

Kids in Need of Defense – *pro bono* opportunity

I'm writing you now to announce a new organization in DC called Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). Some of you may know us as "Angelina's new org." We are a new non-profit organization dedicated to representing unaccompanied children in the immigration system. Our mission is to provide thorough, child-focused representation to children who otherwise face the daunting task of navigating immigration court on their own. Jen Kelley (cc'd) and I are the pro bono coordinators in charge of the DC/NoVa/Baltimore region.

We are looking for law student volunteers to assist with interpretation and client intake. I would like to put together a corps of Spanish-speaking volunteer interpreters to accompany us to the NoVa Juvenile Detention Center for intakes, as well as to assist in interviews in our office and over the phone. Here are the details:

Where: NoVa Juvenile Detention Facility (200 S Whiting St., Alexandria, Va.)

When: TBD, about once a week, approximately 2 hours per visit, plus travel time. We can pick a time that works best for students.

How to Get There: Meet us at KIND's offices (1300 Eye St. NW, Suite 900), or they can drive to the center and meet us there. We can also meet them at the Van Dorn St. Metro if that is most convenient for them.

Who They'll Be Talking To: Children (mostly teenagers) who are detained by DHS for immigration purposes. These children are kept at this secured facility (jail) because their cases are usually intertwined with some criminal component. For most, this is their first encounter with the immigration system. For some, they may have just recently arrived in the U.S.

What They'll Be Doing: Helping us conduct initial and follow-up interviews with these children. Specifically, we are hoping to discern if any children have grounds for immigration relief (i.e., asylum, trafficking, abuse/neglect from parents, etc.). We will explain to them their rights and prepare them for the court process.

What Students Get: a fantastic opportunity to see the immigration system from the inside. These are some of the toughest of the tough cases, a very vulnerable population. We are putting together an orientation to help educate volunteers on what to expect and what to look for. This is a great pro bono opportunity for anyone who wants to work in immigration, with children, in criminal law, on human rights, or just to keep their Spanish skills fresh. And, we'll gladly sign any pro bono pledge paperwork!