

CITY NEWS

Rally statement re: Families Belong Together BY MIRNA CERVANTES, MULTICULTURAL INSTITUTE

Editor's note: on Saturday, June 30, more than 1,000 gathered at Civic Center Park for a rally protesting the current policy at the U.S. border to separate children from their parents. One of the featured speakers was Mirna Cervantes, Associate Director of the Multicultural Institute of West Berkeley. Here are her words:

My name is Mirna Cervantes, Associate Director of the Multicultural Institute, also known as MI. Gracias por su presencia el día de hoy. Since 1991, MI has stayed true to its mission of walking alongside immigrant families, committing to its core values: respect for the dignity of each person and social equality. Through MI, immigrant families have access to job placement assistance, housing, vocational skill development, educational opportunities and a combination of health and legal support.

Todos los que trabajamos en MI levantamos nuestra voz en contra de la separación de las familias que buscan asilo en nuestras fronteras. ¡Las tácticas del gobierno federal son inmorales y nada necesarias! Y contradicen nuestros valores del respeto mutuo, y hospitalidad. Ningún niño o niña debe de ser separado de sus padres. Ni estar viviendo en condiciones inhumanas.

Today, we raise our voices

against human rights abuses, perpetrated at our borders.

We believe immigrant, refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.

We call on our leaders to consider effective alternatives to detention, with timely access to legal counsel and to ensure that the outcome be humane immigration legislation. As a nation of immigrants, we have a moral obligation to help those fleeing persecution, violence and harmful living conditions. All vulnerable populations deserve our compassion and should not be cruelly detained and further traumatized.

MI has had a longstanding commitment to bridging immigrants and their families to available resources. Join us by coming together and providing opportunities for immigrants and refugees. Join our mission and volunteer. If you have free time come teach English to the day laborers who seek work on street corners, work with immigrant youth after-



photo by Nate Poremba

Families Belong Together: On Saturday, June 30, Mirna Cervantes of the Multicultural Institute (West Berkeley) spoke to a gathering of more than 1,000 at Civic Center Park.

school and provide them academic support and mentorship, or if you have teaching background come prepare immigrant adults

for their GED or Naturalization exams. These are concrete examples of things most of us can do to help today. Remember

that we are stronger together. We must not let hate divide. Gracias.