
Hughes Hubbard & Reed

Firm Helps Guatemalan Family Stay Together in US

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August 29, 2018 — Hughes Hubbard has successfully taken the first steps in helping a 5-year-old Guatemalan girl achieve legal permanent residence in the U.S.

Her mother came to the U.S. some years earlier to flee an abusive husband and set up a life to support her children. The girl arrived in the U.S. in early 2017 and was reunited with her mother and younger brother (who was born in the U.S.) after being abandoned and neglected by her father in Guatemala.

HHR received the case in mid-2017 from Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), a nonprofit organization that partners with law firms to provide legal counsel to unaccompanied refugee and immigrant children in the U.S. The firm represented the girl in her motion for a special findings order and assisted the mother with her petition for guardianship.

At a family court hearing on July 30, 2018, after hearing testimony from the mother, the judge granted the mother's guardianship petition and the girl's motion for a special findings order. That special findings order will allow the girl to apply for special immigrant juvenile status, the granting of which will ultimately permit her to petition for legal permanent residence in the U.S.

It has been a stressful 12 months for the mother, and she was happy and relieved with the outcome of the July 30 hearing. Although the client is a little too young to understand what happened in court, she was excited to be given a cuddly white teddy bear from the court during the hearing.

Mel Pudig worked on this matter with the assistance of Alejandro Carrasco and Esther Stultz, and the supervision of Vilia Hayes.

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Vilia B. Hayes