Dear Friends,

The year 2007 was ushered in with a lot of hope and great expectations. Those who wish for Comprehensive Immigration Reform must know that we are still facing a difficult uphill battle with this new Congress. While this Congress should be better than the last one, we should still realize that this is not a slam dunk. At the same time, we must also present our agenda to local and state officials. There is much work to be done and we will need our supporters to help us in this endeavor.

During the last election cycle, some politicians and some in the media attempted to use immigration as a wedge issue. They tried to create fear in the minds and hearts of many voters. Since 9-11, our government has unjustly targeted innocent immigrants and refugees in their fight against terrorism. This has led to an expansion of raids, sweeps and thousands more being detained and often deported without having legal representation. In the process more families have been separated and communities disrupted. The defense of immigrants has become much more difficult since 9-11 and many cases have to be appealed in order to get a small bit of justice.

America has a wonderful and colorful immigrant history that should be a lesson to all who want to understand our nation’s past. This historical view will help us all as we envision a future that recognizes the reality of our economic and social systems. This understanding of immigration is important so all might better understand the need for comprehensive immigration reform. We do not need a piecemeal approach but a complete package that addresses all of the key issues.

All of us should lend our voices and support on behalf of this historic effort for comprehensive immigration reform. We should take advantage of this window in time to do this most important mission. I look forward to working with all of you in this year on behalf of the human rights of immigrants.

My best,

Magdaleno ‘Leno’ Rose-Avila,
Executive Director

NWIRP would like to congratulate our Executive Director, Magdaleno ‘Leno’ Rose-Avila, on receiving the Distinguished Citizen Award for Human Rights.

In accepting the award Leno said “When they honor me they are honoring the board, staff and clients of NWIRP and all those who work on behalf of human rights.” Leno was also featured recently in a Seattle Times article as well as in a full-length interview on Seattle Channel’s Seattle Voices program hosted by Eric Liu.

Congratulations Leno! NWIRP is proud to have such a well-respected Executive Director!

To see the interview of Leno go to: www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=3120651
NWIRP would like to welcome:

Angélica Cházarò. As a staff attorney funded by the New Voices Fellowship, she serves the VAWA and Impact Litigation Units. Angelica is a native of Mexico City and graduated from Columbia Law School in May of 2006. Before NWIRP, Angelica worked with the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, Legal Aid Society’s Immigration Unit (in New York) and Sanctuary for Families.

Jennifer N. Brown has joined NWIRP in the new position of Associate Director. Jennifer has an M.S. in Management from Antioch University and more than 20 years of experience working with international, social justice and legal organizations in Nebraska, Washington D.C., San Francisco and Seattle. In her recent work, she is most proud of her adorable son Rowen, now age 2.

Jordan Wasserman is our new Pro Bono Coordinating Attorney. Jordan is licensed to practice law in Washington State. Prior to starting at NWIRP, Jordan worked for Gibbs, Houston & Pauw in Seattle. Jordan also has over three years of immigration experience in San Francisco, where he worked for Van Der Hout, Brigagliano, & Nightingale, Berry, Appleman & Leiden, and the Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights. When he is not working, Jordan loves to travel and cook.

NWIRP BEATS WINTER FUNDRAISING GOAL THANKS TO YOU!

During our recent Winter Fundraising Drive, you helped us beat our original goal of $20,000 to go on to raise more than $36,000! Special thanks to those of you who were able to contribute at the level of $1,000 or more, your gifts qualified for a 100% match by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation! With the matching gifts our grand total exceeds $53,000!

Not only did NWIRP receive new funds for its critical programs and services, but thanks to the help of board members and volunteers along with MJM & Associates, Inc., NWIRP was able to make contact with more than 2,000 people, forging new relationships with many first-time contributors!

Your support means hope for immigrants and refugees in Washington State!
It’s been a long road for the Macedas. Originally from a small village in Oaxaca, Mexico, the Macedas grew up with very little, and can easily recall times when all they had to eat were plain tortillas. As the wife and children of a migrant farm worker, they became accustomed to not seeing their husband and father for most of the year, as he would leave to work in the strawberry and tomato fields of California to support them. After many years, Mr. Maceda received permanent resident status in the U.S. through his agricultural labor. Then, after saving up enough money, he filed immigrant visa applications for his wife and four children, hoping that one day they could come to the U.S. to study, work, and escape poverty. Unfortunately, before any of that could happen Mr. Maceda was diagnosed with a terminal illness and died in late 2002, at the age of 45.

Mr. Maceda’s death took away not only a husband and a father, but also brought to a halt the family’s immigration process. Under the law, the death of a visa petitioner automatically cancels any and all visa petitions filed by that person. Nonetheless, a few months after burying her husband, Mrs. Maceda traveled to the U.S. through his agricultural labor. Then, after saving up enough money, she filed immigrant visa applications for his wife and four children, hoping that one day they could come to the U.S. to study, work, and escape poverty. Unfortunately, before any of that could happen Mr. Maceda was diagnosed with a terminal illness and died in late 2002, at the age of 45.

After hearing a presentation by NWIRP attorney Soren Rottman at a local health clinic, Mrs. Maceda sought his assistance to determine if there was anything that could be done about the family’s visas. In November 2005, Soren prepared and filed a request to reinstate the petitions for humanitarian purposes with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Office in Yakima. Under federal regulations, the agency’s district director has the discretionary authority to reinstate a cancelled visa petition for humanitarian purposes. This type of request is rarely granted. However, after reviewing Soren’s submissions on behalf of the family, USCIS granted the request, paving the way for the family to apply for adjustment of status to lawful permanent residents. “I was extremely happy to hear that our request had been approved by USCIS,” says Soren. “I was particularly thankful that the local immigration office did the right thing by this family that has lost so much, giving them the opportunity to establish themselves legally in the United States.” Shortly thereafter, NWIRP Accredited Representative Adela Ruiz assisted the family in preparing and filing their applications for adjustment of status, and accompanied them to their interviews, where all five were approved to receive their “green cards.”

Floriselva, 20, and Noe, 18, both work the night shift at a fruit warehouse in Yakima to support their mother and younger siblings. Floriselva and Noe have been studying English at their local community college. Joel, 14, is a sophomore and Lizbet, 12, is an eighth grader. Mrs. Maceda enjoys taking care of her family and their new home in Yakima. “I feel so blessed that I crossed paths with NWIRP and with my attorney. I am so grateful for the help and the support which I’ve received from them and I want others to know about it.” - Celsa Maceda
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
615 Second Avenue, Suite 400
Seattle, WA 98104

UPCOMING EVENTS:
February 17th, 9pm
“DARFUR DIARIES” SHORT FILM AND DISCUSSION AT NW FILM FORUM AS PART OF THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FILM FORUM, SPONSORED BY NWIRP.

February 2007:
SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILE STATUS & DEPENDENCY CLE FOR KING COUNTY JUVENILE COURT JUDGES.

check out our website:
www.nwirp.org for more details!

MANY WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT NWIRP

THROW A HOUSE PARTY FOR NWIRP
SEND A CHECK TO NWIRP
GIVE ONLINE DIRECTLY AT WWW.NWIRP.ORG
MAKE AN HONOR OR MEMORIAL GIFT
PLAN TO ATTEND NWIRP’S ANNUAL GALA
SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT NWIRP
MAKE A MONTHLY CREDIT CARD PLEDGE
PUT NWIRP IN YOUR WILL
GIVE A GIFT OF APPRECIATED STOCK
MULTIPLY YOUR SUPPORT WITH A MATCHING GIFT
GIVE THROUGH YOUR WORKPLACE
FACILITATE A CORPORATE GIFT FROM YOUR EMPLOYER
GET INFORMATION ON PLANNED GIVING OPPORTUNITIES
GIVE A GIFT IN HONOR OF YOUR SWEETHEART FOR VALENTINE’S DAY

NWIRP TOUCHES PEOPLE FROM ALL COUNTRIES, AGES AND MANY BACKGROUNDS AND PEOPLE FROM MANY BACKGROUNDS CHOOSE TO GIVE WHAT THEY CAN TO BENEFIT OTHERS. IN THESE WAYS YOU CAN HELP NWIRP TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT RIGHTS AND CHANGE LIVES. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, JANET LOTAWA 206.957.8609 OR JANET@NWIRP.ORG.