

REPRESENTING REFUGEES IN THE “CREDIBLE FEAR” PROCESS:

**TRAINING FOR ATTORNEYS
VOLUNTEERING TO REPRESENT CENTRAL AMERICANS
DETAINED IN TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO**

August 9, 2014

9 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

**St. Paul’s United Methodist Church,
5501 Main Street (at Bissonnet), Houston, TX 77004**

The news has been full of stories about migrant children who arrive in the United States unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. Less has been heard about mothers (some of whom are minors themselves) who are fleeing the violence in Central America, along with their young children. While the law provides special protection for unaccompanied minors from three particular nations, the same law does not apply to these family groups. However, family groups from these countries have a legal right to understand their options before deportation, given the circumstances in their home countries. Instead, new arrivals are detained and subjected to a severely truncated asylum process: A brief interview where they must convince a government official of their “credible fear” of being persecuted if returned to their home country and, if the results of that interview are negative, a quick review hearing before an immigration judge. DHS is represented in this hearing by an experienced government lawyer; migrants who appear without counsel are virtually assured of negative findings and speedy deportation which may put them at grave risk upon return to their home country.

Recently the government has begun detaining migrant women and their children in remote detention centers in New Mexico and Arizona, and a new facility for families will open in August in Karnes County, Texas. Many of these families have already been removed to their home countries after interviews and hearings at which they were not represented by counsel. Non-profit organizations are struggling to provide representation and afford these migrants some modicum of due process.

This training will cover the basics of the expedited removal process, the relevant legal standards, and practical tips for working with this population in a detention setting. Those volunteering will be referred to non-profit organizations coordinating representation for indigent migrants at family detention centers in Texas and New Mexico. The situation at the detention centers is evolving, but volunteer opportunities should be available in the coming weeks.

Free to potential volunteers
3.75 hours of Texas CLE credit applied for and pending
Continental breakfast provided

RSVP to kedenton@stpaulshouston.org

**PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME AND EXPERTISE
TO DEFEND OUR COUNTRY’S TRADITION OF ENSURING
DUE PROCESS OF LAW TO EVERYONE.**