CAN!
COMUNIDADES PARA AMERICANOS NUEVOS!

OCTOBER 2026

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THE LATEST AT CAN!

OUR TEAM

The team at CAN! is small but mighty, consisting of two part-time staff, who both hold other jobs within RCHP-AHC. Bella, CAN!'s director, works two days a week at CAN! and the other three days at the English Language Learning program of Interfaith-RISE. Before coming to CAN!, she was the Community Outreach and Education Coordinator at Accompany Now!, another RCHP-AHC program which serves unaccompanied children.

Katia works one day a week at CAN!, and works the rest of the week as the Administrative Associate at Accompany Now!.

CAN! relies on support from community members like you for volunteer work, supply donations, and financial contributions to keep the program running.

CELEBRATING ONE YEAR

CAN! first started operating in August 2025. In just over a year we have:

raised more than

$140,000

towards direct support for ICE-impacted families in financial crisis

received more than

290

referrals of families separated by ICE

helped

5

detained parents hire attorneys, win their case, and return to their children

WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON

CAN! primarily assists families separated by ICE with their basic needs for survival. We provide rental and utility assistance to families that are at risk of homelessness or utility shut-off after the detention of a breadwinner. We provide baby items and diapers to postpartum mothers whose husbands have been detained or deported. We connect mothers, fathers, and children who are devastated by the separation of their family with mental health services that can stabilize them in their most vulnerable moments. But stability is not always possible for those who are at risk of losing their immigration status, or of being detained or deported. In some cases, CAN! uses donated funds to help mothers, fathers, and children hire attorneys and defend their rights to live and work freely and safely in the United States. Here are some of these cases CAN! is raising funds to support:
(all names changed to protect client privacy)
All illustrations by Amber Hwang, CAN! volunteer

ELIO

Elio is a 15-year-old boy from Central America. He came to the US as a boy with his mother to reunite with his father in the US. They moved to New Jersey shortly after. In 2025, Elio's father was picked up by ICE on the way to work. Alone with Elio and his little siblings, Elio's mother decided her best option was to return to their country. Elio begged his mother to let him stay in New Jersey with his two uncles in order to continue his education.

His mother allowed it, and Elio moved in with his uncles when she left with his younger siblings. Only a few months later, both of Elio's uncles met the same fate, picked up by ICE in a van on their way to work. Luckily, Elio's best friend's mom volunteered to take him in. Elio is now living with his best friend's family, who consider him one of their own. Elio spent the summer at a prestigious pre-college program sponsored by an Ivy League college and has big ambitions for his future and education. Recently, Elio called the DIRE hotline for help with his immigration legal case. DIRE staff discovered that Elio had a deportation order from when he was only 8 years old, of which he was completely unaware. He is now more afraid than ever that on his walks to and from school, he, too could be detained. CAN! is raising funds to pay for an attorney to re-open Elio's case and help him pursue legal status.

MAYA

Maya is a young woman in her early twenties who was detained just a few months after giving birth to her first-ever baby, a little boy. Maya has been detained for several months now, and told CAN! that she has faced both unsafe conditions and abuse in the center where she has been held. Maya's family hired a private attorney to fight for her release, but as the case dragged on, they became concerned about his handling of it, especially as it appeared he would not commit to filing a response before a critical deadline. Despite this, the family had spent their entire savings on the attorney's fees and could not even afford a consultation with a different lawyer.

At the last minute, CAN! heard of her case, and was able to partner with another nonprofit to hire a different attorney to take over Maya's case and make the necessarily filing in time. Maya is now temporarily protected from deportation and has a fighting chance to return to her infant child and his father in the US.

ELENA

Elena is a young mother whose husband was detained when their youngest daughter was just four months old. Elena's husband tried his hardest to defend his right to remain in the US, but after months in detention he was ultimately deported. On her own with her two young daughters, Elena sprung into action. She found roommates to help her pay for rent on her own, and secured the help of a nonprofit to help her apply for Asylum. She is afraid of returning with her two young girls to her home country, where her life had been threatened.

Like many young mothers whose husbands were deported, Elena herself was put in removal proceedings, and has an immigration hearing scheduled this fall. Despite working full time and cutting costs as much as possible, Elena does not have money left over at the end of the month to hire an attorney to represent her. CAN! staff suspect that Elena might also be eligible for a U visa, as she was the victim of a violent crime while still pregnant with her youngest daughter in the US. However, despite securing consultations with multiple nonprofit legal providers, CAN! has not found a pro bono attorney with the capacity to take her case or represent her in court. A private attorney has agreed to take her case at a discount, and CAN! covered half of his fees. Elena will pay the rest on a monthly payment plan.

ISA

Isa is a mother of three young children whose husband was detained on the way to work several months ago. Isa, her husband, and their oldest son made the dangerous journey to the US from South America after their lives were threatened in their country. As a child, Isa had also experienced human trafficking in her country. On their way through Mexico and into the US, the young family was kidnapped and once again Isa was trafficked. They managed to escape into the US and settled in New Jersey. Isa and her husband both worked, and they were able to hire private attorneys to help them apply for Asylum and later for T visas (visas for trafficking victims). They also had two more children, a 3-year-old boy and a 2-year-old girl who has microcephaly.

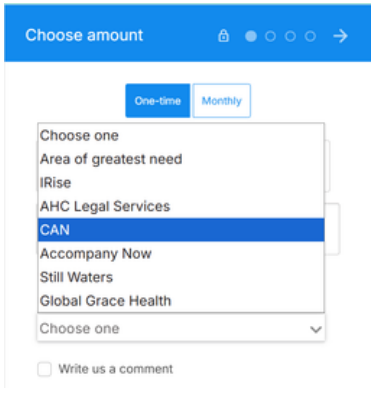
After the detention of his father, the oldest son started to remember the traumas of his kidnapping en route to the US. The 3-year-old boy had to start therapy as well after he started making distressing drawings in school. Isa herself is in removal proceedings. Without her husband's income, she can't afford to pay her rent, let alone continue to pay the lawyers who started her applications for legal status. Despite her pending applications and credible fear of returning to her home country, it is very likely the immigration judge will give her a deportation order in court, and her only option will be to hire an attorney to appeal. CAN! intervened and has been providing case management to Isa and her family. After trying and failing to get a pro bono attorney to represent Isa, CAN! committed to hiring a private attorney who offered a discounted price to defend Isa's case all the way up to the highest courts.

HELP US HELP THEM

To donate towards legal fees and other assistance that CAN! provides to families like these, visit rchp-ahc.org/donate . Make sure to designate CAN! when you donate to ensure the money goes to us!

For check donations:
Payable to RCHP-AHC, Attn: Finance Dept, 19 S. 2nd Ave, Highland Park, NJ 08904.

Designate CAN! in the memo line to ensure the donation goes to us!



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HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR WORK OR HOW TO GET INVOLVED? CONTACT OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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