

MARCH 2025

# Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition

## A NEW NNJSC HOST

*Diana Crowder with Ruby Cribbin*

In our September 2024 issue, you met Bob Shoemaker, Board Member and veteran host currently hosting a young man from China. In this issue, we introduce Diana Crowder, volunteer and our newest host. Diana is a woman who brings to this service much travel and life experiences, a knowledge of Spanish, deep wisdom and compassion, a love of theater and parties, and great energy and creativity.

### **Introduction**

Hello. My name is Diana Crowder. I am an immigrant who has been here for many years. I originate from a coal mining town in Northern England. I think of all the people in the United States who helped me when I arrived, who mentored me, and opened their homes to me. How much I appreciated that support! There comes a time for reciprocity instead of accepting. It's time to support, and that is one of the reasons I decided to host.



### **What an interesting background, Diana. Will you say more about why you decided to be a host?**

I have hosted three young women in my home – Omon from Nigeria, Katie from El Salvador, and now Luna from Nicaragua. Each time I was asked if I would host a young woman, I said to myself “Why not?”. I had space in my home and always enough food to feed another, even though the young women have always handled their own food and needs.

Omon now lives in Canada where she has her own business and shares a house with her sister. Katie still lives with me and is pursuing her dog walking work. Now Luna has recently arrived from NNJSC. I am sure she is going to pursue a new life for herself as did Omon and Katie.

It can be very rewarding watching someone arrive in your home and blossom, and to know you have been a small part of that experience.

### **I know hosting in addition to gifts, also holds challenges. What has been your biggest challenge?**

I have found communication to be the biggest challenge. Communication is not just about speaking the same language, although speaking the same language is a big help, but communication is about listening and about accepting things as they are. Any help in learning and practicing to do that is a big plus.

### **Diana, what have been some things you've learned in hosting?**

I have learned that whether we older folks like it or not, we are models. I can tell someone how to maneuver the various systems in the United States, but the young women have learned a great deal by just watching me.

I have learned so many things about the music, food, dress, and different ways of thinking from being around people from different countries and cultures. Having Omon and Katie around, I have sought out books to read about the history of their countries and what is happening there today to understand why people are driven to leave their homes, families, and countries. I am sure I will continue to learn from Luna as well.

# A NEW NNJSC HOST Continued

What else would you like to say to other readers, Diana?

Why not try a new experience by hosting a guest? In addition to the reasons I have given above about learning from supporting and hosting a guest, I think of my hosting as an action I can do. When I am feeling a little down about current conditions, it empowers me. There is something I can do that will make a difference.



## NEWS & NOTES

Many things have been happening in these past months in the personal lives of our clients and in the immigration advocacy. Here are a few highlights.



One of our clients from Afghanistan moved to Virginia. We will miss her and wish her well in her new home.

Laura and her daughter, Sarah, prepared a special dinner for three of our clients from Cuba.

Laura's quilting group created a made-with-love quilt for the baby of a client.

One client obtained Medicaid with Horizon. This will help with needed next steps.

Two volunteers, Laurie and Kathy, generously agreed to work with two clients on ESOL. (English For Speakers of Other Languages.)

After working through an agency, one of our clients now has a permanent job directly with the company. This is good news.



NNJSC has supported several of the recent rallies for immigrant justice. Those who participated included Mallery and Ruby from the Board, Amy, our faithful bookkeeper, and volunteers Georgette, Emily, and Mallery's mother Joanna, and friends.

Board Members Mallery, Jon, Ruby and volunteer Emily, gave a spirited "Know Your Rights" \* presentation to about forty members of the Ethical Culture Society in Teaneck. Check our website for up-coming presentations.



Laura, Jon and Ruby distributed "Know Your Rights" \* red cards to workers at the Home Depot in Hackensack. About 100 cards were distributed. These actions will continue.



\*Know Your Rights (KYR) presentations focus on instructions to be followed if ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) encounters immigrants at home, work, in a car, in public spaces.

\*\* For the safety of our clients we will no longer use their names.

# A REFLECTION ON A TROUBLED TIME AND A TIME FOR ACTION

Laurie Ludmer

No doubt we are living in extremely challenging and potentially dangerous times.

The current administration has come into power spewing hatred and fear, especially of those considered “the other” – immigrants being top of the list of undesirables. Regrettably, it has come to pass that our government, meant to serve and protect, is turning its back on hundreds of thousands of people seeking shelter from the storm of poverty, corrupt government, hunger, racism, etc. Historically, part of what has been so exceptionally and great about this country is the fact that it IS a land of immigrants with two very important exceptions, the native and the enslaved people. But given these exceptions, what makes the United States so exceptional is that the United States IS and CONTINUES TO BE a country of immigrants. People come to the United States out of necessity, as well as opportunity and possibility. Intertwined in that history is the unfortunate fact that at different times our government has not welcomed immigrants and restricted or imposed limits on immigration. Unfortunately, we are in those times now.



My own family, (now including Haitian and Colombian members), represents both the potential and the pain of immigration. My son married into a Haitian American family, and my daughter married a Colombian immigrant. After many years in this country, he still does not have his citizenship. Within my family, I am witness to the growth of anti-Haitian and anti-immigration sentiment and the difficulties in achieving the path to citizenship.

I have known and supported the good work of the Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition. As part of a social justice movement, it provides support and compassion to people seeking asylum. The Coalition assists with housing, transportation, education, and employment, helping individuals as they seek shelter from the storm of anti-immigrant sentiment. Despite periods of anti-immigration sentiment and policy, the history of the United States has included individuals and organizations who saw that a fundamental aspect of their humanity was helping those who need it most. The Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition is one such organization.

In these challenging and difficult times, I stepped up my involvement with the Coalition. It speaks to my sense of justice and has implications for my own family. When the political gets personal, then it’s too hard to ignore. Then it’s time to step up.



THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THE  
NEWSLETTER ARE THOSE OF THE WRITERS  
AND ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF  
NNJSC AS AN ORGANIZATION

# The Immigrant Trust Act: A test of commitment to a safe, healthy NJ

Jon Moscow

The Immigrant Trust Act bill (ITA, S3672/A4987) in the New Jersey Legislature should not be controversial. As its title implies, it would allow immigrants, regardless of immigration status, to trust that they can access public resources without danger of detention or deportation. It protects people's ability to obtain healthcare, report wage theft, and send their children to school. If a crime victim were to file a report with the police, they wouldn't have to worry that they themselves would wind up being detained. Someone in a domestic dispute would know they could call the police without it leading to their partner being deported.

Each of these provisions clearly benefits the community at large, as well as the individual. Public health, education and safety, and enforcement of labor laws are essential to a healthy society. The Act's provisions limiting police interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) only to those required by law are essential to building or maintaining positive community-police relations. This is especially true when the Federal administration is aggressively targeting immigrants, even those who have well-established immigration standing, such as green cards.

So why has the ITA remained bottled up in committee in the Legislature?

Much of the answer must include the intense vilification of immigrants, undocumented, and, often, documented as well. A nation that prides itself on being a "nation of immigrants," and a haven for the oppressed, actually makes it very difficult for immigrants to gain refugee status or asylum, not to mention citizenship. Fearmongering fuels the perception that immigrants bring crime, though in fact, they have lower crime rates than citizens.

The need for the ITA has become ever more evident and pressing over the past few months. Far from focusing on those whom it claims to be its target--undocumented violent criminals--ICE and its associated agencies are arresting and deporting people who have well-documented legal status, and in some cases, holding them in conditions that amount to torture. ICE is also targeting people with green cards who exercise their First Amendment rights, such as Mahmoud Khalil, the Columbia University student activist.

We don't know how much the ITA, if passed, can protect the public from these actions. But it is an important step. It will offer some protections by ensuring that the State of New Jersey will limit its collaboration only to what is required by law. It will make a strong statement of the state's commitment to the well-being of all its communities.

The ITA's passage will require active education of both the public and the legislators. It is a test of both the state and people of New Jersey's commitment to a healthy, safe society and a rejection of the politics of fear.

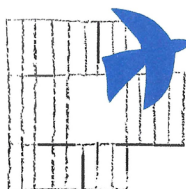


## Mission Statement

*Motivated by the belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the need for social justice, the NNJSC offers compassion, support, and accompaniment to persons seeking asylum, and advocacy for all immigrants.*

## Practices

*Among the services the coalition provides are housing, medical care, financial support, transportation, ESL instruction, educational opportunities, and contact with a social worker and/or caseworker.*



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**Donations may be made online at  
[www.njsanctuary.org](http://www.njsanctuary.org) and are tax deductible.**