



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION—Participants at the April 22-23 training “Responding to Immigration Enforcement: Strategies for Legal, Community and Child Welfare

Advocates.” About 120 attended the event, held at Boise State University in Boise. (ICR photo courtesy of Catholic Charities of Idaho)

Diocese, CCI host immigration training

BOISE—Catholic Charities of Idaho and the Diocese of Boise were part of a coalition that hosted a two-day training, “Responding to Immigration Enforcement: Strategies for Legal, Community and Child Welfare Advocates,” at Boise State University April 22-23. It was intended for agencies and professionals who deal with the issues immigrants without legal status face during an enforcement action.

“It was a wonderful conference with a diversity of professionals coming together to find strategies to network and respond to immigration enforcements,” said Rosio Gonzalez, executive director of CCI.

More than 120 participants attended the event, held to promote awareness, education and networking among concerned community groups. It included workshops on immigration law, family safety planning and community collaboration.

Starr Shepard, CCI immigration specialist, said, “It was timely for this conference to happen now. The stakes are high for the innocent children, and for our country as a whole. We need humane immigration reform, and we also

need to be able to respond to the multiple crises that occur after an ICE raid.”

ICE is the acronym for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, an agency within the federal Department of Homeland Security. ICE conducts worksite enforcement actions and raids on people’s homes.

A panel of experts discussed comprehensive immigration reform, calling for an end to the enforcements and an earned, viable pathway for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants who desire naturalization.

Also sponsoring the conference were the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC), Casey Family Programs, the Idaho Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program, Boise State University-Cultural Center, Idaho Community Action Network and Andrade Law Office.

Participant Silvia Rel Blain said, “This conference was so informative for community

advocates. We had access to CLINIC and gained a better understanding of the services provided by CCI. I was able to use the information the next day and several times this week when I was in a position to advocate for children among community leaders.”

Rel Blain works with mixed-status migrant families in the Wilder area, an area that is 70 percent Hispanic.

In Idaho, it is estimated that there are 32,000 immigrants without legal status.