Cover: Nearing the end of her time in Washington D.C., Carleen "Carly" Garcia sits at the World War II Memorial and reflects on the incredible advocacy work she did on Capitol Hill for her husband, Alex Garcia, and their family. To read more, turn to page 12.
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"As an immigrant and a child of refugees, I believe that all human beings have the right to pursue better opportunities and that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity while doing so."

— Mirjam Collegeman
Accompaniment Volunteer
MESSAGE  
from the  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION
"THE TIME IS ALWAYS RIPE TO DO RIGHT. NOW IS THE TIME TO LIFT OUR NATIONAL POLICY FROM THE QUICKSAND OF RACIAL INJUSTICE TO THE SOLID ROCK OF HUMAN DIGNITY."
-Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1963, Dr. King wrote these words from a Birmingham jail cell after he was arrested on Good Friday of that year. He wrote the letter in response to a statement made by a group of white clergy discouraging the community from following Dr. King's methods. Instead, the clergy suggested that the people simply accept that segregation and racial injustice were a necessary, normal part of American society. Those same clergy also wrote that the direct action led by Dr. King on Good Friday was "untimely"; the struggle for racial justice was inconvenient for the privileged, white clergy.

In 2018, we set out to name our oppressors more clearly, organize more powerfully, resist more prophetically, and ensure that dignity is the measure for all policies, laws, and decisions that affect our communities. I am humbled to reflect back on our efforts, captured briefly in the following pages, and recognize the ways that we worked towards these goals, rooted in the belief that the time was, in fact, ripe to do right. Throughout the year I’ve served as Executive Director, I’ve been in awe of the hard work that our organization has been a part of and consistently impressed by the individuals that surround us. In the same letter, Dr. King also writes, "we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure."

The year began with some pretty loud, determined nonviolent pressure that echoed in the streets and pews of St. Louis! We marched time and again behind the courageous leadership of four fierce young leaders who represented the MOdreamers coalition, as we fought with them to defend the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program while demanding permanent protection through the Clean DREAM Act (read more on page 10). We shouted along Delmar, chalked up the sidewalks around Sen. Claire McCaskill’s office, spoke firmly with staff from Sen. Roy Blunt’s Missouri and DC offices, and marched in Downtown St. Louis. On a Tuesday night in February, we made noise inside of Christ Church United Church of Christ, as more than 100 family, friends, and supporters of the Garcia Family gathered both in Maplewood and in Poplar Bluff to hear from Alex in person or on a live video stream (read more on page 13). Many of those same voices, including Carleen "Carly" Garcia, Alex's fearless wife, joined with local Dream activists to call out in unity the same system that uses many tools to oppress us.

In middle of the year, we channeled our frustration, anger, and despair into "the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action," as Dr. King wrote, so that we could move "with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land." Members of IFCLA's staff, board, interns, and volunteers joined area clergy and lay leaders in a prophetic act of civil disobedience for immigrant justice (read more on page 11). Twenty individuals delivered a list of demands on behalf of a group of local Latino activists, and occupied the rotunda of the Robert A. Young Federal Building, where the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices are located. At the same time, over 100 community members rallied, marched, and shut down traffic on Tucker Boulevard, until everyone had been released from custody. What a powerful demonstration of our unity and collective action!

We must not forget that the time for justice, dignity and liberation is right now. The time certainly is ripe to do right for the Garcia family. We know that family separation everywhere is wrong. We know that taking parents away from their children is wrong. We know that forcing husbands to live apart from their wives is wrong. We know that playing political games with our lives is wrong. We know that unjust laws made by greedy men don't sit right in our souls. To this end, Dr. King writes in the same letter that we have “a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws” because, in the words of St. Augustine, “an unjust law is no law at all.” Our actions and our hearts are held to a higher standard, and a much more powerful law.

More than 55 years after Dr. King penned his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," I am honored to be part of an organization that continues to fight for the same values, one that consistently seeks to inconvenience the privilege of injustice. When individuals and communities decide to resist oppression, when we wake up, push back, demand equality, justice, and dignity, we are fighting an untimely struggle that started long before us, has taken many forms, and yet tirelessly persists. So still today, let us not forget that now is the time "to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity."

Thank you for the opportunity to serve with you.

In power,

SARA L. JOHN  
Executive Director
MEET
the many
FACES OF IFCLA

LINDSEY FAUST
Accompaniment Coordinator
Loretto Volunteer

THERESA SCHAFER
Community Engagement Coordinator

AURORA CASTILLEJA
Operations Manager

KATIE MEOLA
MSW Practicum Student
Washington University

MARISSA ORNELAS
Student Intern
Saint Louis University

RAMONA MARSHALL
MPPA Practicum Student
University of Missouri

BECKY HARSZY
Office Volunteer

ELLEN ZIEGEMEIER
Co-Convener

AMY DE LA HUNT
Secretary

LEO MEDINA
At Large

REV. TYLER CONNOLEY
Co-Convener

GERALDINE GERMAIN
Treasurer

YARELI URBINA
Co-Convener (Jan-Jul)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TRANSFORMATION begins INTERNALLY

THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY, WE CONVENE AN INTER-FAITH COMMUNITY TO ACCOMPANY THE PEOPLE OF LATIN AMERICA IN THEIR WORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

We began the year by dedicating time to strategic planning. Staff, board, and volunteers critically developed and analyzed plans to start the year with a renewed mission, clarified vision, and core values to drive our organization’s efforts. Additionally, we created a Strategic Framework for the year, which included our mission, vision, and values, but also included useful new tools like guiding principles, strategic levers, and desired outcomes from our robust programming.

This clearly articulated Strategic Framework had a tremendous impact on our success in 2018. Because the mission and vision of IFCLA are so encompassing and could touch so many different social issues within Latin American struggles for justice, it can often be difficult from a programmatic standpoint to prioritize issues, campaigns, and work. However, having a clear framework for the direction of our organization helped clarify our programming, focus our efforts, and more effectively use our limited staff capacity to construct and run solid programs throughout the year.

With the new Strategic Framework, we realized that other aspects of IFCLA’s structure needed to be amended as well! In the past, IFCLA has operated with a Core Committee providing decision-making leadership to a Program Coordinator, who oversaw day-to-day programming and supervised volunteers to complete the work. In 2018, we transitioned to: a Board of Directors, an Executive Director, an Advisory Committee, expanded staff capacity, and volunteers. This organizational shift provided more concrete roles and responsibilities in each category, as well as more freedom to move forward with creative programs, fundraising initiatives, and engagement of the wider IFCLA community.

Our Board of Directors has been revitalized, with 4 new members and 1 long-time IFCLA volunteer. We secured enough funding to add a new full-time Office Manager position, as well as a part-time Community Engagement Coordinator position. Our connections to our community have been strengthened by the revival of the Advisory Committee, a group of roughly 25 invested individuals who bring together new ideas to realize IFCLA’s mission.

With all these new changes and areas of growth, we simply outgrew our old office space! Formerly housed in the World Community Center, IFCLA moved into a spacious classroom in the old St. John the Baptist Catholic High School building. Our new space allows us to have separate cubicles and new individual workstations, shared meeting spaces, and plenty of room for storage! It also enables us to honor our internal goal of organizational subsidiarity, a principle by which we trust that each member of the board, staff, and volunteers are competently contributing to IFCLA to the best of their ability. What a transformation!

**VALUES**

**DIGNITY**
- Respecting each person’s autonomy to act on their own intuition and wisdom.

**INTEGRITY**
- Acting with honesty and transparency in all situations, even when the outcome of doing so is unclear.

**SOLIDARITY**
- Recognizing the unity of our mutual struggles toward liberation and supporting each other with compassion.

**DIVERSITY**
- Finding joy in the many manifestations of what it means to be human.

**COMMITMENT**
- Showing resolve and resilience through our actions, while sustaining optimism about our collective future.
A FRAMEWORK for our MISSION

Through education and advocacy, we convene an inter-faith community to accompany the people of Latin America in their work for human rights and social justice.

IFCLA envisions a world in which partners reach across economic, political and social borders to build a sustainable future for the planet and its people.

**EDUCATION**
Fostering greater awareness of the consequences of policies and laws that connect the people of the United States and Latin America.

**ADVOCACY**
Building relationships to effect change in United States' policies and laws, and support our partners in Latin America in their struggle for social justice, environmental sustainability, and economic stability.

**ACCOMPANIMENT**
Recognizing the importance of and encouraging supportive partnerships that are responsive to the changing goals and needs of immigrants and locals in the United States and Latin America.

**PROGRAMS**
Together with our partners, create and sustain programming which continues to build awareness of injustice in the U.S. and Latin America and supports immigrants locally in St. Louis.

**POLICY**
Create support and resources for lawmakers and voters to be more informed about their decisions.

**MEMBERSHIP**
Facilitate engagement of our volunteers to the extent of their interest, and provide leadership development for interested individuals.

**OUTREACH**
Encourage and seek out new partners to grow the movement for migrant justice.

**FUND DEVELOPMENT**
Ensure sustainability of funds to continue the organization’s work for many years to come.

**STRATEGIC OUTCOMES**
The IFCLA St. Louis Coalition for Sanctuary provides options for migrants in removal proceedings and creates a space for local faith groups to live into values of equality and compassion.

Through IFCLA’s Immigration Customs and Enforcement Accompaniment Project, St. Louis community members provide accompaniment to individuals at immigration check-ins.

IFCLA’s Advisory Committee creates a campaign to ensure diverse and impacted communities are a part of our strategy.
TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY through EDUCATION

Before we can act, we must know, and before we can know, we must learn. IFCLA is committed to the education of the St. Louis community on issues of injustice, and in a special way in 2018, our educational programs focused heavily on immigration. By creating our own Immigration 101 curriculum, partnering with and supporting other organizations who further similar educational programs, and taking the time and energy to continue our own education about important immigration updates and policies, IFCLA has worked to continue its mission of education, so that the entire community has the opportunity to know so we can take bold action together.

THREE VISITING SPEAKERS

IFCLA hosted, co-sponsored or played a leadership role in nearly 30 events in 2018, including welcoming 3 visiting speakers from DC, El Salvador and Honduras.

ENGAGING OUR BASE

Actions and events in 2018 engaged more than 500 participants, including over 150 individuals in the sanctuary coalition effort.

TRIPS AND TRAININGS


FUNDRAISING FOR EDUCATION

IFCLA volunteers contributed over $10,000 in one week to support nearly 40 DACA recipients with the cost of the renewal applications.

HONDURAS SOLIDARITY

Citizens of Honduras continue to face crises at home, on the journey north, along Mexico’s northern border, and in the U.S. Honduras began the year amidst a growing human rights crisis, generated by the illegal and fraudulent presidential elections of 2017. The Honduran social movements that organized to reject this US-backed dictator installment were met with “iron fist” repression, violence, and abuse. More than one thousand people were arrested, more than 30 were killed by government forces, and roughly 30 individuals were captured as political prisoners.

The difficult and often life-threatening political, economic and social conditions that have become common in Honduras under the dictatorship of the Juan Orlando Hernandez government continue to deny thousands of individuals and families the right to stay home, forcing many to flee. Groups of hundreds and thousands of Honduran and Central American migrants fled the region in caravans, seeking refuge from the damaging neoliberal policies and ongoing national crises sparked by the 2009 military coup. Homicide rates, massacres, organized crime and gang violence as well as rampant political corruption have exploded in the country once again. Human rights defenders and environmental activists continue to be targets of threats and acts of violence.

As a member organization of the Honduras Solidarity Network (HSN), IFCLA participates in monthly conference calls focused on strategies to effect change in US policy towards Honduras, such as planning and coordinating local and national demonstrations as well as social media campaigns and educational webinars.

Additionally, IFCLA volunteers met with the staff of Representative W. Lacy Clay in the fall, to further educate the congressmen on the current situation in Honduras. At the request of Honduran activists, we requested Rep. Clay’s support for urgent protections of human rights defenders in Honduras. We will continue to advocate for all members of Congress to stop funding the dictatorship, pass legislation to end all U.S.-support of the regime in Honduras, and end the mass deportations of Central American refugees.
This 4-week, 8-hour course was designed and developed by IFCLA staff to help key leaders and community members dedicate time to: learn about the history of US involvement and intervention in Latin America; review US immigration law and policy; contextualize this history and develop skills to critically assess current immigrant realities in St. Louis; practice using dignity as the measure of assessing the moral value of all policies, institutions, and actions against immigrants; begin to identify political and social actions that emerge from this deepened understanding.

The course, which is customized and modified every time it is offered, incorporates denomination-specific teachings and faith-based principles as part of the curriculum. In 2018, this course was offered 6 times and reached over 60 individuals! The curriculum from this course was also adapted to offer 4 additional smaller-scale education sessions that engaged over 50 individuals.

In May, IFCLA sent two representatives to Colorado to attend the 12th Annual National Member Conference of the Detention Watch Network (DWN). We’ve been a member organization of the DWN for several years, supporting their mission as “a national coalition building power through collective advocacy, grassroots organizing, and strategic communications to abolish immigration detention in the United States.” This is the first national member conference we’ve attended, and the theme was “Fighting for Dignity, Justice and Liberation.”

Sara John of IFCLA and Jaidy Carranza of the M0dreamers coalition attended the 3-day conference, where leaders, organizers, immigrants, activists, and families participated in over a dozen sessions and workshops. Some key sessions included “Narrative & Messaging for Long-Term Change”, “We Will Not Be Silenced - Recent Retaliation Against Activists by DHS”, and “Dismantling the Web of Detention Profiters”. We had a chance to learn from personal testimonies offered by amazing leaders such as Alejandra Pablos and Maru Villalpando. A key takeaway from the conference was the Public Records Requests workshop, led by Fred Tsao (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights). The information shared and relationships established during that session played a direct role in IFCLA’s work with the MICA Project in starting a local public records fight regarding the abusive use of ankle monitors in St. Louis (see page 15 for details).

Additionally, the “Building Grassroots Power through Movement Lawyering” session led by Paromita Shah (Associate Director, National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild) and Eunice Hyunhye (Staff Attorney, American Civil Liberties Union of Washington) has shaped the way we conceptualize the strategy team for Alex Garcia’s liberation and the permanent reunification of the Garcia family. Movement lawyering is based on the idea that social movements are the center of legal and political transformation, so bringing about that change involves taking instruction from activist organizations in a client-centered fashion and using law in politically sophisticated ways, designed to maximize the potential for sustained social reform. We re-conceptualized our work, framing our efforts with Alex and his family, the MICA Project and Christ Church as a Defense Team, where each have specific roles to play in this family’s fight for freedom. We have since sought to integrate these concepts of working to sustain long-term social reforms and pushing for legal as well as political transformation, which has been challenging and daunting at times, but has helped connect the Garcia family’s struggle and the larger sanctuary movement work to the broader fight for dignity, justice, and liberation. (To read more about Alex’s situation, turn to page 12.)

We have worked to integrate many of the behaviors modeled by the DWN staff and member organizations during this conference, such as our awareness of language justice (the idea that everyone should be able to participate in the language in which they best express themselves) and importantly, the abolitionist stance on immigration enforcement reform. In 2019, we will further develop this particular stance, but we came away from this conference rethinking the way we talk about immigration reform. The call to abolish immigration detention is part and parcel of struggles against racism, xenophobia, discriminatory policing, and mass incarceration, and more broadly, the struggle against radicalized oppression. As Kimberly Gonzalez (Operations Director, Law for Black Lives) said during a session, “We call for abolition because of the profits involved and because it strips our dignity and our humanity; we want to abolish systems that hold us down and [try to] break who we are inherently, and don’t allow us to live with love.” There is no humane or just way to detain and criminalize immigrants, and a system that was created to serve that purpose cannot be reformed; it must be eliminated so that all people may lead lives of dignity.

**“We want to abolish systems that don’t allow us to live with love.”**
**-Kimberly Gonzalez, Law for Black Lives**
TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY through ADVOCACY

IFCLA stands alongside the immigrant community through building and supporting advocacy movements and initiatives. It is a moral responsibility for non-immigrant community members to use their position of security and privilege to speak out against injustice, centering the voices of the directly impacted. We continue to advocate for the rights of immigrants and all marginalized members of our community so that together, we can change laws and policies to serve the common good of our whole community.

FIGHTING FOR PERMANENT PROTECTION

Our advocacy efforts in 2018 began in the heat of a nationwide push for a Clean DREAM Act. We worked deeply with MOdreamers, a grassroots coalition of DACAmented and undocumented community members and their allies, and supported a 10-day action plan to urge Congress to pass a Clean DREAM Act. Our local efforts joined nationwide actions to increase public awareness and pressure Congress to take action and pass a Clean DREAM Act as part of a continuing resolution or spending bill for the budget debates then underway.

Actions in St. Louis included requests for calls to members of Congress, meetings with staff in local congressional offices, actions to engage the faith community, social media posts, and a rally outside of Senator Blunt’s Clayton office. In March, Congress still had not approved a budget and we participated in a nationwide day of action, marching the entire Delmar Loop and arriving for a rally outside of Senator McCaskill’s office.

Permanent protection for Dreamers, DACA recipients, TPS holders, and all undocumented community members must come from Congress. As one local DACA activist said, “Our lives are in a state of emergency and our futures are in the hands of Congress.” While Congress resolved the 2018 budget, they failed to give permanent protection for our neighbors the entire year.

In June, along with hundreds of secular and faith-based organizations across the U.S., IFCLA issued a statement reaffirming our opposition to the latest prevention-through-deterrence tactics used along the U.S.-Mexico border in the wake of policy changes in the first half of the year. The policy changes we witnessed in 2018 are shocking, appalling, and morally reprehensible — but if we are surprised, it is only because we have not been paying attention.

Since the early 1990s, the U.S. government has implemented a variety of prevention through deterrence policies along the Southern border. These kinds of policies have led to the exponential increase of death and disappearance among immigrants and increased the profits for the corporations and individuals that benefit from this extensive militarization and the criminalization and mass incarceration of our families. It is wrong to separate and detain families. It is wrong to put children in cages, jails, tents, or “tender age” shelters.

Mass incarceration is not a solution to family separation. We will continue to oppose all attempts to criminalize communities of color, and we will continue our efforts to defund and dismantle the already massive, unaccountable, and deadly immigrant detention system.

These are matters of grave moral concern. Many of the families and individuals who have arrived to our borders seeking asylum or pursuing a better life have made difficult decisions to leave dangerous places. We must not forget that these conditions — pervasive violence, rampant poverty, and, often, the threat of death — are the direct results of decades of dangerous U.S. policy and intervention in Latin America. We are resolved in our belief that every person has the right to move and live freely, in community and with their families, without fear of being separated from their loved ones or displaced from their home. We support clean legislation that honors the dignity of all. We support laws and policies that keep dignity first, demonstrate an understanding of the root causes of migration, and seek to end the criminalization of communities of color.
Throughout the year, IFCLA advocated as part of the nationwide Defund Hate coalition. This coalition serves to hold our elected officials accountable to the values they profess. We don't believe our government can claim to care about our communities while simultaneously funding aggressive immigration enforcement and deadly immigration jails. This campaign seeks to stop the anti-immigrant agenda by stopping the flow of money needed to fuel such hatred. We sent out multiple digital action requests, calling for our community to contact their members of Congress and demand that they stop funding mass incarceration, family separation and deportation. We are committed to see our government allocate funds that strengthen our communities by investing in education, housing, and healthcare programs that increase well-being of all, not to build a useless, destructive and divisive wall on the southern border.

Funding our nation's government is a matter of moral concern. We demand that Congress hold DHS, CBP and ICE accountable for their dehumanizing policies of mass incarceration, deportation and family separation by cutting their funding. We must stop pouring money into the detention and deportation machine. We refuse to give CBP more dollars to tear gas children or put our kids and families in internment camps. We refuse to give ICE more dollars for private contracts that criminalize asylum seekers through the abuse of the ankle monitor program. We refuse to fund hatred against immigrants.

**12**
Deaths at the hands of immigration agents in 2018

**$22 Billion dollars of immigration enforcement funding in 2018**

**72**
Average cost per day for ICE to detain an immigrant in 2018 ($72)

**44,631**
Average number of immigrants in ICE jails every day in 2018

**Civil Disobedience**

IFCLA stands with our migrant brothers and sisters and all those within migrant communities who are threatened daily by the presence of ICE in our government, police forces, jails, and streets. Our guiding principles of advocacy and accompaniment lead us to lift up their voices. The action on Thursday, July 19, 2018, was an example of how we put these guiding principles into practice.

St. Louis area clergy and lay leaders occupied the space outside of the office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in downtown St. Louis while protesters marched through the surrounding streets. The action highlighted the needs of those who have been directly affected by current immigration policies and laws. From within the federal building, clergy and activists delivered to ICE a list of demands generated by members of the Latinx community. Some of the demands included reuniting children with their families, dismantling the federal institutions responsible for the criminalization of communities of color, ending immigrant detention, and creating policies to interrupt the local police-to-ICE pipeline such as ending contracts between immigration enforcement agencies and county jails. The action itself was organized by independent leaders and supported by several organizations, including IFCLA, and others who have been directly impacted by unjust immigration practices.

Sara John of IFCLA was among the team that was arrested inside the building. "We came together today to deliver the demands of our neighbors, united in the belief that those affected by immoral policies and laws have a right to be heard, rooted in our conviction that all of us share the same dignity as human beings," she said in a statement regarding the event. "We came together in spite of our differences, many of us still learning and questioning, still seeking to understand the demands our neighbors make, but committed to walking forward together in solidarity and in love. Like many who have come before us, today's prophetic stance was not the final step in our journey, but the first on a longer and more difficult road together."

"A group of about 100 people protesting the Trump administration policies on immigration marched from the Federal Courthouse to the Federal building at Tucker Boulevard and Spruce Street. The protesters blocked traffic on Tucker Boulevard for about 2 hours. Inside the Federal building [20] people occupied the lobby, sang songs and chanted before they were placed in handcuffs and taken into custody."

-St. Louis American
This year, we reached a milestone we hoped we would never see: September 21, 2018, marked one year that Alex Garcia has been living in sanctuary at Christ Church United Church of Christ in Maplewood, Missouri. After more than 400 days living separated by sanctuary, Alex, his family, the congregation and the community remain committed to justice. IFCLA shares in this commitment, and will continue to support this effort to our fullest capacity. We will work alongside Alex until he is able to return home to Poplar Bluff and live a life of dignity with his family.

As many of our volunteers know, Alex Garcia is a hard-working family man who has been a productive Missouri resident for more than 13 years. He fled extreme poverty and violence in Honduras and came to the U.S., arriving in Poplar Bluff where he lived, worked, and formed a family. His wife, Carleen “Carly” Garcia, and Alex raise 5 children together: Ayden, Maddux, Caleb, Xander and AriannaLee.

In 2015, federal immigration authorities arrested Alex when he accompanied his sister to an immigration appointment. At that time, with the support of his attorney, Nicole Cortes at the Migrant and Immigrant Community Action (MICA) Project, Alex received a stay of removal, which gave him work authorization and protection from deportation for one year. The following year, the stay was renewed, honoring the merits of this family’s case and the injustice in separating this American family. However, in 2017 under the direction of the Trump Administration, Alex’s renewal request for a stay of removal was denied.

Despite being the husband of a U.S. citizen wife, the father of 5 U.S. citizen children, and a beloved friend, coworker and neighbor overwhelmingly supported by the Poplar Bluff community, Alex does not have a path to legal status. Determined to keep their family together in spite of the immoral decision to deny the stay, Alex took sanctuary at Christ Church, where he intends to remain until he is granted reprieve from deportation and permanently reunited with his family. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has full discretion to grant Alex a stay of removal, but has neglected to do so. This family deserves to stay together.

We must keep families together and honor the dignity of all. The Administration has changed policy and shifted the way our nation’s outdated immigration laws are applied. These changes have detrimental impacts in our communities. The government recognized the need to exercise discretion in Alex’s case since 2015, but partisan games in Washington DC have emboldened local offices and agents to use fear, intimidation, and incarceration as weapons to criminalize immigrant communities in furtherance of a white supremacist agenda. Every year, the Administration asks Congress for more funding for this detention and deportation machine, so they can rip apart families like the Garcia’s. We see how this plays out for Carly and Alex, and we know that pouring millions of dollars to fuel this hatred is simply immoral.
In light of this, the sanctuary movement nationwide has seen great renewal. Now, nearly 2,000 congregations have pledged their spaces to providing and supporting sanctuary. Our efforts to organize the St. Louis Coalition for Sanctuary have also expanded and developed as we know that the Garcia’s are, unfortunately, one of thousands of families faced with similarly impossible decisions. Public sanctuary in houses of worship can serve as response, strategy, vision and moral imperative. Now, 4 congregations have declared sanctuary in St. Louis, and several others are involved, supporting, and educating their members as they discern their role in this movement.

Our local organizing and strategies in 2018 took us all over the state and ultimately to the nation’s capital, fighting for this family’s right to stay together. There were many critical fights, plenty of setbacks, some great successes, and too many tears.

**BANQUET BENEFIT & FAT TUESDAY POTLUCK - FEBRUARY**

Two events happened simultaneously in mid-February to support Alex and his family: a banquet benefit in Poplar Bluff and a potluck dinner in Maplewood. Rev. Rebecca Turner, Nicole Cortes and Sara John joined Carly in Poplar Bluff while nearly 100 community members gathered with Alex at Christ Church. Events were connected by video, which enabled about 50 of Alex’s Southern Missouri neighbors, friends and family to see and talk to Alex for the first time in over 100 days.

**REP. CLAY VISITS ALEX - MAY**

After multiple attempts requesting support from Missouri’s federal elected officials went unanswered, Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay, Jr., finally answered the call. In late May, the congressman and his chief of staff met with Carly and Alex at Christ Church, where he pledged to support this family - and to be there on the day when Alex gets to “walk out of Christ Church as a free man.” Weeks later, Rep. Clay sent a letter to ICE Director Ricardo Wong and subsequently communicated with him via telephone. We will continue to rely on Rep. Clay and his colleagues to act swiftly and boldly for justice for Alex and his family.

**DONUTS FOR ALEX - AUGUST**

The fall was an especially difficult time for the Garcia family, as the kids went back to school - this time, for the first time, Alex was not able to take his kids for donuts before dropping them off for the first day of school. In light of this, we launched a mini-campaign to engage Rep. Jason Smith, who had been reluctant to get involved. An online petition gathered signatures requesting the congressman file a formal inquiry into Alex’s case. For every 12 people that signed the petition, we committed to deliver a dozen donuts to Rep. Smith’s office! Due to irregular staffing at Rep. Smith’s Poplar Bluff office, we suspended donut delivery but did submit over 300 signatures from constituents in his district who demanded that he take action on Alex’s behalf. Unfortunately, Rep. Smith continues to ignore the people he was elected to represent and has taken no action.

**WEEK OF ACTION - SEPTEMBER**

September 16-23 marked the Week of Action on the occasion of his first anniversary in sanctuary. The week included multiple events and activities to raise awareness of Alex’s sanctuary status and the reality of this family’s separation (see above). Carly Garcia, Nicole Cortes and Sara John spent 3 days in Washington, D.C., for exhausting hours of direct advocacy and engagement with members of Congress. The team met with Rep. Clay, as well as with the staffs of Rep. Smith, Sen. Claire McCaskill, Sen. Roy Blunt, and Sen. Dick Durbin. Additionally, they met with key leaders at national advocacy organizations including Church World Service, Network Catholic Lobby and Faith in Action. The week concluded with a fast followed by a joyful gathering at Christ Church.

The words from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”, though written in a different moment in history, nonetheless describe the sanctuary journey with Alex Garcia and his family this past year: justice has been too long delayed for the Garcia’s; justice for this family has been denied. Throughout these efforts, the injustice of family separation and the lack of reasonable immigration laws that would give permanent protections for American families like the Garcia’s are clear to see. We built new relationships and deepened existing ties with people of faith and good will in Missouri and across the country. As organized people, we were able to reach those in power, and be heard. Our efforts in 2019 will increase pressure on those who have the power to make it right until they are unable to remain complicit in this injustice.
Accompaniment is the process of walking alongside someone and joining them in solidarity. The Peruvian theologian and a founder of Latin American liberation theology, Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, spoke of the need for “the preferential option for the poor,” the necessity of aligning ourselves with vulnerable members of our communities and uniting with them in solidarity. IFCLA’s accompaniment programs seek to embody the spirit of unity with marginalized individuals by standing up against the brutal and abusive actions of the U.S. government and immigration enforcement agents, choosing to align ourselves not with power but with love.

**ICE Accompaniment Project**

The work we have done in 2018 to further develop the ICE Accompaniment Project has been central to the transformation we seek in our community. Accompaniment teams have been active in St. Louis since August 2017 as part of a growing state-wide initiative to ensure that no one has to go to an immigration check-in alone. Through this program, we regularly train and organize volunteers in the ministry of accompaniment. For us, this means being present with immigrants when they present themselves for check-ins at the offices of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or BI Incorporated, a subsidiary of the GEO Group, the private contractor who administers ICE’s Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP), through which many immigrants are forced to wear ankle monitors.

**WELCOME AND SUPPORT**

Volunteers humbly offer a non-anxious presence during a traumatic time, demonstrating together that no one stands alone.

**PUBLIC WITNESS**

Volunteers serve as a witness to the actions of immigration authorities and publicly declare support for the rights and dignity of immigrants.

**PROPHETIC RESISTANCE**

Volunteers grounded in faith and good will serve as an expression of sacred resistance to policies and laws that are incompatible with our common values.

**LANGUAGE JUSTICE**

Volunteer interpreters on each team ensure that immigrants have immediate access to understanding and facilitate more just communication.

By volunteering to accompany migrants to immigration check-ins, IFCLA and our volunteers are able to show solidarity and offer comfort and company to help ease some of the anxiety of interacting with the legal system. The presence of accompaniment volunteers also serves as an accountability measure, showing ICE and ISAP officers that mistreatment of our neighbors will not be tolerated. Accompaniment also involves the devastatingly necessary practice of keeping relatives and/or lawyers informed in the event that an individual is detained.

"Our country’s treatment of immigrants makes me feel frustrated and helpless. Accompanying our neighbors is a small way to protest that injustice. It has been a wonderful and energizing way to experience solidarity with others in St. Louis who are committed to justice and compassionate treatment of all people."

-Accompaniment Volunteer
This year, we partnered with the Migrant and Immigrant Community Action (MICA) Project to expand our programs in order to support immigrants who want to request that ICE remove these monitors through direct petition to ICE, via the Ankle Monitor Removal Initiative. With the help of the MICA Project and other partners connected to this work through the Immigrant Service Providers Network (ISPN), IFCLA filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request to the federal government in October. The FOIA seeks demographic and statistical information about ISAP, the abuse of ankle monitors in our region, and the constitutional as well as due process violations that regularly occur in St. Louis offices.

After revising and resubmitting the FOIA three times, the process was stagnated due to the government shutdown. We will continue to expand the reach of this program, to ensure all immigrants in the region are fully supported. This effort will continue in 2019 and we are confident that this strategy, as part of our larger efforts, will help us secure more transparent policies regarding the use of ankle monitors in St. Louis as we fight for the abolition of ICE and ISAP entirely.

SOA Border Encuentro

The third annual School of the Americas (SOA) Watch Border Encuentro took place November 16-18, 2018, in the border at Ambos Nogales (Arizona, U.S., and Sonora, Mexico). The Encuentro seeks to organize activists from across the nation to protest the militarization of the border, the detention of immigrants, the separation of families, and the murder and disappearance of immigrants at the US/Mexico border and to stand in solidarity with the immigrants affected by these issues. All three years, IFCLA has been represented at this important event by our Loretto Volunteer on staff at the time. This year, Lindsey Faust attended and participated in the Encuentro, along with Loretto community members.

The weekend featured a rally outside of Eloy Detention Center where indigenous and Latinx immigrant speakers spoke of their own experiences of discrimination and detention, musicians led rally songs, and blessings were offered from various traditions. Participants stood facing the prison, singing while holding candles and flashlights. In a powerful act of solidarity, detained immigrants began waving while opening and closing their blinds, communicating to those rallying that they could be seen and heard.

Additionally, the Encuentro included a series of workshops such as an explanation of some root causes of the Honduran caravan, a session on faith-based responses to immigration justice, and a screen-printing session. The weekend concluded with a powerful vigil to honor the lives of immigrants lost due to extreme conditions during migration, at the hands of U.S. Border Patrol agents, and in detention. As cantors sang the names of those who lost their lives - often instead singing “desconocido” (“unknown”) - participants responded, “presente,” (“here with us” or “present”) indicating the commitment to carry the memories of those lives in every heart committed to justice.

“Our dreams for justice will not be stopped by any wall.”
Photo: Steve Pavey, Hope In Focus
## Funding our Mission

### Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$9,941.78</td>
<td>$2,944.05</td>
<td>$51,000.00</td>
<td>$71,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
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<td>$3,862.00</td>
<td>$4,021.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
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<td>$1,532.00</td>
<td>$1,054.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainers</td>
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<td>$430.00</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
<td>$3,012.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justice &amp; Peace Shares</td>
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<td>$11,070.00</td>
<td>$13,590.00</td>
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<td>Accompaniment</td>
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<td>$21,130.77</td>
<td>$28,188.12</td>
<td>$22,901.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs &amp; Events</td>
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<td>$5,197.58</td>
<td>$12,371.90</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>$64,464.63</td>
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### Expenses

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<tr>
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<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>$47,888.47</td>
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### Net Income

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Net Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$-1,650.29</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>$52,473.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$3,321.40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 2018 Income Pie Chart

- Grants: 51%
- Donations: 10%
- JPS: 8%
- Accompaniment: 16%
- Programs & Events: 3%
- Miscellaneous: 12%

### 2018 Expense Pie Chart

- Admin & Programs: 13%
- Personnel: 50%
- Accompaniment: 24%
- Events: 1%
- Miscellaneous: 12%
Funding the transformative work we accomplished in 2018 required a stern commitment to building support from funders and individuals in the community seeking to invest in social change. The exponential rates of growth in grant income and individual donations demonstrate that our community believes that the time truly is ripe to do right: from 2016 to 2018, our grant income increased over 23-fold! Similarly, individual contributions over the same time period increased over 700%. Moreover, new monthly giving pledges have increased from $400 per year to over $400 per month!

These funds enabled us to make some significant changes in how we function as an organization: the office is now abuzz with three full-time staff (including our 2018-19 Loretto Volunteer), one part-time staff member, and three regular interns. Plus, we purchased three new desktop computers for all of these IFCLA team members to use, switched to an entirely new phone system with devices and lines for each staff member, and are transitioning to a new volunteer management software program that will help us more effectively engage our base and our elected officials. We moved office spaces and are now located on the campus of the former St. John the Baptist High School in the Dutchtown neighborhood. We more than tripled the square footage of our office space, and thanks to a generous in-kind donation from the Archdiocese of St. Louis, our new office is equipped with professional cubicles - a much more effective and powerful work environment!

The one-time infrastructure investments we made in 2018 yielded an organizational capacity unmatched in IFCLA's history. We are overcome with gratitude and moved by the generosity of our community. We will continue to establish and integrate new fundraising strategies and further diversify our funding and fundraising in 2019 to build upon the transformation we have begun.

This year, IFCLA's amazing volunteers contributed nearly $3,000 to support a summer service internship for Marissa Ornelas, currently a junior at Saint Louis University and long-term IFCLA intern. Marissa spent ten weeks at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, where she worked with the CARA Family Detention Pro Bono Project, a team of legal professionals and volunteers who help detained women and children prepare for their credible fear interviews, which, if deemed “positive,” allow their asylum case to begin. Marissa presented about her experience in the fall, sharing poignant and powerful first-person testimonies of the hardship and injustices she witnessed during her time there. She spoke with clarity about the current state of the US immigration system, detailing immigrants’ journeys from hieleras (freezers) to perreras (dog cages) in detention centers like the one in Dilley. Marissa frequently worked 12-hour days, prepping client after client for traumatic asylum interviews, and holding in her heart all of their heart-wrenching stories of intense gang violence, sexual violence, political corruption, police violence, unsafe domestic situations.

But Marissa spoke of more than just the traumatic and unjust aspects of her time in Dilley. She offered powerful anecdotes of the resilience and strength of the women she met and worked with, and of the innocent playfulness of children she encountered. She shared her vision for the future: a nationwide organization that supports families recently released from detention centers as they acclimate to life in the U.S. Marissa's contribution to immigration justice has been powerful and whole-hearted, and IFCLA is proud to call her part of our family.

This year we launched the first Annual Week of Gratitude - and it was a huge success! Besides the atmosphere of fun and connection achieved, IFCLA gained sixteen new sustainers and multiple one-time donations over the course of the week!

During the week, we screened the new Alex Belongs Here video for the first time and talked about ways that we can commit to personal actions towards justice in the face of a government that is often uncooperative with our efforts. On Giving Tuesday, we reached our goal of 10 new monthly donors for 2019! The week also featured a Dinner Dialogue event, where a panel of local immigration activists and advocates discussed the importance of unifying our efforts and working together as a cohesive unit for justice in the future. On Thursday, we set aside heavy discussions for a night to ensure we are bringing joyful resistance into our work! Volunteers enjoyed dinner and margaritas while learning about the history and traditions of the game of lotería. At the Salsa Swap and Program Fair that wrapped up the week, volunteers discussed IFCLA’s different programs and how they functioned in 2018. We are so grateful for the community of kind and generous supporters that believe and invest in IFCLA’s mission, and we look forward to continuing this new Week of Gratitude tradition in years to come!
HONORING OUR TRANSFORMATION
with
GRATITUDE

WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL TO OUR 2018 DONORS, WHO MAKE THIS WORK POSSIBLE:

- Rev. Mary Albert
- Rita Andres
- Marie Andrews
- Sanaa Anwar
- Jillian Baker
- Jean & Mike Bollinger
- Louise Bullock
- Cynthia Butters
- Jose Cabrera
- Leslie Carranza
- Jessie Chappell
- Peter Clarkson
- Kelly Conlon Zimmerman
- Rev. Tyler Connoley
- Joseph Connolly
- Marylynn Crandall
- Amy De La Hunt
- Donna Dennis
- Tim Dewane
- Cassie Dukett
- Theresa Everson
- Lindsey Faust
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- Caroline Mejia
- Debbie Meola
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- Mary Mohl
- Maura Nagle
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- JEA Schmittgens
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- Jeff Schulenberg
- Mary Lois Sennewald
- Mel & Alice Serrano
- Stan Shanker
- Nancy Spargo
- Brian Stefan-Szittai
- Joy Sterneck
- Lee Street
- Devonn Thomas
- Sarah Thomas
- Rev. Rebecca Turner
- Kristine Walentik
- Barbara Ward
- Jared Weatherholtz
- Joseph Welling
- Sr. Paulette Weindel
- Bob Wilcox
- Judith Williamon
- Maria Yaksic
- Rev. Lois Yatzeck
- Ellen Ziegemeier
- Rabbi Jonah Zinn
ADDITIONALLY, WE’D LIKE TO THANK OUR ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDERS, INCLUDING:

- Adorers of the Blood of Christ
- Communication Center #1
- Congregation Shaare Emeth
- Conscience and Military Tax Campaign
- Daughters of Charity Foundation of St. Louis
- Detention Watch Network
- Duchesne Fund for Social Ministry
- Incarnate Word Foundation
- Jewish Community Relations Council
- Kirkwood United Church of Christ
- Loretto Community
- Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis
- Sisters of Mercy
- St. Louis Friends Meeting
- St. Mary’s Institute of O’Fallon