



# The Immigrant BEACON

IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT

SUMMER 2015

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**GUEST CONTRIBUTOR:** Betsy Mahoney, Esq.

## The First Generation: Surviving and Thriving

**“I’m sorry I underestimated you,”** a customer using Uber ridesharing service told his driver Patrick not long ago.

Patrick, a Rwandan man who was granted asylum last October, mentioned to his Uber passenger that he was moving from Portland to New Haven at the end of the summer. When the man asked why, Patrick explained that he was going for a Master’s degree at Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, prompting his passenger’s startled reaction.

No one should underestimate Patrick’s determination to succeed as a first-generation immigrant to the U.S. An ethnic Hutu, he left Rwanda for the U.S. after being arrested twice for his involvement in a political party that opposed the Tutsi-led government of Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

Once in the U.S. he was determined to continue pursuing the career he began in Rwanda in his chosen field of environmental preservation. He was undeterred by his status as a near penniless immigrant. “I wanted to follow the dream I had before I left Rwanda. I didn’t want to not have any goals in life,” he explains.

“You hear people say that they come here [to the U.S.] so that their children and grandchildren can have a better life, but it doesn’t have to start in the second generation,” adding, “I strive to make the best of a life that was shaped by tragedy.”

Patrick’s persecution by Rwandan authorities was the final chapter in a series of traumatic events he experienced as a child and young adult. When he was seven, Patrick and his family survived the Rwandan genocide of

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**ILAP welcomed five new board members since last fall:**

**Eben Albert, Esq.** (January). Eben is an attorney with Bernstein Shur and is currently a member of ILAP's Pro Bono panel, which he has found to be one of the most important things he's done with his law degree.

**Ken Farber, Esq.** (January). Ken is the Senior Counsel at Central Maine Power Company in Augusta. He is excited to share his advocacy skills and his passion for fairness for all with ILAP.

**Malual Mabur** (October). Malual is a Health Promotion Specialist with the City of Portland and has previously practiced as a physician in South Sudan. Malual has a deep appreciation for the mission and vision of ILAP.

**Robyn March, Esq.** (October). Robyn is a lawyer with Lambert Coffin and has worked extensively with refugees in Maine. She has served on ILAP's Pro Bono panel since its inception.

**Marie Umurange** (October). Marie is excited to help connect the Board with other immigrants in Maine. Marie works at Goodwill Industries and lives in Westbrook.



**SUE ROCHE**  
**Executive Director**

**Maine faces a critical juncture. The choices we make now about how we welcome new Mainers will impact our communities and economy for years to come.**

As the oldest and whitest state in the nation, Maine is in dire need of a larger and more diverse workforce. Immigrants are moving to Maine at the same time Mainers are

leaving. They come with talents and skills that we need, and a fierce determination to work hard and build their own American dreams, while giving back to the communities that welcomed them. They also bring rich culture, arts and food that help make our communities more vibrant.

The Chamber of Commerce reports that immigrants are key to Maine's economic growth. There are leaders in the public and private sector, community and faith groups, and service providers who are working hard to ensure that newcomers are welcomed

and have the foundation they need to prosper here in Maine.

Attempts to restrict safety net benefits for immigrants sends the opposite message, and works counter to all of the hard work being done to support our new immigrant communities. We need to continue to welcome immigrants to Maine, whether they are asylum seekers seeking safety from persecution, domestic violence or trafficking victims who need protection from abuse, or whether they come here to join family or seek a better life, immigrants have always been a part of Maine's history. If we make the right choices now, they will be an important part of our future.

Susan Roche  
Executive Director



**VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

**Monica Bouyea**  
Intake Volunteer



Monica Bouyea became an intake volunteer in January 2015. She comes to ILAP several times per month to assist with new client interviews. The intake process captures basic demographic information and a summary of the legal issues at hand, which helps the lawyer determine how ILAP can best serve the individual.

Originally from Los Angeles, Monica traveled across the country to attend Bowdoin College. As a student, Monica studied abroad in Valparaiso, Chile, where she solidified her Spanish skills and became interested in immigration issues. She is passionate about understanding and recognizing structures of inequality and social injustice within communities. Her interest in immigration informed the focus of her senior independent study, which examined

the barriers that many Latinos in Portland face when accessing legal services. Monica's research brought her to ILAP, an organization that she believes has a tremendous impact by providing services to individuals who are often fleeing hardship in their home lands. Monica is now the Program Coordinator at the McKean Center for the Common Good at Bowdoin. In this position, she helps support student engagement in our communities by advising leaders of student groups.

She loves the volunteer work she does because "no two clients are ever the same!" Each Friday presents new faces with a new set of circumstances. Monica often finds herself frustrated by wide-scale global injustices; she is continuously humbled and moved by the strength and resilience of the individuals she speaks with at ILAP. ■

## The First Generation

Continued from Cover

1994 by hiding in a church for two months. His family continued to have problems with the government. Patrick's decision to become active in a Hutu-led opposition party was in part a response to the Rwandan government's treatment of his family and other Hutus after the genocide.

Despite these setbacks, Patrick had strong academic skills, a longstanding interest in environmental preservation, and an unwavering determination to succeed. He received his BA in conservation biology from the University of Rwanda, and worked as an intern in a national park. But his political problems forced him to flee the country.

Patrick fled to the U.S. in order to seek protection. I represented Patrick in his application for asylum through ILAP's Pro Bono project, and he was granted asylum last fall after a long four year wait. Since his arrival in the U.S., Patrick has continued to pursue his interest in the environment, even as he sought political asylum and worked at a variety of entry-level jobs to support himself. Since he received his work authorization in March 2012, Patrick has worked as a hotel service worker, and a support worker in a home for disabled adults, among other jobs. His current job as an Uber driver is his second job, starting in the evening after he finishes work as a telephone salesperson. He has also volunteered for several Maine environmental organizations including Maine Audubon (where he later held a seasonal paid job), the Biodiversity Research Institute, and Casco Bay Estuary Partnership.

His acceptance to Yale on a partial scholarship, "means everything," he says. "My goal since day one has been to compete at the highest level." His long-term objective is to work at the international level in a natural resources job. ■

## A Growing Collaboration

ILAP is proud to be part of a "community coffee" offer at **Coffee by Design**, Portland's own micro roastery, of Burundi Kayanza Bourbon roast. This coffee supports a women's coffee growing collaborative in Burundi, established by Isabelle Sinamenye, a former teacher. The success of this delicious medium roast coffee has helped many Burundian women gain



**CBD +  
ILAP +  
Burundi IWCA =  
Community**

financial independence. One dollar of every pound sold will be split between the international Women's Coffee Alliance's (IWCA) Burundi Chapter and ILAP. Thank you to CBD for their ongoing support of Maine's immigrant community!

## GIVE Online

Visit [www.ilapmaine.org](http://www.ilapmaine.org) and click "Donate Now" or contact Loretta Prescott, Development Director, at 207-780-1593, #107, or [lprescott@ilapmaine.org](mailto:lprescott@ilapmaine.org)

## BY THE NUMBERS IN 2014

- ILAP clients originated from **16 counties** in Maine
- **2,721 Mainers** received direct help from ILAP
- ILAP's Immigration Clinic served **1,805 individuals**
- **1,578 people** attended education and outreach events
- ILAP staff and pro bono attorneys provided full legal representation to **457 individuals**

## ILAP Services

"Intake" for new clients or former clients with new matters, takes place **every Friday** by appointment. Appointments for Friday Intake can be made any weekday by calling the ILAP office at 207-780-1593 or by coming to the office between 9 and 5. Friday Intake appointments can also be done in person or by phone. Everyone must first have an Intake appointment before consulting with an ILAP attorney or getting help in our Forms Clinic.

■ ILAP offers extended **attorney consultations** on immigration legal issues each month in Portland and Lewiston, for those who have gone through Intake. For those who cannot travel to either city, we offer consultations by telephone or Skype. ILAP also offers emergency consultations for clients referred by other service providers and for those with pressing issues of safety.

■ ILAP's **Forms Clinic** helps people to understand, fill out, document, file, and follow the progress of their immigration applications. The Clinic also assists applicants who must progress through additional complicated steps on their way to a final decision.

■ ILAP assists asylum seekers to find lawyers through its **Asylum Pro Bono Panel**. ILAP also collaborates with the **Justice for Our Neighbors** program and the **University of Maine School of Law** to offer regular classes for asylum seekers who have no lawyer and are filing their own asylum applications.

■ ILAP offers **education and outreach programs**, by request, to organizations and service providers on a range of immigration topics. We take part in training programs for legal, medical, law enforcement, or other personnel who work with immigrant communities. We also participate in advocacy to improve laws and policies that affect Maine's immigrants.



photos by Jane Berger of *Maine Magazine*

**On March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, ILAP**  
hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual CeleSoirée at  
Ocean Gateway in Portland.

**This year’s event featured a mesmerizing performance by The Circus Conservatory of America and Les Voix des Anges choir.**

Over the course of the night, guests met fellow ILAP supporters and enjoyed a delicious buffet featuring international food from local restaurants. While supporting Maine’s only immigration legal aid organization, ILAP’s annual celebration of immigration through the arts proved to be, in the words of our guests, “Portland’s best fundraiser!”

The Circus Conservatory of America, our major event sponsor, delighted the audience with an unforgettable performance. Peter Nielsen, president of the Circus Conservatory, highlighted their commitment to supporting the work that ILAP does. The circus has a rich history of incorporating cultural influences from across the globe into each piece. **Emcee Krin Haglund** playfully guided guests from one act to the next; contortionists, aerialists, acrobats, and gymnasts all exchanged places in the spotlight. Although new to the Portland area, the Circus Conservatory successfully demonstrated its commitment to celebrating multiculturalism through the circus arts in Maine.

Incredible live music by **Les Voix des Anges** (“voices of angels”) brought the crowd to its feet. The Pan-African vocal group electrified the room with their high-energy performance. Comprised of young and gifted musicians, the captivating a cappella choir performs frequently at Sacred Heart church in Portland. Les Voix des Anges harmonizes in French, Kirundi, Lingala, and English.

In addition to a new venue, ILAP’s 11<sup>th</sup> CeleSoirée included a full dinner featuring international food from local, immigrant-owned restaurants. Guests enjoyed a buffet packed with Indian, Thai, and Mexican cuisine.

**Taco Trio** allowed guests to fill fresh tacos (made on site!) with beans, rice, guacamole, beef, chicken, and much more. **Pom’s Thai Taste** provided steaming hot pad thai, spring rolls, and vegetable fried rice. **Jewel of India** prepared tikka masala, biryani, curry, and several types of naan, a crowd favorite! **Coffee by Design**, a long-time ILAP supporter, donated coffee for the dessert reception, which paired nicely with assorted treats from **Ten Ten Pié**, a new Portland bakery with an international twist.

**Tabin Tangila mesu Kamba**, our special event speaker, shared his personal story to help highlight the importance of ILAP’s work in Maine. His firsthand perspective contributed a true sense of ILAP’s impact to the mission-driven event.

This unforgettable night couldn’t have happened without the support of our generous event sponsors and raffle donors, to whom we are so grateful!

Many thanks to everyone who helped make this year’s event truly special: **Emcee/Auctioneer Chris Kast** from the Brand Company, the **CeleSoirée Planning Committee**, all of the hardworking volunteers, and last but not least, **our guests**.

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Please visit the **CeleSoirée event page** on our website to view additional photos by Jane Berger of *Maine Magazine*, our media sponsor:  
[www.themainemag.com/people/galleries/celesoiree-for-ilap.html](http://www.themainemag.com/people/galleries/celesoiree-for-ilap.html)

# BIENVENUE!

Willkommen, Welcome!



■ **Kate Chesney, Esq.** joined ILAP as our new Staff Attorney in January. She received her Juris Doctor from Roger Williams University School of Law in 2013. Her passion for immigration law was discovered during her time as a student attorney at the Roger Williams University School of Law Immigration Clinic. Kate finds the position to be “both challenging and extremely fulfilling.”

■ This summer we welcome **Madeline Cole** and **Carlos Medina** as ILAP interns. Madeline has a Community Matters in Maine Fellowship through Bowdoin College, where she is a current student. Carlos, a first year law student, joins us as a Maine Association for Public Interest Law (MAPIL) summer fellow through the University of Maine School of Law.

# BANKWANA!

Farewell and Well Wishes!

■ Bon voyage to **Jennifer Bailey, Esq.**, who was a vital member of the ILAP team since she joined our staff in 2008. Jennifer passionately fought for the rights of immigrants during her time at ILAP. We are grateful for her dedication to ILAP’s mission; we cannot thank Jennifer enough for her devotion to Maine’s immigrant community!

■ Goodbye and thank you to **Andi Summers**, who worked tirelessly for ILAP for nearly seven years. During her time on staff, Andi earned her BIA Accreditation. Andi has moved on to new adventures in Portland; she now dedicates her skills to improving public education in Maine. Andi, you are certainly missed by all!

## MELTING POT

### ■ Executive Action Outreach Events

ILAP staff organized a series of outreach events around the State this winter to help immigrant communities understand the new Executive Action programs announced by President Obama in November. Staff met with groups in Portland, Milbridge, Lewiston and Turner to explain the new programs to attendees.

### ■ Mexican Mobile Consulate in Maine

On Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, representatives from the Mexican Consulate in Boston traveled to Maine and held their mobile consulate in ILAP’s office. This annual visit to Portland provides outreach to Mexican nationals in the state.

■ **“Genocide and ME: Shining the Light of Truth.”** In November, ILAP partnered with Maine-Wabanaki REACH as a sponsor for the event – “Genocide and ME: Shining the Light of Truth.” Monique Mutumwinka, representing ILAP, provided a first-person account of genocide in Rwanda – the homeland she fled to make a new life in Maine. The event raised awareness around the historical and current effects of genocide in our state.

### ■ World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day is an annual, global celebration that celebrates and honors refugees in our communities. Portland’s week-long celebration began on June 13<sup>th</sup> with the World Refugee Festival.

### ■ ILAP Partners with JFON and UMaine

ILAP has continued its collaboration with Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON) and the UMaine School of Law’s Refugee and Human Rights clinic in conducting a workshop series for pro se asylum seekers in Portland. The series consists of four presentations: each focuses on a different aspect of preparing an asylum application.



## Our Mission:

The **I**mmigrant **L**egal **A**dvocacy **P**roject helps low-income immigrants improve their legal status and works for more just and humane laws and policies affecting immigrants.

## ■ Some Benefits Retained for Maine's Asylum Seeking Community

### The Portland City Council voted 5-4 to retain general assistance benefits for asylum seekers for one year.

The measure will only cover those already receiving benefits and will cap at 2.6 million dollars, but the vote saved 1,000 people and 500 families in Portland from becoming homeless and without access to food or shelter. The City was forced to make this decision after indications from Augusta that the state will not fund general assistance for asylum seekers. Both houses approved LD 369 that would provide benefits to asylum seekers and others in lawful status. But as this newsletter goes to press, there are insufficient votes to overcome a veto from the Governor. The Lewiston City Council is expected to vote next week on whether benefits will be extended there.

Asylum seekers rely on general assistance while they are waiting for permission to work. Federal asylum laws and procedures only allow people to apply for asylum after they are in the United States. Once here, the process is lengthy and applications are backlogged for years. It can take months to prepare an application. ILAP's pro bono attorneys

often spend over 100 hours preparing an application and compiling corroborating evidence. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work until six months after their applications have been filed. During this time, they rely on general assistance benefits to meet their basic needs. ILAP worked along with other advocates on the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition to fight these cuts and ensure that Maine's immigrant communities have the safety net benefits they need in order to start their lives here in Maine.

## ■ Children and Parents in Maine Left in Limbo as DACA/DAPA Programs are Delayed

On November 20, 2014, President Obama announced several changes in immigration law enforcement. Two of the most important changes were the expansion of the **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** program for some people who entered the United States as children, and the **Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA)** program for some people who have U.S. Citizen children. Because only Congress can create new paths to citizenship, these programs would only give work authorization and temporary protection from

deportation to those who meet all of the requirements.

### ILAP staff have conducted outreach on DACA and DAPA throughout the state and found Mainers who would qualify for both programs.

The DACA and DAPA programs are now being challenged in Texas v. United States, a law suit filed by a group of states and joined by Maine's Governor Paul LePage. Shortly before the expanded DACA program was set to begin, a District Court Judge in Texas issued a preliminary injunction in the case, delaying the start of the expanded DACA and DAPA programs during the pendency of the law suit. The Administration appealed that decision and requested a stay of the preliminary injunction. On May 26th, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals denied the request for a stay, and the appeal of the preliminary injunction remains pending. The DACA and DAPA programs will continue to be delayed while the appeal of the preliminary injunction continues. If that appeal is denied, the programs will remain delayed while the law suit continues before the Texas Judge. Advocates and the Administration are confident that the programs are supported by law and will ultimately go forward.

Children and parents in Maine who would qualify for these programs are waiting for a decision that will allow the programs to go forward, so they can come out of the shadows and work without fear of deportation and family separation. ILAP will provide legal assistance to applicants as soon as the DAPA and DACA programs are open. Updated information will be available on ILAP's website: [www.ilapmaine.org](http://www.ilapmaine.org).

## ILAP Email Delivers

Ever wonder why nonprofits send more email than hard copy mail? **Here's why:**

- \$ Email uses fewer donor dollars for staff time, printing and mailing.
 Please consider updating your current email address by emailing Olivia Orr at [Oorr@ilapmaine.org](mailto:Oorr@ilapmaine.org). ILAP does not share or sell our lists to anyone!
- 👤 Email enables one person to complete the entire communication.
 *Thank you- it means the world to us!*
- 🌱 Email is environmentally friendly, with a small carbon footprint.

**PANEL  
UPDATE**

**Pro Bono  
Panel Trainings**

ILAP will host an asylum training in Waldoboro on July 23rd at 1:00 PM at Markham & Read. This training will cover the representation of asylum seekers before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

**Pro Bono Panel  
Successes**

Since last fall, we have had a great number of asylum grants. Congratulations to the following *Pro Bono* Panel members:

- **Michael Bell**
- **Braden Clement** and **Tara Shuman** of Verrill Dana
- **Devin Deane** of Norman Hanson & DeTroy
- **Darya I. Haag** of Norman Hanson & DeTroy
- **Kathryn Hutchinson** and **Cynthia Dresden**
- **Jane Makela**
- **Katie Minervino** and **Ralph Lancaster** of Pierce Atwood
- **Jack Montgomery** of Bernstein Shur
- **Anne Schools** of Douglas McDaniel Campo & Schools
- **Lowell Turnbull** of Garvey Schubert and Barer

**A Tribute to: Leslie Silverstein**



**Leslie Silverstein**

**Congratulations** to ILAP's *pro bono* attorney, Leslie Silverstein, for her national recognition as a leader in *pro bono* legal service. Leslie was selected as one of five lawyers in the country to receive the American Bar Association's 2015 *Pro Bono* Publico Award. This award goes to select individuals and institutions in the legal profession that have enhanced the human dignity of others by improving or delivering volunteer legal services to our nation's poor and disadvantaged. She will travel to Chicago to receive this award at the ABA Annual Meeting. This honor puts Maine on the map for national *pro bono* leadership!

As a solo practitioner, Leslie has donated thousands of hours volunteering her time to represent asylum seekers through ILAP's *Pro Bono* Panel, and domestic violence survivors through the Volunteer Lawyers Project. In 2014, she was named ILAP's *Pro Bono* Attorney of the Year, and the Volunteer Lawyers Project recognized her for taking the most cases in 2014. Leslie's tireless dedication to equal justice, her passionate advocacy for her clients, and her mentorship to new attorneys make her a leader and a hero to us all. Congratulations, Leslie!



**Lemonade for a Cause**

Board member Kathy Willing's two children (pictured on either end), along with some of their neighborhood friends, decided to hold a unique fundraiser. The group of friends sold homemade lemonade and split the profit between local nonprofits – including ILAP. *Thank you for your creativity and generosity!*

**Boston Sub-Office**

The Boston sub-office for the Newark Asylum Office is now up and running. The new full-time office intends to decrease the current backlog of asylum cases brought by Maine claimants.



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[www.ILAPmaine.org](http://www.ILAPmaine.org)



In early February, our staff, *pro bono* panel members, and volunteers gathered for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Party. ILAP appreciates the time and energy that our loyal volunteers and *pro bono* panel members have devoted to ensuring that Maine's low-income immigrants have access to expert immigration legal assistance.

- **Pro Bono Firm of the Year:**  
Verrill Dana
- **Pro Bono Attorney of the Year:** Leslie Silverstein, Esq.
- **Intake Volunteer of the Year:**  
Lynne Shulman
- **Clinic Volunteer of the Year:**  
Sally Vater
- **Development Volunteer of the Year:**  
Cheryl Stevens
- **Community Partner Award:** Family Crisis Services
- **ILAP Hero:** Amy Bruning

**Special thanks to the Local Buzz** in Cape Elizabeth for donating their space and to Empire and The Olive Café for donating delicious appetizers!



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**DONOR  
 SPOTLIGHT**  
**Stephanie Cotsirilos**

*Immigration so often involves courage,  
 deep friendship, and love.*



**Thanks to grandparents who fled Greece and to my own Peruvian-born son, I am deeply convinced that immigration can be a gift**—both to those arriving on these shores and to those who are already here. Immigration involves courage, deep friendship, and love. ILAP is in touch with that power.

The pathway to America can be gritty but inspiring. In Greece, my grandmother was forbidden any education, but married up: her husband achieved the second grade. Together they came to the U.S. and started their own business, raising five children who attended college and became professionals—largely because my grandmother, who died illiterate (and ornery) in every language, insisted on education.

My own son, born in the high Peruvian Andes of indigenous forbears, is also an immigrant and American citizen. Ironically, the heritage he brings to our family is closer to that of my Native American colleagues—for whom this immigration conversation is different and often painful.

So immigration invokes larger issues: justice and memory—whether we have been on this continent 12,000 years or 1—and the good faith to connect to one another in shared humanity.

We can do that here in Maine. Though beloved young people have left to seek more available diversity, Maine is transforming thanks to the credentials and skills of our immigrants. Over 50% of these new Mainers have an undergraduate degree.

ILAP can help us embrace new neighbors in a way that powerfully benefits us all and makes Maine an even better place to say, “Welcome home.”

My family and I are supporting ILAP with a matching grant over three years to sustain the asylum coordinator position. ILAP has been supremely responsive to all our questions and I am confident our money will be well used. I invite you to join in that confidence. ■