Dear friends,

We are excited to share ASAP’s first ever annual report!

As many of you know, we started the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project as law students in May 2015 to fill a gap in legal services at the nation’s largest detention center. Since then, we have grown to represent hundreds of refugees across the country, using our model of rapid-response, remote legal aid. We have built a private online community to provide support to thousands of otherwise isolated mothers. And we have transitioned from an entirely volunteer effort to a project incubated at the Urban Justice Center with three full-time staff. (Our fourth co-founder, Conchita Cruz, is rejoining ASAP in 2018.)

Unfortunately, when we started ASAP, we could not have anticipated how the political climate for immigrant families in the United States would change. This has been an incredibly difficult year for ASAP and our clients, as the current administration pledges to detain, deport, and prevent the entry of more refugees than ever before.

But the families we work with are incredibly resilient. They have traveled hundreds of miles to participate in the legal process of seeking asylum, and they’ve gotten themselves more than 90 percent of the way there. It’s just a lack of resources at a critical time that is making the difference between them winning and losing their cases.

At ASAP, we are working hard to provide those resources and prevent the wrongful deportation of refugee families. We see a future where all refugee families have the tools and support they need to win their cases, no matter where they live in the United States.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, donors, and supporters for joining us in this fight.

Sincerely,

Swapna Reddy, Dorothy Tegeler, and Liz Willis
WHERE WE WORK

350+ Asylum Seekers
5 Detention Centers
26 States
“As someone who did not know how to apply for asylum, ASAP was very attentive, and that made me feel secure and confident until the end.”
- Sandra

SANDRA’S STORY

Sandra and her father were mayoral candidates in Central America, where her father was murdered. After his murder, Sandra began to receive death threats against her and her infant, even after going into hiding. When her persecutors came to her new home, she escaped through the backdoor and fled to the U.S. with her child. Sandra and her child were detained at the border for weeks, before securing their release to relatives in Texas. Months later, she received a deportation order due to government error, just as raids began against asylum seekers in the U.S.

However, Sandra and her child had moved to rural North Carolina, to an area with no traditional legal aid services.

ASAP was able to represent her family remotely, working with her and her relatives abroad by phone and WhatsApp to prepare her case. ASAP reversed her deportation order, and, after collecting more than 200 pages of evidence, represented Sandra at trial. In April 2017, Sandra won asylum for her family. With a path to citizenship, she can now live in safety in the U.S.
**INNOVATION**
In a dangerous political climate, ASAP developed a unique model of lawyering in a crisis, to respond to emergencies, including mass deportations, detention, and raids.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**RESISTANCE**
When ASAP’s first client Suny Rodriguez decided to hold the government accountable for its inhumane treatment of her family, ASAP helped her file a first-of-its-kind federal lawsuit.

**RELEASE**
ASAP worked with asylum seekers, including children averaging 6 years old, to secure their release from detention centers to communities across the United States.

**COMMITMENT**
ASAP has built a sustainable project, joining the Urban Justice Center, hiring our first full-time staff, forming an advisory board, diversifying funding sources, and refining systems to scale our work.

**350+ CASES WON**
HOPE
ASAP has supported asylum seekers through trials, helping families win refugee status, envision new possibilities, and live in safety in the United States.

COMMUNITY
Through an online social network, formerly detained women have shared stories and strategies, asked questions of expert attorneys, and connected with one another to build community power.

JUSTICE
Recognizing the life-or-death consequences of bureaucratic mistakes, ASAP has overturned wrongful deportation orders for women and children in 15 immigration courts.

ENGAGEMENT
By converting cases into assembly lines, with guides for each step, ASAP has lowered the barrier to entry for volunteers, allowing advocates of all kinds to contribute according to their ability and availability.

500+ VOLUNTEERS MOBILIZED
2,080 FAMILIES CONNECTED
ASAP IN THE NEWS

WHY EVEN A LIVE-TWEETING SENATOR COULDN’T STOP A DEPORTATION
New York Times | May 5, 2017
ASAP discussed the unlawful deportation of a Honduran mother and child who came to the U.S. fleeing danger abroad.

WHY DEPORTATION COULD MEAN DEATH FOR SOME REFUGEES
TIME Magazine | March 9, 2017
ASAP’s co-founders published an op-ed discussing the challenges faced by asylum-seeking families in the United States.

IN A TIME OF REFUGEES
Yale News | January 30, 2017
Yale profiled the development of ASAP and IRAP at UJC, both founded by law students to assist vulnerable families in hard-to-reach areas.

MIGRANT MOTHER, SON SUE U.S. OVER TREATMENT IN DETENTION
Thomas Reuters Foundation | August 19, 2016
A reporter covered a first-of-its-kind federal lawsuit filed by ASAP on behalf of Suny Rodriguez—a Honduran mother and activist—and her 9-year-old son.

WOMEN ON THE RUN
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees | October 2015
ASAP clients Alba Cruz Montano and her daughter were featured in the UNHCR’s report on the Central American refugee crisis, including on its front cover.

THE GLOBAL TEAM EFFORT THAT FREED A MOTHER AND CHILD
American Immigration Lawyers Association Leadership Blog | July 9, 2015
ASAP detailed the international volunteer effort that led to one family’s release, detailing the development of ASAP’s lawyering in a crisis model.
VOLUNTEER PROFILE: JOANNE LEE

“Near the end of my first semester at law school, I took a day off of studying for final exams to help a detained mom and her two-year-old daughter. The family was in imminent danger of being deported back to violence, and I wanted to help the family fight that. I pored over the family’s story and crafted a legal argument for their release. It was the most meaningful thing that I did that semester. Up to that point, law school had felt like an ivory tower full of highbrow rhetoric that was completely divorced from my experiences as an immigrant of color.

ASAP grounded me. It gave me a passion that I could hold onto. When I learned a few weeks later that the family was released, I realized I had found my calling: providing legal services to underserved immigrants. Since then, I have continued to work with fellow immigrants, including through ASAP, and I won’t be stopping anytime soon.”
In our first fiscal year, ASAP focused on building a solid foundation from which to grow. We have secured over $100,000 to support our coming year’s work and are now fundraising to grow our staff and reach even more families next year.

Volunteers Multiply Our Impact!
Volunteers have contributed over 15,000 hours of legal services, financial advising, design, translation, programming and tech support, communications, and more.
DONORS

Thank you to our early supporters for your belief in ASAP and commitment to the rights of refugee families!

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ASAP is a young organization that has already provided community support and emergency legal services to hundreds of asylum seekers who could not access traditional aid. But we cannot scale our work and respond to the current crisis without your support.

Donate at https://asap.urbanjustice.org/donateasap or by check made out to “Urban Justice Center” with “ASAP” in the memo line. Checks can be mailed to: ASAP, UJC, 40 Rector Street, 9th Fl., New York, NY 10006.

BECOME AN AMBASSADOR

Invite your friends and family to support ASAP and defend asylum seekers from detention, deportation, and raids. Contact us at info@asylumadvocacy.org to learn more about hosting an online or in-person fundraiser.

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