

Ulster Immigrant Defense Network

# UIDN

*Because We All Belong*

Red de Defensa de Inmigrantes de Ulster

*I don't believe in charity; I believe in solidarity.* — Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan journalist & novelist, 1940-2015

## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR GUATEMALAN NEIGHBORS

A very significant portion of the people that UIDN serves are Kekchi—indigenous Mayans primarily from Guatemala. Kekchi people make up one of the largest immigrant groups in our area.



*Because Guatemalan farmer Oscar Lopez's corn crop was stunted by drought, he was unable to support his family. (photo: John Burnett for National Public Radio)*

A small number of representatives from groups working with Kekchi Mayans, including UIDN's case manager, Daniel Woodham, have created a presentation about the Kekchi people. They've already begun sharing the presentation with other agencies working with our Kekchi neighbors. The goal is to help these groups understand more about the Kekchi people's history, culture, and the conditions compelling many to migrate.

[Find out more here.](#)

## UIDN CONTINUES TO MEET URGENT NEEDS

## PANTRY

The weekly market-style pantry continues to be very busy. Through the second quarter of 2023, we served as many as 200 families a week. We are pleased to be receiving more fresh fruit and vegetables as the local farms begin to share their produce with the immigrant community of Ulster County.

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## RENT & UTILITIES

Thanks to the seasonal jobs that employ many immigrants, UIDN has been able to devote more of its resources to new arrivals to Kingston and beyond. Besides helping with their rent and utility bills, we are occasionally lucky enough to find apartments for recent Central American and African arrivals.

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## LEGAL

In addition to supporting two asylum cases, during the last three months the legal team has worked to get eligible children Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS). When children have been abandoned, abused, or neglected by their parents, they can apply for SIJS. If granted, SIJS gets them on a solid path to citizenship.

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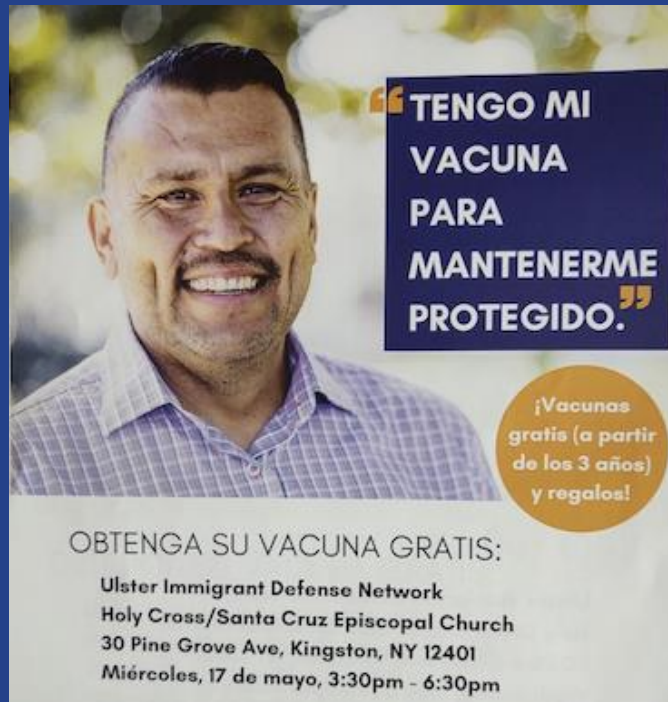
## TRANSPORTATION

Over the last three months, our drivers brought 24 riders to medical and legal appointments, both in Ulster County and in NYC, where they go for ICE check-ins and immigration hearings. Non-English speakers are grateful for the stress-relieving rides to important appointments.

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## HEALTHCARE

This past spring, UIDN partnered with the [Institute for Family Health](#) to get Covid vaccinations out to the immigrant population. Our Health Committee chose dates that coordinated with the pantry, and they used fliers and WhatsApp to get the word out. Pharmacist Neal Smoller and his staff from the Village Apothecary in Woodstock did the honors.



## CONNECTING WITH IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

### UIDN IN THE KINGSTON SCHOOLS

“I really enjoy it; it feeds me in so many ways,” says Margo McLoone, one of a handful of UIDN volunteers who worked with immigrant students in the Kingston City Schools during the school year that just ended. “The teachers

are fabulous,” Margo added, “but the demand on them is immense; not only are they teaching students to read and write, but they’re also helping them with inevitable problems recent immigrants face.”

## READING TOGETHER

The New Paltz-based *Reading Together* program matches English language learners with community volunteers for weekly reading sessions, online or in person. The popular program was launched at the start of the pandemic by UIDN board member Jo Salas and Spanish interpreter Tona Wilson.

Recently, 50 readers, partners, and their families gathered at the Reformed Church of New Paltz



*Children at Stories Together were given books to take home. (Photo: Susan Leher)*

[More about immigrant students.](#)

for *Stories*  
Together.

## TRANSITION AT HOLY CROSS / SANTA CRUZ CHURCH

At the end of June, the beloved priests at Holy Cross / Santa Cruz—where UIDN is based—moved on after 23 years of combined service to their English- and Spanish-speaking parishioners.



*Along with Emma Kreyche of the Workers Justice Center, Farther Frank leads a protest against a Trump-era anti-immigrant policy.*

### FATHER FRANK ALAGNA

Father Frank has been priest-in-charge of Holy Cross / Santa Cruz Episcopal Church for 12 years. He has touched hundreds of worshippers' lives with his compassion, wisdom, and his uncompromising sense of social justice.

Widely known as a fierce advocate for the rights of immigrants, Father Frank co-founded UIDN in 2017. Over the last seven years he has grown and nurtured it.

To date UIDN has served over 1,300 immigrants in Ulster County.

*We are very grateful that Father Frank will remain active in a lead role at Ulster Immigrant Defense Network.*

**MOTHER  
FILOMENA  
SERVELLON**

Born in Honduras, "Madre" came to this country in 1985, and almost immediately made the Episcopalian church her faith home.

In 2012, Madre became priest-in-charge of the Latino ministry at Holy Cross/Santa Cruz, as well as at Our Lady of



Guadalupe  
parish in  
Poughkeepsie.

Madre has been  
a valuable  
member of  
UIDN's Board of  
Directors. She is  
moving to  
Yonkers to be  
closer to her  
family.

## WELCOME FATHER ELIACÍN ROSARIO-CRUZ



Most recently canon and priest associate at Saint Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, **Father Eliacín Rosario-Cruz** will move to Kingston the third week in July and shortly thereafter will begin his new position as priest-in-charge at Holy Cross / Santa Cruz. His appointment gives the church a timely

opportunity to further  
blend their English  
and Latino  
congregations.

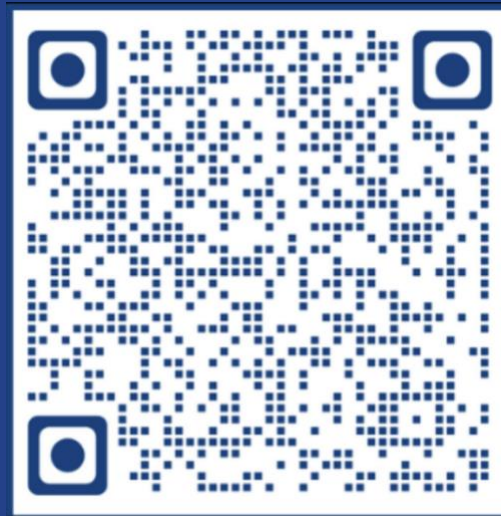
Father Rosario-Cruz  
is excited at the  
prospect of  
continuing UIDN's  
work serving our  
area's immigrants.

## CONTRIBUTE TO UIDN

### WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Use the camera on  
your phone to  
capture the QR  
code at the right, or  
click the button  
below. Thank you!

[DONATE](#)



## DONATE GOODS

To help settle new families in Ulster County, UIDN always welcomes donations of furniture—especially beds and mattresses. The market also has a current need for bicycles, shopping carts, and diapers (especially sizes 4, 5, and 6).

Do you have an old but operable car, van, or truck you'd like to donate to UIDN? We would put it to good use delivering furniture and household goods, among other services. All donations are tax-deductible. To contact us about a donation, please send an email to [uidn@ulsterimmigrantdefenseorganization.com](mailto:uidn@ulsterimmigrantdefenseorganization.com).

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