





# Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity's 2023 End of the Year Newsletter

As we approach the end of 2023, we reflect on a year filled with **growth, collective action, and beloved community** at Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity.

We are a multiracial, multi-faith movement for justice, rooted in the 1990s dedicated to ensuring the well-being and sacredness of all. Focused on connecting spiritual people and impacted leaders to the movements for immigrant justice, decarceration, and thriving communities, we strive to uplift a liberating vision grounded in dignity and care.

We do this through 4 main strategies: **transforming narrative, transforming leadership, transforming policy and practice, and transforming our organization.**

With your collaboration, together here are a few highlights of our accomplishments this 2023 year:

- Assisted nearly **400 newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers** and those **impacted by detention and incarceration**
- Undertook **three powerful pilgrimages**, transcending borders and barriers. From the Mexicali/Calexico border, to the historic Black town of Allensworth and our second statewide witness to detention centers through Bakersfield, Adelanto, Calexico and San Diego.
- Initiating a **Leadership Summer Training** which was bilingual, multi-racial and multi-generational
- Completing our **second cohort of Faith Advocates, five grassroots immigrant and formerly incarcerated individuals** who learned skills of advocacy and organizing
- Ending immigration detention at the **Yuba County Detention** Facility through a multiyear organizing campaign in broad coalition with others.
- Impactful advocacy engaging **hundreds** of people across California, opposing Title 42, and supporting the HOME Act, a **solidarity fast** in support of hunger strikers inside ICE detention, and emphasizing our commitment to dismantling oppressive systems and advocating for the dignity and sacredness of all people.

Please read more as we recount the stories of impact, advocacy, and transformation. We thank you for your continued support and engagement, which has made these accomplishments possible in our ongoing journey toward justice and compassion.

# TRANSFORMING LIVES: NUEVA ESPERANZA ACCOMPANIMENT TEAM (NEAT)



NEAT Party May 2023

One of our core organizational strategies is **accompaniment**. Our accompaniment work thrives through four impactful areas: **Nueva Esperanza Accompaniment Teams (NEAT)**, I-134A Supporters, Sponsoring People out of Detention, and Hosted Housing. Through NEAT, your unwavering support and dedication have made a significant difference in the lives of many newly arrived immigrants, offering sanctuary, safety, and friendship in our community.

Together, led by IM4HI NEAT Manager, Kelly Younger, we've been able to ease the transition for **over 400 immigrants** who fled war, danger, and unlivable situations, faced the impacts of climate change, and sought refuge from political and economic instability worldwide. Our program has been able to provide hope and beloved community, thanks to the commitment of **12 volunteer teams** who accompanied **20 families**, totaling **63 people seeking safety**. This accomplishment was made possible through our internship program at the University of San Francisco and the valuable addition of Nadia Tavera, NEAT Coordinator, to our team.

## New Initiatives: I-134A Program Success

A major focus this year has been the I-134A program, a new government pathway that has seen significant success. The I-134A Supporters have played a pivotal role in reuniting NEAT families with their loved ones, creating a clear-cut way for Venezuelans, Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Haitians to join their families in the United States. We are proud to share Pablo's story as part of this initiative.

Pablo R. Guerrero M, a Nicaraguan attorney and notary public, had to leave Nicaragua to the United States almost five years ago due to safety concerns, leaving behind his two sons, Pablo Felipe (13) and Isidro Emilio (15), who had to go into hiding. Now, after nearly half a decade of separation, Pablo and his sons are finally reunited. The boys, now five years older, can celebrate being together again with their father in safety.



Pablo and his sons reuniting at the airport (Nov 2023)

Pablo is currently living with his partner, employed in the restaurant industry, and volunteering his legal skills with us, contributing to the community.

# NEXT STEPS FOR NEAT: EMPOWERING LIVES THROUGH ACCOMPANIMENT

Looking ahead, our goals for the upcoming year are ambitious, and we extend an invitation for you to join us by partnering with our accompaniment teams, offering hosted housing, **sponsoring people** out of detention, or **becoming I-134A Supporters**.

We plan to expand our efforts with Work Permit and Asylum Application workshops, building on the success of this year's pilot where we served **10 people** in a group-style format to fill the gap when local legal organizations are over capacity to offer this much-needed support. We will be focusing next year on expanding congregational housing (we currently partner with **8 congregations** who offer housing on their campuses), as well as a hosted housing network for rapid response in the case that busloads of migrants are brought to SF unexpectedly. For more information about the hosted housing network, contact Nadia Tavera, NEAT Coordinator, **[ntavera@im4humanintegrity.org](mailto:ntavera@im4humanintegrity.org)**.

Embracing the strength of intergenerational collaboration, we are committed to including younger generations in our work, fostering a sense of community and understanding.

To further enhance our impact, we aspire to build Directly Impacted (DI) leadership by inviting them to educate our wider community about their home countries, including Nicaragua, Honduras, Sudan, and more. Finally, we look forward to organizing gatherings with Directly Impacted families, creating spaces to share valuable resources, discuss job opportunities, legal assistance, and simply have fun, fostering connections through activities like baseball games and soccer.

We would like to thank accompaniment teams, volunteers, interns and you for being an essential part of our journey.

Together, we can continue to transform lives and build a world where every individual is welcome, supported and valued.



IM4HI Futbol Team (April 2023)



# TRANSFORMING POLICIES: TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES IN LOS ANGELES



Community Reflection of Allensworth (Oct 2023)

On October 14, 2023, IM4HI's Justice Not Jails group of 25, embarked from Los Angeles on a meaningful pilgrimage to **Allensworth State Park**. We journeyed by bus, singing freedom songs, sharing stories, and reminding ourselves about the historical contributions of Black Americans. This meticulously planned 150-mile journey immersed us in the rich history and legacy of early Black settlers and **founders of Allensworth, established in 1908, as the first Black self-governed town in California**. As we opened our eyes to this early history, we carried with us our own Black ancestors' migration journeys and the awareness of those incarcerated in the four State prisons in the near vicinity.

For many on the pilgrimage, Allensworth was a town they had never visited or knew existed.

Saharra White, a member of **Dignity and Power Now**, which is one of the partner organizations with IM4HI in the **Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) coalition to close California prisons**, joined the journey. She shared, "I grew up in Bakersfield, California, about 30 minutes away from Allensworth. I had never heard of the town until getting connected to this pilgrimage.



Saharra's newfound awareness led her to connect the town's significance to individuals directly impacted by the incarceration system. Not far from Allensworth, sits Kern Valley State Prison, where Saharra regularly visits her father who has been incarcerated since she was four years old.

Saharra connected Colonel Allensworth's vision with the current struggle for Black folks. "Allensworth is vital for the Black community and those impacted by the incarceration system, as the Allensworth community's goal aligns with our ongoing fight: **to live in a place fostering harmony, assistance, and skill development instead of oppression and mistreatment.**"

Saharra shares during community reflection (Oct 2023)

# TRANSFORMING POLICIES: TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES IN LOS ANGELES

The transformative journey together strengthened our commitment to justice and human integrity, leaving us inspired and connected.



On sacred ground in Allensworth  
(Oct 2023)



Departing from Allensworth Pilgrimage  
(Oct 2023)

IM4HI's work in Los Angeles has also focused on the theme of **Beloved Community**, with several community forums and engaging Black faith communities in neighborhoods that were decimated by mass incarceration to become "**Beloved Community Congregations.**" Rev. Dr. Larry Foy, our Los Angeles Regional Director has been engaging Black congregations to be and provide a welcoming community where those formerly incarcerated can belong and successfully reintegrate into communities in their process of coming home.

This year, individuals and families with loved ones with Life Without Parole (LWOP) sentences regularly attended support meetings and legal clinics held at Lincoln Memorial Church Congregation and other resource fairs, providing crucial support to families with LWOP sentences.

Stay tuned for more public conversations that strengthen our shared humanity and humanize and liberate people who are criminalized. Join us in advocating for the full allocation of community reinvestment funds to support housing, jobs, health, education, legal services, and community care to prevent harm and recidivism. Your support is vital as we point to the coming year, returning to Allensworth and engaging Black Faith leaders and congregations in decarceration and advocacy efforts.



# TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEYS: STATEWIDE PILGRIMAGE TO HEAL OUR COMMUNITIES

At the end of October 2023 we embarked on a **Pilgrimage to Heal Our Communities**, an interfaith and spiritual pilgrimage to visit the six remaining immigrant detention centers in **Bakersfield, Adelanto, Calexico**, and **San Diego** as part of a multi-year effort to end detention in California. Our group of **50 individuals**, including **18 people who have experienced firsthand the injustice of ICE detention**, **9 dedicated faith leaders**, and **23 passionate community organizers**, embarked on a **460-mile journey**.

The purpose was clear – to bear witness, connect with those inside detention facilities, and conduct community forums to inform California communities about a new opportunity to transition from carceral to life-sustaining economies.

Throughout our pilgrimage, directly impacted individuals seized the spotlight, presenting an impactful popular theater piece incorporating testimony, movement and song at every stop.

These performances sought to underscore the harsh realities endured by those awaiting release and shed light on the harmful consequences of existing systems and illustrate the potential for people, economies and communities to heal.

- **McFarland and Bakersfield:** Vigil stops at Kern Valley State Prison, Golden State Annex ICE Detention, Mesa Verde ICE Detention, and a community forum in Bakersfield
- **Adelanto:** Vigil stop at Adelanto ICE Detention as part of Toxic Tour of the region, and a community forum in Victorville
- **Calexico:** Vigil at Imperial ICE Detention, with a neighborhood tour of the Calexico border, and a community forum with local leaders
- **San Diego:** Vigil at Otay Mesa ICE Detention, witnessing the Border Wall (Whiskey 8 Border Patrol controlled area) where migrating families are trapped, and community ritual in Chicano Park.



Pilgrimage stop in front of Imperial ICE Detention Center (Oct 2023)

IM4HI along with our partners at the Dignity Not Detention (DND) Coalition recently won ground-breaking legislation, Healthy Economies Adapting to Last (HEAL), which creates an incentive for communities to divest in detention centers and invest in high-road jobs and build a sustainable economy. HEAL, managed by the **California Workforce Development Board (CWBD)** over the next three years, stands as a powerful tool in our advocacy toolbox to **permanently close immigration detention centers**, challenging the persistent obstacle of carceral economies.

Throughout the pilgrimage, we hosted **seven vigils** at detention centers and a prison, fostering spaces for healing, prayer, and solidarity. Simultaneously, we engaged in **four community forums** which shed light on the state of immigration detention in California and new opportunities for collective advocacy. **This year the pilgrimage did not need to travel to Yuba County, as the Yuba ICE contract ended in February!**

# BEARING WITNESS:

We share with you the pilgrimage experiences and voices of folks who were on the pilgrimage returning to places of their immigration detention and harm.

Their voices bear witness with **clarity** and **resilience** and illuminate the pressing need for closures and lasting change.



## ELADIO CORTES MORALES

"On the pilgrimage, I learned how we can gather together and show unity. **How immigration affects all of us, not just one community.** This has brought me closer to everyone. My fight is your fight and vice versa."



## GUILLERMO MEDINA

"Joining the pilgrimage and standing in front of Golden State Annex (GSA) held a profound significance for me. I recalled a year prior, seeing people on the outside protesting in front of GSA while I was working out in the detention yard. It was astonishing to me to think that there were people who didn't know me but cared about my release. Fast forward a year, and here I am, looking through those fences, seeing three guys in the yard. This time I'm with you people who were once strangers, but now stood alongside me. **Together, we were in the battle to free the same individuals I had been incarcerated with.** It was a powerful moment of healing, realizing that we were now working together to advocate for the release of those who had once cheered for me as I walked out."

## SAHARRA WHITE

"Speaking in front of Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP) was a powerful but emotional moment for me. **My father has been housed inside KVSP for the past five years after he was transferred from Pelican Bay.** We thought with him being closer to home that conditions would be better, but they are not. The fact that KVSP is on Californians United for Responsible Budget (CURB)'s top 10 list of CA Prisons to close makes me hopeful that he may be one step closer to coming home. But it also upsets me that the conditions are so unbearable to live in."



## IBRAHIMA BA

As Mauritanians, we have experienced difficult times in ICE detention ourselves. We don't want other newcomers to endure what we've been through. Participating in the pilgrimage may seem like very little, but it always shows those still in detention that there are people who care. Sharing stories with others who likely went through the same challenges reminds us of a proverb: 'People in the same boat aim to cross together to the other side of the sea'.

**Our goal, too, is to close all detention centers in California."**

## OUMAR BA

I joined the group because I faced the same situation as the detained individuals, and it was very challenging for me. That's why I joined the group—to unite, as uniting always provides strength. **The Pilgrimage journey became a source of certainty for me, giving me the courage to achieve the goal of closing the detention centers.** My favorite part of the pilgrimage was raising the theater banner with the word "Release," and singing "Sanando" (Healing) with the participants was a special moment."





## JOSE RUBEN HERNANDEZ

"The pilgrimage has been a tool to empower formerly detained folks to build our leadership. The pilgrimage was significant to me and others directly impacted in a way that our voices are being uplifted and that those who are still facing this unjust carceral system are not alone or forgotten. Building bonds with faith leaders and impacted individuals was the pilgrimage's beauty. Meeting local activists and witnessing the impact that HEAL could have divesting from oppressive ICE centers was inspiring. The border experience revealed inhumane conditions, with local advocates stepping in where the government fell short. in many ways.

Overall, **the pilgrimage showcased unity among diverse individuals with various faith beliefs to address global needs."**



## MINA SOLIMAN

"Visiting Adelanto, where I spent 18 months as a long-term resident, marked a significant moment since my release in 2018. Despite the challenges, this time, I felt a strong sense of healing rather than reliving past traumas.

**Leaving my cane at the Joshua Tree (in the field across from the detention center) symbolizes letting go and healing for me and everyone who suffered.**

I'm grateful to the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, especially community and faith leaders, for their support. The act of leaving my cane was a remarkable moment, expressing courage and the power of collective love. Today, we are better and stronger because we are together, working together."

## GILLIAN ALOO ODHIAMBO

Being part of the pilgrimage and this community a second time, especially with the community discussions on HEAL, has been a humbling experience. Through this journey, **I've learned to find forgiveness, seek guidance, make connections, and apply new organizing skills.**

My favorite part was visiting facilities, praying for those in cages, providing strength, and letting them know they are not alone. Visiting Adelanto, with the knowledge of its impending closure, and working on stopping transfers, has been a transformative experience for healing the community."



Gillian Aloo Odhiambo ( middle)

**For more information and to delve deeper into the pilgrimage, explore our [Resource Guide](#).**

**As a special thanks to everyone who contributed to the 2023 Pilgrimage to HEAL our communities, [check out our thank you reel!](#)**

# TRANSFORMING LEADERS: FAITH ADVOCATES COHORT

## Faith Advocates Cohort and IM4HI Leadership Training:

We are thrilled to share the remarkable impact of our Faith Advocates Cohort and IM4HI Leadership Summer Training programs.

These initiatives lie at the heart of our mission to amplify the leadership and voice of directly impacted individuals and people of faith in advocating for more just policies and practices in immigration and incarceration.

## IM4HI Faith Advocates Cohort 2023:

In early 2023, we proudly convened our **second** leadership cohort of **five** individuals who have first-hand experience with ICE detention. Led by our Nor Cal team of Gala King and Danny Thongsy, this group formed a dedicated cohort of IM4HI Faith Advocates. Trained in leadership and equipped with skills for direct campaigns, public speaking, and strategy development, they became catalysts for educating communities about these systems and advocating for policy change.

This cohort focused on advocacy for the **HOME Act** (AB 1306). This state-level bill would have limited the transfers between state prisons and ICE, and our Faith Advocates, all with direct experiences of transfers, played a crucial role in lobbying for its passage. Unfortunately, this was ultimately vetoed by the Governor.

During this transformative initiative, participants actively engaged in lobby days in Sacramento, leading powerful interfaith prayers and advocating fervently for the HOME Act with legislators.



Faith Advocates Lobbying at California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC) Immigrant Day of Action with Jose Ruben Hernandez, Floricel Liborio Ramos, Pedro Ayon (May 2023)



Gala King, Michael Prasad, Pedro Ayon, Jose Ruben Hernandez, Hulissa Aguilar, Floricel Liborio, Danny Thongsy



# TRANSFORMING LEADERS: SUMMER TRAINING SERIES

## Empowering those Directly Impacted:

"During the summer I took part in the Faith Advocate cohort training that was organized by IM4HI and the experience was powerful. The material educated me in areas where I didn't have a lot of knowledge. I embraced the community support and circle of care, compassion and love. As a result of some of these trainings I'm more confident in my role as an advocate and it has enhanced my passion to help others in my community and anywhere I can. I'm truly grateful and blessed to have been part of these cohorts!"

- Pedro Ayon, directly-impacted Faith Advocate

This collective effort underscored IM4HI's commitment to tangible change and influencing policy at the intersection of faith, justice, human rights and integrity. IM4HI Faith Advocates played a crucial bridge role sharing their personal experiences and wisdom across interfaith communities, immigrant, legal and criminal justice organizations.

## Transforming Leaders: Summer Training Series:

This past summer, we launched our inaugural summer training series for faith and community leaders. Drawing a vibrant cohort of **25-30 individuals** (including our IM4HI Staff, Faith Advocates, Fe y Justicia Spanish-speaking leaders, core volunteers, and interns. The training delved into core IM4HI themes and values, encompassing social biography, racial equity, abolition, feminism and faith rooted organizing. Danny Thongsy, IM4HI's Nor. Cal Faith Organizer helped to organize the summer training series. Leaders from across the state participated.

"The lessons connected the personal with the political and showed how faith-rooted organizing addresses various issues using a humane and affirmative approach," shared an attendee from the summer training series."

The culmination of this enriching series took place during a transformative **2-day**, in-person faith-rooted organizing training where we focused on our method of faith and activism, and fostering a beloved community dedicated to social change.



Leadership Summer Training Participants (May 2023)



Rev. Deborah Lee, Rev. Allison Tanner, Elizabeth Medina, Danny Thongsy, Gala King (Dec 2023)

# TRANSFORMING NARRATIVES: LOVE OVER FEAR

"Art and culture are foundational to all social justice movements. They have the power to open hearts and spirits and minds which make change possible," expressed Gala King, IM4HI Regional Director, Northern California and organizer of our Love Over Fear Oakland Project. "By centering an ethic of love, we are centering healing, leadership, transformation, and connection."

We are thrilled to share the exciting news about our latest narrative campaign, **Love Over Fear**, to replace the narrative of fear, xenophobia, and racism with inclusion, forgiveness, and shared humanity. We will be **centering culture, art, spirit** and **healing** to cultivate forms of community safety that **don't rely on criminalization**, but **prioritize holistic well-being**.



To launch our campaign, we held our first **Love Over Fear** concert this past November where the evening was a testament to the power of love and solidarity, as **over 200 people** gathered to celebrate music, art, and the shared commitment of choosing "Love Over Fear."

The concert featured a lineup of incredibly talented **Bay Area immigrant** and **BIPOC musicians** who captivated the audience with their inspiring performances. Together, we immersed ourselves in an evening of healing, inclusion, and the celebration of shared humanity. The event was a benefit for IM4HI, supporting our advocacy for the dignity of immigrants, full inclusion of people formerly incarcerated, and community well-being over prisons, detention, and criminalization.

As we bask in the success of this event, we are energized and inspired to bring more art, music, and culture-centered gatherings to our community in the future. We envision creating spaces that celebrate the richness of diversity and amplify the voices of those who advocate for **justice, love, and compassion**.



**Click on the picture above to watch a performance from our concert!**

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our IM4HI board member and talented artist Benjamin Mertz, who helped envision and produce the concert. We would also like to extend our appreciation to all our artists (BenjaSoul, Diana Gameros, Francisco Herrera, Nancy Louise, Aisea Taimani, Tory Teasley, Deema Shehabi, and Ricardo Lomeli Gomez), event sponsors, auction donors, staff, volunteers and Freight and Salvage for helping make our Love Over Fear Benefit concert be the first of many more to come!



# Love Over Fear Oakland in 2024:

## Connection, Care & Community

Local work in Oakland will focus on reshaping the public conversation around safety and foster deeper connections between **AAPI, Black** and **Latinx** communities. Plans for 2024, include holding affinity group spaces, engaging in multi-generational and multi-faith story-telling, cultural sharing, and communal meals. **These gatherings will inform larger, cross-cultural events in the summer of 2024, centered around themes of safety, healing, and spirit.** IM4HI is the recipient of a 1-year grant from the San Francisco Foundation's Bay Area Creative Corps Program that helps us work with a team of creative changemakers, each representing different cultural and faith communities and who bring various modes of art and healing modalities.

### Community Partnerships:

We invite community partners, faith communities, artists, and collectives who resonate with this work in Oakland to participate in small or large ways. To begin with,

- Explore our **Love Over Fear page** on our website dedicated to the work with our first concert and Cultural Strategists
- Stay tuned for upcoming interviews with our Cultural Strategists, providing insights into their experiences and perspectives.
- Participate in our affinity group gatherings to share and explore the theme of Love Over Fear

**Together, let's build a safe, more connected Oakland.** The work with our Cultural Strategists seeks to create safe and thriving communities, recognizing that community safety is intricately linked to the well-being of the most vulnerable among us.

Stay connected with us on **Instagram** and **Facebook** for updates on future events and initiatives. We look forward to building the Love Over Fear campaign and creating more opportunities for our community to come together in celebration and solidarity.

### Meet Our Oakland Cultural Strategists:



**B. Dukes:**  
A Black, trans, non-binary artist, musician, and healer with Freedom Community Clinic.



**Eileen Amina Lei:**  
A Chinese-Muslim woman, visual artist, organizer of Under the Sky One Family gatherings, educator, and storyteller.



**Francisco Herrera:**  
A Chicano cultural worker, musician, and co-founder of Caminante Cultural Foundation, experienced in cultivating healing and safety within communities impacted by war and torture.

# Transforming Policies:

## Inland Empire Communities

In Southern California's High Desert lies a narrative woven with threads of environmental impact, carceral economies and the pursuit of immigration justice. IM4HI's work in the Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino counties), led by Hilda Cruz, IM4HI Regional Program Director, unveils layers of injustice and possibilities of healing in the story of the land.

The story begins in the biodiverse region, a **75-mile drive** from the bustling metropolis of Los Angeles, where the towns of Victorville and Adelanto stand as witnesses to a complex tale.

In Adelanto, the GEO corporation's immigration detention facility connects carceral interests, environmental neglect and human rights abuses, impacting every resident.

The story traces back to 1941 when the George Air Force Base emerged in Victorville, expanding over **4,100 acres** with **over 250 buildings** and **employing over 4,000 military personnel**. Post-WWII, the base went on standby, leaving behind a legacy of pollution — jet fuel, solvents, and pesticides seeping into the land. In 1992, the base became decommissioned airplanes, forming a sprawling **900-acre federal prison complex in Victorville**.

Polluted legacy on the land could be developed for little else but carceral facilities. Prisons, historically detrimental to the health of local communities and the people incarcerated within them, continue to leave their mark. Waterways and ecosystems are polluted, exacerbated by the construction of warehouses, adding more strain to the already compromised environment. The City of Adelanto succumbed to promises of job creation by the for-profit GEO corporations which built an immigration detention facility with a capacity to incarcerate **2,690 immigrants**.

This Spring, IM4HI conducted the **10th annual Stations of the Cross Vigil** at Adelanto ICE Detention Facility, connecting the crucifixion of Jesus to the experience of immigrants on the journey, detained and suffering from harsh policies.

In the Spring we took a small group of leaders on a **pilgrimage to the border** between Mexicali and Calexico, which exposed additional environmental harms —from polluted air to water contamination in the border region. We visited migrants stuck at the border due to **Title 42** and led a vigil in front of Imperial ICE Detention Center.

In October, IM4HI orchestrated a vital conversation at the Adelanto stop of the Pilgrimage to HEAL our communities, where **65 faith leaders, community members, and those directly-impacted convened**. Amid recent layoffs at the Adelanto Detention Center, the conversation informed the local community about **Healthy Economies Adapting to Last (HEAL)**, inviting their shared vision for how the needs of the community could be met by opportunities to invest in high-road jobs and foster a sustainable economy. The discussions highlighted community needs for Adelanto, such as a trauma hospital, community college, transportation improvements, climate resilience measures, and reflecting the collective aspirations for a more inclusive and resilient community.

We are hopeful and awaiting an expected government announcement that Adelanto Detention Center might soon close. In 2020, the facility emptied after a federal court found conditions inconsistent with contemporary standards of human decency. In 2023 many guards were laid off and today, the facility holds **six individuals** while the government pays millions for **1,455 beds**.

This story is far from its conclusion. Adelanto Detention Center is just one of the carceral facilities in the Inland Empire. Desertview ICE Detention is right next door. This year, we brought on a new IE faith organizer, Ipyani Lockert, who is leading our organizing and faith engagement as part of the **Close the 10 Prison campaign organized by CURB**. This year we have been focusing on the NORCO State Prison which for years legislators and community advocates have argued should be shut down.

As we continue the story, we will weave an intertwined vision of how healing can happen to people and the environment, for a future where communities thrive beyond the shadows of detention.



Border Experience Pilgrimage leaders at prayer service in front of the Imperial Immigrant Detention facility in Calexico (April 2023)



# TRANSFORMING THE ORGANIZATION: NEW STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS

**This year also brought some wonderful transformations to our staffing at IM4HI.**

We have several new faces who are bringing new energy and expertise to our Team. In the Northern California region, Nadia Tavera Medina joins our Accompaniment staff as the Nueva Esperanza Coordinator, working closely with our newly arrived migrant families and individuals. In the Inland Empire, Ipyani Lockert helped to coordinate the Border Experience Pilgrimage to Calexico/Mexicali and is now our Inland Empire Faith Organizer who is leading our work with CURB and the Close the 10 Prisons Campaign focusing on Norco Prison. Hulissa Aguilar is taking on new tasks as IM4HI's Youth Organizer and Digital Media specialist.

This summer we also added Sara Fread as our first-ever Development Associate. Sara began with us as a seminary intern, and we are so grateful to have her help our Executive Director, Rev. Deborah Lee, with grants and fundraising efforts to sustain the organization. We most recently have welcomed Felicia Hyde, as our new Communications Manager who replaces the outgoing Rebekah Olstad. Felicia has jumped right in to lead the communications and storytelling of our many events this fall, including this newsletter!

We are also excited that Sergio Jaime Lopez, one of the graduates of our NEAT program, joined our Board of Directors.

We also could not have accomplished all the work this year without the support of several interns: Faith Williams, Susana Cabrales, Gabriela Riever, Mariela Rojas and Philip Komba. AND the work that so many of you do with us as volunteers, leaders, and partners.



Photo from October Board and Staff Retreat focused on healing and visioning the future (October 2023)

## **Sustaining the Organization:**

This summer, we hosted an intimate **Interfaith Movement for Integri-Tea Party** at our Executive Director Rev. Deborah Lee's home in August to cultivate deeper relationships with our dedicated donors. Amidst tea and treats, we discussed IM4HI as an ecosystem with many crucial parts – our donors being one of them. NorCal staff shared updates in their work around policy advocacy, accompaniment, and leadership development. Directly-impacted leader Jose Ruben Hernandez, shared his powerful story of leading the hunger strike in Mesa Verde ICE Processing Facility, being liberated from the detention system, and how his faith grounds his past and present advocacy work.

In November, we hosted our first Love Over Fear Benefit Concert! At the beautiful Freight & Salvage music venue in downtown Berkeley, we gathered as a beloved community to enjoy music and poetry from fantastic local BIPOC performers and heard testimonies from two of our directly-impacted leaders. The message was clear: **when we come together to choose love in the face of all that there is to fear, we CAN create lasting change in our communities.**

The concert was an overwhelming success! In addition to the high praise from attendees, we raised **about \$22,000!** We are so grateful for the **23 faith communities** and partner organizations whose event sponsorships helped make this night so successful! If you weren't able to make it, we hope you'll join us next year!

We're exploring new ways to strategize around fundraising as an organization! If you want to brainstorm together, share future fundraising event ideas, or support an upcoming event, please reach out to Sara Fread, IM4HI Development Associate at **[sfreadeim4humanintegrity.org](mailto:sfreadeim4humanintegrity.org)**!

Your involvement will be instrumental in shaping a future where love triumphs over fear in creating lasting change within our communities.

You can connect with us on **[Instagram](#)** and **[Facebook!](#)**

For more information about us and our work, subscribe to our **[mailing list!](#)**