



# Action of the Month: Immigration Justice

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"We are...called to acknowledge that racism has blinded many Americans to what takes place in our own kitchens, workshops, and fields. For our nation to be whole, we must acknowledge that our lives of privilege are supported in thousands of ways by people whose labor is invisible and whose suffering is hidden."

—Rev. Bill Sinkford, President, UUA

Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, AZ, first received media attention in 1995 for his unorthodox techniques including chain gains, pink underwear marches and a "tent city" for prisoners. But recently, his notoriety has grown as he has extended these techniques in his fervent one-man war against immigrants. Reports from the Phoenix area show that Arpaio and his deputies have circumvented laws, procedures and human rights to persecute anyone who appears to be an immigrant. Fortunately, Arpaio is now being federally investigated for civil rights abuses (see Congregational Success below). The marginalization of immigrants in Phoenix and so many other areas of the country is a call to Unitarian Universalists to stay aware and informed about the justice issues affecting immigrants in our nation and local communities so that we can respond effectively.



Members of UUCP stand with immigrants for justice. Photo Credit—George Pauk

**Take Action:** When it comes to immigration, understanding the issues and promoting awareness is half the battle. Lead your congregation, community, civic groups, family or friends in study and activities to increase knowledge of the issue and expand dialogue during the month of May.

Check <http://uua.org/socialjustice/index.shtml> in May for an expansive collection of resources and activities, including questions to host your own Immigration Quiz Night, suggestions to "Let The Walls Speak" (an interactive art project on immigration & migration for your coffee hour space), and information about legislation, films, books, and more. To show what you've learned or already knew, enter the *Crash Course for Immigrant Justice* essay contest by responding in 800 words or less to all or some of the questions below related to immigration, community, and faith:

*How is your civic community relating to immigrants? What are the values that we need to see play out in the public sphere with regards to undocumented immigrants? What is a loving immigration policy? What does it mean to be a welcoming faith community to immigrants, both within our congregations and in the community at-large?*

Email your response in an attached Microsoft Word document to [lswanson@uua.org](mailto:lswanson@uua.org) by May 31st along with your name, address, phone number, congregation, and age to enter.

Winners will receive a *Standing on the Side of Love* t-shirt and their entries will be posted on [UUA.org](http://UUA.org)!

**Congregational Success:** The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix (UUCP) joined a grassroots effort to call for a federal investigation of Sheriff Joe Arpaio. UUCP minister Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray wrote an eloquent call for UUs across the country to become involved. Forty members of the congregation marched in a February 28<sup>th</sup> rally of over 5000 people in downtown Phoenix. The grassroots pressure and the well-timed release of a report critiquing the 287(g) program that authorized Arpaio to enforce immigration laws resulted in federal investigation of Arpaio. The federal government has also announced that the entire 287 (g) program will be rewritten for greater accountability.

To read Rev. Fredrick-Gray's call to action, please visit- <http://uua.org/news/newssubmissions/129530.shtml>