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*We support the rights of immigrants and their families, giving priority to those who live or work on the Olympic Peninsula and immigrant detainees within Washington State, through access to legal services, standing witness, family support, community education and advocacy.*

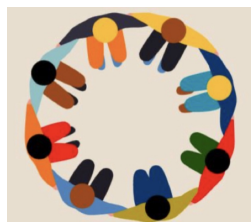
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Visitors at the new JCIRA Multicultural Center. Look for news of our grand opening coming this spring.

***A Note from Outreach Coordinator Natalia Durán:  
JCIRA Multicultural Center***



We all deserve a sense of belonging in the place we build our lives. We walk here daily even if our roots are far away. Our mission is to create a space that feels like home for the immigrant community. A space where it is OK to be different; where in our differences, we find our strengths. Whether you would like to learn English, have conversational circles or visit to learn about other cultures, come join us!

What cultural gift can you bring?

Todos merecemos sentir que pertenecemos al lugar en donde estamos construyendo nuestras vidas. Nosotros caminamos aquí, incluso cuando nuestras raíces están muy lejos. Nuestra misión es crear un espacio en donde la comunidad inmigrante se sienta como en casa. Un espacio en donde ser diferente es bueno; en donde nuestras diferencias son nuestro poder. Ya sea que te interese aprender Inglés, participar en un círculo de conversación ó visitar y aprender de otras culturas. Acompáñanos!

¿Cuál regalo cultural puedes aportar?

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## JCIRA Has a New Staff Member!

MIRIAM TATIANA MCMAHON



Please help us welcome Miriam Tatiana McMahon as our second part-time staffer. Everyone is so happy to be working with her! She is overseeing activities at the new JCIRA Multicultural Center, assisting Natalia with her outreach work, managing the Center's calendar, getting the Center ready for each event, helping to initiate and carry out programs, and overall, making the Center a vibrant and welcoming place.

Miriam was born in Ecuador, and attended University there. She has a degree in Community Development and Organization and over twenty years of experience in social welfare projects in Ecuador with national and foreign institutions.

From a young age she's been actively involved with helping others, directing projects in several foundations for the benefit of people in low-income communities. Her last position in Ecuador was as the Territorial Coordinator of the Jesus Carpenter Foundation focused on Women's Entrepreneurship.

Miriam says that this work experience has helped develop her people skills, and to value being understanding, sincere and supportive with diverse kinds of families and people. She has also worked in family conflict resolution, is creative and committed to JCIRA's mission.

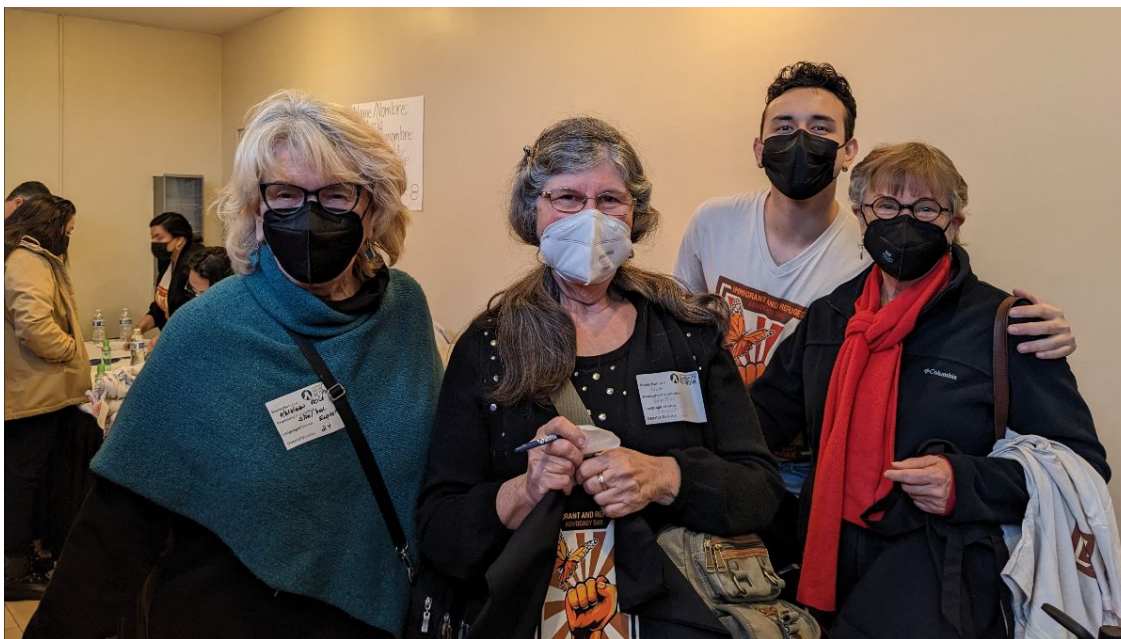
Miriam came to Jefferson County with her husband in December 2019 and, after settling in Port Hadlock, has been volunteering with her church's charity projects in Irondale. She is very happy to live on the Olympic Peninsula, which she calls "her home and her family," where she feels that she has opportunities to improve her English and grow even more as a human being.

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developing a schedule for drop-in hours as well as for scheduled programs and events. We hope you will soon stop by and say hello or get involved.



JCIRA Board Members attend Advocacy Day in Olympia

## JCIRA Takes Action in Olympia

### Día de Cabildeo de Inmigrantes y Refugiados

JCIRA Board Members joined 250 immigrant rights advocates from across Washington State for WAISN's (Washington Immigrant Rights Network) 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Day on February 16<sup>th</sup> in Olympia. The WAISN coalition consists of over 400 immigrant and refugee rights organizations including JCIRA, as well as labor unions, grassroots groups, and faith communities, to support and build power for immigrants and refugees across Washington.

The level of organization of Advocacy Day was outstanding. JCIRA was able to meet in person with our District 24 legislative team including Representatives Mike Chapman and Steve Tharinger, and the legislative aid for Senator Kevin Van de Wege. Our mission was to convince the legislators to support two immigrant justice campaigns: Unemployment Insurance for Immigrant Undocumented Workers (HB1095 & SB5109) and Health Equity for Immigrants as a budget proviso.

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For more information on WIASN, check out their website <https://www.waisn.org/>



## Welcoming Library

The Welcoming Library is a collection of acclaimed children's illustrated books featuring stories of new immigrants and their families – in their home countries, or adjusting to life in the U.S. The goal of the collection is to raise awareness and build sensitivity for all ages through children's literature. Reading these stories can lead children to become comfortable talking about belonging, welcoming, assimilation, and the celebration of all families, languages and cultures.

The Port Townsend Library received a grant to acquire a Welcoming Library of 30 books and then contacted JCIRA to help distribute this visiting collection to schools, other libraries, after-school programs and other non-profit organizations in Jefferson County. Natalia Duran and Libby Palmer took the Welcoming Library to Chimacum Primary School on February 13, our first experience reading aloud to groups of young children. Michele Moriarty, Chimacum School Librarian, was the host and had arranged a full schedule of kindergarteners through 2nd graders coming and going in small groups.

Natalia started by introducing herself as an immigrant from Mexico, arriving in Port Townsend with her baby girl about 10 years ago. She stressed how much she loved living here. Libby then talked about her parents arriving in the U.S., one from Poland and the other from the Ukraine, and somehow meeting in New York City. Those personal introductions captured the kids' interest right at the beginning.

During the 3-hour session, a total of 8 different books were read aloud, with Natalia and Libby taking turns, so each group heard both readers. Some books were sad, even tragic in parts, dealing with families migrating due to war. Others stressed new arrivals in U.S.

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engrossed.

Just before the end of the last session, a 2nd grader asked Natalia to read a small book completely in Spanish that she'd personally selected. Instead of reading it only to the girl, Natalia read the book aloud to the whole group. It was a funny book from the school collection and pretty soon, all of the kids - and the readers - were saying words aloud in Spanish, laughing together and saying goodbye in Spanish. It was a perfect ending to a great day.

The Welcoming Library's next session in Chimacum will involve 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, with perhaps more time given to discussion and questions, yet using the same collection of books.

## Status of Federal Immigration Legislation

February 2023

*If you have questions about immigration legislation or other immigration issues, send them to [jcirawa@gmail.com](mailto:jcirawa@gmail.com) with the word "Question" in the subject line. We will try to answer questions either by return email or in this newsletter.*

### **DACA and the Dream Act**

Senators Durbin and Graham again introduced the Dream Act on February 14, providing permanent protection from deportation and a pathway to citizenship for immigrants who were brought into the country by their parents when they were children. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was created in 2012 by President Obama. It provides temporary protection from deportation and authorization to work for those who qualify, but it does not provide a pathway to permanent residency or citizenship. The program has been controversial and the subject of partisan debate since its inception. It has been the subject of much court action aimed at shutting the program down. At present a lawsuit filed by nine states asking that DACA be declared illegal is pending with a decision expected this spring. There are now about 600,000 individuals covered by the DACA program. All of them live with an uncertain future, fearing that the program could end and deportation follow. The Dream Act would put an end to this unfair and unjust situation. JCIRA urges us to support passage of the Dream Act in any way possible.

### **Other Bills Introduced**

A total of nineteen bills have been introduced in the House and three in the Senate. HR575 and HR614 seek to loosen the restrictions on temporary migrant workers in the fishing, seafood, and agricultural industries to address the serious worker shortages. This issue was the subject of the Farm Workforce Modernization Act which failed to

### **Proposals for Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

The Biden Administration issued a “Blueprint for a Fair, Orderly and Humane Immigration System” in 2021 which remains on their agenda. This is available [here](#).

The conservative CATO Institute published a white paper in 2020 titled “12 New Immigration Ideas for the 21st Century” available [here](#).

### **Border Policies**

Unfortunately the Biden Administration continues to enforce certain policies that prevent people from exercising their legal right to request asylum. For example, Public Health Title 42 is used to turn back many asylum seekers. The administration has announced plans to end the practice, but GOP Attorneys General have sought to intervene in the case to defend the policy. The Supreme Court ruled on February 16 that they will not consider this challenge, so the administration can stop using Title 42 to prevent entry. However, this will mean that many more people will be requesting asylum and so the workload on Border Patrol personnel will increase. This may exacerbate problems of asylum seekers not being treated humanely and with respect.

## Volunteer Spotlight

JCIRA Board Chair Larry Jensen



Larry Jensen and his wife arrived in Jefferson County from Nebraska in late 2018 shortly before the pandemic. For decades he worked in the railroad industry but found time to help immigrants and refugees as a member of his church congregation. When the couple moved here, Larry looked for similar opportunities to serve. He found JCIRA, and it was a good match for his experience and philosophy. Soon meetings

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new Center.

Consistent with his beliefs, he is dedicated to helping meet the needs of immigrants and refugees in our community that, in his view, is JCIRA's most important work. Although humble and unassuming, Larry speaks out against any and all injustice. His interests include racial and economic inequality, housing, and environmental issues and is willing to take a stand. For example, he was active in the fight for full LCBTQA+ inclusion when his Omaha church split after the pastor performed a same sex union. Larry has stepped up to lead as JCIRA's outreach and projects expand, and we thank him for his dedication to our mission.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Medical and Health

JC Mash (free clinic)  
136 Water Street, Suite 109  
PT, WA 98368 360-385-4268

JFC Express Clinic  
834 Sheridan St., Suite B  
PT, WA 98368 360-385-2204

North Olympic Healthcare Network  
Two locations in Port Angeles  
360-452-7891 [www.nohn-pa.org](http://www.nohn-pa.org)

Jefferson Dental Clinic  
915 Sheridan  
PT, WA 98368 360-344-1005

Ecumenical Christian Helping Hands Organization  
1110 Jefferson St., PT, WA 98368  
360-379-3246 [www.echhojc.org](http://www.echhojc.org)

WIC Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and  
Children under 5  
Jefferson County Public Health

### Food

All Food Banks:  
[Jeffersoncountyfoodbanks.org](http://Jeffersoncountyfoodbanks.org)

Quilcene Food Bank  
294952 US 101  
Quilcene, WA 98376

Tri-Area Food Bank  
760 Chimacum Road  
Chimacum, WA  
98325  
360-385-9462

Port Townsend Food  
Bank  
1925 Blaine Street  
PT, WA 98368



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## Other Services

Dove House Advocacy Services  
Advocacy, basic needs, housing assistance, and other resources for recent and past victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and general crime.

[www.dovehousejc.org](http://www.dovehousejc.org)

1045 10<sup>th</sup> Street, PT WA 98368  
Office and 24/7 Crisis Line: 360-385-5291

St. Vincent de Paul

Help with needs like food, gas, prescriptions, mobile phones/minutes, propane, utilities, medical/dental expenses, repairs, clothing and laundry.

<https://svdpejc.org/>

360-379-1325

Olympic Community Action (OlyCAP)

Provides assistance for all basic needs (rent, utilities, energy, prescriptions, gas, public transportation, etc.) for low-income households.

[www.olycap.org](http://www.olycap.org)

823 Commerce Loop Quilcene, WA 98376  
360-385-2571

## Housing

Bayside Housing and Services

[www.baysidehousing.org](http://www.baysidehousing.org)

310 Hadlock Bay Road

Port Hadlock, WA 98339  
360-385-4637

Jefferson County Emergency Shelter

Located in the basement of the American Legion  
209 Monroe St, Port Townsend, WA 98368  
Regular hours 4:00 PM-8:00 AM 7 days a week.

## DONATE TO JCIRA!

Support our mission by donating to JCIRA. Click on the word [Donate](#) or click [Here](#) to go to the donation page on our website. Thank you for considering!



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