



## In the Land of the Free

On July 4<sup>th</sup> and through each year we celebrate the concept of freedom in the US. While freedom can mean different things to different people freedom continues to encompass several key elements to all people who overcome great challenges to find it for their lives. The history of the US tells countless tales of people coming here to escape oppression, violence and poverty seeking freedom and a “better” life. Our constitution and government are built on the concept that all men are created equal and deserve freedom and justice. Migration and immigration are cornerstones of our country’s history both distant and current.

What is this concept of freedom that people seek? Why is the drive to find it so strong that people will risk everything to obtain it? What is the current wave of global migration and immigration telling us about human needs and human strength?

We know that all people, children and adults, communicate their needs through their behavior. We use the phrase “actions speak louder than words” to explain interactions and causes. Thus, to understand the current global wave of immigration into the US and throughout the world we need to explore the human drive for freedom.

As human beings we have an innate compelling drive to meet our core basic needs. Those are needs that keep us alive including; food, shelter, safety, human contact. Without these elements securely and dependably in our lives we live in trauma, fear and isolation. We are forced to remove ourselves from unsafe environments and seek safety, food and shelter regardless of the challenges and obstacles in our path. This human condition is at the heart of all migration and immigration... to find a safe place to live which provides us with adequate food, shelter, and keeps those important to us together. People driven by unacceptable circumstances to migrant to safety are not trying to break laws or disrespect boundaries. Their core drive for survival is the overwhelming force that propels them forward even against huge odds.

Those of us who have the freedom which comes from safety, food, shelter and human connections have the responsibility to assist those in need of safety, not to create greater unsafe situations and trauma. While it is necessary to maintain balance and create systems to accommodate all people in need of freedom those systems must be designed to uphold everyone’s basic needs at all times.

Individuals, organizations and governments must work together to develop methods of supporting the needs of all people understanding that once people have freedom in their lives they will support others in need. It is the core of human nature. We must have faith in ourselves and in each other so we can work together in providing freedom for everyone.

**What can you do during this month of celebrating freedom in the US to support freedom for those still seeking it in their lives?**

- \* Can you provide basic needs for others? (food, shelter, clothing, human contact)
- \* Can you raise your voice in protest over unsafe and inhuman conditions?
- \* Can you join others in finding solutions through organizations and advocacy efforts?
- \* Can you become a lawmaker dedicated to creating laws and systems that meet everyone’s needs?

**Let us celebrate freedom this July by fighting for freedom for all people in our country and the world**