

Dear Friends,

**National Hispanic Heritage Month** kicked off last Thursday, September 15th, and runs through October 15th! "Hispanic" is an umbrella term for American citizens who hail from Spanish-speaking countries including Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Spain. At Bet Tzedek, we celebrate the individual and collective contributions of Hispanic Americans and immigrants to society every day. We have made fighting for the protection and equitable access to justice of immigrant children one of our agency's missions.

As a way of recognizing Spanish-speaking individuals and people from Spanish-speaking countries, we've highlighted Hispanic thought leaders, shared information, and dived into available resources for immigrant populations on our social media accounts. You can find them at the bottom of this newsletter. We'd love for you to follow us on social media and join the conversation!

## Stabilizing the Lives of Immigrant Children



Osmin was only 14 when he arrived alone in L.A. from Honduras. When he left Honduras, Osmin was distraught that he had had to quit high school and start working to help with the family finances. So when his mother urged he come live with her in L.A. and continue high school, he braved the dangerous 2,400 mile trek. But once he arrived, his mother — who had two new children since her own arrival to the U.S. — told him that he couldn't go to school and that instead he needed to get a job to help with her bills.

Feeling tricked and trapped, Osmin finally ran away and ended up living in a youth homeless shelter. The staff connected Osmin with Bet Tzedek because he had several legal options in terms of having a guardian appointed on his behalf and resolving his immigration status. The case was tough. His mother fought his paternal grandmother for guardianship and opposed him getting immigration relief. But ultimately, Bet Tzedek secured legal guardianship of Osmin on behalf of his grandmother and secured Special Immigrant Juvenile Status on his behalf, which allowed him to get his "green card."

Bet Tzedek helps unaccompanied child immigrants stabilize their lives by identifying and securing legal guardianship for these vulnerable children, and helping ensure their physical and emotional wellbeing. In the process, we also work to resolve their uncertain legal citizenship status. Bet Tzedek is helping lead this national effort, training pro bono volunteers in these special proceedings and guiding state legislatures in the policy changes necessary to respond to this emerging issue.

If you are an advocate seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) findings or are representing a client seeking a specific form of guardianship following parental deportation, [please click here for additional information](#). And if you know of a child in similar circumstances here in Los Angeles, please let us know at [intake@bettzedek.org](mailto:intake@bettzedek.org).

## Help a Ukrainian-born Musician Take Her Small Music Business to the Next Level

Ms. S is a classically trained soprano singer, accomplished pianist, songwriter, music producer, and film composer. She has performed on stages around the world, and is originally from Kharkiv, Ukraine, where she began her musical education at the age of seven. Ms. S launched a music company in April of 2021 focused on lessons in composition, voice, film scoring, and playing instruments. As Ms. S grows her business, she seeks assistance drafting a template independent contractor agreement that she can use with her growing ensemble of music teachers.

Staffing: This case is best suited for an attorney with experience in corporate law. If interested, contact Director of Pro Bono Programs, Sara Levine at [slevine@bettzedek.org](mailto:slevine@bettzedek.org).

## More and More Older Angelinos Falling Into Homelessness



According to the [Los Angeles Times](#), "L.A.'s spiraling housing costs increasingly are driving people into homelessness for the first time at advanced ages, advocates said. A fall, a job loss, or a medical crisis pushes them over the edge." In fact, adults 55 or older are the fastest-growing demographic of people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County. Since 2017, homelessness among older adults has increased by 20 percent, with a disproportional increase among older adults of color.

On August 24th, Bet Tzedek hosted a training for legal aid organizations from throughout the state of California to highlight the [Home Safe](#) Program which addresses housing issues for Adult Protective Services-eligible clients who need to stabilize their current housing, find alternative safe housing, or get help to become housed. This training, co-conducted with Justice in Aging, focused on the expanded eligibility and funding adopted in last year's state budget for the Home Safe Program, and how APS-eligible clients and those in the intake process can get housing assistance.

Bet Tzedek is a nationally recognized leader in providing legal services to low-income seniors. We help improve the safety and quality of life for older or disabled adults and their families. We do this through providing services such as housing protection, helping with public benefits, advanced planning, adult conservatorships, elder abuse prevention, and Holocaust survivor services. [Click here](#) to get help or to learn more.

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