NFWM Vigil at Grape Vineyard Remembers Farm Workers Who Have Died in California Fields

The board & staff of NFWM were in Los Angeles in July for our semi-annual board meeting. We traveled to the area around Arvin and met with farm workers and United Farm Worker (UFW) staff. We also met with UFW co-founder Dolores Huerta and held a prayer vigil alongside a grape vineyard. NFWM President Felix Garza later spoke at an immigration rally in Bakersfield, where we heard from several Giumarra workers during dinner.

Felix Garza speaks of solidarity with immigrant workers.

Dolores Huerta talks about the organizing work of the Dolores Huerta Foundation.

Hearing from workers who are grateful to learn of NFWM support around the country.

NFWM Board President Felix Garza (holding grapes), Maria Vidal, NFWM-CA Support Committee (holding cross), and NFWM board and staff declare “Presente” for the farm workers who have died in our fields.

Giumarra workers talked about conditions at the company where picking one bad grape can lead to forced time off.

NFWM staff Alex Jones & Christy Lafferty, Dolores Huerta, Olgha Sandman, NFWM staff Lucy Boutte & Virginia Nesmith, Jeanne Giordano, seated.

Over 60,000 farm workers labor in California’s grape vineyards.
On July 22nd, the Orlando YAYA (Youth & Young Adult) chapter of NFWM organized a rally in front of Florida Senator LeMieux’s office in Orlando. Ninety people called on the senator to support the AgJobs bill and the Dream Act. Members of the Deland-YAYA chapter, as well as several other organizations including the Farmworker Association of Florida, joined the rally. YAYAs have been active throughout the spring and summer in supporting both pieces of legislation.

**OFWM Supporting Ruby Ridge Workers**

Oregon Farm Worker Ministry Board member John Nichols says a blessing over the water cooler that he and others attempted to deliver to Ruby Ridge Dairy for the workers. The delegation was denied access to the dairy and told to leave the water cooler at the entry to the property. For more than a year, workers have been fired and harassed for seeking UFW representation. OFWM and allies continue to provide supportive actions to the workers in their struggle for justice.

NFWM-NC & a group from the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship spent an afternoon developing relationships and building solidarity with a group of men living and working on a tobacco farm in Person County, NC.

**Sodexo Signs...one more CIW Victory!**

On August 23rd, the foodservice giant Sodexo signed an agreement to work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) to improve wages and working conditions in the fields of its Florida tomato suppliers.

With this announcement, all three of the largest foodservice companies, Compass, Aramark, and Sodexo, have now signed Fair Food agreements and will be implementing those agreements in their supply chains this coming season. This victory marks the conclusion of the Student/Farmworker Alliance’s successful “Dine with Dignity” campaign. **Congratulations to CIW and SFA!**

CIW is calling on the supermarket industry, particularly Publix, Ahold, Kroger and WalMart, to step up and bring their considerable purchasing power to bringing justice to the fields. NFWM supporters have been active in outreach to Publix in Florida. For current actions in your locality, visit: [http://www.ciw-online.org/tools.html](http://www.ciw-online.org/tools.html)

**“Hit the Fields” Soccer Game in Florida**

NFWM-Florida partnered with the Alliance of Active Women (AMA) to organize a soccer game fundraiser to support their work with farm worker women in central Florida. A team comprised of 15 farm worker women from Volusia County played against a team of 15 NFWM YAYA supporters. The farm worker team won 3-2. The event was a success, raising $2,300. And it was an opportunity for YAYAs and other supporters to share, play and laugh together with farm workers of the area.

**OCIC Annual Fundraiser for NFWM**

Over 100 people attended the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farmworkers Annual Fundraiser dinner for NFWM on August 1st. NFWM Board President Felix Garza and Director Virginia Nesmith were the featured speakers. Many NFWM staff, in LA for the board meeting, attended. Thank you to OCIC co-chairs Suzanne Darweesh & Andy Saavedra (pictured), among others, for a successful event that raised more than $5,000.
Christy Lafferty joined NFWM in January 2009 as a United Methodist Mission Intern. During her 18 months in California, Christy helped organize many actions on behalf of the United Farm Workers’ campaign with Giumarra Vineyards, with a focus on re-energizing the support of Los Angeles area faith communities and young people. Twice during her internship, Christy worked briefly with UFW field teams in the San Joaquin Valley helping to organize grape workers. This fall, Christy will return to Nicaragua, where she did her UM Mission internship prior to coming to NFWM.

Christy says, “Throughout the year and a half with NFWM, I met an incredible number of inspiring people amongst the staff and board of NFWM, the farm worker organizations, farm worker supporters, and of course, the farm workers themselves. I have had a life-changing experience that I will never forget.”

We Bid Farewell to Christy Lafferty

With leadership from NFWM’s Lucy Boutte and Margarita Mota, NFWM has a new support committee in the San Gabriel region of Los Angeles made up of representatives of many of the area Hispanic churches. Committee members have held prayer vigils, met with farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley and most recently conducted a raffle for former staffer Christy Lafferty’s car, raising over $7,000 for NFWM. ¡Si se Puede!

Celebrating CA’s New Support Committee

Coming Soon … Spanish language version of NFWM’s resource, Blessing the Hands: A Curriculum on Farm Workers for Faith Communities. This resource will be available as a free download from our website or as a hard copy for $5.00. Check our website in November.

Farm Worker Monument Dedicated

Astronaut Jose Hernandez, who grew up in a family of farm workers, and NFWM Director Virginia Nesmith were among the speakers at the dedication of a monument in Santa Paula, CA honoring the nation’s farm workers. The monument, which is the first of its kind in the country, was the inspiration of Albino Pineda who worked in the fields as a young man. Pineda left farm labor and served at one time as director of Latino Ministries for the United Methodist Church in Southern California. He never forgot how hard farm labor is and believes farm workers deserve recognition.

Hernandez spoke of the importance of education in his journey from farm worker to astronaut, and his experience in space, including a view of North America that showed no boundaries between countries. “I wish our politicians could all go up to see the world from this perspective”, said Hernandez.

Astronaut Jose Hernandez poses with an NFWM shopping bag given to him by NFWM Director Virginia Nesmith, and California organizer Lucy Boutte.

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Christy Lafferty llegó a NFWM en enero de 2009 como un pasante de Misión Metodista Unida. Durante sus 18 meses en California, Christy ayudó a organizar muchas acciones con la Unión de Campesinos (UFW) en la campaña de Giuramam Vineyards, con un enfoque de revitalizar el apoyo de las comunidades de fe y jóvenes en la área de Los Angeles. Dos veces durante su pasantía, Christy trabajó brevemente con equipos de campo de UFW en el valle de San Joaquin ayudando a organizar a los trabajadores de la uva. Este otoño, Christy regresa a Nicaragua, donde participó en la Mesa Directiva Unida antes de venir a NFWM.

Christy, dice, "durante todo el año y medio con NFWM, me reuní con un número cuantificable de personas inspiradoras entre el personal y la Mesa Directiva de NFWM, las organizaciones de trabajadores agrícolas, apoyadores del trabajador agrícola y por supuesto, los propios trabajadores agrícolas. He tenido una experiencia de cambio de vida que nunca olvidaré."

Por llegar .... **Recurso de NFWM en Español, Bendiciendo las Manos: A Currículo sobre Trabajadores Agrícolas para comunidades de fe.** Este recurso estar disponible bajándolo en nuestra pagina web gratis o puede orden copia imprimida por $5.00. Favor de ver nuestra pagina web en Noviembre.

**NFWM cuenta con la ayuda financiera de individuos para continuar el trabajo de apoyo para los trabajadores agrícolas en la lucha para ganar justicia. Favor de usar el sobre incluido y que su donación sea generosa y a su alcance. Gracias**

Para mas noticias de actividades de NFWM y de campañas de trabajadores agrícolas regularmente visite www.nfwm.org. Y ya que esta allí, inscríbase para recibir E-news.
NFWM Joins Global Farm Workers Meeting in California

Virginia Nesmith, NFWM’s Executive Director, was among the participants at the First International Global Agricultural Industry and Waged Agricultural Workers Conference in California sponsored by the UFW, Oxfam America and Oxfam Nobib. Representatives of farm worker organizations from the U.S., South Africa, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, India, Bangladesh, and the Philippines, as well as Oxfam colleagues from Morocco, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands attended.

During the three day meeting, participants shared information about farm worker conditions and the work they are doing in their respective countries. The similarity in oppressive conditions and challenges from continent to continent is remarkable.

Everyone left convinced that just as agribusiness and the food retail industry are global in scope, it is critical that farm worker representatives begin to communicate and collaborate on a global level. The conference planted the seeds for that work, as they opened the door to the future with new knowledge, energy and hope.

“Thank a Farm Worker” Shopping Bags Make Great Holiday Gifts!

Every time you shop, other shoppers get the message - “Did You Eat Today - Thank a Farmworker!” And your donation of $10 or more, supports NFWM’s work for justice for farm workers.

- environmentally friendly, made in the USA
- natural cotton, 18”w x 15”h, with 7” gussets and 25” handles
- eliminates an average of 1,000 plastic bags over its lifetime.

To order by credit card, visit www.nfwm.org.
To order by check, fill out the order form and mail to us with your check, payable to NFWM.

Take Action to Support Tobacco Farm Workers

JOIN FLOC’s JP Morgan Chase Bank Divestment Campaign

JP Morgan Chase is one of the lead banks in a consortium of lenders that provides $498 million dollars in credit to Reynolds American, one of the largest tobacco companies in the US. While Reynolds American and JP Morgan Chase make billions, tobacco farm workers continue to suffer serious human rights abuses in the fields.

As a major lender to Reynolds, Chase has the stature and resources to convince the tobacco giant to address exploitation of tobacco farm workers, but Chase has so far failed to do so. On September 8th, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), as part of its campaign with Reynolds, launched a divestment campaign with Chase to convince them to act on behalf of farm workers.

- Make a pledge to close your Chase Bank accounts and/or Chase credit cards until Reynolds agrees to work with FLOC to find a solution to the abuses or until Chase severs financial ties with Reynolds.
- Organize a leafleting / bank manager action at your local Chase Bank branch. For a complete toolkit, visit www.nfwm.org for the link from our home page; or call 314-726-6470.

Visit www.supportfloc.org, to send an E-Fax of your divestment pledge directly to Chase Bank. If you are not on the web, call NFWM’s national office at 314-726-6470 to make the pledge.

In 2009, Reynolds American CEO Susan Ivey earned $7,905 per hour. That’s about the same as a tobacco farm worker earns in an entire season.

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Send me _____ NFWM Shopping Bag (s) for a $10.00 donation each. Enclosed is my check for $ ________

Name ____________________________________________________________
Mailing Address __________________________________________________
Phone ___________________________ email ________________________________

(Please Print)

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Can you make an extra gift this year?

Your support is vital to NFWM’s work and to the farm workers who rely on us to support them in their efforts to gain justice.

Please use the enclosed envelope to send in an extra, and much needed, gift today.

Have you remembered to put NFWM in your will, trust, insurance policy or estate plan?

Thank You for your Support!

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