

Merrimack Valley Project Hopes to Inspire Activism Amid City ICE Raids

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With local incidences of Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids on the rise in Haverhill, the Merrimack Valley Project is hoping to educate their neighbors and inspire activism.

Organizers from the outreach group tell WHAV that since February, they've seen an increase in immigrants with stories to tell about ICE.

One person MVP is working with is a father of two named Segundo who was detained last month for not having an ID. The group was alerted to Segundo's case after agents came to his Haverhill home to investigate someone else that lives in his building, only to take him in instead.

He'll appear in court next year to find out his updated immigration status, according to MVP's Leena Mathew. Mathew and her colleagues will be there to rally behind him. His hearing was postponed from March 19, which the MVP has designated as a day of action.

"On the 19th, we're organizing a day of action for Segundo," she said. "What we're trying to raise awareness that this is happening to good people and it's not a criminal doing something nefarious. It's happening to people who are trying to work and raise their families and it's happening every day."

Segundo's is the second local immigrant the Merrimack Valley Project supported in recent months. In January, Jacob Leonce was sent back to St. Lucia and ripped away from his wife and two children.

Mathew says Haverhill has become a frequent stop for ICE agents—and that her group works tirelessly to reverse that trend.

"In Haverhill, because the community is sort of quiet about immigration issues, most of the undocumented people here are particularly vulnerable to ICE," Mathew said. "That's where MVP has stepped up, to let people know that there are people who are struggling and that we should do something about that."

For more on Merrimack Valley Project outreach efforts, residents are invited to [stay in touch with them on Facebook](#).



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