



## Together for the growth of our community

October was another month full of activities and achievements for the Brazilian Worker Center and the Brazilian community. We are proud to work hard every day to contribute to the development of our community.

It is gratifying to know that we are constantly advancing, serving the working immigrants with different services and projects.

There were many highlights of the month, mainly our work to keep the Massachusetts Driver's License Act in force and the "Solas Community Leadership Awards" in recognition of our dedication to this fight. The BWC is part of a broad coalition working to bring the Work and Family Mobility Act Law into effect in July 2023. Therefore, your YES on question number 4, on November 8th, is essential to ensure that all eligible drivers are tested, licensed, and insured, making Massachusetts roads safer for everyone.

We also participated in an Immigration Law training and clinic in partnership with the



City of Boston. Our Building Justice committee took an essential step to defend workers against a restaurant. The youth of the Dreamers program continued their personal and professional growth. We had unique visits to the BWC, we celebrated Pink October, and received an important recognition for our work on behalf of the community.

And the work doesn't stop! 2023 is only two months away, but we still have much to accomplish this year. We always count on your support!

Thank you,

**Lenita Reason**

Executive Director of Brazilian Worker Center





## BWC Director receives the "Solas Community Leadership Awards"

On October 5th, the work of the Executive Director of the Brazilian Worker Center, Lenita Reason, as co-chair of the Driving Family Forward (DFF) coalition, earned her the "Solas Community Leadership Awards", promoted by the RIAN Immigrant Center. The honor is a source of great pride as Reason continues to work to uphold the Work and Family Mobility Act, a law that allows eligible Massachusetts residents to obtain a driver's license.

The theme of this year's award was "All are welcome and valued, regardless of country of origin," highlighting the importance of immigrants. "I was thrilled to receive the honor of an organization like RIAN, which was part of this victory and that recognizes my work as one of the leaders of the DFF coalition," thanked the director of the BWC.

RIAN also honored Jules Latouche (Immigrant from Haiti); Chrystel Murreita Ruiz (SEIU Local 32 BJ Policy Coordinator), and Ron O'Hanley (State Street's Chairman).







## Boston Mayor and Police Commissioner support Driver's License



A few days before the elections, the Brazilian Worker Center emphasizes that everyone's support is essential to keep the Massachusetts Driver's License law in place. You must vote YES on question number 4, on November 8th. The BWC is part of a broad coalition working to bring the Work and Family Mobility Act Law into effect in July 2023. Executive Director Lenita Reason is the co-chair of the coalition and explains why voter support is so important.

"As all drivers are tested, licensed, and insured, our roads become safer for everyone. By voting YES, we can ensure that everyone can drive safely regardless of immigration status. We count on your support", he says.



Reason participated in a press conference with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and Boston Police Department Commissioner Michael Cox in the last week of October to discuss the importance of the Work and Family Mobility Act Law.

During the conference, the BWC's director recalled the trajectory of work for the law to be approved and the current challenge to obtain approval in the state elections. "By bringing together more than 270 leaders and organizations, the Driving Families Forward coalition has proven that this law benefits everyone. The law has been endorsed by advocates, church leaders, unions, hospitals, businesses, transportation experts, and many officials, including most of our sheriffs and district attorneys, and most of our top city police chiefs," Reason said. She also thanked Mayor Wu and Commissioner Cox, two leaders responsible for the security of the largest city in the state, for their support, and highlighted her pride in having them as allies.



# Training about Immigration Laws

During three weeks, from October 3 to 20, the Brazilian Worker Center had the opportunity to update itself on Immigration Laws in a 40-hour training offered by the MIRA Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition. BWC's Executive Director Lenita Reason, BWC's Immigrant Rights Coordinator Lorryne Reiter, and Dreamers Fellowship Program Coordinator Andre Coco participated in the online and in-person classes.

One of the highlights was the guided tour of the USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) building, where they learned about the interview process for new permanent residents and U.S. citizens. "The Brazilian Worker Center is constantly improving knowledge, especially about Immigration Laws, to provide quality assistance to our community," emphasizes Lorryne Reiter.



## Immigration Clinic in partnership with the City of Boston

Last October 29th, the Brazilian Worker Center partnered with the City of Boston in a free Immigration Clinic with 11 volunteer lawyers.

The event was organized by the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) and took place throughout the day at Madison Park High School in Roxbury. The BWC was represented by Executive Director Lenita Reason and staff members Lorryne Reiter and Andre Coco. During the clinic, Catholic Charities offered an information session on the requirements to qualify for the asylum application and the participants were directed to speak with one of the Portuguese or Spanish-speaking lawyers. More than 30 people were assisted, most of them Brazilians with less than one year living in the US. The most discussed topics were related to asylum, change of address, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and the SIJS (Special Immigrant Juvenile Status) visa.

For Lenita Reason, initiatives like this are essential to provide clarification by reliable sources, such as immigration lawyers.





## Support to former employees of Braza Grill to receive salaries



In October, the Brazilian Worker Center took another step in the case of Brazilian workers who did not receive wages. Supported by the BWC, through the Building Justice Committee and Justice at Work, a group of four former employees of the extinct Framingham-based Braza Grill & Grill Buffet Restaurant is taking legal action again to try to collect back wages in the full amount of \$13,184.00. They had already filed suit in 2020, but the case had several ramifications and is now

expected to be reopened.

Former owner Alessandro Vicente and his partner Amanda Lopes-Vicente closed the restaurant and were in debt to the employees. They declared bankruptcy, which technically relieved them of obligation. But with the work of the Building Justice Committee and Justice at Work lawyers, workers will have another chance to fight to receive what is rightfully theirs.

"Building Justice is a committee that fights for justice at work. All people have the right to receive, regardless of immigration status. We handle cases like this every day, and the Brazilian Worker Center supports workers in respecting their rights. It is important that the community knows they will have our support when their rights are violated. In this case, we will be together with them until they receive what they are entitled to", says Lenita Reason, Executive Director of the BWC.

## Dreamers Fellowship encourages youth development

The special Fall edition of the Dreamers Fellowship Program is in full swing. In October, the Brazilian Worker Center started another project group, which is a partnership with the City of Boston and other non-governmental organizations. This time, the program is bringing together 15 students between 14 and 20 years old, who stood out in the Spring and Summer editions. Students continue the startups they created in the previous editions they participated in. The goal is to apply in practice the concepts they are learning about entrepreneurship and other topics related to the business world. According to André Coco, the young people have 9 hours of classes per week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, at the BWC headquarters. The content offered is quite varied, covering topics related to social justice, mental health, health and safety at work, and community engagement. In addition, they also participate in BWC-supported events.







## BWC and Dreamers support Maura Healey for Governor

The Brazilian Worker Center team and the young students of the Dreamers Fellowship Program participated last October 29 in a rally in support of Massachusetts governorship candidate Maura Healey, congresswoman Ayanna Presley, and state attorney general candidate Andrea Campbell. The event brought together the press and supporters and highlighted the importance of voting yes on Question 1, which refers to the taxation of large fortunes, and also yes on Question 4, to keep the law that approved the Driver's License in place for all Massachusetts residents, regardless of immigration status. The participation of Dreamers youth in this type of public action is part of the program's curriculum of study, focused on Civic Engagement, which generates excellent citizenship learning for all.







## Attorney Michael Foglia reinforces partnership with BWC

Partnerships are fundamental for the provision of services to the community. That's why the Brazilian Worker Center has a support network of several organizations and professionals. One of them is attorney Michael Foglia, a longtime partner of the BWC, who paid a special visit to the staff in early October. Accompanied by the new members of his office team, Foglia reinforced his connection with the Brazilian Worker Center in various causes and projects over the years.

Well-known in the Brazilian community, the lawyer is the founder of Foglia Associates, a law firm specializing in criminal cases and personal injury located in Framingham. To celebrate the get-together with our team, the lawyer offered a Brazilian lunch, and all employees had the opportunity to get involved. "It was great to be together with this wonderful team. We share the same goals in serving our community. Our team will always support the Brazilian Worker Center in its fight for the rights of the immigrant community", highlighted Foglia.

## Winning Women celebrate Pink October



Aware of its educational role within the Brazilian community, the Brazilian Worker Center once again supported Pink October, a month dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of fighting breast cancer. On October 14th, the BWC hosted a special event with the participation of members of the Mulheres Vencedoras group, formed by women survivors of cancer and their supporters. The group has been meeting for several years at the BWC, giving support to each other and exchanging experiences.

According to the project coordinator, Paula Correa, the event disseminated information about the importance of self-examination for breast cancer prevention, in addition to distributing explanatory materials. The live music night, led by singer Thiago Diniz, was attended by Jamila Xible and Cleatia Cassarino (Cambridge Health Alliance). Erika Souza, one of the BWC Board of Directors, also donated her time for the decoration and organization of the event.





## Staff expands knowledge about communication



Taking into account the importance of communication nowadays and its informative role in the Brazilian community, the BWC staff participated in the training led by journalist Fabiano Ferreira at the end of October. The objective was to improve communication tools to expand the reach of BWC's actions through the website, newsletters, social networks, and the Brazilian and American media. Alexandre Simões also trained participants to use a platform that stores data, photos, and videos of all projects, campaigns, and events in which the Brazilian Worker Center participates.

## Momentum Training

Anna Barbosa, BWC's Director of Development, has attended a three-day virtual training on October 28th, 29th, and 30th, hosted by the Momentum Community. The almost 19th training focused on topics related to the organization of social movements in the USA and Momentum Theory. Organizers with different levels of experience attended the training and had the opportunity to exchange stories, learn from each other, and improve their knowledge on current methodologies associated with social movement organizing. The attendees also reinforced their leadership skills and had the opportunity to build their own professional network with fellow organizers.

**On November 8th, please don't forget to vote yes on Question 4 to keep the work family mobility act law in place.**

