



# AMERICAN GATEWAYS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## A Letter From Co-Executive Director Edna Yang

Happy Immigrant Heritage Month! We all know someone with immigrant heritage and all of us have stories of our own immigrant heritage. Take the time this month to uplift those stories. Share your immigrant heritage and celebrate the many contributions that all immigrants have made in our communities!

Our June Fiesta was a wonderful gathering in honor of this month. We were delighted to see so many of you in person, especially after two years of the pandemic! We want to give a very special thanks to our in-kind sponsors: Maudie's Tex Mex, Circle Brewing, Tiff's Treats, T'so Chinese, Costco, Trader Joes, Rambler, mmmppandas, and Blue Norther. We also want to thank our elected officials, Representative Lloyd Doggett and State Senator Sarah Eckhardt for joining us at the festivities.



This week marks the 10 year anniversary of the creation of DACA. We are thankful for DACA and the ability to assist so many DREAMers in the past decade, but we know that this temporary relief is not enough. The politicization of immigration has left many in limbo. We will continue to support DREAMers and their families and call for a permanent solution for them through comprehensive immigration reform.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your commitment to immigrant justice here in Central Texas.

## **LGBTQ Asylum-Seekers**

This month we celebrate Pride to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, and to celebrate, uplift, and raise awareness of issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. American Gateways represents LGBTQ+ individuals every year seeking asylum and safety in the US due to their sexual orientation and gender.

We represented John (pseudonym) an asylum case due to his sexual orientation. Growing up in El Salvador, John had a difficult childhood. He was abandoned by his father and witnessed his mother's brutal murder as a young child. John lived with relatives who, rather than offering a loving home, forced him to work on a ranch performing physically demanding and often dangerous tasks at a young age. During this period, John also suffered regular sexual abuse.

As a teenager, John made the difficult decision to leave El Salvador in search of a better life in the United States. Unfortunately, as a young adult on his own, John faced many challenges upon arrival. Over time, he became increasingly aware of his sexual orientation and came out as gay. Sadly, this only led to further harassment and abuse.

An encounter with police resulted in John being detained and placed in deportation proceedings. It was there that John attended an American Gateways presentation. Our staff attorneys helped John win permission to remain in the U.S. Now out of detention, John is looking forward to rebuilding his life and receiving the counseling and support he needs to heal from his past abuse.

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## **American Gateways in the News**

### **ICE Limits Migrants Legal Rights**

San Antonio Staff Attorney Naveen Flores-Dixit spoke with USA Today last week on US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) decision to restrict access to attorneys for immigrants in detention. Naveen said, "Lack of privacy and confidentiality for attorney-client phone conversations is a problem," in addition to the barriers already in place for immigrants to speak freely with their attorney. Read the entire article [here on USA Today](#).

## Waco's Continued Effort to Help Newly Arrived Asylees

The Waco office is partnering with a new project, the Naomi House, who plans to shelter newly arrived asylum-seekers in Waco. Anali Looper, director of the Waco office, spoke with the Waco Tribune-Herald about the asylum process and why shelter to newly arrived asylees is crucial. Read more about the Naomi House and Anali's quote [here](#).



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