

The Sanctuary Education Fund

- Presented by Kathy Friedrichs, January 18, 2015

The Sanctuary Education Fund was established in May 1999 with a substantial donation from Guala Lauzzana. The purpose of the Fund was “to provide scholarships or other financial assistance to children of sponsored sanctuary families in Southeast Michigan who came from El Salvador due to the war 1982-1991.”

The Fund was managed from 1999 – 2007 by the UUAA church through the Sanctuary Education Fund Committee comprised of: then Rev. Ken Phifer, Guala Lauzzana, and Kathy Friedrichs.

The Committee awarded most of the scholarship money to the three oldest children of our Sanctuary family: Oscar, Erica and Carolina.

1. Oscar attended the University of Michigan. However, because the family didn't yet have their green cards, he had to pay out-of-state tuition, which was very costly. By combining grants, loans and work-study from U of M, and money from the Sanctuary Education Fund, Oscar graduated in 2004. He went on to study law at Wayne State University and is now a practicing attorney.
2. Erica attended Michigan State University and fortunately received in-state tuition. Erica studied education and is now a teacher in the Ann Arbor area.
3. Carolina studied political science at the University of Michigan and went on to study law at the University of Wisconsin. She is now a practicing lawyer in Milwaukee.
4. Cristi is also studying political science at Eastern Michigan University and currently doesn't know what she will do with it yet.

From a paper Oscar wrote several years ago about his family's history, he noted how many refugee families can't afford the high cost of college tuition, and thus are unable to improve their low economic status in this country. Francisco and Angelina, themselves not educated, stressed to their children the importance of education as key to succeeding in the US. This made a great impression on their children. Oscar said that the Sanctuary Education Fund played a critical role in enabling the Rodriguez children to attend college. Oscar, Erica and Carolina were the **most powerful agents** of their own success by working at jobs while in college, studying very hard, getting excellent grades, and going on to successful careers.

Gratefully many other people also contributed to the Sanctuary Education Fund over the years. Unfortunately due to the recession in 2001, the fund suffered serious losses and made its last payment in 2007.

Our congregation couldn't be prouder of the commitment and accomplishments of this wonderful family.