



## Dance Builds Community



Each year, Cornell's PAO Bhangra Exhibition brings together dance teams, Cornell students, and community members for a high-energy celebration. A long-standing partnership between Cornell Bhangra and IWR has developed around this event. In our [latest blog post](#), learn from this year's Bhangra team co-presidents about the origins of the dance style, the value of community at the heart of the show, and their support for IWR. PAO Bhangra XXIII will take place in Barton Hall on Cornell campus on March 7th, 2026 at 6:00 pm, with show proceeds to benefit IWR. Not to be missed! Tickets available [here](#).

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## IWR Outreach

Amid divided public opinion over current federal policies and law enforcement practices targetting immigrants, IWR staff are helping to spread understanding on this topic based on experience supporting people affected in our community. On January 31, Programs Coordinator Leigh Bacher represented IWR at an interfaith rally of prayer and protest at St John's Episcopal Church in Ithaca, and on February 7, Executive Director Casey Verderosa spoke at a Cornell undergraduate course [event](#) titled Pathways to Purpose – Civic Leadership in Law, Health, Tech, and Business. If you are interested in having IWR staff give a talk in your school, community group or workplace, drop a line to: [leilaw@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org](mailto:leilaw@ithacawelcomesrefugees.org).

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## Use Your Voice



In our [October newsletter](#) we reported on IWR's advocacy, alongside others in the community, against AI-powered police cameras that have been installed by Flock Safety under contracts with the City of Ithaca and Tompkins County. Tools of mass surveillance have great potential for misuse, including by aggressive immigration enforcement entities. This week, the Ithaca Times is using its Question of the Week to poll the community on this topic, asking readers "Should Ithaca end its contract with Flock and disable its license plate reader cameras throughout the city?" You can read up on why residents are expressing concern in [this Ithaca Voice article](#) and [vote here](#) to show local decision-makers the strength of opposition to Flock surveillance!

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## Lessons from Immigration Curbs Past

January brought severe new federal [restrictions](#) on immigration to the US from a long list of countries. A recent [op-ed](#) co-authored by Cornell law school

professors Dan Berger and Steve Yale-Loehr puts these policy changes into historical perspective. With the title "Back to the future: Trump's restrictions echo the Immigration Act of 1924," the authors provide a valuable reminder of the negative economic effects of similar restrictions enacted by the U.S. government a century ago.

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## Seeking Gently Used Jewelry for 2026 Benefit Sale

We are delighted to announce that long-time IWR supporters Debbie Benzer and Yvonne Fogarty have begun planning this year's jewelry sale fundraiser in aid of IWR programs!

The team is now collecting donations for the sale, to take place on November 21, 2026 in Ithaca. All jewelry sold at the sale is gently used and donated by people like you. If you or your friends (bring your friends!) have jewelry to donate, this is an excellent time to get it cleaned and organized. All items are welcome, including necklaces, earrings, bracelets, hair pins and barrettes, rings, pins, tie pins, watches, ankle bracelets, cuff links, and anything else!

Please separate items by category in bags, small boxes, etc. Necklaces can be tied with a twist tie to avoid tangling. For items that are more valuable, please include a note alerting the team so they can be professionally appraised and priced accordingly. We do have places that buy random pieces of gold or silver, ex: broken chains or only one earring from a pair.

This is the 14th year that the team has organized jewelry sales to benefit local or national non-profit organizations. It is always a fun event! To donate jewelry, volunteer at the sale or for any questions, please contact **Debbie at 607 279-7174 (Dpbenzer@twcny.rr.com)** or **Yvonne at 607-592-2799**.

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## Gratitude

Our hearts have been warmed this month by the incredible show of support for refugees and immigrants shown by local businesses and their clients over the past weeks, as the nation processes the killings of [Renee Good](#) and [Alex Pretti](#) and the violence being perpetrated against immigrants by law enforcement on streets and in detention centers across the country. On

January 30th, many small businesses in the area found ways to contribute to a national wave of action in protest against ICE. A total of 18 businesses and groups chose to fundraise for IWR, many sacrificing a portion of their profits to support us. Thank you so much to everyone behind these generous contributions! You are a vital part of the bottom-up care and support for our immigrant and refugee neighbors in need that remains strong in Tompkins County. We appreciate you!

So far, we have received donations from: [Kitchen Theatre Company](#), [Botanist Coffee House](#), [4 Seasons Landscaping](#), [GreenStar Coop](#), [Protagonist Books & Coffee](#), [Connected Stitches Yarn and Fiber Shop](#), [Flake](#), [Show Pony Studio](#), [Buffalo Street Books](#), [Z Core Pilates](#) and [The Kaleidoscope House](#). We are also grateful to [Wide Awake Bakery](#), which runs ongoing fundraisers for IWR and also donated to us in the past month.



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