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Reflections from Sonia Parras, Attorney, Law Office of Sonia Parras

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Sonia Parras – Attorney – Law Offices of Sonia Parras/Co-Director ASISTA

When I think back to that spring morning in 2008, the images of that day are so fresh, so immediate, that they seem as recent as the events of last week. It isn't until I begin to recount all the dear friends that set out together that morning on the difficult journey to attempt to find some measure of justice, some meaning in such a tragic event, that I realize what a long, very long, road we've been on.

But for every long, hard day on that road, we've also have the privilege of sharing many glorious days.

- Walking through the halls of Congress bearing the voices of so many men, women and children and having the privilege of bringing their stories for the world to hear and to be moved.
- That first envelope that arrived from Immigration and Citizenship Services bearing the words: Approved!
 - **It may as well have said, We listened, we care! And the many more to come after that one**
- Interviews at the consulate in Guatemala when families, in their fineries, marched into the office of the vice-counsel to get their U visas and be reunited with their love ones
- I also think of the kids and families arriving from Guatemala who upon arriving in Iowa on a cold wintery day, ran to play with the snow.

Like many of you, I'm frequently asked about Postville. Asked to find some meaning in the tragedy, some explanation of what it all stands for. Folks ask me to speak to the size of the raid, or the violent tactics utilized that day, or my thoughts on the judicial process and its aftermath. All of which, of course, deserve our remembrance and scrutiny. All of which will always be part of the legacy of that tragic day. But I also remind folks of the communities of faith who served as sanctuary for a huddled but proud community, or the townsfolk who chipped in to help the women who were enduring the humiliation of ankle bracelets, and the daily struggle of each and every one of the hundreds of families immediately transformed by that day. I choose to remember these events in the spirit that nowhere have the beacons of faith, of community, and of the enduring human spirit burned more brightly as they have in Postville.

As we cast our eyes forward, today--even as we speak--thousands of miles away in the halls of Congress, politicians are debating the framework of an immigration reform and even if it should occur at all. I don't presume to predict the outcome. I can only pray that immigration reform will be just, compassionate, and comprehensive. Nor do I know how things will turn out in the end for Postville or for all of our brothers and sisters forever bound by the events of that tragic day. All I do know, all I can hold on to, are the words of Theodore Parker, as paraphrased by Dr. King, who said

"The arc of the Moral Universe Is long, but It bends toward Justice".