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Save Regina!

Update – July 18, 2005

When one mother got home from work the week Regina was released, her little girl was wearing an altered “Save Regina” button. It read: [www.we Saved Regina.org](http://www.weSavedRegina.org). “I know, Mom. She still has to go before a judge, but she could have died by now. We did it, Mom! We really saved Regina!”

True! By the grace of God.

None of us knows exactly how it happened. Certainly our strong prayers and the huge grassroots effort inspired by St. Mary’s school kids, parents and parishioners made a big difference. So did the generous contributions from everywhere. Of course, it could not have happened without the expertise and flat-out dogged work of Attorney Mary Sfasciotti.

According to a top immigration official, at the time Regina was released, there were one million people in deportation proceedings. That’s hundreds of thousands of cases clamoring for review by the Board of Immigration Appeals (B.I.A.) What brought Regina’s case to the top of the pile?

Was it our 4000 letters and many phone calls to B.I.A. Director Mary Scialabba, or the 4000 letters we sent to Wesley Lee of I.C.E. or the 4000 to Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez? Was it letters written by Congresswoman Gwen Moore or help given by Congressman Jim Ryan and others – Mark Green, Ron Kind, John McCain? Even Jim Sensenbrenner had the House Judiciary staff looking into her case. Or maybe letters sent by Senator Russ Feingold and Senator Herb Kohl hit their mark. Or the Milwaukee County Board or state officials? Was it Archbishop Dolan who got everybody’s attention?

How about the extraordinary and repeated coverage that Regina’s story got from all segments of our media? (According to TV reporters themselves, this alone was a miracle!)

Then there was the wonderful Washington, D.C., access provided by the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the oldest and most prestigious immigration lobby in the country. Maybe it was one of our team who walked into the Hart Senate Building with channel 12 (ABC news). He began by fanning the papers with your 5000+ signatures, then sat down to explain Regina’s case step by step. In the end, the officials went immediately to make phone calls.

Or was it purely and simply that God inspired our compassion and our prayer, protected us from wrong decisions and orchestrated our every effort for a larger purpose?

It was not only Regina who was freed. I think of our team members. I did not invite these people. I was amazed when they showed up offering to help, most of them new to me and to each other. We marveled at the uniquely perfect gifts each brought to the mix. Their faith and determination buoyed all of us. We were awed as supporters multiplied and money flowed in. We watched our prayers bear fruit. Our faith grew. Our hearts expanded. Attitudes shifted. Relationships healed. We spent our June meeting talking about how God had transformed each one of us.

I invite you, too, to get still on the inside and think about how, in reaching out to help Regina, you also

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found yourself changing. Maybe you, too, have been freed, invigorated, transformed. Then look even bigger. Family, faith community, Internet buddies, metro area, blue states/red states, nation, world. What is God up to? For me, working for Regina's freedom is like plunging deep into God's heart. As I write her story, a sweet, plaintive melody lingers in my soul, "The Lord hears the cry of the poor...." Please share your reflections: contactus@saveregina.org.

We are all eager to see Regina receive full asylum. But right now our strategy needs to be quieter.

As required by current law, Regina's case has been remanded back to the original judge in Atlanta, Georgia. This fall, Regina and Attorney Mary Sfasciotti, are required to fly to Atlanta for a prescheduled "Master Calendar Hearing," a relatively short session in which the judge attends to administrative details and sets the date for Regina's big hearing, most likely in 2006. If the judge is amenable, he may agree to transfer jurisdiction to Chicago, but he is the only one who has that prerogative.

Because Regina's case is complicated and judges do not like to overturn their original decisions, Attorney Sfasciotti has asked us to take special care not to do anything that could be construed as pressure. She asks that until Regina's case is resolved, we stay out of the public eye.

So our strategy these months is sh-h-h-h. Prayer and fund-raising. Amen.

Prayer

I know you will keep praying for Regina, Mary Sfasciotti, the judge... and for me, too, as I write Regina's story. Do thank God for how this is changing your own heart, too. You might want to write your own prayer to use each day, then post a reminder somewhere – a sticky note on your mirror or a Save Regina button pinned to your clothes.

Fund-raising

We are 35-40% toward our goal of \$100,000.00. To attract corporate donors who look for tax exemption, the Save Regina Committee is working toward incorporation as a non-profit organization. We also have some intriguing fund-raisers planned. Stay tuned.

Meanwhile, please spread the word to those on your e-mail lists that they can now contribute directly online by credit card (using PayPal): www.saveregina.org.

Gratefully,
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For More Information:

Visit Us at: www.SaveRegina.org
Email Us at: Contactus@SaveRegina.Org

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