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Boston College Law School

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Students Use Break for Immigration Work

3/06/06—As part of Boston College Law School’s Immigration Spring Break Trips, nineteen first-year students spent this year’s spring break volunteering to provide legal assistance to indigent non-citizens who were in detention facing deportation. The students went to 5 different locations and volunteered at 6 non-profit organizations during the spring break week. Students worked at the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIIRP) in Seattle, WA; the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) in Los Angeles, CA; the Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR) in Harlingen, TX, the Capital Area Immigrants’ Rights (CAIR) Coalition in Washington, D.C.; Catholic Charities in Miami, FL; and the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center (FIAC) in Miami, FL.

Prior to the students’ departure, Director of Human Rights Programs Dan Kanstroom and Boston College Immigration and Asylum Project Staff Attorney Mary Holper trained them on U.S. immigration law. Holper also accompanied the Texas group to supervise the students’ work.

Students helped detained asylum-seekers to complete application forms for protection under U.S. immigration law; assisted staff attorneys with intake interviews at immigration detention centers; researched human rights conditions to support asylum seekers’ claims of persecution; and drafted motions and legal memoranda for staff attorneys. The students all gained considerable knowledge of immigration law and the deportation process, especially as it affects immigrants in detention.

The students’ exhaustive fundraising efforts, through the Law School’s Public Interest Law Foundation and otherwise, and a generous contribution from the Dean’s Fund permitted them to make a difference in immigrants’ lives during the spring break week.

“Several students commented that their trips allowed them to do what they came to law school to do: use their legal skills to assist indigent persons in need,” said Holper. “As an alum of the immigration spring break trips (I attended all 3 years when I was a student here), I can say that the work completed during these spring break trips is incredibly rewarding to both the students and the clients served.”

[Immigration Spring Break Trips on the web](#)