

Carlos and several other children spent nearly two years jailed with their mothers in the Berks, Pennsylvania family detention center. Another was three-year-old Josue who learned to walk and talk behind bars. These families had fled life-threatening events, including kidnapping threats and severe sexual violence in their home countries of Honduras and El Salvador. AIUSA worked hand-in-hand with their attorneys at Aldea – the People’s Justice Center to demand the release of these four families, and finally, in the summer of 2017, they were freed.



Fourteen-year-old Astrid and her father Arturo fled Guatemala, where discrimination and violence against Indigenous K’iche is institutionalized and widespread. Despite establishing roots and community ties in Easton, Pennsylvania, they were awoken by ICE agents in the middle of the night and locked up at Berks. In just three weeks, AIUSA generated over 78,000 signed petitions and over a thousand phone calls to ICE, who then released the family. In March 2018, Astrid was free to return to her eighth-grade classes, catch up on the homework she loves so much, and to be with her friends.



In fall 2018, AIUSA partnered with the American Immigration Council, American Immigration Lawyers Association, and Dilley Pro Bono Project to demand the release of 36 families from a detention center in Dilley, Texas. These mothers and children were cruelly separated from each other when they arrived at the border, and when they were reunited, they were thrown into family detention together for months. After weeks of campaigning for their release, all 36 families were freed.

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