

## The National Farm Worker Ministry

### NFWM Board Meets in Toledo, OH during FLOC Convention

The NFWM Board held our bi-annual meeting in conjunction with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's Constitutional Convention. It was a great opportunity to see farm worker democracy in action, meet old friends, make new ones and act with FLOC in support of immigrant rights. For more news, turn the page.

Society of the Sacred Heart



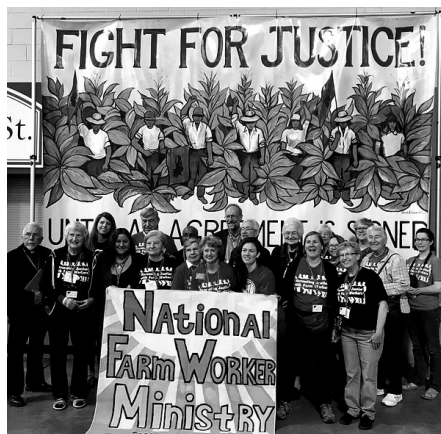
School Sisters of Notre Dame



United Methodist Women



Photo by John Hill, The UMC General Board of Church & Society



## Farm Workers Vote to Boycott Reynolds VUSE E-Cigarette



When the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) held its 13<sup>th</sup> Convention in Toledo, OH on September 9<sup>th</sup>, the National Farm Worker Ministry was on hand to share the work and celebration with them.

NFWM was asked to open the Convention by declaring the space a sanctuary space and offering a prayer for their work. Felix Garza, Immediate Past President and Sisters of Charity of Nazareth representative, with 16 board members, staff and several guests standing behind him (pictured above) prayed in Spanish, *"...On this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, in this year of jubilee, we continue to build on and improve the work of our parents and generations who struggled years before. We thank you for the safe arrival of the many delegations of workers who traveled long distances from several states. We ask your blessings on this convention...."*

*God of justice, help us to see clearly how to move*

*forward to improve the living and working conditions of all farm workers in this country."*

FLOC's convention represented the culmination of a year of camp and regional membership meetings in both Mexico and the US, as well as the successes of the past 50 years of FLOC's work.

An important moment of the convention came when, in a unanimous vote, delegates passed a resolution to boycott Reynolds American's e-cigarette VUSE to escalate the campaign with the tobacco giant to guarantee freedom of association in their supply chain and the farm workers right to organize!



After ten years of campaign actions and five years of talking, no agreement has been reached that results in substantial improvements in the living and working conditions for tobacco farm workers in the Southeast. It's time Reynolds American and its parent company British American Tobacco do the right thing!

The NFWM board will be voting this Fall on a resolution endorsing the boycott and then we will create boycott campaign resources. Please keep updated through our website and social media. The farm workers seeking justice from the big tobacco companies need YOUR support to win!

### MESSAGE FROM FLOC...

**Thank you to everyone who helped make this convention possible!**

The convention would not have been possible without our amazing volunteers and drivers who helped register delegates, pick up and transport members, act as security to keep our members safe, and translate between Spanish and English. A special thanks to the National Farm Worker Ministry and YAYA. And more thanks for phenomenal help in NC from Dave Austin and Triangle Friends of Farmworkers.



A highlight of the board meeting was connecting with FLOC's Homie union for dinner and sharing on Thursday evening. Thank you to Tiffany Kidd, Homie Coordinator, and NFWM's Dominique Aulisio for organizing the visit.

NFWM Executive Committee member, Mary Martens, Sisters of Charity, BVM says it well, "The relationships, stories and connections are always important to me at our meetings...Among the best events was our welcome of the 'Homies' at supper time. It took me back to my years of teaching high school and college students, seeing many of the same emerging leadership traits present in these young people..."



## More FLOC News

### FLOC's Campaign is Global

In August, the IUF (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations) voted to join FLOC's global fight for justice by passing a resolution to guarantee farm workers around the world the right to work together to negotiate the conditions of their labor without fear of retaliation.

### NC Legislature's Assault on FLOC

This past summer, the North Carolina Legislature passed & Gov. Roy Cooper signed S615, the Farm Bill, with a shameful amendment added at the last minute. The amendment makes it illegal for farmers, who have signed union agreements, to deduct dues from union members who want to pay those dues; and it makes it illegal for farm workers to ask growers to sign an agreement with their union as part of settling wage or other legal violations. This is a blatant assault on FLOC and the gains they have made organizing workers in NC.

In July, FLOC held a press conference (see the story on our website) to denounce S615. FLOC is pursuing a possible Constitutional challenge to S615 and NFWM filed complaints with the NC Legislative Ethics Committee against the two main movers of the amendment, both farmers, for conflict of interest. After confidential hearings about which NFWM had no knowledge, the Ethics Committee denied NFWM's complaints. Follow up actions are being considered.

UCC Justice & Witness Ministries



Stephen Bartlett (left), long time NFWM friend since his days with Agricultural Missions, is organizing for FLOC in Kentucky. NFWM Board member Felix Garza is on the right.

### FLOC Organizing Workers in Kentucky

On October 11, seven tobacco farm workers from Nayarit, Mexico here through the H2A guest worker program initiated a strike on Wayne Day's farm near Paint Lick, KY. "We are on strike because of the unfair pay of the grower who hopes to get away with not paying us the correct wage. We came to work for a better life for our families through sacrifice and sweat... Even working at a high speed, we cannot earn a living wage on this farm," said Cristian Santillan. The seven FLOC members want Day to recognize the union, negotiate with FLOC, and pay the stolen wages promised in their contract.

On October 15, FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez and a group of supporters from Kentucky traveled to the labor camp to meet with the workers and deliver a letter to the grower, who said that if the workers don't like the wages they can return to Mexico.

NFWM is thankful that unlike most U.S. Guestworkers these men have a union to support them, as Familias Unidas por la Justicia did this past season for workers at Sarbanand Farms in Washington state.

## Young Activists Participate in NFWM's Board Meeting



YAYA Coordinator Dominique, Irene & Mallory

NFWM tried something new at the September Board meeting -- to bring young adults from our member organizations. Mallory Daily, Loretto Community Volunteers Program Coordinator, and Irene Arellano, Faith Rooted Organizer with CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) in Orange County, CA and member of OCIC, engaged with NFWM's issues and mission and participated in discussions and activities throughout the meeting as well as the farm worker engagement day at the FLOC Convention. NFWM staff, along with their member organizations' board member, are mentoring Mallory and Irene to continue serving both their constituents and NFWM to impact farm worker justice.

Reflecting on the experience, Mallory said, *"My weekend with the National Farm Worker Ministry opened my eyes to the intersectionality of the farm worker justice movement. Farm worker justice involves pretty much everything I've ever cared about as a human being involved in justice & peace work: immigration rights, worker rights, climate change mitigation, food system repair, corporate accountability, reform of free trade agreements, and more... This experience put real people on the other side of my food. I've known for a long time that our food system in the U.S. is warped and nefarious, but now I've seen the faces of those that suffer at the hands of it the most."*

We will continue this project for future bi-annual board meetings, including the one in January in Orlando, FL. If you are interested, either as a sponsor or as a young activist, please contact Julie Taylor.

## Congratulations to Greg Asbed



Photo: MacArthur Foundation

Church Women United in Illinois

GREG ASBED, co-founder of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, was recently named a 2017 MacArthur Fellow, sometimes called the "genius" grant. Greg was cited for, "Transforming conditions for low-wage workers with a visionary model of worker-driven social responsibility." Greg has said, "So we realized if we were actually ever going to have the ability to improve workers' lives in a meaningful way, we were going to have to take the conditions that we saw and confront those corporations with those conditions."

In her congratulatory message to Greg, NFWM's Julie Taylor said, "On behalf of the National Farm Worker Ministry, let me offer our appreciation for your work in the farm worker movement. It is making a difference." Greg's gracious reply included these words, "Thank you so much! Every single inch of ground we have won we have won only because we have the support of allies like NFWM. This award is for all of us, and I truly mean that."

## UPDATE

### Familias Unidas por la Justicia

from Debi Covert-Bowlds,  
Co-President, FWM-Northwest



FUJ members Benito López and his wife and organizing partner Juana Sanchez Ruiz

FUJ president Ramón Torres reports that the first season under a union contract between FUJ and Sakuma Bros. Farms was a success on many levels.

There were grievances based on poundage being increased without an increase in piece-rate in both blackberry and blueberry fields which led FUJ to take Sakuma to court. FUJ won and through arbitration Sakuma paid back wages.

Also, in the contract, price and quota are based on test picks, and more FUJ members were trained and paid \$15/hour doing this work. Ramón also reported that all the previous workers at Sakuma Farms who applied were hired this season. All workers reported they were happy with higher pay, good conditions in the field and also in the farm camp housing. ¡Si Se Puede!

## CIW's *Harvest without Violence* Exhibit on the move!

CIW has created a mobile exhibit exposing the daily barrage of sexual harassment and assault faced by farm worker women in the U.S. and Mexico.



Wendy's shifted purchases from Florida, where the Fair Food Program's protections have worked to eliminate sexual harassment and assault against farm worker women, to Mexico, where those and other abuses remain rampant despite Wendy's claims that its code of conduct ensures the fair treatment of workers there.

The exhibit is touring college campuses and community centers. It will be the centerpiece of major actions in Columbus, OH (Wendy's headquarters) and New York City (home of Wendy's Board Chairman) as workers from Immokalee and their allies around the country turn up the heat on Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program and the fight against gender-based violence in the fields.



If you go online, NFWM highly recommends the Equitable Food Initiative's brand new 4-part video series, *Cultivating Voices*, that shares stories from farm workers, supervisors and managers across farms, greenhouses and packing facilities in Mexico, Guatemala and California.

The certification program has come a long way in 8 years. EFI now has 25 major produce suppliers in the US and abroad on more than 60 locations with more than 14,500 workers. EFI has a new logo/label and is launching its consumer engagement phase. Look for the label on Costco and Whole Foods produce – and if you don't find any, let the manager know you want to purchase EFI!

Visit [www.equitablefood.org](http://www.equitablefood.org)



## Bringing Art to Activism



YAYA has embarked on a project to expand the use of various forms of art into their education and activism for farm workers. The "Artivism" project includes trainings, incorporating what is learned into campaign actions and creating a toolkit which will have modules added to it over time. YAYA member Emilia Nicholson-Fajardo is completing the first modules of the toolkit.

Theater is a tool for social change that has deep roots in the farm worker movement, notably used by the United Farm Worker's troupe "Teatro Campesino" to organize farm workers in California.

In that spirit, YAYA recently held a two day workshop on "Theater of the Oppressed" in partnership with the Hope Community Center, Apopka, FL. Nadia Garzon guided the group in techniques to understand personal experiences of oppression and create powerful scenes on issues including migration, detention of immigrants, mass incarceration, and gender-based violence. YAYA is holding a second weekend workshop this November to integrate the learning into creating material supporting FLOC's campaign for tobacco workers.

NFWM Florida Advisory Council



YAYAs get goofy after a hard day's work in the Fellsmere Campesino Garden.

## Wendy's Boycott Action in Orlando

In August, YAYA partnered with CIW to protest at an Orlando, FL Wendy's so the company knows that we will not stand idly by while they continue to ignore the rights of farm workers. Over 60 farm workers and their families from Immokalee, and the same number from YAYA, coalition partners, student organizations and supporters from the First Unitarian Church of Orlando picketed in the 100+ degree heat. A delegation then delivered a letter to the manager, who refused to accept it.



But as YAYA member Kathleen Melendez said, "This rejection however, will not stop our fight at YAYA, and we will continue to push back and build awareness for the Wendy's campaign."

## Visiting Congressional Offices



This Fall, YAYA hosted a legislative training on the Agricultural Workers Program Act of 2017 in which members practiced presenting the bill to lawmakers and asking them to co-sponsor. Delegations then visited the Florida offices of Senators Nelson and Rubio with the Farm Worker Association of Florida. YAYA will continue to visit congressional offices to gain support as we also pressure legislators to oppose drastic changes to the Guestworker program.

For much more news, please visit [www.nfwm-yaya.org](http://www.nfwm-yaya.org) & click on "YAYAs In Action."

## Welcome John Caleb Wise

*NFWM is pleased to introduce our Academic Year Duke Divinity School Ministerial Intern - John Caleb. From day one, John Caleb enthusiastically jumped in to learn about NFWM and begin working with staff. We look forward to learning from him and getting to know him better.*

I am a third year Duke Divinity student. I grew up in North East Texas and in Charleston, South Carolina. In 2014 I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies at the College of Charleston and then in 2015 a Masters of Theology and Religion at the University of Amsterdam in The Netherlands. I have a beautiful wife named Emily who I married in the winter of 2013. We now live in Pittsboro, North Carolina where we plan to stay for the next few years. Upon completion of my current Masters of Divinity from Duke this coming Fall, I will pursue candidacy as an Elder in The United Methodist Church. I hope to one day be able to work in either social advocacy or the public outreach of the Church abroad.



John Caleb & Emily

Staff at NFWM were particularly interested to learn that I spent a number of years working for a large church in Charleston, South Carolina where I was a successful video producer. I am well versed in filming and editing professional media for public advertising. Therefore, over the course of the next year with NFWM I will be crafting new video media for our organization to be utilized on the upcoming website, in social media, and at our public events.

## Take ACTION

Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls

### Help Protect Farm Worker Rights

Farm workers need your support for the Agriculture Workers Program Act. VISIT or CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES to URGE them to:

- 1) co-sponsor the Agricultural Worker Program Act of 2017;
- 2) oppose Rep. Goodlatte's anti-immigrant, anti-worker Agricultural Guestworker Act (HR 4092).

Talking points, flyers in English and Spanish and background can be found on our website to help you contact elected officials in your home districts or in Washington, DC. Let them know that you value the people whose labor puts food on our tables every day. And please let us know you acted by emailing [jtaylor@nfwm.org](mailto:jtaylor@nfwm.org).

### Support Dreamers

NFWM signed a letter along with more than 850 faith leaders and groups sponsored by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) urging all Members of Congress to co-sponsor the "clean" Dream Act of 2017 (S.1615/H.R.3440) and pass it immediately. If you have not already contacted your Congress people with that message, please do so today.

The IIC has resources available to organize a "Dream Sabbath" to lift up the stories, contributions and leadership of Dreamers in worship services, vigils and in communications to Congress. Many thanks to Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), for these. Visit [interfaithimmigration.org](http://interfaithimmigration.org) for the toolkit and to register your event.

### National Clergy Fast: Harvest without Violence - January 18th

NFWM urges our supporters to join the CIW's *National Clergy Fast: Harvest without Violence* on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Religious people around the country will fast and peacefully demonstrate at local Wendy's restaurants to educate, mobilize, and inspire their communities to call on Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program. For more information visit the Alliance for Fair Food website.

This fast is a commemoration of the historic 30 day hunger strike of six farm workers in Immokalee, FL which ended on January 18, 1998 when former President Jimmy Carter and Bishop John Nevins of the Catholic Diocese of Venice intervened to call for a dialogue with growers on the condition that the workers would break their fast.



And for the story of Karen Caudillo (left), a DACA student and YAYA member in Florida, please visit [nfwm-yaya.org](http://nfwm-yaya.org). Karen participated in the fast/mobilization in Washington D.C. this past September. YAYAs are heading back to D.C. for more actions this November.



## Donate Your Birthday to NFWM

Make your birthday (or other event) extra special this year! How? Its simple: instead of gifts, ask for donations. Pledge your birthday to National Farm Worker Ministry and change the world by helping us support farm workers seeking dignity & justice.

### 1 Pledge Your Birthday

Go to [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org) and click "Donate Your Birthday" on the "Take Action!" tab. Commit to raise money to support farm worker organizing in honor of your special day. (And don't worry. If the internet isn't your cup of tea, just call the office and you can start the process that way.)

### 2 Create Your Message

Tell friends and family that you'd prefer donations instead of gifts this year. Celebrations are a great way to spread the word about how we're all connected to farm workers at every meal. Plus, it gives people you know the chance to both honor you and help farm workers. We've got sample messages for you to use in various forms: letters, web pages and/or social media.

### 3 Send your Invitation

Make a plan and decide to whom and how to send your birthday wish. Then carry it out! It's that simple. Plus, we're here to give you all the support you need throughout the process.



**Here's to more meaning, more celebrating and more support for farm workers creating change.**



A very big THANK YOU to Suzanne Darweesh and all the great folks at Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farmworkers for raising over \$5,000 for NFWM at their 52nd Annual Farm Worker Celebration in September. We hear that their keynote speaker Peter O'Driscoll of the Equitable Food Initiative was a very big hit!

## Heroines of the Farm Worker Movement



Sisters of St Francis of Assisi



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Visit [www.doloresthemovie.com](http://www.doloresthemovie.com) for screenings near you. PBS will broadcast the documentary in 2018.

Standing: Dolores Huerta with Olgha Sierra Sandman, long time NFWM Board Member and former Interim Director.

Seated: the late Jeanne Giordano, long time Chair of the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farmworkers and NFWM Board member.

Photo was taken at NFWM's 2010 Board Meeting in California.

**National Farm Worker Ministry**

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