



FIRST FRIENDS
of New Jersey & New York



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2021

Contact: press@brooklynbailfund.org

ORGANIZATIONS COMBINE FORCES TO PAY HEFTY \$50K BOND TO FREE NY RESIDENT FROM ICE DETENTION

NEWARK, NJ / NEW YORK, NY - A New York resident returned home to his family this week after the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund (BCBF), First Friends of New Jersey & New York, and the New Sanctuary Coalition pooled their resources to pay an extraordinarily high \$50,000 bond to free him from ICE detention.

Once a person has been arrested by ICE, they likely face mandatory, indefinite detention unless they are one of the 30 percent who are granted the opportunity of a bond hearing. Bond is set by an immigration judge in less than half of those cases, and it's usually set in amounts that most immigrant families are unable to afford. In 2019 the median bond amount paid by BCBF was \$8,000 and in 2020 the median increased to \$11,200.

“There are no policies or guidelines for immigration judges to follow when it comes to setting bond amounts,” says **Rosa Santana, the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund’s director of bonds**. “With bond amounts ranging from \$3,000 to \$50,000 being set by judges or by ICE itself, we know that no one is thinking about whether that’s affordable for the person being caged or their family. If it takes three organizations together to free this one person, how is it reasonable to expect that a family could afford to free their loved one? These bond amounts are more than just arbitrary—they’re unfair.”

“We are happy to have partnered with the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund and the New Sanctuary Coalition to pay the bond to release this person back to his family,” says **Giselle Holloway, executive director of First Friends of New Jersey & New York**. “However, we are very concerned about the exorbitant amount. We are seeing bond amounts rising to levels that are well beyond what most immigrant families can afford—a very disturbing trend that will prevent many of those in detention from being released.”

“Three nonprofit organizations needed to get together to pay for the release of a community member, that is outrageous,” says **Andres Jimenez, anti-detention and bond fund coordinator**

--more--

--cont--

of the New Sanctuary Coalition. “Immigration violations are civil infractions and there is nothing civil about paying thousands of dollars for the freedom of our family and loved ones, especially during a global pandemic that is running rampant in the same jails and prisons where ICE continues to hold our community hostage. ICE values money over human life and it shows given the fact that we are mourning the 4th death in ICE custody this year.”

Brooklyn Community Bail Fund works alongside impacted communities to dismantle the oppressive and interconnected criminal legal and immigration systems. With freedom as our guiding principle, we invest in innovative campaigns and programs that aim to win long-term, transformative change, while meeting the urgent needs of community members in the present. As one of the largest bond funds in the country, BCBF has paid \$5.4 million in bond to free nearly 600 people from immigration detention since 2018.

First Friends of New Jersey & New York upholds the inherent dignity and humanity of detained immigrants and asylum seekers. We provide compassion and hope through volunteer visitation, resettlement assistance and advocacy. First Friends serves those held in the Elizabeth Detention Center, the Essex County Correctional Facility, the Bergen County Jail and the Hudson County Correction & Rehabilitation Center.

New Sanctuary Coalition is a multi-faith immigrant-led organization that creates support systems for and empowers those navigating the immigration system. We do this by bringing together citizen volunteers and immigrants - Our Friends - to achieve two primary goals: equip Friends with the knowledge they need to navigate the immigration system and lead the movement, and train and mobilize citizen and faith leaders to support and fight alongside our Friends.

www.brooklynbailfund.org | www.firstfriendsnjny.org | www.newsanctuarynyc.org

###