

September 17, 2025

They are coming for them.

Camilla has three children. Her daughter is 13 years old and deaf. Nayeli is a kind, polite boy in fourth grade and Sebastiano is a 4-year-old chatterbox. Manuel, their father, works all week in Maine. Camilla works too but has no car to drive the children to school. I met her at the “Convivio”, a gathering for the families with food, music and activities for the children. We had ICE Watchers stationed to warn us if they were coming. When I picked up Nayeli to drive him to school the next day, Camilla greeted me with a hug.

Maria works all night and comes home just in time to send Miguel off to first grade. Miguel wants to do everything himself, even buckle himself into the booster seat. He had never seen a car without power windows. It took all of his strength to crank the window open and close it again, but he insisted on doing it.

Liliana and Alison, in kindergarten, play with the stuffed animals in the back seat of my car on the way to school. Unicorns and dragons fly in my rear-view mirror.

Juan, in Middle School, was in an accident and missed the end of last school year. You can see the jagged scar on the back of his head when he feels safe enough to take his hoodie off. His father took a few days off from work to drive him to school the first week, worried about his re-entry.

Felicia rents a storefront where she sells clothing and does alterations. She allows us to drop off many children there whose parents cannot be home in time to greet them. She cannot read or write, so we cannot text her to let her know who is coming. Most of us do not speak Spanish and she does not speak English, so phone calls are challenging. We do the best we can.

The father of a little girl was injured on the job. Rather than pay workers compensation, his boss denied he was employed there. His foot is still not healed. Leaning on his cane, he walks his little girl to school even though he is in pain. We do not have enough drivers to offer his child a ride yet. Naron, the Executive Director of the non-profit that serves immigrants, points them out to me at the school as if further breaking my heart will make more drivers materialize. I understand that his heart is way more broken than mine, so I do not complain. About anything.

These are my neighbors. These are the people they are coming for. Just as they came for my ancestors long ago in Russia. They will lock them up in cages and deliberately keep them in inhumane conditions. They will appeal their bail, keeping them detained, pressuring them to “voluntarily” self-deport. The parents will have to choose whether to

leave their children behind or take them to unsafe places where they may be unable to feed them. They will move them out of state, where judges are less sympathetic. Sometimes they move them several times to prevent us from finding them. The American dream has turned into a nightmare, and we are responsible.

My privileged life in a middle-class New England suburb was built on the backs of these people and others like them. They harvest my food, clean my house, and risk themselves replacing my roof while their children go to inferior schools or are bullied in the “better” schools. They were once invisible to me. Now they haunt my nights. I wake up thinking “Who is driving Magda today? Did I forget to arrange it?” If someone has to go to immigration court, we accompany them. If they are taken, we offer legal help, drive the children to school, and deliver food. But we cannot keep them safe from our own people, our own government. How did we let this happen? What will we have to do to stop it?

There are many ways that you can help, such as:

- ☐ Accompaniment to appointments
- ☐ Food packing and distribution
- ☐ School transportation
- ☐ ICE watch

If you are interested in helping out your immigrant neighbors, either in Holliston or in the surrounding towns, please contact hollistonimmigrationjustice@gmail.com.