



130 Union Street Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 739-7233 tel (413) 746-3012 fax
info@a-dp.org · www.a-dp.org

MEDIA RELEASE

23 January 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Michael Kusek

413.575.1435 (if on deadline)

michael@michaelkusek.com

-or-

Caroline Murray, 413.739.7233

413.219.1108 (if on deadline)

caroline@a-dp.org

GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND KICKS-OFF WITH FUNDRAISER

ADP brings together Pioneer Valley residents, volunteers, and immigrants to create Legal Defense Fund to support Valley immigrants

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS (23 January 2008) On March 7, 2007 officials from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided a factory on the New Bedford waterfront and detained 300 workers who could not prove that they were in the country legally. An estimated 100-200 children were separated from their parents. Amherst resident Deb Bix read the reports of the raid, got in her car and drove to New Bedford to offer whatever help she could. Bix ultimately ended up organizing her first fundraiser for families affected by the New Bedford ICE raid and netted over \$5,000 to help with the effort.

Recent ICE raids in Western Massachusetts also affected Amherst residents. In June 2007, a woman named Crista was involved in a small car accident after she experienced a health related blackout while driving. While at the hospital, she was arrested, put into detention and transferred to Bristol County jail where she was denied access to her urgently needed medication. After the ADP Worker Center / Casa Obrera intervened with her doctor and attorneys by filing an emergency humanitarian release form, she was deported to El Salvador, where she will not receive the medical attention she needs. She left behind her daughter, Crista Zavala, a student in the Amherst Public Schools.

"I pray everyday that I will be able to continue my studies at Amherst Regional High School. With the help of the ADP, my school and my neighbors I look forward to getting my diploma and being a productive part of a new America."

Event committee member, Deb Bix, said, "Our neighbors and our neighbors' children are too often the targets of this government's failed immigration policies. It's time to put our money where our hearts are and take some action here on our own streets."

Members of the Alliance to Develop Power Worker Center/Casa Obrera identified support for immigrant families as part of their ongoing national immigration reform campaign. In just nine months the ADP has conducted 'Know Your Rights' trainings for 450 people; brought 52 community leaders, both immigrant and American-born, to demand comprehensive immigration reform on the steps of the White House; delivered 7,000 signed postcards to Senator Kennedy demanding comprehensive immigration reform and has developed a rapid response system to assist immigrant families affected by the slew of recent ICE raids. The ADP has now created The Good Neighbor Fund, as a component of their system to provide financial assistance to pay for

emergency legal support for immigrants in Western Massachusetts.

“As a recent immigrant and proud member of the ADP Worker Center/Casa Obrera, I call on all of our neighbors to stand with us to create a safe community that honors and respects all neighbors regardless of their country of origin or immigration status,” said Adrian Garcia.

To start the fundraising efforts to provide the seed money for the fund, local residents will be hosting a campaign kick-off party on Tuesday, January 29th (snow date January 30th) from 6 PM until 9 PM at the Amherst Regional High School.

The evening will include food from local restaurants and music and performances by students from Amherst Regional High School, Project 2050 of New World Theatre, Conjunto de Bomba and special guests, The Alchemystics. Food will be provided by La Veracruzana, Mi Tierra, Ben & Jerry's, Bueno y Sano and The Sub & Pizza.

“Current immigration policy has had an impact on some of our students. We're very excited to have our students sponsoring and participating in a project that allows our entire community to come out as a huge show of support for those students and their families that are being affected,” said Mary Custard, Dean of Students at Amherst Regional High School.

Tickets are \$5 for students and \$15 for adults. Fifty-percent of the money raised at this event will be earmarked for expenditure in support of Amherst residents and the balance of the money will be for other residents from the Pioneer Valley. Tickets are available at Food for Thought Books (Amherst), Broadside Bookshop (Northampton), World Eye Bookshop (Greenfield) and Odyssey Bookstore (South Hadley).

If people cannot attend and want to contribute to the fund, checks made payable to the Good Neighbor Fund may be sent to the Good Neighbor Fund c/o the ADP, 130 Union Street, Springfield, MA 01005.

Long range, the goals of the Good Neighbor Fund will be to: 1) raise awareness in our community of the urgent need for Fair Immigration reform; 2) create a safe community that honors and respects all neighbors regardless of the country of their origin or immigration status; and, 3) raise money for legal assistance for families facing immediate deportation or are in detention. The Good Neighbor Fund has already assembled a committee of local community and religious leaders to develop guidelines and assist in the distribution of the Fund, which will be housed at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.

The Alliance to Develop Power (formerly known as the Anti-Displacement Project) is a membership based community organization that is well known for its work to improve the lives of low-income people and for its model of cooperative economic development. ADP has transformed 1,450 units of slum housing to tenant owned permanently affordable coops; opened the regions only worker-led Worker Center representing low wage workers and immigrants; created worker owned businesses; won over \$300,000 in restitution from employers; and has led a number of successful campaigns including saving funding for the federal Section 8 program. ADP has created business and capital holdings worth \$45 million. These community-owned assets contribute \$20 million a year in cash flow to the local economy.

- END -