

Pinellas Support Committee of
The National Farm Worker Ministry
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National Farm Worker Ministry

Issue 1
March 26, 2013

Pinellas Support Committee

Come to Our Spring Berry Festival
Join PSC as we Pay Tribute to Bert and David

**Keynote
Speaker,
Bert Perry**

Advocate for
Farm Workers
for over 30 years
through
NFWM – FL
and UCC



**David
Haney**

Retired Lt Col,
US Air Force
&

Active member of
St Paul's Catholic
Farm Worker
Ministry
Program



Saturday, April 20, 2013

5:30 p.m.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
3200 North McMullen Booth Rd.
Clearwater, FL 33765
(across from Mease Countryside Hospital)



Home-made berry dessert will be served

 Donations will gratefully be accepted and will be used to help farm workers in Florida

Bert Perry, Keynote Speaker

NFWM Announces Closing of DeLand Office

Bert Will Still Speak at Berry Festival



Bert Perry and her family have experienced the costs and joys of discipleship.

Everyone knows and respects Bert Perry for her tireless dedication working for justice and dignity for farm workers. Bert's advocacy which began as a UCC member, soon led to her opening the NFWM-FL office over 30 years ago. The DeLand office was an answer to the call of César Chávez and the United Farm Workers to help organize faith communities. We know that Bert will continue to forge meaningful relationships with farm worker and support organizations- relationships which have been and remain significant to La Causa, regardless of her position or title.

To hear Bert speak on "The Cost of Discipleship", including how her husband lost his job/ career years ago due to her activism, visit www.nfwm.org. Bert and others have shared their fascinating stories.

Most recently, Bert was very involved in helping with CIW's March, wearing many hats- planning, driving, marching and more. Participation in this event was especially meaningful and important to her.

Bert's comments on "The March" and some parting thoughts are in her article below.

The March

Fifteen days, two hundred miles, sore feet, sunburns.....and spirits that soared! Each person on the march from Ft. Myers to Publix Supermarket's headquarters in Lakeland joined the Campaign for Fair Food in support of Florida's tomato harvesters with the message that Publix do the right thing. As Florida's premier supermarket and one of the most profitable companies in the United States, Publix could easily afford to pay an additional penny per pound for the tomatoes it purchases. As farmworkers gave up their wages for the days they marched, as supporters gave their energy and time, as church members fed and housed the marchers, Publix had no words to share.

David Haney, Guest Speaker

A Friend to Plant City & Dover Farm Workers

David Haney was born at MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL. He graduated Louisiana Tech University, with a BA degree in Professional Aviation and Foreign Languages. David retired from the US Air Force after 26 years. He achieved the rank of Lt. Colonel, serving as a Navigator and Logistics Officer.

David is a member of NFWM and has been active in the St. Paul's Catholic Church Farm Worker Ministry for the past eight years. He visits the labor camps with much enthusiasm, bringing food and clothing (and even Christmas trees!). David is always kind and uplifting. In flawless Spanish, David has maintained meaningful connections with his friends at the camps over the years. It is clear that he truly values the relationships he has built with many farm worker families.

Under David's direction the Plant City/Dover Christmas Toy Project has grown tremendously. We want to sincerely thank David for his years of volunteerism. Sadly, he will be moving out of state and he will be truly missed not just by us, but especially by the farm workers. We wish David well and know that somewhere and somehow he will be volunteering in some capacity for the farm workers in N. C.

David is a dynamic speaker; he will inspire us with his stories.



loa



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Snapshots from some recent events...



Bert Perry answers a question from the audience during PSC's Soup Supper last November. She is shown with author, historian, USF Professor, Dr. Ray Arsenault, Keynote Speaker.



Scenes from lunch at DeSoto Park, Tampa, on 3/13, during CIW's "March For Rights". UUSP & PSC provided this meal.



Thoughts from PSC Chair Maria McCourt



IN ORDER FOR PSC TO GROW, WE NEED YOU!

There have been accomplishments in the last 25 years, but there still is a lot more to be done! These accomplishments were only possible because of people like YOU!

PSC NEEDS new members, new board members, more representation from faith-based organizations and individuals, and more attendees at our two yearly functions. We need to grow in order to support farm workers in their quest for self-determination.

PSC is so grateful to all the wonderful donors who donated specific funds so we can continue to take food to the farm workers. The food project was started thanks to the generous donations from **the First United Church of Tampa**. **Feeding America Tampa Bay** has been a wonderful partner in helping feed farm workers. Your donations through Feeding America Tampa Bay go a long way!

Our thanks go as well to **St. Paul Catholic Church's Bible Study group** for donating linens, to **UUSP** for bringing children's underwear & socks, and to **UUC** for their blanket drive. The farm workers are always so delighted to see these groups-not only because of their donations, but because they care! We appreciate our relationship with **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church**, for their help and the use of their facility, as well as for their generous donations. PSC looks forward to a year of growth – help us to provide better support to farm workers in Florida!

To join PSC, contact Maria @ nfwmtampa@hotmail.com
Or call 813-961-8777

If you are unable to attend our Berry Festival, please support farm workers in Florida by sending your tax-deductible contribution to PSC Treasurer, Shirley James at:
701 Pinehurst Rd, Apt 2A, Dunedin, FL 34698

NFWM's Virginia Nesmith Resigns



NFWM recently announced that its Executive Director, Virginia Nesmith will be leaving her position this summer, after serving as its leader for the past 15 years.

Virginia managed NFWM's support for numerous farm worker organizing campaigns, mobilizing national and international faith leaders, and establishing NFWM's Youth and Young Adult Network (YAYA).

She has helped found and develop the Equitable Food Initiative, a groundbreaking initiative of farm worker groups, NGOs, growers and retailers who are working together to create a fairer and safer food supply.

NFWM recently has completed a thorough review of its strategy and structure, which includes relocating national headquarters to Eastern or Central North Carolina and restructuring staff responsibilities and assignments. The new Executive Director will play a central role in those transitions. See www.nfwm.org for further details

PSC has enjoyed working in solidarity with Virginia and has appreciated the support of the national office. We wish you the best, Virginia!

Other News

A March for Immigration Reform is planned for April 10 in Washington, DC. NFWM and YAYA members will join farm workers, labor, community, student and faith groups from around the country, to educate and lobby for immigration reform.

FLOC: Concerned consumers have launched another letter writing campaign- this time to Wawa executives. Wawa, a popular convenience store with headquarters in PA, is also an important customer of McLane, a distribution company, which is RJ Reynolds' largest customer. WaWa officials were asked to arrange a meeting between FLOC and McLane. Later, FLOC urged WaWa to convey concerns about conditions in the tobacco fields to Reynolds. So far, WaWa has refused to be involved. Wawa has recently opened stores in Orlando, and is in the process of expanding into the Tampa Bay area.

The March

(continued from previous page)

It would seem that human decency would require at least recognition from Publix to the thousands of its customers who support the farm workers. Publix founder, George Jenkins, spoke often about the responsibility of his company to the community.

Now, Publix spokesmen claim the company has no responsibility for its supply chain. As an anti-union company in a right to work state, Publix is free to ignore not only its customers, but also what happens in its supply chain. A company that touts its participation in community issues on behalf of children, schools, and neighborhood organizations, Publix has certainly turned its back on those who contribute to its success as a Florida business.

The fast food companies, the other supermarkets, and businesses that have signed onto the Fair Food Agreement have not suffered financial loss or loss of consumers. In fact, individuals, churches, denominations and organizations that believe in justice for all workers intentionally choose to patronize those businesses.

It is imperative that we, as Publix customers, continue to communicate our disappointment that the place "where shopping is a pleasure" discounts the rights of workers for safe and healthy workplaces.

The Pinellas Support Committee has a rich history of support for those who feed us that is unmatched. I am still amazed at the concern and commitment of PSC members and leadership. I am deeply grateful for your support of the National Farm Worker Ministry for these many years. I now have the unhappy task of telling you that NFWM is closing our DeLand, Florida office as of March 28, 2013. After thirty years of service with NFWM, I will be leaving as of March 28, also. I will miss the friendship, presence and support of all of you but will continue to be in relationship in other ways, as my support and concern for farm workers remains strong and important to me.

God Bless each of you. Thank you for such a great relationship, and know that the PSC will always have a special place in my heart.

Bert

PSC has relied heavily on Bert's support and counsel over the years. Needless to say, Bert will truly be missed in her role as a partner in NFWM. We are confident that we will remain close friends with a common cause, aside from changes in organization.

We will miss you, BERT!