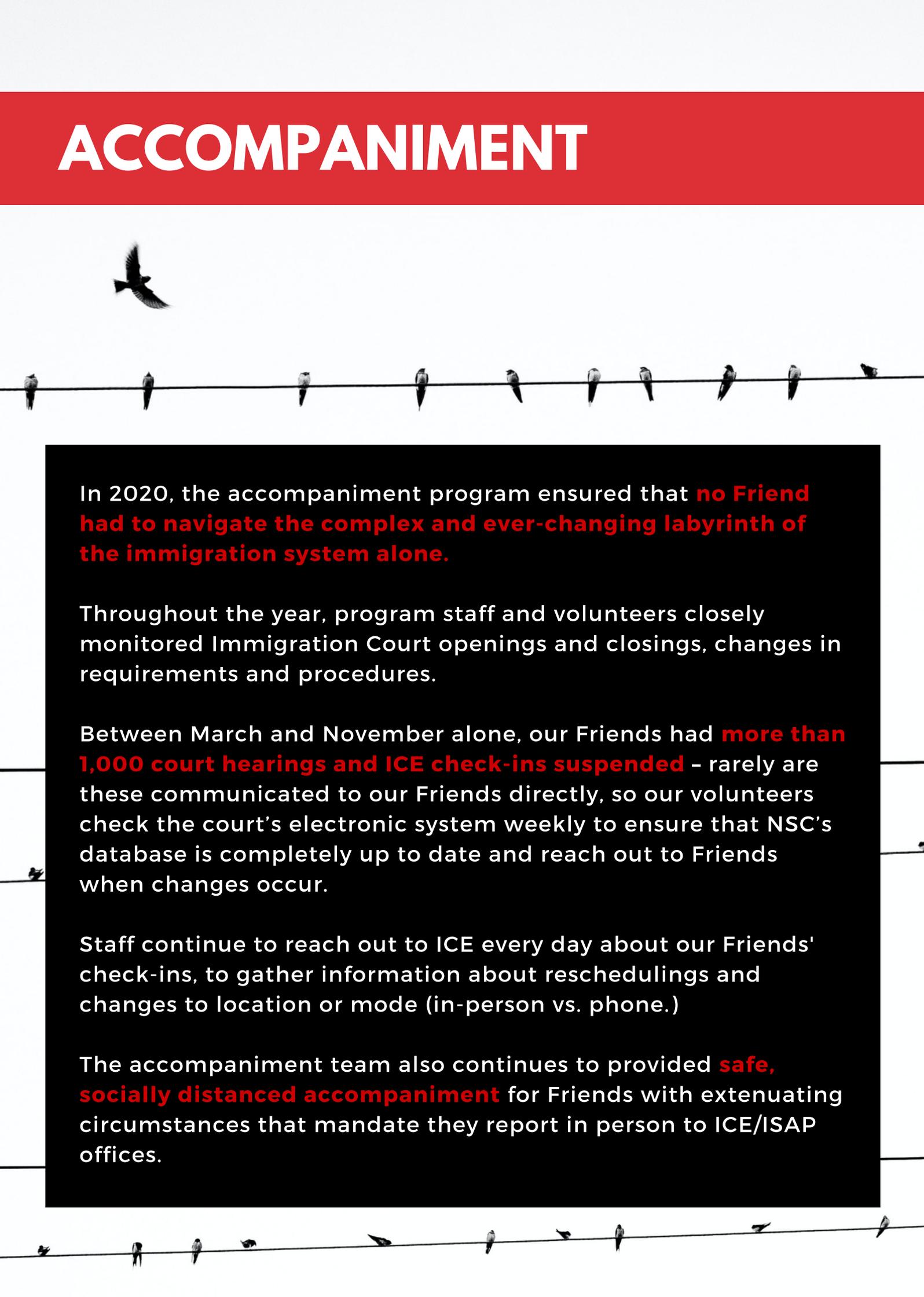
Throughout the year, the Anti-Detention team **actively supported 272 detained Friends**. While we work toward our ultimate goal of 100% liberation and abolition of immigrant detention, the staff and volunteers make sure that **no Friend or their family feels alone or lost on NSC's watch**.

The Anti-Detention program could not have done all of this without NSC's amazing volunteers who **wrote and submitted more than 1,000 letters to immigration judges** in support of our detained Friends, and also made sure that Friends seeking support were connected to what they required, reaching out to family members and attorney's offices and offering a listening ear whenever needed.

Volunteers covered **more than 2,000 hours of the Anti-Detention Hotline**, a particularly monumental task given how hard it always is to receive a call from detention and how the pandemic heightened that difficulty.



# ACCOMPANIMENT

A decorative graphic featuring a horizontal wire with several small birds perched on it. One larger bird is shown in flight above the wire. The background is white, and the wire and birds are black.

In 2020, the accompaniment program ensured that **no Friend had to navigate the complex and ever-changing labyrinth of the immigration system alone.**

Throughout the year, program staff and volunteers closely monitored Immigration Court openings and closings, changes in requirements and procedures.

Between March and November alone, our Friends had **more than 1,000 court hearings and ICE check-ins suspended** – rarely are these communicated to our Friends directly, so our volunteers check the court’s electronic system weekly to ensure that NSC’s database is completely up to date and reach out to Friends when changes occur.

Staff continue to reach out to ICE every day about our Friends' check-ins, to gather information about reschedulings and changes to location or mode (in-person vs. phone.)

The accompaniment team also continues to provide **safe, socially distanced accompaniment** for Friends with extenuating circumstances that mandate they report in person to ICE/ISAP offices.

# SOCIAL WORK

During this chaotic year, **NSC's social work program worked to provide stability, reassurance, and a reliable source of information for the 586 Friends** who reached out or were referred to us. Team members provided assessment, referrals to services, education and advocacy to assure our Friends' dignity and access to health and social services regardless of their immigration status.

The social work team worked with Friends to ensure they had health care including mental health, food security, shelter, child care and could resolve any school issues. Many Friends received assistance with navigating government agencies, and throughout the year the complexity and quantity of issues arising with Friends applying to or currently living in the shelter system rose steadily.

**Our Friends are often told that they have no right to seek help. We defy that,** and work to ensure that they receive all the social benefits to which they are entitled.





## **A SOCIAL WORK SUCCESS STORY**

ICE agents separated Emma from her three daughters as they crossed the border, sending the girls to their father they barely knew in Hartford. Emma desperately wanted to bring her daughters to New York to live with her, particularly after the girls sent her video and audio evidence of their father physically abusing them and begged her to come get them. She contacted child welfare in Hartford and was told by the case worker assigned that “this is what you get for marrying a guy like that,” at which point she hired a lawyer to pursue custody. Emma was referred to New Sanctuary Coalition for support because the father was threatening that if she tried to come get the girls, he would call ICE on her and all four would be deported.

Our social work team coordinated with Emma’s lawyer and helped educate her about her rights, including the fact that she would not be subject to removal as long as her immigration case was pending in the court. We also advocated with the Department of Children and Family Services in Hartford to hold the case worker accountable to the agency’s policies, and were able to get them to write a letter releasing the case from their jurisdiction and moving it to New York. With community support behind her and at the advice of her lawyer, Emma went and got her daughters while their father was at work. Once Emma and the girls were safely reunited in New York, we helped orient them to the city’s public school system and obtain municipal identification. Their asylum cases are still pending, and they know that New Sanctuary Coalition will have their backs every step of the way.

# COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



**At NSC we believe in the power of our Friends to organize, advocate, and fight for themselves and each other.** All of our programs are based on this foundational understanding which finds expression most directly in two efforts where NSC provides the space and structure within which Friends unite to build new futures for themselves and the community.

Every week at the **Community Meeting**, now offered online and drawing between 14 and 20 individuals on average, Friends and their supporters (family and allied volunteers) come together in celebration and commiseration.

The meeting offers a safe, non-judgmental space for Friends to share their concerns and their victories, to swap recipes and share their musical talents, to sing and pray together. For many, the Community Meeting is an emotional lifeline as they endure the detention of their loved ones – and a place for rejoicing and welcome when those loved ones are liberated.

Through the cross-platform messaging program **WhatsApp**, **NSC connects more than 800 Friends in a secure grassroots network of two-way communication**. Through the system, including subgroups ranging in size from 10 to 145 members, Friends connected by geographic location or language share information on topics ranging from local job opportunities to immigration rule change confusion, child care recommendations to sources for low-cost legal assistance.

One subgroup of women created an entire system of mutual aid food delivery system where people in their area of Queens could request food and they would make it and take it door to door, ensuring that no one in the area went hungry during the early pandemic.

Through the network, NSC's social work team also shares information about opportunities and clarification on changes to city and state benefits. While NSC staff verifies information that is shared in all the groups, the network is increasingly self-regulating, with Friends requesting sources and calling on each other to be cautious about sharing unverified information. Network membership continues to grow as Friends throughout the region learn about this resource.





# EDUCATION, AWARENESS, & ACTION CAMPAIGNS



**Throughout 2020, New Sanctuary Coalition's family of Friends, allies, staff, and volunteers came together time and again** to work toward the release of those held in immigrant detention; to declare solidarity with those ICE threatened to tear from their families; to confront and disrupt the cruelty of the system and those who uphold it; and to learn about the history, evolution, and current state of the criminalizing and racist U.S. immigration system.

## • Jericho Walk •



In March, the Jericho Walk moved online along with the rest of NSC's programs. Although we cannot gather in person, each week a powerful group of ten to 20 community members unite online to read the names of our Friends in detention and offer up a group prayer for the safety and liberation of all who are held or threatened by ICE.



## • Rapid Response •

When ICE officers invade neighborhoods, homes, and public places, **NSC is the first call many people make**. Here are two brief examples of 2020 rapid responses:

In February, ICE officers shot a man in the face as he tried to intervene in an arrest, and NSC quickly brought hundreds of community members and organizations together at Maimonides Medical Center in a two-day vigil to fight for Eric Diaz and Gaspar Avendano-Hernandez.

NSC got word in mid-March that an ICE agent at LaGuardia Airport was transporting six migrant children from Texas to NYC during the pandemic. We immediately rallied a group of community members and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to confront the agent and pursue information about where the children were being taken and why.

## • Legislation •

In the middle of this year of tumult and upheaval, the administration mounted an unprecedented attack on the fundamental right of asylum. **NSC trainings prepared more than 300 volunteers to submit comments detailing their concerns about the law**, a powerful way to delay its effect and give us time to stop the changes from taking place.

Two years ago, as zero tolerance and family separation took hold, NSC started fighting for the **Separation of Children Accountability Reporting (SCAR) Act**. This year, the act was passed in the New York State Assembly and Senate, and we are pushing Governor Cuomo to sign the bill into law by the end of 2020. The SCAR Act requires that information about separated and unaccompanied children in care of NY state foster care organizations that receive Federal funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement/ HHS for this work be reported to the state and federal government.

• **Stop the Deportations campaigns** •

NSC believes that **NO ONE should be deported**. When a Friend comes to us at high risk for deportation, we help them locate a sanctuary site if needed, and create a campaign that includes a plan of action with components such as press conferences, community rallies, and letter-writing campaigns.

Maria is one such Friend -- despite the fact that her son has severe hemophilia, ICE has been trying to deport her for a year. NSC is working closely with AFSC to fight to keep Maria in the U.S. where her son can get the medical care he needs to survive.

• **Free Them ALL! #FreeThemAll campaigns** •

Free Shakoure! – NSC and a coalition of immigrant rights organizations are calling for the immediate release of Shakoure, a U.S. citizen, before ICE deports him to a country he's never even visited. After 141 days in jail, Shakoure is still detained, his citizenship denied, vital records withheld. We will not stop the call for his liberation until he is free!

Free the Unaccompanied Minors! – Throughout the pandemic, and still today, NSC is agitating for the liberation and family reunion of imprisoned minors cruelly separated from their immigrant parents who remain in the custody of our Office of Refugee Resettlement-funded facilities.

Let My People Go: Because Never Again Is Now -- NSC was honored to partner with JFREJ, Never Again Action, and the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund for the. The campaign raised over \$320,000 to free our immigrant neighbors from ICE detention.



**Free Them All: Stories from Detention - NSC is committed to amplifying the voices of our detained Friends, letting the world hear their stories in their own words.**

**"I have nobody in my country. I have been in this country since 2000. I went to middle school and high school. I have tattoos and my life will be at risk if I get deported. I don't want to be separated from my family."**

— Josue | Detainee

**#FreeThemAll** 

**"The officers come in and out of the facility every day. Our life is at risk because they can bring the virus inside... They don't wear no mask. When we put sick calls, sometimes they take two weeks to see us."**

— Yoscal | Detainee

**#FreeThemAll** 

**"Here the problem with coronavirus is getting worse every day. They are aware of my heart disease and asthma condition... If I get the virus there's a good chance I would die. Please do everything you can."**

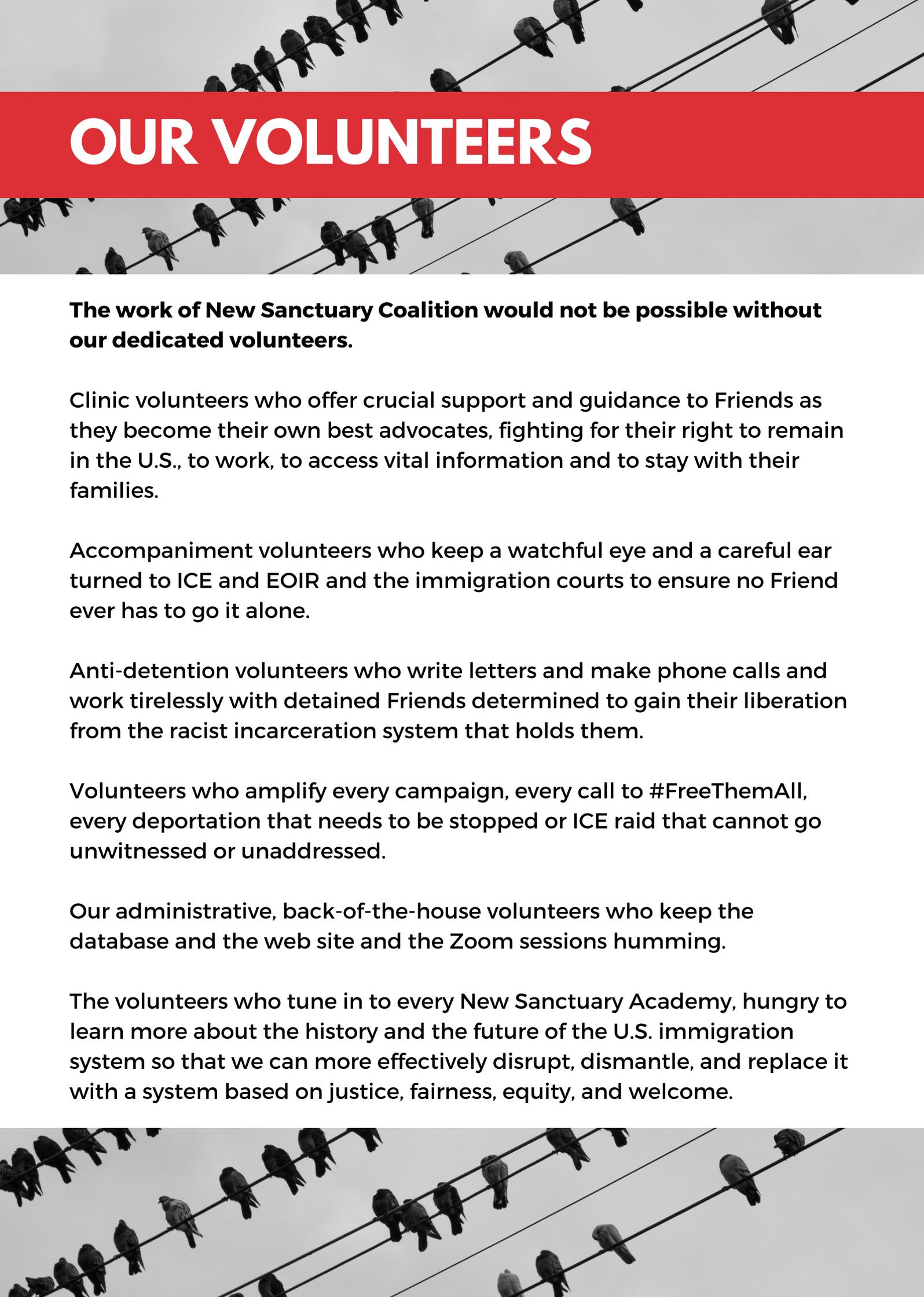
— Ramón | Detainee

**#FreeThemAll** 

**"We haven't received any medical attention or any additional cleaning measures. We don't know what to do or think anymore. We just know we're in danger and they aren't saying anything."**

— Marvin | Detainee

**#FreeThemAll** 



# OUR VOLUNTEERS

**The work of New Sanctuary Coalition would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers.**

Clinic volunteers who offer crucial support and guidance to Friends as they become their own best advocates, fighting for their right to remain in the U.S., to work, to access vital information and to stay with their families.

Accompaniment volunteers who keep a watchful eye and a careful ear turned to ICE and EOIR and the immigration courts to ensure no Friend ever has to go it alone.

Anti-detention volunteers who write letters and make phone calls and work tirelessly with detained Friends determined to gain their liberation from the racist incarceration system that holds them.

Volunteers who amplify every campaign, every call to #FreeThemAll, every deportation that needs to be stopped or ICE raid that cannot go unwitnessed or unaddressed.

Our administrative, back-of-the-house volunteers who keep the database and the web site and the Zoom sessions humming.

The volunteers who tune in to every New Sanctuary Academy, hungry to learn more about the history and the future of the U.S. immigration system so that we can more effectively disrupt, dismantle, and replace it with a system based on justice, fairness, equity, and welcome.

# CELEBRATING SUCCESSSES

In early 2020, Edwin Tineo wrote to NSC to update us on the conditions in the Hudson County Detention Center and his efforts to organize the men there. After being held for over a year, he was released in March into a country in the early throes of the pandemic. He joined Community Meeting and inspired everyone in that virtual room with his passion and dedication to the liberation of the brothers he left in detention. Edwin agreed to join the Anti-Detention staff, and now leads the charge on connecting NSC with family members of detained Friends, strategizing ways to obtain release, and ensuring that Friends have a supportive space to process their liberation and continue the fight against ICE once they leave detention. His crew of “ICE Breakers” continues to grow and lead us toward an ever more powerful immigrant-led movement.

The victories we celebrate are often incremental – sometimes the success is simply that the worst thing that could have happened did not. Two such stories follow.

Carla was scheduled for an individual hearing with no attorney, and was incredibly relieved when she was granted a six-month adjournment due in no small part to the support she had received at the pro se clinic and the physical presence of accompaniment volunteers at her hearing.

When Sam completed his reasonable fear interview, earning him the right to present his asylum case in front of a judge, that was a huge win – a win earned by his own courage and resilience, fortified by the group of NSC volunteers who waited outside for him from 7 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. when he finished his grueling interview.

*Some names and details have been changed to protect Friends' privacy.*

# WE ARE NSC

## New Sanctuary Coalition

Founded in 2007, New Sanctuary Coalition (NSC) is a multi-faith immigrant-led organization that creates support systems for and empowers those navigating the immigration system. We do this by bringing together citizen volunteers and immigrants – our Friends – to achieve two primary goals: equip Friends with the knowledge they need to navigate the immigration system and lead the movement, and train and mobilize citizens and faith leaders to support and fight alongside our Friends, advocating for urgently needed changes to the system.





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of New Sanctuary Coalition possible.**

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