

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

February 2008

Site of the Month

Work-Site Raids

Voices for America's Children sponsored a teleconference to introduce the 2007 publication titled *Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children*. It is produced by the Urban Institute for the National Council of La Raza. In preparation of the call, I read the 100-page report and would like to share some of the report's findings.

First, I concede that considering the political climate surrounding illegal immigrants, the public response to the report and to this Newsletter may elicit some negative response. This I would expect. My purpose is not to stir up controversy, but to bring awareness to the unintended consequences of three work-site raids on children of undocumented workers, even though most of the children were U.S. citizens and were under 10 years of age.

The Department of Homeland Security conducted raids in Greeley, Colorado; Grand Island, Nebraska; and New Bedford, Massachusetts. As a result of these raids, undocumented workers during their arrest, detention, and in some cases, deportation, were separated from their children, resulting in short- and long-term adverse effects on children. Some of these effects included family fragmentation, family economic hardship and instability, lack of stability in child care and supervision, interruptions to schooling, emotional trauma, psychological health issues, stigma of being associated with illegal immigrants, and fear.

Most of the children were entitled to public assistance following the raids, but the parents had not applied for help due to lack of trust in public agencies, their immigration status, lack of knowledge regarding their eligibility to receive services and benefits, and their reliance on extended family networks. Religious institutions became centers of distribution of relief, although it "was not sustainable due to the limited capacity of infrastructure and staff."

The study concludes that communities are not prepared to deal with the aftermath of large-scale raids. To better prepare communities in the event of future work-site raids and to protect children who become separated from their families, the Urban Institute provides recommendations for local, state, and private providers; Congress; public schools; and immigrant community institutions and leaders.

Nevada has experienced work-site raids of undocumented workers. Several McDonald's restaurants were raided in Carson City last year, resulting in arrests of undocumented workers. No doubt there will be more. According to a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent, ICE worked with Washoe County social services to ensure children were provided care.¹ How Nevada local, state, and private institutions handle the aftermath of the raids is important because children should not be forgotten.

The report is available at: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411566_immigration_raids.pdf.

¹Sonner, Scott, September 27, 2007, "56 Immigration Arrests at McDonald's in Nevada," *The San Diego Union Tribune*, available at: <http://signonsandiego.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=SignOnSanDiego.com+%3...>, as of 2/4/08.

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Nevada KIDS COUNT