

Basalt woman works on two fronts to stay in U.S.

[By Nancy Lofholm](#)
[The Denver Post](#)

When Norma Galindo Gonzales was awakened by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents at her Basalt home early May 1, a valley with a history of opposing perceived unfair immigration enforcement also was roused.

People rallied against the action in Glenwood Springs three days later. School officials and church representatives wrote letters of opposition. Local and state immigrants' rights groups began stirring up a growing swell of protest that has served in the past to bring attention to other illegal immigrants' plights in the Roaring Fork Valley.

"What everybody here did when I was in detention was huge. I would not be out there without the pressure everyone put on the Department of Homeland Security," said [Edgar Niebla, who was detained and threatened with deportation in 2010](#). He had been brought to the United States illegally at the age of 7 and had earned the community's respect in the ensuing 20 years. His deportation was delayed while his case has moved through the appeals process.

Niebla is now one of those leading the fight to stop the deportation of Gonzales.

Gonzales' case might not be receiving so much attention if one of her sons, Hector Morales, had not recently garnered so many public kudos for his accomplishments.

Hector Morales, 18, has been accepted to Duke University to study engineering and was one of 258 seniors across Colorado to be awarded a full-ride Daniels Fund scholarship. He is a member of the National Honor Society and is slated to graduate June 2 from Basalt High School.

"The Morales family should be celebrated as a model for all our families. We should be honoring them, not tearing them apart," said Daniel LeBlanc, a Basalt High teacher and basketball coach.

Norma Gonzales was ordered deported in 2005 after she attempted to use someone else's birth certificate to obtain a Colorado identification card. At that time, she had been living in the country for nearly 15 years.

Gonzales has two sons who were born in the United States and are thus American citizens. Her husband is undocumented, but his brother has filed a petition to make him a legal resident.

"She had a moral dilemma. Do you stay and raise your kids or go back to a place that would be unthinkable to take your family to?" said Gonzales' attorney, Ted Hess.

An ICE spokeswoman noted that ICE is committed to removing criminal aliens and last year removed a record 216,000. Thus far in 2012, 52 percent of individuals ICE has removed have been convicted-criminal immigrants.

ICE is operating under a new directive since last summer that stresses the removal of the most serious criminals. ICE includes immigration fugitives and those who have ignored deportation orders in the priority category for removal.

Read more: [Basalt woman works on two fronts to stay in U.S. - The Denver Post](http://www.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci_20597558/roaring-fork-valley-fights-immigration-plans-deport-basalt#ixzz1usmOHv55)
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