

Biographies for Pathways to Citizenship



Guerline M. Jozef is an activist, mother, sister, niece, and wife with a passion to serve others and promote her love for Haiti and Haitian immigrants in the United States. She came to the United States at 12 years old with her parents. Their family originally came to visit for a few months in Queens, New York but after the government in Haiti quickly changed, Guerline and her family could not return and she has lived in the United States ever since.

Ms. Jozef is the Co-Founder and Executive director of Haitian Bridge Alliance (HBA), a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that works to help Haitian immigrants. The Haitian Bridge Alliance provides refugees with aid, legal help, and other social services.

Recently, Ms. Jozef and the Haitian Bridge Alliance were some of the first responders to the Del Rio crisis in Texas, where 15,000 people seeking asylum, mostly coming from Haiti, were forced to camp under a bridge surrounded by U.S. border agents and Texas state troopers. Many of these migrants faced violence and unfair treatment from border patrol agents. Most of the group were also refugees who have been denied their right to seek asylum in the United States.

This year (2022) the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) gave Ms. Jozef the 2022 Arthur C. Helton Human Rights Award for outstanding service in the advancement of human rights.

Ms Jozef's motto is "Anpil Men Chay Pa Lou" which is a Haitian Creole phrase that means "many hands lighten the load."

Sources:

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Juan Escalante's parents left their home country of Venezuela and moved to the United States in 2000, with Juan and his two brothers. An immigration lawyer mishandled the Escalante family's case, and they lost their immigration status even though they waited a long time and paid their taxes and immigration fees. This experience had a large influence on Mr. Escalante who now works to help other immigrants in the United States.

As a DREAMer, Juan Escalante is under the protection of the DACA program, which protects immigrants who came to the United States as children.

Mr. Escalante serves as the Digital Campaigns Manager at FWD.us, a group in Washington D.C. to improve our criminal justice system. Mr. Escalante has used his computer skills to help pass laws in government to help immigrants.

Juan Escalante graduated from Florida State University in 2012 with a degree in Political Science. Thanks to the DACA program, he was able to return to Florida State and receive a masters degree in public administration in 2015. Mr. Escalante now uses his education and experience to help protect other immigrants rights. He cares a lot about the DACA program and wants to make sure it keeps protecting 700,000 young immigrants from deportation.

Mr. Escalante's work has been shown in important news articles and television shows including The New York Times, USA Today, Univision, and CNN.

Sources:

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Erika Andiola works as the Chief Advocacy Officer for The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services, a nonprofit agency that gives free and low-cost legal services to immigrant children, families, and refugees. Ms. Andiola was also the Press Secretary for Latino Outreach for the Bernie Sanders 2016 presidential campaign.

Ms. Andiola started working to help immigrants in 2009 when she co-founded the Arizona Dream Act Coalition, a group that protects the rights of undocumented immigrant communities. The Arizona Dream Act Coalition helps immigrants work with our government and helps immigrant children with their education goals.

Ms. Andiola also worked in the National Coordinating Committee and the board of directors for the United We Dream Network. With the United We Dream Network, Ms. Andiola worked to improve education, racial equality, and more for migrant groups.

Erika Andiola decided to focus on this work because of her own struggle living as an undocumented woman, with an undocumented family. Ms. Andiola's mother brought Erika and her siblings into the United States from Mexico in 1999 When Erika was only 11 years old. Erika's mother left her home country and risked everything to give her children and family a better life in America. Ms. Andiola's personal experience as an undocumented immigrant motivates her to fight to improve human rights for immigrants in the United States.

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Ali Noorani was born in 1974 and is the son of Pakistani immigrants. Growing up in the small town of Salinas, California, Ali learned how to get along with people from different backgrounds at an early age. During his childhood Mr. Noorani says he gained the ability to be a “cultural chameleon” building partnerships and relationships with many different people and groups.

Ali Noorani served as the president and chief executive officer of the National Immigration Forum for 14 years. The National Immigration Forum is a group that works hard to support immigrants, refugees, and raise funds to help immigrants in other countries. He works on both sides of the immigration system; Mr. Noorani helps undocumented immigrants adjust to life in the United States while also working with police chiefs, judges, and many conservative community leaders to fairly apply the immigration laws of the United States.

Ali Noorani believes that Americans need to realize our country is a nation of immigrants. He feels that effort begins in communities all across our country, not in Washington D.C. Ali says that we need to bring the nation together around an immigration system that gives a path to citizenship for the undocumented while also making sure our laws are being followed so the United States can be safe and secure.

Most of all, Ali Noorani believes that who we are as a country can be shown by the way we treat immigrants and refugees, regardless of their legal status.

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Bruce Goldstein is the former president of Farmworker Justice, a group that works to improve the quality of life for immigrant farmworkers. He pushes to make their working conditions, access to healthcare, and access to legal services better.

Over the past forty years, Mr. Goldstein has led the organization in pushing government leaders to pass stronger federal laws that protect farm workers' safety and health (including a ban on harmful chemicals), suing private employers and government agencies that break the law, speaking up for immigration reform, providing training and other resources for farmworkers, and teaching all Americans about these issues.

Mr. Goldstein's interest in this work came from the United Farm Workers, a labor union in the U.S. that stood up for improving the rights and working conditions of farmworkers. He graduated from Cornell University with a bachelor's degree in Industrial and Labor Relations. Soon after, he became a labor and civil rights lawyer after getting his law degree from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He joined Farmworker Justice in 1988 and recently retired in 2021. He now helps other groups focused on workers' rights and migration.

Mr. Goldstein believes that it is very important to improve conditions for our farmworkers. Since most of America's farmworkers are undocumented immigrants worried about deportation, it's hard for them to speak out against unfair or illegal working conditions. He argues that if undocumented farmworkers are deported from the U.S., our agricultural system would fall apart. Therefore, agricultural businesses, employers, farmworkers, and the American people all have a common interest in immigration laws that give farmworkers a pathway to citizenship.

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