It is now well known that increased ICE enforcement in Santa Cruz county and the horrible anti-immigrant policies of the Trump administration has created heightened fear and increased stress among our immigrant community members. This fear and stress has wide reaching implications. Thirty thousand or more persons who reside and work in Santa Cruz County are undocumented immigrants; most of them migrated from Mexico to work here as farm laborers. Thousands more of our neighbors comprise their families and their neighborhoods.

"Know your legal rights" has been one important message consistently permeated as one way to help ease the fear of undocumented immigrants. Family preparedness planning is another crucial tool and message. One aspect of family preparedness is to choose who would be your children's caretaker if something, -- deportation, incarceration, detainment or worse -- were to happen to you and to create a temporary childcare custody document informing necessary parties of this choice.

However, understanding when a Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit (provided for in the Family Code), or a nomination of guardian (provided for in the Probate Code), or a power of attorney is the appropriate tool can be incredibly complex. Trusting someone to help you understand these differences and actually prepare the forms is also convoluted and challenging.

A group of community organizers representing Monarch Services, Community Bridges, Community Action Board, Santa Cruz County Immigration Project, and Proyecto de Plan Familiar (formally Proyecto de Tutela) – all parts of the Santa Cruz County Human Care Alliance – have created a powerful toolkit called the Childcare Safety Plan designed to allow parents to simply get through this otherwise challenging process. We are organizing a series of large family preparedness forums at which concerned members of our communities will be able to engage with trained aides to help them prepare their Childcare Safety Plan, including legal documents for use by families in case of parents or caregivers of minor children being “disappeared” by ICE.

We invite you to be among those concerned members of our community able to assist families in taking on this hugely important project, ensuring the well-being of their children. In a date to be selected in early August, Attorney Tanya Ridino and retired attorney Miriam Stombler, will train attorneys and legal staff on the use of the Child Care Safety Planning document. We would welcome your later participation at our Immigration Forums and in other settings to offer immigrant families this powerful tool designed to be offered free of charge.

Thank you!

Friends,

As a participant in the Sanctuary Santa Cruz organizing network, I collaborate with a number of good public-spirited people and community-based nonprofit organizations that seek to assist and empower poor people, especially undocumented immigrants and their families.

Thirty thousand or more persons who reside and work in Santa Cruz County are undocumented immigrants; most of them migrated from Mexico to work here as farm laborers. Thousands more of our neighbors comprise their families and their neighborhoods.

These communities have been badly disrupted and terrorized under the present state of affairs in which the rogue Federal agency ICE has become a clear and present threat to their safety and security, periodically mounting armed incursions into our neighborhoods, and subjecting our neighbors to sudden detention and deportation.

Of the six Santa Cruz and Watsonville residents abducted in ICE raids three weeks ago, three have already been deported to Mexico; the other three are in indefinite detention at Federal detention sites elsewhere in California. All were working people who left families remaining in our communities without their support.

A group of community organizers representing Monarch Services, Community Bridges, Community Action Board, Santa Cruz County Immigration Project, and Proyecto de Tutela – all parts of the Santa Cruz County Human Care Alliance – are organizing for a series of large family preparedness meetings at which concerned members of our communities will be able to engage with trained aides to help them prepare a Childcare Safety Plan including legal documents for use by families in case of parents or caregivers of minor children being “disappeared” by ICE.

Our organizers need to arrange for use of large community gathering places in three regions of Santa Cruz County – Watsonville, Mid-County, and Santa Cruz – on three dates in August 2017, preferably on Sunday afternoons, at local church facilities.

Each of these Family Preparedness Planning presentations and workshops developed by our team of immigration legal advisors would involve gathering some 200 people, for two or three hours. Community-based organizers will make all the arrangements, including simultaneous Spanish-English interpretation and translations.

We need suitable sanctuary spaces for these community gatherings, and supportive churches’ facilities would be ideal. Would your church care to offer a venue for one of these August events?

Please give this your soonest consideration, and let me know what you think. Can you offer your church as a venue on some particular Sunday afternoon in August?

If you can help in some way other than providing a venue, please call me - let’s talk about it! (For instance, we could use some help photocopying materials for distribution. We could also use bilingual helpers.)

Many blessings,

Jim Weller

I have been working with a large team of professionals and organizations in Santa Cruz and Monterey County to try and 'standardize' the various messages being offered to immigrant families in these difficult times. Our intention was to put the various Family Preparedness Planning tools (such as "caregiver authorization affidavit," "nomination of guardian" and "power of attorney") tools into one much more manageable and understandable form. Our team is currently training volunteers on the use of the document and then we'll be hosting several community forums in August where the volunteers trained this week will assist immigrant families with filling out the papers. The document will also be housed at the various Community Bridges family Centers, Monarch Services, Santa Cruz Immigration Project and CAB's Centers for families to be helped with for free at any time.

I'm attaching the Child Care Safety Planning document, in English and Spanish, that we spoke about several Thursdays back. I look forward to your review of this document and to receiving your further comments. This has been a collaborative effort among family law, immigration and probate attorneys and non-profit orgs. I believe a lot of heart and thought has gone into it.

As I mentioned, I first became involved when I learned that "Proyecto de Tutela/Guardianship Project" had been assisting immigrant families with guardianship nominations. As you know this is NOT always the best course of action. This initial group has been very responsive. They've changed their name to Proyecto Plan Familiar/Family Planning Project and received assistance from Santa Cruz Immigration Project, Community Bridges, Community Action Board and me at Monarch Services. Overall, we have tried to create a easy to fill out, understandable document which any family can use that covers a wide range of needs in case of parent incapacity. Thus, the nomination of guardian notarized form is only one optional section in this document which includes very specific admonitions about why a guardianship might not be needed or beneficial.

We have numerous "Train the Trainer" events scheduled and then will host Community Events (three in SC in August) to have the trained volunteers work with with the families in small groups. The document will also be available at these various organizations to be accessed for free at any time. I've attached a flyer re three events this week, if you could by chance make it to one, I'd love to add your expertise and perspective to the event.

I do like what you said about having all the options available for a parent to choose from. I am still curious about the Power of Attorney form your organization and Monterey County School of Law has been providing to families. When I worked with Senior Citizens Legal Services and previously when I ran Mendocino County's Self-Help Legal Access Center, I assisted many many elders put this important document into place with respect to their financial concerns. I just had not known the document to be used with respect to child custody.

I know that the ILRC is specifically suggesting to not use Power of Attorneys for this purpose in California. Their well respected "family preparedness planning document" has a "note of power of attorneys" which I'll copy below. Its also at https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/family\_preparedness\_plan\_v3-20170323.pdf.

Anyway, lets please continue this conversation as I know both of us just want to have the best assistance possible available for immigrant families. I'm grateful for all I am learning as I continue with that endeavor. Thanks for your part in that.