

OUT & ABOUT in SERVICE

Virginia Organizing hosts five immigration reform events in one day

Commentary/pictures by Laura Castro

On April 4 Virginia Organizing pulled off five major events in one day to celebrate the first anniversary of "Light the Way to Comprehensive Immigration Reform" gatherings.

That morning Virginia Organizing members held meetings at the district offices of Congressmen Scott Rigell and Randy Forbes and asked to bring immigration reform to the floor of the U. S. House of Representatives for a vote.

The legislative meetings were followed by a student forum at Virginia Wesleyan College that included a special screening of the documentary "The Dream is Now." A question and answer session followed, led by Loretto Dalmazzo and Cristian Avila.

Later that day, 45 community leaders and pastors from churches across South Hampton Roads participated in a private community-leadership-strategy dinner hosted by Reverend Tony Suarez, national vice president of Chapters NHCLC-Hispanic Evangelical Association.

The evening concluded with the monthly "Light the Way" Town Center gathering led by Maria Fornella, Dr. Carlos Campos, Reverend Jim Wallis, Eliseo Medina, Roberto de la Cruz and Cristian Avila.

The highlight of the gathering was the personal testimony from Marta Arreola (and her three American kids), whose husband was deported six months ago.

More than 180 people gathered. Some held signs asking legislators to fix the broken immigration system and generated calls to Scott Rigell, Randy Forbes and Eric Cantor.

Virginia Organizing will continue working for comprehensive immigration reform and celebrating the "Light the Way" gatherings the first day of each month from 6:30 to 7:30 pm at the Town Center Fountain in Virginia Beach.

For more information: tstanley@virginia-organizing.org, lcastro@virginia-organizing.org, or on Facebook.



Clockwise from the top:

Members and supporters pictured following meetings at the offices of Congressmen Scott Rigell (left) and Randy Forbes (right).

Virginia Wesleyan College students view a special screening of "The Dream is Now" at a student forum.

Eliseo Medina speaks at the first anniversary of "Light the Way to Comprehensive Immigration Reform." Mr. Medina is former international secretary-treasurer of the 2.1 million member Service Employees International Union. He was named to the "Top 50 Most Powerful Latino Leaders" by *Poder Magazine*.

Another scene from "Light the Way."