



HAPpenings !

HISPANIC AFFAIRS PROJECT

We are an organization dedicated to the development of leadership, community organizing, and the provision of key services for the integration of the western Colorado community

March 2017

We stand with immigrants in our community

“The immigrant community is part of the very fabric of our county and is the foundation of our nation. They are my friends, neighbors, co-workers, business owners and fellow residents. I know many in the immigrant community are scared and concerned about what is happening at the national level and are worried about how this will affect them. Know that you have a partner in me and us as a community and as a county, we have the ability to stand strong together in protecting the civil and social rights of all who live here. Let us walk shoulder to shoulder together out of the darkness and into the light.”

John Messner, Gunnison County Commissioner

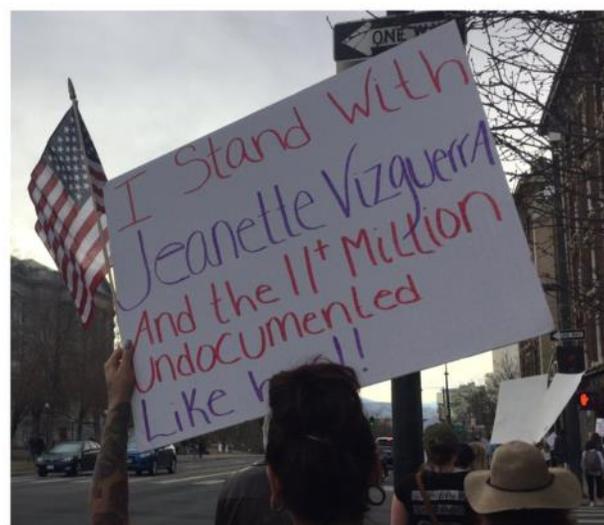


Thank you to our allies for their standing with us. We are a diverse community with many faces. We are a nation of immigrants and children of immigrants, and that what has made this country a model for other nations of the world. We must not allow that spirit of liberty to be destroyed.

**Red de Colorado para Combatir el Trafico Humano/
Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking
(CoNEHT) 1-866 / 455-5075**

The Face of the Resistance

Jeanette Vizguerra is a forty-five-year old immigrant, mother, spouse, and life-long community leader. She came to the United States in 1997 together with her spouse. They have worked hard to provide a better life for their four children born here. Due to a broken immigration system, she has spent all these years trying to find a way to continue living and working in their home here in Colorado. This past February 15, she decided to enter the sanctuary of the First Unitarian Society of Denver, after finding out that ICE was waiting for her at the place where she had an appointment to renew her visa. Since then Jeanette has become the face of resistance of thousands of families across the Country. "I have had the opportunity to know her since 2005 through the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, CIRC. The last time we were together was precisely in a CIRC retreat in February, and she shared with us that there was exactly one week remaining for her temporary permit, and that she was in danger of deportation under the anti-immigrant political environment of the new administration. Anyone who knows Jeanette knows that she is an example for everyone. She symbolizes the very people that we need in this country today," said Ricardo Perez. To learn more about her story , google "Jeanette Vizguerra" in any of the major newspapers of the country.



Together We Are Building an Immigrant-Rights Movement in Western Colorado

During recent months, the HAP team has worked intensively to communicate with elected officials, organizations, agencies, and local governments to advocate for the issues that are impacting our community.

The number of members on the committees has grown significantly and many of them are taking leadership responsibilities in community education. We've had massive participation in the Know Your Rights workshops and legal assistance activities for the community. "We are currently organizing to address the increase in deportations, discrimination, workplace abuses as these often happen when an anti-immigrant environment is promoted", said Esperanza Rivera. But the most amazing thing was the solidarity of our allies. The established community has opened their doors to unite us and create a strong movement of

support to deal with Executive orders and combat new legislation which may endanger the civil, economic and environmental rights of our nation. Together we are making a big difference in Western Colorado.

Picture: Jeannette at the center of the group



The impact of the Immigration Legal Assistance Program

At the end of 2016, HAP has generated a savings of \$125,775 by providing legal representation to low-income households in western Colorado.

The main services have been in legal consultations, citizenship applications, residency renewals and work permits for young people qualified for the Deferred Action for Children Arrivals (DACA) program.

That amount does not include the cost of education through community outreach to explain the immigration system and fraud prevention in immigration.

HAP is the only agency authorized by the Department of Justice to provide legal assistance in immigration in the western region of Colorado, under the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) Office. BIA-DOJ assists organizations like HAP to supplement the lack of immigration attorneys in rural areas or to help low income families.

The success of the program has been to integrate legal representation, with community education about the immigration system and advocacy for an improved system of immigration.

In 2015, HAP contributed to passing the law against notary fraud who, without authorization and charging high fees have been “assisting” families and causing many people to lose their opportunity to gain legal migratory status in this country.



The Hispanic Affairs Project is helping eligible individuals apply for US Citizenship. Are you ready to apply or do you know someone who is eligible? Help us spread the word!

Call us at 970.249.4115 or email: info@hapgj.org

Legislative Report: Driver Licenses Program in Danger

In 2013, after years of strong advocacy by the immigrant community and allies, the Colorado State Legislature passed SB 251 to expand driver license access to everyone regardless of immigration status. As of the end of 2016, it is estimated that 26,000 licenses, 4,000 learners' permits, and 3,000 IDs had been issued. But approximately 120,000 additional Colorado residents qualify, and many barriers remain. Section 505 of the law requires that an applicant have an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Because immigrants with valid Social Security numbers would have to give up their Social Security numbers to get an ITIN, this provision effectively makes the license program unfit for many. For example, if former president Obama's executive order granting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was to be repealed, the youth who arrived to this country as children would not be able to use their Social Security numbers to apply for or renew a license.

Currently, only three DMV offices in the state process SB 251 licenses: the offices in Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, and Denver. Each of these offices only offer 33 appointments per day. To service 120,000 people who qualify, if those DMV offices were open every week day, it would take over 4 years to get an appointment for everybody! Already we are seeing the effects of the shortages of offices, with those who are able to make an appointment today typically having to wait at least three months for



their date, and often having to travel great distances. This year, State Representative Singer and State Senator Moreno have introduced HB-1206 to allow the use of Social Security numbers to access drivers licenses and to make the renewal process easier. But success is not certain. Whether or not the legislature passes the bill depends on if they hear from you. The **I Drive Colorado** campaign is encouraging you to find your rep at openstates.org/co/ and call them to tell them you support increased driver license access!

Photos: Members of ally groups participating in conversations about how to show solidarity with minority groups in western Colorado.



Adiós Amigo Juan!

To Aurora, Juan Jr. and Juan’s beloved family.

I have known Juan Alonso Chumacero for far too few years. But I glimpsed him through the affection that the herders held for Juan.

In the land of the shepherds, Juan was the master shepherd. It was he who never lost anyone under his watch, who never turned away anyone in need.

For those who were defenseless, he defended them, and the lonely were accompanied, and the friendless he befriended and those in need were provided for.

We met Juan late in his career as the steward of the semi-arid mountain desert where Juan spent his retirement with his lovely wife and travel companion, Aurora.

They were angels in a forbidding environment. Juan was available one phone call away for any of the sheepherders that needed assistance: to send money home, for getting a phone card for the calls to Peru and Chile and Mexico, for buying clothing, medicine and occasionally a beer. He was “Don Juan”, revered by all who knew him. His wide and easy smile could fool you into believing that Don Juan was a softy. But you would be mistaken as several gruff foremen who were abusing their workers have learned over the years.

Juan was the “go-to” guide for those of us who work to improve the lot of the herders. Juan Chumacero is known in Denver, in Grand Junction and now, with our colleague in Washington, he is known there, too. Hispanic Affairs Project, Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, Colorado Legal Services all recognize the single-handed contribution Juan and Aurora have



made to the lives of the herders that tend flocks between Meeker and Rangely and beyond. His knowledge, generosity and reliability will be irreplaceable. A huge hole has been torn in the social fabric of the area north of the Douglas Pass.

Adios amigo Juan. Lo vamos a echar de menos!
Tom Acker on behalf of the Hispanic Affairs Project.

For decades, Juan and his wife, Aurora, have sought out the sheepherders in the area, building relationships with and materially assisting the mostly Peruvian and Mexican migrant workers.

Photo: Don Juan receiving the 2013 John Kiernan Award in Grand Junction for his many years assisting sheepherders in California and Colorado.

Yes, I want to support HAP!

My donation is in honor to: _____

\$20 \$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

I would like to contribute \$ _____ **Annually:** \$ _____ **Quarterly** \$ _____ **Twice a year**

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Make a check payable to **Hispanic Affairs Project** - 300 N. Cascade Avenue Suite C4 Montrose CO 81401

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