

# PAIFUP

*News from the fight for freedom, safety and dignity for all immigrants  
detained or facing deportation in Pennsylvania.*

September 2023 | Issue 7

[Subscribe Here!](#)

[View as Webpage](#)

## What's Happening?



1 CLIENT RELEASED

2 NEW CLIENTS

5 HEARINGS

PAIFUP is continuing to seek out other public (or private/public match) revenue sources to provide assistance to ALL individuals facing deportation proceedings throughout PA.

We had one client released from detention thanks to the efforts of PAIFUP legal services and community organizations! Check out a harrowing client success story below, along with articles from among the PA immigrant community.

## Client Success: B

[Content Warning for Intimate Partner Violence]

Brisa left her native Guatemala and came to the United States with her 4-year-old daughter, Amelia, fleeing domestic abuse and death threats by her ex-husband. She thought that she had left the danger behind her, and she started to feel safe. She filed for asylum, and she felt hopeful for a safe future. She met a man, Otto, who seemed to care for her and her daughter, and at first, all was well. After a time, Otto began to hit her, and she sought an opportunity while on a trip to escape with her daughter. He then called her and threatened to kill her family if she didn't give him her location and return with him. Out of fear for her family, Brisa told him where she was. When Otto showed up drunk, he tried to stuff her into the trunk of his car and when a passing car shouted at him, he momentarily let go of her. Brisa ran for the door of the house, but Otto caught her before she could enter. He grabbed her by her hair and began to beat her. She lost consciousness after the first blow, but by the time he was finished, he had broken her nose, her cheekbone, and her jaw, and left her bruised, bloody and swollen. The police arrested Otto, and Brisa bravely testified, putting him behind bars. Otto was deported to his country, El Salvador. It was during this time that she was referred to her PAIFUP attorney.

There was a young man from her native country, Alex, who had helped her through this situation, and they began a romantic relationship later. About fifteen months after Brisa had been so badly beaten, Alex was now jealous and aggressive, and Brisa had to lock the door of her bedroom to protect herself. Alex became so angry that he climbed up a house post to the second story balcony, came in through the window, grabbed her by the neck and began to choke her. She managed to scratch his eye causing him to let go, and she ran to call the police. The police arrested Alex and charged him with strangulation. After he got out on bail, Alex began to call her constantly, telling her he would go to church with her, telling her he would marry her, and telling her how sorry he felt. Brisa, who wanted nothing more than to just be loved and have some stability, agreed to give him another chance. She came to regret this a month later when he convinced her to go to Maryland with him for the holidays, only to abandon her there, leaving her with very few

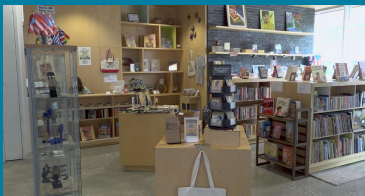
belongings and even less money. As he drove away, he called her awful names and taunted her, "That's what you get for calling the police on me!" Thankfully, some kind people gave her a place to stay until she could find help.

Some friends came from Tennessee to pick her up, and incredibly, her troubles were not over. As she was sleeping in the backseat of the car, the hatchback to the vehicle came open and her bag with all her documents was lost on the interstate, never to be found. She stayed in Texas with an aunt, but eventually found her way back north. Her PAIFUP attorney had requested multiple continuances during this time because Brisa had been unable to stay in contact and had been frequently moving and changing her phone number. Finally, the immigration judge scheduled an individual hearing and gave an ultimatum that this was her final chance to either present her case or request prosecutorial discretion based on her eligibility to file a U visa petition. The problem was that it had been impossible to gather evidence for her asylum claim while she had been running for her life. Furthermore, Brisa did not yet have an employment authorization document for the same reason, and prosecutorial discretion would preclude her from getting work authorization. Her PAIFUP attorney was finally able to contact Brisa 13 days before the scheduled merits hearing date to get her to sign releases needed to gather evidence.

On a very tight timeline, the PAIFUP attorney was able to collect Brisa's statement; an affidavit from the attorney; evidence of the abuse in Guatemala, including information from an attorney in Guatemala; and evidence of the abuse in the United States, including police reports, photos, medical records, and court dockets. It was nerve wracking to wait for the immigration judge's decision while he surveyed the evidence, but so, so gratifying to hear his decision. The IJ removed Brisa's case from the merits track and set a master calendar status conference for 4.5 months out to allow time for her applications to be filed with USCIS. The judge emphasized that he would not normally do this, particularly for a case that had been pending as long as Brisa's asylum case, but that he recognized that these were "extraordinarily extenuating circumstances."

Brisa's PAIFUP attorney is finalizing her U visa petition and her EAD application. Brisa and Amelia, now almost 9 years old, are grateful and relieved that they have been given an opportunity to live a safe life free of abuse and violence.

## In Other News



### One of a kind bookstore in North Philadelphia showcases Latino stories

This one-of-a-kind bookstore in North Philadelphia is dedicated to showcasing Latino stories and authors.

[Read More](#)



### With a new name and new services, Xiente hopes to grow prosperity in Philadelphia

Formerly known as the Norris Square Community Alliance, the group will experiment with tools like guaranteed income to lift families out of poverty.

[Read More](#)



### Latinas stress empowerment, mentorship and boldness at Pa. convention

At their first Pennsylvania Latina Women's Conference, Latinas from across a broad sector of private and public entities stressed the importance of empowerment, identity and fearlessness.

[Read More](#)

Catch up on the previous issue here

Questions? Comments? News worth sharing? Send **Yomayra Burgos**, our PAIFUP coordinator, an email at [yburgos@pirclaw.org](mailto:yburgos@pirclaw.org).

**The Pennsylvania Immigrant Family Unity Project (PAIFUP)** is a collaborative of nonprofit organizations in Pennsylvania formed in order to achieve universal representation for detained immigrants facing removal proceedings in PA.

Pennsylvania Immigration Resource Center | PO Box 20339, York, PA 17402

[Unsubscribe emiller@pirclaw.org](mailto:emiller@pirclaw.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by [yburgos@pirclaw.org](mailto:yburgos@pirclaw.org) powered by



Try email marketing for free today!