Another family in the NC Triad is fighting to stay together. Oscar entered the Congregational United Church of Christ in Greensboro on January 18, becoming one of the first cases of public Sanctuary in 2018.

Oscar is a business owner who has created multiple jobs for US citizens and has repaired roofs for many homeowners in the Triad. Oscar was born in El Salvador, in 1983. “Our family was poor, we could never afford to see a doctor,” he said. Lack of access to medical care resulted in the death of an older sibling before he reached his first birthday. Poverty also restricted the family’s educational ambitions; schools cost money, and by the time he was thirteen, the family could not afford to send him.

As he got older, he grew tired of scraping to get by, and having heard stories of neighbors and relatives who had made it to the US, a friend invited him to go with him to “El Norte”. They paid a “coyote” who claimed he could get them work permits once they arrived at the border. They later learned that the indiscernible papers they received at the border were not work permits but notices to appear in immigration court. Having missed the court appearance, Oscar was ordered deported in absentia.

Oscar met his wife when they were both working at restaurants earning $150 per week, and later Oscar began working in construction. Today they have three kids – Karen, born in 2012, and George in 2016. They also co-parent Shirley, his wife’s 17-year-old daughter.

Oscar started his own roofing company in 2012. Since 2013 the company has employed around five U.S. citizens as workers. The business has paid thousands of dollars in taxes, and has served many clients from single-family homes to larger businesses and schools.

In 2013, following a minor fender bender, Oscar waited to give insurance information, the police officer misidentified him as a different person with the same name who had a criminal record (Oscar does not). Oscar was taken to the Guilford County Jail, where ICE was alerted to his presence, and he was transferred into their custody the same day. Oscar spent six weeks in Stewart Detention Center in Georgia. Finally, thanks to community activism by Alerta Migratoria and a stay of removal petition filed by attorney Jessica Yañez, Oscar’s deportation order was temporarily suspended, and he was ordered to report to ICE in Charlotte once a year. At his annual appointment this past year, on October 26, ICE took his passport, and informed him that his deportation order would be reinstated. He was ordered to leave before January 18, 2018, and was fitted with an ankle monitor.

Deporting Oscar would tear apart a family of five, and would substantially damage a business that has provided steady employment for US citizens and Guilford County residents. It would not have any positive impacts on this family or on our community.

Under our current immigration laws, once attorneys have been denied final requests for a stay, there is nothing they can do to stop deportation. However, over 2,000 times over the last three decades, congressmen and senators have filed “private bills” to protect individual constituents from deportation.

As their representative, Rep. Ted Budd can choose to file a private bill on Oscar’s behalf. AFSC has worked with representatives in states like Colorado to file private bills that have won protection from deportation for other immigrant parents. Ultimately, we would like for the laws to be fixed humanely. Until then, representatives who claim to want to protect some immigrants from deportation, as Budd does, and want to support local business owners, must take action to that end. He can file a private bill today.

How can you help?

- Find Oscar’s petition at www.afsc.org/NCsanctuary.
- Call Rep. Ted Budd’s office to ask him to support Oscar’s case by urging ICE to grant a stay: (202) 225-4531.
- If you are local to Greensboro and want to support the family, contact Congregational UCC or call AFSC 336-854-0633 for details.
This new year brings in many renewed efforts for immigration reform, a resolution to DACA, but also a continued struggle to protect those who find themselves under the threat of deportation. In Greensboro, Juana Luz Tobar Ortega, a Guatemalan woman who immigrated to North Carolina in 1993, is marking seven months as the first person to take sanctuary in a North Carolina church to avoid deportation.

Juana Ortega fled Guatemala in 1992. After settling in North Carolina in 1993, Ortega returned to Guatemala in late ‘90s to care for her daughter while her appeal for status was being processed. Her decision to leave the country in addition to purchasing a fake visa in 1999 to return to North Carolina resulted in her deportation order. With a May 31 deadline to leave the country, Juana Ortega moved into St. Barnabas to take sanctuary and became the first person to take sanctuary in North Carolina.

Seven months later, Juana finds herself still in sanctuary. As of now, only Minerva Cisneros Garcia has been able to successfully leave sanctuary. Meanwhile, four other people find themselves in Sanctuary in North Carolina.

Juana’s family continues to struggle both emotionally and financially while she is in sanctuary. Her family’s income has been cut in half but Juana has been working as much as she can while in sanctuary. Two supporters assisted to purchasing sewing machines, that Juana uses to sew. Juana sews pillows, and has learned to make purses and to crochet. Her family sells the products to bring in additional income and has been able to raise additional income with the handmade crafts.

These past seven months, family and supporters have relentlessly pleaded with Senator Thom Tillis to intervene on her behalf with ICE. So far, his office has continuously stated that they have done all that they are able to and no success has come from these efforts. Juana’s story has become well-known in the community and we hope that as efforts increase this year we will be able to elevate her case and the others who are in sanctuary. See details at afsc.org/NCsanctuary.

-Citlaly Mora, AFSC Intern

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LEARN HOW TO RESIST ISLAMOPHOBIA ON ANNIVERSARY OF MUSLIM BAN

January 27th 9am–1pm
Greensboro, NC

This training aims to train potential allies to understand Islamophobia, its harms, and strategies to combat it. Come learn what you can do to combat Islamophobia in your community and protect our friends and neighbors.

To register please visit www.afsc.org/RegisterCAInc

Join us and partner organizations downtown immediately following the training for a collective rally for inclusive communities and resisting the Muslim ban.
JUDGE BLOCKS DACA RESCISSION

On January 9th, federal Judge William Alsup from San Francisco, California temporarily blocked the Trump administration from ending DACA. This preliminary injunction states that the government must continue to accept DACA renewals. Those who did not get to renew their permit before October 5th now have a chance to submit their renewal applications. Even though this ruling has helped many of the immigrant youth who benefited from DACA, advocates will continue to push for a permanent legislation this month, because a long term solution is needed.

A clean DREAM Act would give DACA recipients and other immigrant youth protection from provisions that would criminalize them and their family members and increase persecution of immigrants through detention and deportation.

President Trump has thus far rejected the proposals and has talked about getting a deal including border security, family based migration, and the visa lottery program. On January 19th, Congress will vote on a spending bill and many hope that DACA will be included in those negotiations, but AFSC has grave concerns about what else would be included. AFSC is adamant that a DREAM Act should not be used to push policies that would criminalize, detain or deport more members of our families and communities or further militarize the border region.

In North Carolina, we have one of the highest numbers of DACA recipients, over 50,000. Earlier this month, the Trump Administration also ended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 200,000 Salvadorans, adding to the many who are in limbo and under the threat of deportation. Everyday thousands lose their DACA status and for that reason it is imperative that we continue to push for a clean DREAM Act and also for permanent legislation that is fair and humane for TPS holders and other immigrants in the country.

-Citlaly Mora, AFSC Intern

JOIN OUR SANCTUARY EVERYWHERE WEBINAR

The assaults on the immigrant, Black, Muslim, trans, and other targeted communities are incessant in these times. And it's all the more important to stand up and stand in the way of these attacks. Finding what can help and how to offer sanctuary in the midst of these attacks may seem daunting, but brave activists and organizers are finding ways to make a difference.

One powerful way that ordinary people are standing up is by working together to create policies of welcome and care in schools, colleges, and cities. These efforts are often inspired by the immigrant community, but Sanctuary Everywhere groups led by those targeted are reaching across differences to demand polices to protect people against the onslaught from the Trump administration. You, too, can learn concrete steps to work in your local community or school to enact such policies.

Join us on Jan. 18 from 8:30 to 10 p.m. ET for a webinar on successful efforts to establish sanctuary policies in cities and schools.

To register, or to view the webinar afterwards, visit www.afsc.org/SanctuaryEverywhereLive
MORAL MARCH ON RALEIGH
& HKonJ People’s Assembly

TAKING THE RESISTANCE TO THE BALLOT BOX

February 10, 2018 • Raleigh, NC

8:30 a.m. Begin Gathering
9:00 a.m. Pre Rally/People’s Assembly
           Corner of Wilmington and South Streets
           near Shaw University
10:00 a.m. March Begins followed by
           Rally/People’s Assembly

#MORALMARCH2018

Forward Together, Not One Step Back!

For more information, visit our websites at naacpnc.org or hkonj.com