



BREAKING BARRIERS

A TEEN'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPACT OF LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Juanita* is a teenager in New Jersey from Central America who survived severe hardships during their journey to the United States.

"NJCIC MEANS SO MUCH TO ME AND MY FAMILY, IT HAS GIVEN ME HOPE AND SECURITY I THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER HAVE. NJCIC HAS CHANGED MY LIFE FOR THE BETTER AND I CAN'T THANK THEM ENOUGH!"

After facing so much uncertainty, Juanita said that the process of seeking legal assistance went smoothly. With the help of the legal program and NJCIC, they were able to apply for the Special Juvenile Immigrant Status application.

"NJCIC'S WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN, GIVE ADVICE, GIVE TIME AND RESOURCES HAS BEEN INVALUABLE, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SOLIDARITY. IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO BE PART OF THIS PROGRAM."

Juanita now feels safe and secure in their life and is looking forward to a more promising future. Reflecting about their situation just a few short years ago, they are hopeful and excited for the opportunities ahead.



* Name changed for anonymity. Pictures are stock images.

OUR IMPACT

After meeting Juanita and building trust, NJCIC was able to submit their asylum application before they turned 18. This puts Juanita on a potential pathway to permanency in the United States and a safe life where they can pursue their goals and dreams. Staff also submitted Juanita's work permit application as soon as they were eligible. This was a great relief to Juanita who was now able to legally work while pursuing other academic opportunities.

The NJCIC Legal team continues to work with Juanita to prepare their testimony and arguments for their future asylum interview.

Tragically, there are far too many children and young adults in similar circumstances as Juanita, but far too few resources. It is more important than ever to support **fully funding** the Legal Representation for Children and Youth Program at last year's level of \$7.5 million.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE BUDGET RESOLUTION TO FULLY FUND THE LEGAL REPRESENTATION PROGRAM!

Reach out to Lady Jimenez-Torres, NJCIC's Policy Director, at ljtorres@njcic.org to find ways to help.