How have recent immigration raids/detentions affected the work you do in the community?

What impact do you think immigration policy is having in the community as a whole?

What kind of support can community members and/or city/state government provide?

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Panelists

Rob Gladden has been President of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce for five years. Prior to that, he worked with other chambers and non-profits as well as in public affairs for a large utility company in Massachusetts. The Geneva Chamber formed an agriculture committee two years ago in order to focus on issues that affect the farming community, which is such a large part of our local economy. The immigration situation has taken a lot of the committee’s efforts to date.

Brian Nicholson is the vice president of marketing and sales for Red Jacket Orchards (RJO) and responsible for most of the daily operations. The farm is currently celebrating its 50th year and now farms over 600 acres of orchards while running packing, juicing, retail and distribution operations. You can find fresh RJO produce and award winning juices primarily in the northeast (concentrated in metro NY) and also throughout the east coast. Recently recognized by the Geneva Chamber as “Business of the Year” for its dedication to the community and consistent growth, the business is currently in its third generation of ownership. Red Jacket is focused on providing delicious and healthy products that nurture our customers and family.

Lew Papenfuse is the Executive Director of Farmworker Legal Services of New York, Inc. (FLSNY). FLSNY is a law project that provides free legal services to seasonal and migrant farm workers throughout New York State. FLSNY represents workers in cases claiming discrimination (including race, national origin, gender and disability discrimination), violation of workers’ civil rights, violation of labor laws such as the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act and violation of other state and federal employment laws.

Sister Kay Schwenzer, RSM, has in the past been a high school teacher in Elmira, NY, a missionary and pastoral minister in Chile and a pastoral minister among Hispanics in Rochester, NY. Presently she is Hispanic Pastoral Minister for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester in the areas of Geneva (at Our Lady of Peace Parish), Penn Yan and Newark. In this capacity she ministers spiritually, pastorally and socially among and with settled and migrant Hispanics.

Mary Zelazny began working with Finger Lakes Migrant Health in 1989 as a case manager. The program has grown to a staff of more than 65 employees with Mary Zelazny as the CEO. Finger Lakes Migrant Health offers comprehensive healthcare and enabling services to farmworkers in Upstate New York. As a federally qualified health center, Finger Lakes Migrant Health works to reduce barriers to healthcare such as ability to pay, transportation and language. Finger Lakes Migrant Health assists farmworkers in 40 counties of New York with the Migrant Voucher Program, providing financial assistance with primary medical and dental visits. The Mobile Medical Program provides medical in-camp services in 21 counties with providers offering healthcare in the home or camp setting. Farmworker children are able to access dental services at nine NYS Agribusiness Child Development sites, as well as at six NYS Migrant Education Summer Programs.

Moderator

Neeta Bhasin is an Assistant Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Her teaching and research interests include the intersection of language and identity with special emphasis on migrant/immigrant identities and diasporas, the relationship between language and culture, race and ethnic studies and nationalisms. She is currently teaching a course called Immigrant Experiences: Voices and Discourses. In this course, Bhasin and her students are examining the historical, political and economic aspects of immigration as well as focusing on issues such as ethnicity, culture and cross-cultural divides through written discourse, discussions, films and talks on immigration issues by guest speakers for additional insights.