

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

of the National Farm Worker Ministry

Fall Newsletter, October 21, 2014

It's Time for PSC's Annual Sacrificial Soup Supper!

*"I have lived
something children
will one day
read about.
And it's something
that's still going on."*

Referring to CIW's
Fair Food Program

*"I don't want them to
struggle like I've
had to."*

Speaking of his son,
and of his younger
brothers and sisters in
Guatemala, to whom he
sends money for
education.

Wilson, quoted in
The Ft Myers
News-Press,
February 18, 2014

PSC is honored to have
Wilson Perez,

CIW staff member and farmworker
as our Keynote Speaker

Wilson offers a unique perspective on
CIW's Fair Food Program, having worked
in the fields before its creation in 2010.

Topics will include: how this historic,
award-winning FFP has changed the lives
of farmworkers, what work remains to
be done, and how we can participate in
this call for justice. Wilson will also share
the latest details on Tampa's November
21st premiere of CIW's film *Food Chains*.

Please join us!

Saturday, November 15, 5:30 p.m.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
3200 N McMullen Booth Rd
Clearwater, FL 33765

Home-made lentil soup and bread will be
served. Donations will be collected to
support farm worker led efforts in Florida.

CIW'S Wilson Perez,
Keynote Speaker at PSC's Soup Supper



before embarking on CIW's Now Is the Time Tour (3/5/14).

Mr. Perez, originally from Guatemala, is a farmworker himself and has worked in the fields both before and after the existence of the Fair Food Program, enabling him to provide unique perspective as to changes underway in the fields.

As part of the implementation of the CIW's Fair Food Program, Mr. Perez conducts workers' rights education, processes complaints of abuses in the fields, manages wage theft claims, and runs a program on the CIW's low-power community radio station, Radio Conciencia. The CIW and its members have received national recognition for their human rights work, including the 2013 Roosevelt Institute Freedom From Want Medal.

Interfaith Action's Elena Stein will be joining Wilson at our Soup Supper. Elena, Wilson, and Joe Parker of Student/Farmworker Alliance will be in our area during the following week to promote CIW's film *Food Chains*. Specific details about the Tampa venue and time of the premiere will be announced at the Soup Supper. See *Food Chains*, page 2

Giving: If you are unable to attend our Soup Supper, yet wish to make a tax-deductible contribution, please send a check payable to our PSC Treasurer:

Shirley James, 1701 Pinehurst Rd Apt 2A,
Dunedin, FL 34698

Donations will help farm worker led efforts in Florida.



Note: Important PSC Meeting
January 23, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

PSC's Steering Committee has been meeting monthly to update our Guidelines, giving particular focus to educate, equip, and mobilize to support farm worker led efforts. We are also directing our efforts to other areas of advocacy which affect migrant workers, such as immigration reform and moving Florida legislation to provide drivers' licenses for everyone in Florida, which is crucial to our farm workers.

This past February, Patricia Plantamura was hired as a part-time Organizer for our area. In a short time she has nurtured important relationships with like-minded individuals and groups, resulting in an increase in attendance at our events. PSC has gained some much needed energy and we are confident that this momentum will continue.

For the past 30 years, PSC has stood side by side farm workers in boycotts, marches, actions, letter writing campaigns, etc. Several of these dedicated people are still serving on our Steering Committee. They remain very passionate about the cause, and have valuable wisdom to share. The time has come, however, for some to step down from such active roles.

Our January meeting will feature an **election for all positions on the Steering Committee:** Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Members at Large (at least 3). The Newsletter Editor will be an appointed position but PSC seeks talented and enthusiastic participation by many people who would like to be a part of the Newsletter team.

To be considered for nomination for *any* of these positions, email Patricia Plantamura at pplantamura@nfwf.org, call her at 727-479-6144, or see her at the Soup Supper. Our newly revised Guidelines will be available at this time. Proposed amendments and revisions to the PSC Guidelines will be available for member comment/input.

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And the Clinton Global Citizen Award Goes to . . . the CIW (and YOU!)

by Patricia Plantamura, NFWM PSC Organizer

Well-deserved news regarding the Coalition of Immokalee Workers broke during the month of September. The recipients of President Clinton's Global Citizen Awards were recognized in New York on September 21st in a program which included not only President Clinton but former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and actor Eva Longoria. Recipients of the Clinton Award included two co-founders of the CIW, Greg Asbed and Lucas Benitez. Also among the winners were actor Leonardo DiCaprio and the President of the Republic of Kosovo.

The honorees are chosen for their innovative approaches, demonstrated results and the sustainability of their work as global citizens.



Greg Asbed (l) and Lucas Benitez (r)

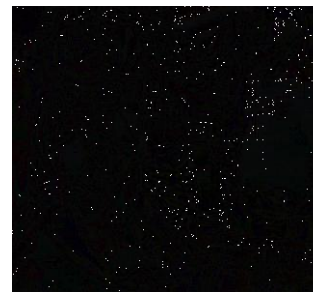
One such approach is the CIW's Fair Food Program and efforts toward worker-driven social responsibility. CIW representatives were recognized for defending the human rights of farm workers across the United States. In accepting the Award they called attention to workers across the world who assemble, sew and grow the many products which we all consume. They acknowledged that traditional models of corporate social responsibility have failed these working communities, and so they asked: What if we, as workers ourselves, designed our own social responsibility program to protect our own human rights? This line of reasoning led to the Fair Food Program, a social responsibility program which is designed and enforced by the very workers whose rights it is intended to protect, in collaboration with growers and retail food companies.

This Program has mitigated risks and led to unprecedented success according to Asbed.

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UUC and NFWM's Dr. Sam Trickey, *continued from page 5*

Dr. Trickey stated that "invisibility is the cloak of exploitation." An essential step to ending exploitation he said, is exposure. In keeping with Dr. Trickey's call to consciously opening our eyes to reality, a letter to the President and CEO of Wawa corporate office was penned. The letter recognized the contributions of farm workers in the agricultural process as it advocated for better working and living conditions, and for better than poverty wages. "We at UUC have had our vision cleared and we can no longer ignore the situation." Almost 60 people signed individual letters after the UUC service, and then several people took the letters to a nearby Wawa store to deliver them to the manager. Unfortunately, the manager would not accept the letters. They were later mailed to Wawa corporate offices.



UUC members signing the letters



Wawa manager refusing to accept the letters

In addition to the points Dr. Trickey makes, it is noteworthy that Wawa's stated core purpose is "Fulfilling Lives, Every Day". We believe that this objective should include the lives of the people in the beginning stages of the process which enables Wawa to provide both tobacco and "Fresh food" products to its customers, that is in the fields with the freshest of these products, and the farm workers.

Core values noted on Wawa's website include to "Value people" and to "Do the right thing". Wawa further states its value to "Embrace change." Wawa's website asks "Why work at Wawa?" and then goes on to answer that "Our programs begin at the basics and help provide the skills and competencies to move through each role change", a practice which is similar to the food chain. We must

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Highlights from PSC's Fall Meeting

Inclement weather, including record setting rainfall did not deter members and supporters from attending PSC's Fall meeting at the Unitarian Universalists Church in Clearwater on Friday evening, September 19.

Keynote speaker, Edwin Enciso, Director of Justicia Now and Coordinator of CIR Now campaign began his talk by sharing his family's personal experience of dealing with our country's immigration system. Years ago, his mother's visa had expired. She became undocumented and was deported. The family lived with ongoing uncertainty and frustration, suffering great heartache from the separation. Edwin then continued with a history lesson that began prior to America, showing how immigration has always been a function of the economy.



Edwin's strong message was substantiated by facts and data in his thorough, thought-provoking presentation.

He made clear—"The deportation machine is blatantly racist-U.S. immigration policy is not broken- it is corrupt." What lessons can be learned from history, especially in recent years? Edwin gave several examples: "That one cannot underestimate the importance of building power locally, district by district, having an organization of local teams, to be able to influence local congressmen, and hold them accountable. It is the process of democracy to care enough to be persuasive enough to influence. Today voter registration is critical, especially outreach to Hispanics, so that candidates will realize the potential impact of Hispanic voters in their districts. What is needed is not an executive discretion strategy, but a constitutional solution. Become engaged to effect change-it is our duty as US citizens!

Thank you, Edwin for your poignant and inspirational words!

CIW Receives Clinton Global Citizen Award

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In President Clinton's closing remarks he recognized the work of CIW as "the most astonishing thing politically happening in the world we're living in today." He noted that within the course of 20 years these advocates "have gotten the biggest companies in the world to agree to use their market power to clean up the labor conditions, to raise the wages to decent wages."



Pictures from the award ceremony taken from ciw-online.org

CIW co-founder Lucas Benitez responded to this honor by stating that he was thrilled to be recognized for the progress which the CIW has made for farm workers. He noted the transformation which the Florida tomato industry has undergone "from one of the worst to quite possibly the best workplace in the U.S. agricultural industry."

CIW co-founder Greg Asbed shared credit for the award. He stated that the award really goes to tens of thousands of people, those being fellow CIW members who for over 20 years have refused to be treated as second class citizens. He also credited retail food corporations who he says took a chance on the new model for worker driven social responsibility. It is noteworthy that Asbed credited the growers who he says have taken courageous steps out of the bitter past and toward a more humane future for Florida agriculture.

Asbed also shared credit for the award with us as consumers as he recognized the many people who he says heeded the Coalition's call at checkout counters across the country. He recognized those of us who made our voices heard in the streets like outside of Publix stores and their headquarters in Lakeland. Shared recognition through this Clinton Award goes to a good number of people and churches in our area.

The PSC and NFWM extend a well-deserved "thank you" to you many honorees for your years of action and advocacy for farm workers.

UUC and NFWM's Dr. Sam Trickey

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remind local Wawa store managers of its corporate goal of embracing change, and its philosophy: "We practice open communication and we actively listen." We invite Wawa management to educate itself about the value of farm workers and the work they do. Wawa can use this information as an opportunity to help to further enact its own stated core values, starting earlier in its supply chain.

As consumers we are able to choose where we buy our gasoline, tobacco or a good sandwich. Through the use of our purchasing power, we must be mindful of Dr. Trickey's observation that when farm workers remain invisible to us, this continues to cloak their exploitation. Like the UUC, the NFWM call is to become beacons for reason, meaning and bold social action, committed to empowerment of farm workers. We can accomplish this through conversations with store managers when we make our purchases, and the continuation of letter writing as the UUC did on Labor Day weekend.

Sam Trickey can be contacted at: trickey@ufl.edu

For info on Wawa core values go to:

<http://www.wawa.com/WawaWeb/WorkAtWawa.aspx>



For CIW: November 21
Documentary film: *Food Chains: The Revolution in America's Fields*
Director/Actors: Eva Longoria, Forest Whitaker

by Patricia Plantamura, NFWM PSC Organizer

Publix credits itself for its generosity to charities in Immokalee, but like Cesar Chavez some 50 years earlier, farm workers assert that it is not charity they want, but rather justice.

The PSC enthusiastically joins in efforts to get people out to see the documentary directed by Eva Longoria called "Food Chains" which will be premiering in theatres in late November. Longoria explains her ongoing advocacy for farm worker rights: "There's more interest in food than ever before. Everyone is about organic and local but no thought is put to the people who pick the food that feeds us all." This film draws attention to a foundational aspect of our fresh food industry—farm workers.

The movie focuses on efforts of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers—a group we know to be revolutionizing farm labor. It reveals the human cost in our food supply chain and the complicity of the supermarket industry. There has been routine abuse and wage theft and, in extreme cases, farm workers have been beaten, sexually harassed or even enslaved. The movie recognizes that supermarkets earn trillions of dollars globally and have tremendous power over the agricultural system. Over the past three decades they have drained revenue from their supply chain, leaving farm workers impoverished and working in subhuman conditions. Yet today supermarkets take little responsibility for this. CIW farm worker led efforts are geared toward a more humane food chain and the goal of triumph of morality over corporate greed.

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PSC January 2015 Meeting - *continued from page 10*

We will be mailing and emailing reminders for this very important meeting. Our current plans are to meet at the Unitarian Universalists Church, 2470 Nursery Rd, Clearwater, FL 33764, on Friday January 23 at 7:00 p.m.

PSC looks forward to 2015 with great hopes for a dynamic team of leaders and motivating increased interest in our work as we stand with farm workers as they organize. Your involvement is critical so we await word from YOU!"

UUC and NFWM's Dr. Sam Trickey: Beacons for Reason, Meaning and Bold Social Action

by Patricia Plantamura, NFWM PSC Organizer



Dr. Sam Trickey speaking at UUC

In the spirit of honoring working people on Labor Day, the Economic Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater sought out a speaker who would educate its members on an issue related to labor. The UUC has long been active in promoting social justice issues. This includes the support of the

PSC in its advocacy for farm workers. An invitation was extended to NFWM Executive Board Member, Dr. Sam Trickey, who is with that organization's Florida Advisory Group. Dr. Trickey noted that since the 1960s religious organizations and their members have been called upon to stand with farm workers, who are also people of faith.

The UUC's bulletin proclaims its vision as being "A beacon for reason, meaning and bold social action." On this Labor Day weekend issues related to farm workers were highlighted in several ways. Dr. Trickey's presentation was a call to stand in solidarity with farm workers. In his analysis Dr. Trickey recognized that the first step in food chains is farm work, and this work is dominated by human labor; "That's people, not machines." The dignified and absolutely necessary work done by farm workers, the living and working conditions of farm workers, and even the farm workers themselves, are often not acknowledged as even being in existence. Dr. Trickey noted that for many people in our society this indifference treats farm workers as if they are "invisible." He believes that this widespread uncaring and indifference toward farm workers actually denies their human worth.

Food Chains *continued from page 2*

In a lead-up to the premiere, on November 15th the PSC Soup Supper will feature a CIW speaker, Wilson Perez. Additionally from November 14-21 Joe Parker from Student/Farmworker Alliance and Elena Stein from Interfaith Action will be in the Tampa Bay area to do the presentations and announcements to encourage a huge turnout at the movie. To set up a time/place for them to address your group, or to arrange to sit together, contact: PSC Organizer Patricia Plantamura at (727) 479-6144, pplantamura@nfwm.org or contact Elena Stein directly at (239)-986-0688 or elena@interfaithact.org.

Let's sit together at the movie as we educate and inspire ourselves, and then go out to create conversations in our churches, schools and communities calling upon retailers to deal with abuse in their supply chains.

During the month of Thanksgiving, before you shake those Publix Pilgrim salt and pepper shakers onto your food, give thanks for the hands and the hearts and the families of our farm workers as part of the initial process which provided that food. As end consumers, please join farm worker led efforts to eliminate their own poverty, and to move from charity toward justice.

Farmworker Association of Florida News

- October 13 marked the 33rd anniversary of the United Nation's World Food Day. FWAf, along with the other member organizations of La Via Campesina, celebrated the World Day of Action for Food Sovereignty and Against Transnational Corporations. In honor of this day, a book, [FOOD VOICES: Stories from the People Who Feed Us](#) by Andrianna Natsoulas was released. For more information, visit fwaf.org.

- On their website FWAf thanked NFWM's YAYA (Youth and Young Adults): "Recently, YAYA helped us host a workday with UCF students at the Fellsmere garden, to plant 1500 seeds! YAYA and their teams of college students have been so helpful with our work in the gardens. We love you YAYA!"