

11 Things You and Your Synagogue/Group can do to Welcome the Stranger

"When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I the Lord am your G-d."

- Leviticus 19: 33-34

What can I do to help?

1. Encourage people in your life to use language that honors the divine spark in everyone - use the term undocumented immigrant instead of illegal alien.
2. Donate furniture - free pick up from your home - to furnish apartments for new refugees. E-mail Dina Kopansky at dkopansky@hiaspa.org
3. Go to these websites and join the listservs: <http://capwiz.com/hias> and www.interfaithimmigrant.org then make calls and write emails as legislation comes up.
4. Become an American friend by helping new immigrants get settled and learn about living in Philadelphia. Contact HIAS and Council at mmerlin@hiaspa.org
5. Help refugees and immigrants avoid deportation by giving tzedakah to HIAS and Council so we can continue to provide legal representation for those in need. Go to <http://hiaspa.org/involved.html> to give.

How can my synagogue community or faith-related organization make a difference?

1. Create a media watch committee to respond to anti-immigrant sentiment (post on facebook, blog, write op-eds, etc.) Help people fulfill the Jewish values of welcoming the stranger and loving your neighbor by changing public opinion on immigration.
2. Join the PA Immigration and Citizenship Coalition listserv at <http://paimmigrant.org/> and participate as a community in local actions for immigration reform.
3. Do an oral history project about your congregants families' immigration stories. Children and adults can interview relatives. Present creatively and make connections to current day immigration issues. Research immigration issues and history at hias.org
4. Sponsor educational programs and invite speakers (tailored for adults or children). Contact Judi Bernstein-Baker, HIAS Pennsylvania's executive director at jbernsteinbaker@hiaspa.org or Tamara Cohen, HIAS Pennsylvania's rabbinical student social justice intern at tcohen@hiaspa.org or the New Sanctuary Movement at nsmphiladelphia@gmail.com
5. Do a community drive for household goods and other items to help immigrants and refugees. Encourage bar and bat mitzvah students to take a leading role. E-mail Dina Kopansky at dkopansky@hiaspa.org for drive ideas.
6. Plan a Dream Sabbath event. For information contact Tamara Cohen at tcohen@hiaspa.org. This is an interfaith effort and more materials can be found at <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/index.php/2011/07/01/dream-sabbath-launch/>