

Orange County Interfaith Committee To Aid Farm Workers



AUGUST 2017

JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER 24th FOR OUR NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY FUNDRAISER WITH SPEAKER PETER O'DRISCOLL

We are very excited to welcome Peter O'Driscoll, Executive Director of the Equitable Food Initiative (EFI), as our speaker for our 52nd Annual Farm Worker Celebration.

EFI is a relatively new and innovative collaborative initiated by Oxfam America to ensure food safety, pest management, and better working conditions for farm workers. It has enjoyed the support of the NFWM and the UFW from the beginning as well as that of Costco, Bon Appetit, and others.

While Oxfam America incubated the organization while it got established and built a support base, in 2015, EFI incorporated as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization. Effective April 1, 2015, EFI spun off from Oxfam and now has its own facilities and staff, while still maintaining a board of members from all the participating partners.

For more information about EFI, visit their website:

<http://www.equitablefood.org/>



**SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 24, 2017**

Sisters of St. Joseph
Multipurpose Room
480 S. Batavia in Orange
**5PM Silent Auction/
Social Hour
6PM Dinner
7PM Program**

Pre-paid Reservations by September 18th please:

Make your check out to **NFWM**

\$25 per person (\$10 students) and \$30 at the door

Send to Suzanne Darweesh

2104 Hilltop Court, Fullerton, CA 92831

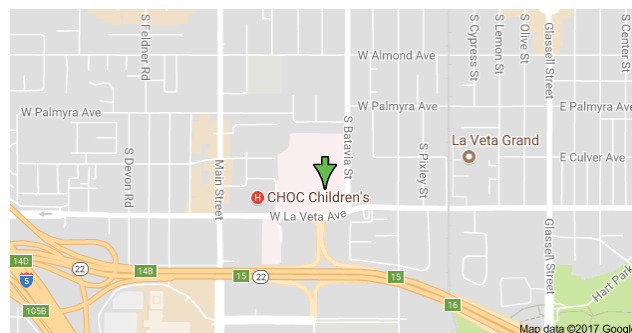
Contributions to the silent auction are always welcome.

Contact Suzanne at sdarweesh@aol.com for more information.

The venue is located just north of the #22 freeway and between the #55 and #57 freeways. The multi-purpose room is found in the building behind the motherhouse. Make a left turn upon entering and find plenty of parking to the side and rear.

GOODBYE TO THE IVENS!

Regretfully we express our deep gratitude to Nadene and Jim Ivens for their many years of service to our committee. They have both served as treasurers, helped with registration, mailing lists, phone tree calling, name tags, centerpieces, etc. Barbara Johnson and Nadene produced our newsletter for many years. The Ivens are moving up north and we wish them well in their new location. We will miss them very much!



FAMILIAS UNIDAS POR LA JUSTICIA

On June 16, 2017 FUJ in Washington state signed an historic two year collective bargaining agreement with Sakuma Farms so FUJ workers can now labor under better conditions and pay. We can eat berries again! The workers would not have won this contract without consumer support. Thank you!

Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers

Chair:

Suzanne Darweesh,

Treasurer:

Nadene Ivens

Fundraising:

Tina Laine

Church Liaison:

Barbara Johnson

Newsletter:

Pam Presnall

Labor Liaison:

Marty Schrank

Others: Chuck Buck, Mike Clements, Sara Halverson-Cano, Jim Ivens, Bill Steiner, Henry Weil, Al White



Farmworker Web Pages:

www.ufw.org (UFW)

www.floc.com (FLOC)

www.pcun.org (PCUN)

www.ciw-online.org (CIW)

www.nfwm.org (NFWM)

If you would like to contribute and have your name inscribed inside the new UFW building, contact sdarweesh@aol.com or the UFW website directly. Please mention OC Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers as we committed to raise \$10,000 and we still lack \$1,200 in achieving our goal.

LATEST FARMWORKER DEVELOPMENTS

NFWM and FLOC

The board of the National Farm Worker Ministry will combine its fall meeting with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's Convention and 50th Anniversary in Toledo, Ohio from September 7-9. Irene Arellano, local CLUE organizer, will be attending.

FLOC is in the midst of a multi-prong campaign with big tobacco companies to gain freedom of association for 20,000 tobacco farm workers in their supply chain. Previously, FLOC won collective bargaining rights for tens of thousands of farm workers through its Campbell's Soup and Mt. Olive Pickles campaigns.

Also, the North Carolina legislature recently passed, and the Governor signed, farm bill S 615 that included two egregious amendments seriously restricting FLOC's ability to do union organizing. In response to this assault on FLOC, the NFWM filed conflict of interest complaints with the NC Legislative Ethics Commission as the two legislators who moved these amendments through at the eleventh hour of the session are farmers who stand to benefit from this bill. Farmers have their own cooperatives and associations.

UFW News

United Farm Workers First Vice-President Giev Kashkooli spoke recently to a House Immigration Sub-committee in support of Agriculture Workers Program Act, (AWPA) HR2690, and against increasing the guest worker program, (H2A workers). AWPA would allow professional farm workers to earn legal status in the US. "It's the best and fastest way to match willing workers to willing employers," said Kashkooli. Efforts are underway to increase the bill's co-sponsors and gain bi-partisan support.

On May 5, in Kern County, wind brought drifts of chlorpyrifos-based pesticides into a neighboring field, sickening farm workers, (vomiting and fainting). Kern County regulators fined two farms \$50,250. The US EPA refused to ban the chemical chlorpyrifos this year despite the fact that studies show its negative effects upon children and farm workers. Its use in California has been decreasing in recent years.

The construction of UFW's building in Salinas progresses. It was a dream of Cesar Chavez to construct a building there where 65,000 farm worker families reside. The new building will house a large auditorium for meetings, classrooms, and offices for servicing UFW members, and more.

BOYCOTT WENDY'S

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers, CIW, in Florida, has asked us to support their boycott of Wendy's.

Wendy's is the last of the major fast food corporations that has not signed onto the Fair Food agreement which not only would pay farm workers an extra penny a pound for tomatoes, but also would ensure better working conditions in the fields, a policy against sexual harassment, (which is a major problem), plus an enforcement mechanism. Taco Bell and Yum Brands, its parent company, signed many years ago followed by McDonalds, Burger King, Subway, Wal-mart, and others.

Wendy's responded by announcing a new supplier code of conduct which lacks worker participation, enforcement, and a pay increase for tomato pickers. Wendy's has also abandoned the Florida tomato industry and now buys its tomatoes from Mexico where farm worker conditions are much worse. Wendy's profits from farm worker poverty and enjoys a cost advantage over its competitors. Letters to Wendy's managers can be downloaded from the NFWM's website.

SAD NEWS. Honesto Silva Ibarra, an H2A worker, died in Harborville Hospital in Seattle earlier this month. After complaining to his supervisor that he felt ill, he was sent back into the fields where he passed out. Approximately 70 fellow workers went on strike protesting not only Ibarra's death, but also their poor working conditions, including no shade breaks from the 90 degree temperatures. The company fired them. The situation is complicated because the government H2A visa binds them to one employer, who, consequently had not renewed expired visas. The company initially refused to give the workers their paychecks or provide transportation money home, provisions of the H2A program. The workers were stranded and sought help from the FUJ. Ultimately, the Mexican Consulate in Seattle and state inspectors got involved. The story of these workers highlights the serious problems with the H2A guestworker program, which is no solution to any agricultural labor shortage.