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### JCIRA's Next General Meeting - July 7th!

JCIRA will be holding our next General Meeting on Thursday, July 7th, at 5 pm. Join us and meet our new Outreach Coordinator, Natalia Duran, who would like to share some of her ideas with us.

We have also asked Olycap, Peninsula Housing Authority, Habitat, Bayside Housing, the Jefferson County Anti Racism Group and the Community Build folks to join us in a panel discussion to share their approaches to housing at this time.

More details will follow closer to the date in another email from us so stay tuned.

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JCIRA is pleased to introduce Natalia to our membership and friends. She began work on May 23 and immediately initiated a new program to help immigrant families send their kids to Summer Camps. Natalia has already been making JCIRA better known in the community and finding ways in which JCIRA can be of service to the community. She wrote the following piece to introduce herself to us.



I always dreamed of becoming for others, the kind of person who showed me the world in a larger way, like my teacher Fernando who took us on the best field trips I could have as a child in México, and changed little by little, how I saw life's possibilities. Since I was a teenager, I was passionate about social justice. Little did I know I would be doing this in a foreign country in a different language.

I started by volunteering at Dove House, which was an eye opener to the needs of my community from a much closer experience. Whether because of fear, cultural differences or language, whatever the reason, many in the immigrant community don't feel comfortable using services that are available. I knew I wanted to be there for someone in a more vulnerable situation.

A few years ago, people from JCIRA started coming to the coffee hour at my church to meet with the Hispanic community, to learn about our needs at a time when fear was increasing because of what was happening in this country politically . This kind of connection made us feel less isolated in our fears and an important part of a larger community. With that confidence we can dream even bigger, and help JCIRA dream bigger.

Some people, all they need is one opportunity to take it and soar.

Natalia Durán  
JCIRA Outreach Coordinator  
[natalia.jcira@gmail.com](mailto:natalia.jcira@gmail.com)



### ***Congratulations/Felicitaciones!***

Local students proudly hold their certificates for achieving proficiency toward the Seal of Biliteracy. Eighteen students, sixteen from Port Townsend High School and two from Chimacum High School, were honored at the Port Townsend School District Board meeting on May 5, 2022 for reaching this significant goal .

Nancy Zamberlin, the teacher of JCIRA's adult evening ESL class, set up and conducted the testing required to earn the Seal of Biliteracy. JCIRA funded the test fees for eleven of the students from immigrant families.

We applaud the hard work these students have put into furthering a world of bicultural, biliterate global citizens.

For more information on the Seal of Biliteracy: [CLICK HERE.](#)

### **Update on Afghan Family in Port Townsend**

Ali, Storya, and daughter Nihal, the family from Afghanistan that members of JCIRA and other friends have been sponsoring, have been living in Port Townsend for the past four months. They have been learning English and adapting to the culture of the United States. Unfortunately, the apartment where they have been living has become unavailable.

Ali and Storya are now assessing their options. They may decide to stay in this area if suitable living accommodations can be found. **Any help finding housing for them would be greatly appreciated.** You can contact us at [jcirawa@gmail.com](mailto:jcirawa@gmail.com) or call JCIRA at 360-232-6070. They may decide to move to Seattle to be with relatives and other Afghans. However, the housing situation in Seattle is also very difficult. A third possibility is a move to Arizona to be with other

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challenging.

## VOICES OF REFUGEES

*On the banks of the river  
run children  
follow, follow  
the boat  
all the way to the ends  
of the world  
where the gulls play  
where seas meet  
where people hold each other  
no matter what  
the next storm brings.*

*There will be wind  
there will be sorrow  
there will be great  
unknowns  
in the next tomorrow.  
And still we have  
each other  
We do this  
to keep  
together,  
together.*

By Polly Thurston (PT resident & QUUF member)

# 3 Myths vs Facts About IMMIGRATION

## MYTH #1: THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION HAS A POLICY OF OPEN BORDERS

### FACT

US borders are highly monitored and regulated. President Trump enacted extremely restrictive policies which severely limit entry at our southern border. The Biden administration has kept these policies largely in place. Immigration law continues to prevent people from entering the country unless they qualify under federal programs, such as family immigration or US asylum law. Until the war in Ukraine, Biden was set to admit fewer refugees to the US than President Trump.

## MYTH #2: THE US IS BEING INVADED BY MILLIONS OF MIGRANTS ILLEGALLY ENTERING THE COUNTRY VIA OUR SOUTHERN BORDER

### FACT

The number of migrants apprehended at the border reached an all-time high in 2021 at 1.9 million. But it is crucial to note that these individuals were apprehended, and the majority of them expelled from the US. The numbers being reported also include up to 25% of people who were previously expelled under Title 42 and make repeated attempts to enter the US. Those who are allowed into the US are usually people who make a claim for asylum, which is a right they have under federal law. They will be allowed to prove their asylum case while in the United States under rigorous standard of proof set out by federal law.

## MYTH #3: DEMOCRATS WANT OPEN BORDERS SO MIGRANTS CAN VOTE FOR THEM ILLEGALLY

### FACT

Illegal voting by noncitizens is extremely rare. Penalties for illegal voting are high, and the consequence to an immigrant is almost always deportation. Immigrants who eventually become citizens and may vote legally wait years to do so. For example, a person seeking asylum can wait many years for a decision. If granted asylum, the asylee must wait another year before they can apply for a green card -- a process that will take an additional three years. Once granted a green card, the law requires they wait another five years before they can apply for naturalization -- an application that often takes another year to process.

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## Border Patrol Checkpoints and the Drug War: The Insanity Continues

By [Patrick G. Eddington](#)

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On June 6, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued their latest [report](#) on operations at internal checkpoints operated by Customs and Border Protection (CBP), previously requested by Senators Pat Leahy (D-VT), Patty Murray (D-WA), Gary Peters (D-MI) and Representative Bennie Thompson (D-MS). Among the key findings:

- About 75 percent (12,194) of U.S. citizen drug seizure events involved marijuana only. About half of checkpoint events in which Border Patrol seized drugs from U.S. citizens (8,098 of 16,315) included the seizure of a personal use quantity of marijuana and no other drugs. Of particular note, CBP officials told GAO investigators that U.S. Attorney's offices in their sector generally do not prosecute people for possessing personal use quantities of marijuana. (p. 27)

So CBP agents are making stops and seizures of minuscule amounts of marijuana in order to tout the "achievement" to their superiors and the public. And 91 percent of the time, those drug "busts" involved U.S. citizens. (p. 25)

[For more on this go to the Cato website here.](#)

## CHAUTAUQUA IMMIGRATION WORKSHOP

An important part of the recent Chautauqua/Rhody week of events was a series of workshops. In addition to music, food, art and vaudeville, a variety of small group discussion workshops was planned. Joanne Murayama, local quilt artist and historian, was asked to lead a session on immigrant family histories, based on her Japanese family having been interned in a detention camp during World War II. Joanne invited Libby Palmer and Jean Walat of JCIRA (Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates) to join her as co-facilitators

On Sunday afternoon, May 22, a group of 15 people gathered for a workshop called *Why I'm Here*, to talk about how each of us ended up in the US. Ancestors of everyone present had come from countries outside the US. We discussed and shared answers to questions such as: Where did our families come from? What led them to leave their native birthplace? What was their experience arriving in the US? How does it compare to the experiences of immigrants today? We also talked about JCIRA's current work with Jefferson County immigrants – helping provide legal aid, family services, advocacy in legislative matters and a special fund to help those immigrants in need.

It's already been suggested that similar small group workshops might take place sometime in the

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## GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT

### 1. One Step Closer for Healthcare for Undocumented in Washington

Recently, JCIRA joined with many organizations including WAISN, the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network, in requesting the Health Benefit Exchange apply for the Section 1332 State Innovation Waiver. If approved, it will provide access to federally non-subsidized health and dental coverage through Washington Healthplanfinder to all Washington residents, regardless of immigration status. We'll be updating you on the application, but in the meantime you can learn more about the need and the support from the [Health Benefit Exchange release here](#).

### 2. Texas City Gives Money for Immigrant Non-Profits

San Antonio will give \$1.5 million of its federal COVID-19 relief funds to nonprofits aiding immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship. City Council members said this is part of the city's welcoming of immigrants and the funds will help groups dealing with the current surge of immigrants. [To read more go to the San Antonio Report here.](#)

### 3. Michigan Proclaims June as Immigrant Heritage Month

Michigan is celebrating the contributions of immigrants in shaping communities and in strengthening the state economy. There are more than 678,000 immigrants in Michigan, about 7 percent of the population. [For more click here.](#)

### 4. The Children of Immigrants are the Ones Getting Ahead in America.

Children of immigrants defy the trend of "downward mobility" over the last few generations. As the American ideals become more unattainable, children of immigrants arriving in the U.S. from 1980 through today appear to surpass their parents and move up the economic ladder. For more on this story [click here.](#)

### 5. D.C. Activists Create Emergency Aid Operation for Bussed Migrants

When Texas announced plans to bus migrants to Washington, D.C., a group of people created an emergency aid operation. They meet migrants arriving at all hours and provide medical care, food, shelter and transportation. [Read more here.](#)

## JCIRA Newsletter Needs New Editor!

**We're looking for a volunteer with newsletter experience and computer skills. Familiarity with MailChimp would be a real plus but not a requirement. Not to worry, we would provide ample orientation and training to make this work. You would be working either solo or with another JCIRA member to produce a monthly, and at times bi-monthly, newsletter, containing primarily**

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[jcirawa@gmail.com](mailto:jcirawa@gmail.com). For more information you can call Roberta at 206-769-6721.

***Our mission is to 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 for local, state and national issues.***



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