

Neighbors Link



OUR MISSION: To strengthen the whole community by actively enhancing the healthy integration of immigrants

Celebrating 20 Years of Immigrant Integration

Neighbors Link began over two decades ago as a dream, but it became a reality because of action. A group of people believed that our community is stronger, safer and more vibrant when we recognize the value and humanity of every resident and they acted on that belief. In the words of Jack Miller, the founder of Neighbors Link, “we believed then and now that our common humanity transcends all the imposed boundaries that divide us, and that a community thrives and succeeds only when its people develop and grow together through social and economic diversity.” Some highlights over the past twenty years:

2001

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2005

Doors open in Mount Kisco
Friends of Neighbors Link form



Learning Links and Summer Links enrichment programs launch with the Bedford Central School District

2006

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2011

Police and Community Together initiative starts with Mount Kisco police department
Nation of Immigrants Festival in Mount Kisco
Neighbors Link Stamford (now B1C) launches



2012

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2016

Family Center opens
Cultural competency training for hospital, schools, police, government staff
Immigration legal services start in partnership with Pace Community Law Practice
Neighbors Link becomes NYS Office for New Americans Opportunity Center

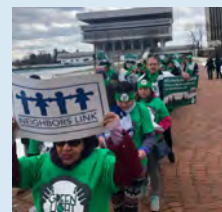


2017

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2019

Neighbors Link Community Law Practice launches
Partnership with Westhab at Dayspring Community Center in Yonkers starts
Neighbors Link center in Ossining opens
Neighbors Link leads advocacy efforts to pass Westchester County Immigrant Protection Act, NYS Green Light Bill for driver's licenses for all, Westchester Anti Wage Theft law



2020

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2021

Programs move online; crisis relief work starts to distribute food, meals, gift cards due to Covid-19
Neighbors Link celebrates two decades of working for the healthy integration of immigrants



2020 COVID-19 RESPONSE NUMBERS

In 2020, Neighbors Link brought creativity, heart and sheer willpower to address the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Not only did program delivery need to transform to keep people safe, but the economic disruption hit local residents hard. Through partnerships with other community organizations and the generosity of our donors, Neighbors Link has been able to provide comprehensive emergency services to help our community come through this crisis.

5,800 IMMIGRANTS SERVED



Community members received services including food, cash assistance, hot meals, diapers and books more than **59,000 times**.



Over **245,000 pounds of food** distributed in collaboration with Feeding Westchester and other community partners.



Over **\$1.1 million in direct cash relief** distributed to people most impacted by the economic crisis.



Nearly 500 volunteers donated more than **9,500 hours** to make our work possible.



Over **9,000 residents** viewed community engagement programs on topics such as Knowing Your Rights, Unemployment Insurance, DACA, Citizenship and more.



Neighbors Link Community Law Practice handled **521 legal cases**.

Immigration Policies to Watch in 2021

It is hard to overestimate the transformation that has happened in immigration policy over the past four years. Through the use of executive orders, regulatory changes and departmental policy guidelines, the Trump administration unilaterally worked to dramatically limit all forms of immigration. The Biden administration's U.S. Citizenship Act is an ambitious proposal that not only contains an earned path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented people, but also attempts to reform many problems in the U.S. immigration system. Getting this legislation passed through Congress will be a focus for many immigrant rights organizations, including Neighbors Link. In the immediate term, the Biden administration will have to focus on dismantling regulatory actions completed under the previous administration.

Neighbors Link Community Law Practice has been closely monitoring all the changes in immigration policies. Here are five important policies to watch:

TPS

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a program that protects individuals who were unable to return to certain home countries due to violent conflict or natural disasters. The Trump administration attempted to end TPS for people from seven countries, prompting nine separate legal challenges alleging that the government's decisions to end TPS violated federal law, the Constitutional rights of TPS recipients and were motivated by racial animus. Currently, TPS for those from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras, and Nepal have been extended through October 4, 2021, while litigation is pending. The Biden administration's U.S. Citizenship Act would offer an expedited path to citizenship for TPS holders. The vulnerability of TPS to legal challenges demonstrates that Congress must pass legislation to provide TPS recipients with permanent protection.



ASYLUM

In 2020 the Trump administration announced a series of regulatory changes that would have effectively ended the right of asylum for nearly every persecuted individual. These draconian restrictions were due to take place on January 22, 2021, but a federal judge agreed with immigrant rights advocates that Acting Department of Homeland Security Secretary Wolf, never confirmed by the Senate, did not have the authority to promulgate the new rule. The Biden administration can choose to stop defending the rule in court and withdraw it on the ground that Wolf was not authorized to announce it in the first place. This is one example of the work the Biden administration will have to do in order to dismantle regulatory actions, by withdrawing all regulations not yet published with the Federal Register, and by issuing new regulations.

MPP

Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), or “Remain in Mexico,” blocks asylum seekers trying to enter the U.S. at the U.S.-Mexico border, requiring them to wait in Mexico for months or years for their cases to be completed. Although President Biden pledged to end MPP, he has sought to manage expectations about how quickly his administration will be able to reverse this policy.

Immigration Policies to Watch in 2021, continued

DACA

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a program started by President Obama that allows certain undocumented immigrants, who entered the U.S. as children, a temporary reprieve from deportation, legal authorization to work and the ability to obtain a social security number. Although the Trump administration announced the end of the program in 2017, the Supreme Court blocked termination of the program in June 2020. Additional attempts to end DACA and challenge President Obama's authority to create DACA in the first place are still pending. President Biden's U.S. Citizenship Act would offer an expedited path to citizenship for DACA recipients. DACA's continued vulnerability to legal challenges demonstrates that Congress must act to pass legislation to protect Dreamers.



REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

For decades, the United States led the world in resettling the most refugees. The Trump administration consistently set lower and lower ceilings for the number of refugees that could be accepted and increased technical procedures to lengthen the resettlement process. The Covid-19 pandemic reduced the refugee resettlement program even further. The Biden administration has pledged to dramatically increase the refugee ceiling to 125,000; however, it will take a significant period of time for resettlement agencies to rebuild their infrastructure to handle that number of refugees.

Alejandro Mayorkas Confirmed as DHS Secretary



Alejandro Mayorkas was the keynote speaker at Neighbors Link's Fall 2019 luncheon. He gave an inspiring talk about the tremendous value that immigrants bring to our country, the important role we all have in defending the rights of immigrants and working to achieve healthy integration in our own communities. He also spoke extensively about the DACA program, which he implemented in 2012. We congratulate him on becoming Department of Homeland Security Secretary!



ESSENTIAL & EXCLUDED

Above, Neighbors Link continues to work with community partners to advocate for ALL immigrant New Yorkers to be included in economic relief during the Covid-19 pandemic.

CREATIVE VOLUNTEERS

Below, Volunteers have always been a critical part of Neighbors Link programming. During the Covid-19 pandemic, volunteers are showing up in new and creative ways, including when they are mystery readers in our online Parent-Child Together classes!



VIRTUAL EVENING WITH BILL WHITAKER

Last Fall, we had the privilege of hosting a discussion of the issues facing our country with Bill Whitaker from 60 Minutes.



NEIGHBORS & FRIENDS

GIVING THANKS

Although the holidays at Neighbors Link looked a little different in 2020, they were still filled with joy! During Thanksgiving, Gary Cohn and his incredible group of volunteers provided 150 meal kits for families to prepare stuffed chicken ("pollo relleno") -- a favorite celebratory meal in our clients' tradition. The Latin American Motorcycle Association provided more meal kits and Falafel Taco provided 100 hot meals. In December, we distributed 554 gift cards to 268 families, along with books from Booksy Galore, hand knitted items from Warm Up America, and another 100 hot meals from Falafel Taco.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development programs continue at Neighbors Link, but have moved to our outside tent for safety. Spaced out, workers come together to learn carpentry, construction, safety and other important job skills.

WORKERS AVAILABLE AT NEIGHBORS LINK

Do you need help with landscaping, yard clean up, housekeeping, snow shoveling or other work?
Workers have received training on enhanced safety protocols related to Covid-19.



Neighbors Link Worker Center
27 Columbus Avenue, Mount Kisco, NY 10549
914-666-3410 • www.neighborslink.org

NEIGHBORS LINK 20TH ANNIVERSARY VIRTUAL SPRING BENEFIT, MAY 6, 2021, 7:00 PM



immigrant integration

For free registration, ticket packages and sponsorship options, visit www.neighborslink.org

Current Resident or:



27 Columbus Avenue
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www.neighborslink.org

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