

## NEWS



## VIEWS

THE NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY

## NFWM Supports Administrative Relief for Farm Workers



There are more than one million farm workers in the US and their labor puts food on our tables each and every day. The majority of farm workers are undocumented, living at risk of deportation and in situations isolated from the broader community.

Comprehensive immigration reform seems still out of reach in the current Congress. Thankfully, President Obama has acted. On November 20, 2014, he moved to provide millions of undocumented immigrants Administrative Relief (AR) through Executive Action.

Estimates are that 1 in 6 beneficiaries of Administrative Relief will be a farm worker or immediate family member – **that is over 700,000 individuals!**

### There are Two Programs:

**1. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)** initially started in June of 2012 for undocumented immigrants who entered the U.S. before their 16th birthday and before June 2007. The current AR would be an expansion of the DACA program that would end the upper age limit to apply and push forward the entry date to 2010—allowing for more people to be eligible.

**2. Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA)** is for undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States since 2010 and have children who are American citizens or lawful permanent residents.

### **DACA/DAPA Benefits:**

- Provides a renewable three-year work permit
- Protection from deportation for three years
- Eligibility for a social security number
- Eligibility for a driver's license (in many states)
- Ability to apply for travel authorization

### **DACA/DAPA Limitations:**

- Does not give legal immigration status
- Does not provide a path to citizenship
- Discretionary decision on a case-by-case basis

This program is not yet in place. Currently, it is being challenged in the court system by anti-immigrant powers. However, advocates are following the direction of the US Citizen & Immigration Services (USCIS) and moving forward with plans for implementation.



NFWM is a member of the Si Se Puede® Network, which is led by farm worker groups and was formed to address the implementation of this action particularly in rural communities and for farm workers across the country.

NFWM is creating educational resources for people to learn more about Administrative Relief and what it will mean for farm worker families. We will provide tool kits for congregations who would like to get involved.

NFWM will continue to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform in solidarity with the millions of undocumented immigrants who will not benefit from this Executive Action.

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**and More!**

## FLOC's campaign for Justice for Tobacco Workers

### Couche-Tard, Do the Right Thing!



On March 10<sup>th</sup>, a determined crew of FLOC staff, NFWM, the Triangle Friends of Farmworkers, and Student Action with Farmworkers attended the special shareholders meeting of Pantry Inc., parent company of Kangaroo Express. Tobacco products account for 39% of Kangaroo Express sales. There exist widespread violations of the human rights of farm workers in the production of tobacco, including dilapidated housing, sub-minimum wages, work-related illness, and fear of retaliation for speaking out.

For more than four years, we have attended these Pantry meetings, written letters to management, rallied outside their convenience stores and delivered letters to managers urging Pantry to take an active role in eliminating the abuses in the supply chain of the tobacco products from which Pantry made substantial profit.

Pantry, Inc. management has not adequately addressed these issues with NC's largest tobacco manufacturer, Reynolds American – as we have urged them to do.

But soon there will be no Pantry, Inc. The meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> was to approve the sale of the company to Canadian based Alimentation Couche-Tard (Circle-K). Couche-Tard's social responsibility policy states: "Our most important corporate responsibility is to provide our products and services in a socially, environmentally and ethically responsible way." The current exploitation of tobacco farm workers meets no definition of "socially...and ethically responsible."

We hoped to meet with Couche-Tard representatives at the Pantry meeting, but were told none were there. But WE were there. And we are not going away!

Our message to the new owners, Couche-Tard, is this:

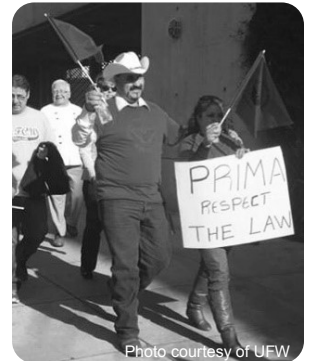
**Once you control the thousands of Kangaroo convenience stores which sell millions of tobacco products, step up and take responsibility for what is happening in your supply chain.**

## UFW Garawin Campaign City Council Resolutions

The UFW is continuing its successful strategy of getting resolutions passed in City Councils around the country which call on Gerawan Farming to obey the laws and implement a contract with its workers. Thus far, LA City Council, Berkeley City Council, and the Los Angeles Unified School District Board have all passed resolutions... and more are coming.

### Background

Gerawan Farming is one of the U.S.'s largest tree fruit and grape producers with more than 5,000 workers. Gerawan sells its Prima label throughout the country. The company is refusing to implement a contract with the United Farm Workers ordered by the California mediator in 2013 under the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act.



If the workers had their contract, among other benefits:

- They would not have had to work last Thanksgiving
- Between July of 2013 and July of 2014, most Gerawan workers would have earned approximately \$1,480 more

### The farm workers at Gerawan are asking for our solidarity.

At the time of printing of this newsletter, Gerawan campaign events are planned for:

**Long Beach, CA on March 24th**  
**San Francisco, CA on March 31st**  
**Washington, DC on April 7th**

If you are in one of those local areas, please plan to attend one of the events and spread the word! Details are at [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org).

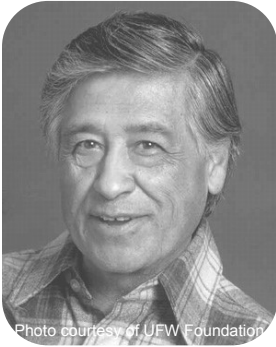
For more information, contact Irv Hershenbaum at UFW, [Irvhershenbaum@hotmail.com](mailto:Irvhershenbaum@hotmail.com) or cell # 661-979-6270.



FLOC will again have a presence at Reynolds Tobacco's Shareholders Meeting on May 7th both in the meeting & at a demonstration afterward. Please check the NFWM website for details as they become available.



## USDA Cesar Chavez Courtyard



This March 31, the US Department of Agriculture will be naming the USDA South Building Courtyard on Independence Avenue in Washington, DC in honor of Cesar Chavez. There will be a reception in newly titled "Cesar Chavez Courtyard" after the ceremony. NFWM plans to have a representative at the event.

## CIW Parade & Concert for Fair Food

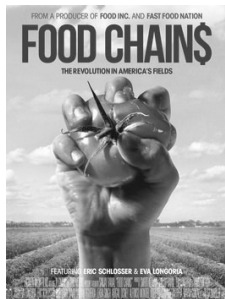
On Saturday, March 21st, YAYA & the Pinellas Support Committee took a large delegation of supporters to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Parade and Concert for



Fair Food in St. Petersburg, Florida. Through Grammy-winning artists like Ozomatli & La Santa Cecilia, CIW & supporters enjoyed powerful music and called for Publix and Wendy's to recognize their responsibility to the people who harvest their produce. Both Publix and Wendy's have refused to do their part to help improve the lives of farm workers who pick their tomatoes.

After a 3-mile parade through St. Petersburg, the concert was held at Vinoy Park. In the weeks leading up to the event, visiting artists and farm worker members collaboratively created large-scale murals and other artwork that framed the day's events.

## Watch FOOD CHAIN\$



Produced by Eric Schlosser and Eva Longoria, Food Chains features the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Program which works to ensure a dignified life for farm workers and a more humane, transparent food chain. To watch the movie online or to host a screening, go to [www.foodchainsfilm.com](http://www.foodchainsfilm.com).

## Faith Leaders Meet with Reynolds

In response to a June letter from nearly 500 religious leaders to Reynolds American, a delegation of faith leaders met on November 11th with two Reynolds' management. The religious delegation urged Reynolds to agree to the Dunlop Commission process and to freedom of association for workers. We pushed for greater transparency from the company, and we reinforced that our support of FLOC is growing and that we aren't going anywhere until justice for tobacco farm workers is gained. Further conversations with Reynolds are looked for.

### STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Nico Gumbs  
YAYA Coordinator



Growing up in Homestead, Florida, Nico has been around agriculture all their life. From looking out the window of their mom's home at the papaya fields across the street, to visiting their grandfather's avocado farm, to being a member of the Future Farmers of America, Nico remembers, "I always saw black and brown people working in the fields, but didn't understand the complexity of the agriculture system."

In 2010, YAYA gave a presentation in a Women's studies class about the farm workers. Nico related it to their experience growing up with Haitian & Latino workers. Later, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers spoke in another class about pesticides on tomatoes and the effects on farm workers. This sparked Nico's interest because they'd been working for Publix as a produce clerk for 2 ½ years. Nico had never worn gloves while hand-stacking produce, but remembered needing to wash their hands several times when stacking tomatoes. They were the worst!

After the presentation, Nico was so moved that they quit their job and two weeks later, joined YAYA for CIW's march against Publix in Tampa. Nico then began volunteering with YAYA and came on staff of NFWM/YAYA in early 2012.

"I like working with young people who are interested in social change and seeing the implications of working in a movement that may or may not directly affect them but has consequences in their lives."

For more information about Farm Worker Organizations and their Campaigns, visit:

[www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)

[www.pcun.org](http://www.pcun.org)

[www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org)

[www.floridafarmworkers.org](http://www.floridafarmworkers.org)

[www.nfwm-yaya.org](http://www.nfwm-yaya.org)

[www.ufw.org](http://www.ufw.org)

[www.floc.com](http://www.floc.com)

[www.equitablefood.net](http://www.equitablefood.net)

## Did you know?

...that almost half of NFWM's budget comes from individuals & church organizations? Please consider having your congregation become a Supporting Organization. Email [ajonas@nfwm.org](mailto:ajonas@nfwm.org) find out how.

### Berry Fest

The Pinellas Support Committee of NFWM (in FL) hosted its Annual Berry Fest fundraiser on March 14. There were more than 50 attendees and it was a huge success! The keynote speaker, Lupe Gonzalo, from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers gave the latest update about the CIW's campaign and upcoming event. Freshly picked berries from Plant City were served over angel cake with whipped cream. Thanks to everyone who came out and showed their support!

### STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Patricia Plantamura  
P/T Pinellas Support  
Committee Organizer



Patricia is one of nine children from a Catholic farming family that migrated from Bohemia to Nebraska in the late 1800s.

Through a friend during a college internship, she was exposed to migrant workers who worked the sugar beet and apple harvest. She learned about the U.S.'s bracero program which relied on Mexican workers' labor while the American labor force was away at war. She also met people from Central America and learned how U.S. foreign policy and intervention into other governments led to people fleeing for their lives.

As an elected official, City Council Member of Seminole, FL, Patricia thinks of immigrants in leading our flag salute. Patricia says, "We do not say 'liberty and justice for people who look like me, talk like me or pray like me', we say simply 'for all' because every person in America is to be treated with liberty and justice. Anything less could be dangerous for any one of us."

The Mexican-American friend who first exposed Patricia to farmworkers is the same person who enabled her migrating from Nebraska to Florida. "I am so grateful to her as this has redirected and enriched my entire life."



## Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

*Taylor Pffaff is a Duke Divinity Ministerial Intern to NFWM. To read his reflection in its entirety, go to [nfwm.org](http://nfwm.org)*

At a Day of the Dead gathering in November, I had the opportunity to speak in front of forty farm worker supporters and seven farm workers. During the cultural celebration, a few recent obituaries were read for farm workers' deceased children, who worked in the fields until death from heat exhaustion and machinery accidents.

Needless to say, the context was incredibly depressing and discouraging. Knowing that I was asked to share a brief message about the hope engrained within the farm workers' rights movement, I tried to reincorporate the celebration theme. My words concerned the theology of resurrection. I outlined Christ's power coming in death to be noteworthy for this celebration of those who perished in the hard labors, for they became freed in their death from the oppressive institutions around us. In retrospect, my homily was marginally helpful to either the audience or myself.

The Day of the Dead Celebration opened up a moment of growth: I heard the stories of farm workers and saw the literal scars of injustice up close. The issues I been writing about in curriculum came to life because I met people oppressed in the fields. After the ceremony, I spoke with three farm workers through their English translator, who shared their horror stories of racism, pesticide sickness, and sexual harassment. These men and women candidly shared about their role in tending crops. One woman told me that her minimal compensation did not allow her to buy the same crops she produced. Her comment, and the other stories, later led me to weep in my car, fumbling through personal thoughts about my role in privilege, systematic injustice, and general inequalities.

Through the tears I realized that the Eucharist raised even greater questions for me to wrestle with afterward. Are there people serving the Lord's Table who are not rewarded with a transformative meal themselves? Even if I believe the Table is meant to exhibit equality (theological, social, economic, etc.), does it ever get filled with diverse occupants?



Taylor Pffaff, Duke  
Divinity Ministerial Intern

The next NFWM board meeting will be held in July in Bellingham, Washington where we'll join **Familias Unidas por la Justicia** to learn about & support farm workers' campaign against Sakuma Berries.

## NFWM Board visits CIW in Florida

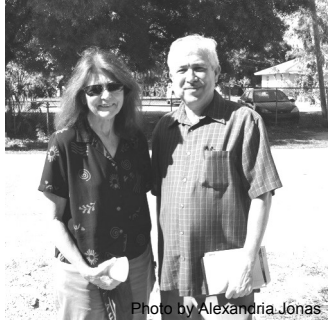


Photo by Alexandria Jonas  
Sylvia Campbell & Felix Garza

NFWM's winter board meeting was on January 30 & 31 in Fort Meyers, Florida. There, two new members were elected to the Executive Committee and Sylvia Campbell, who represents the Alliance of Baptists, was elected President. Many thanks to the Executive Committee and Immediate Past President, Felix Garza. We appreciate your work!

NFWM's board generally meets where farm workers are organizing in order to learn about current campaigns and give solidarity and support to the farm workers. This year, NFWM spent time with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) at their offices in Immokalee and met with a grower who participates in the Fair Food Program (more about that below). Kudos to the CIW!

## CIW's Fair Food Program

*By Suzanne Darweesh, Co-chair, Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers*

While being involved with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers for many years, I had never visited Immokalee. Many of you remember the beginnings of the movement. Taco Bell, part of Yum Brands, the largest fast food conglomerate in the world, with headquarters in Irvine, CA, was the site of several years' struggle to persuade Taco Bell to sign a contract with the CIW to pay a penny a pound more for tomatoes.

This Fair Food Program, in effect, can double farm workers' wages. Even more important is a Code of Conduct which ensures better working conditions in the field, clean water, portable bathroom facilities, no verbal or physical abuse, and a procedure mechanism for firing people guilty of sexual misconduct. The rate of sexual assault in the fields is almost four times the average rate of assaults upon American women in general because of the vulnerability of women farm workers to deportation, loss of job, availability of hidden locations, etc. Finally, the agreement includes an enforcement mechanism for the code of conduct carried out by members of the Fair Foods Council. CIW is actively seeking more grower partners in the Fair Food Program.



Photo by Alexandria Jonas  
NFWM Board & Friends hear about CIW's campaign

## NFWM Search Committee Looking for Executive Director Candidates

Most of you will have received the announcement in January that Rev. Lindsay Andreolli-Comstock stepped down on February 3<sup>rd</sup> as NFWM's Executive Director for other employment. We thank Lindsay for her service to NFWM and wish her well in her new job. Susan Alan, who was the Associate Director, has taken on the role of Interim Director while the NFWM Board conducts a search for a new Executive Director.

Following the January Board meeting, a search committee was selected and it has begun its work. The position announcement is on our website, [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org). If you know of a dynamic, passionate leader with demonstrated commitment to social justice who could be interested in applying for the position, please pass along this news.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Susan Alan  
Interim  
Executive Director



When people ask Susan, 'What do you do at NFWM?' she usually responds, "Whatever needs doing." Susan is a problem solver, so she likes figuring out how to get things done.

Susan has worked at NFWM since 2001 in administrative, fundraising and programmatic capacities. She greatly enjoys the variety of responsibilities she has had over the years.

Hands down, though Susan says, it is the people involved in the Ministry who keep her here and who feed her spirit. For a long time she has had the privilege of writing our thank you notes to donors; knowing so many people who care about NFWM by name, even if she has never met them, is a joy.

And then there is the staff – Susan says that over the years she's worked with some of the most amazing people, like the staff we have now. And as for NFWM's board members now and in the past, "I am convinced that I will never know nor have the honor to work with more passionate, wise, caring and funny people."

When the national office moved from St. Louis to Raleigh, Susan moved with it. She's very glad that being in a farm worker rich state is allowing her more opportunities to work with farm workers, with the staff of our farm worker partner organizations and with committed supporters around the country. Susan considers herself blessed.



## YAYAs in Action

*National Farm Worker Ministry's amazing Youth & Young Adult Network (YAYA)  
Here's how young people have been supporting campaigns for farm worker justice!*



### Holiday Posadas in Seville & Fellsmere



Seville Posada

Last Christmas, the YAYAs were invited to participate in annual Posadas with the Farmworker Association of Florida and Alianza de Mujeres Activas. Posadas are the traditional Catholic Mexican Celebration of the Nativity. YAYA collected toys for the

kids and helped out at the events. There was a raffle and lots of wonderful food & great fun!

### YAYA's Valentines Action with CIW

YAYA's hosted a Valentine's letter drop to managers of Wendy's and Publix in Orlando, FL on behalf of tomato pickers of the CIW. In continuing the pressure on both companies, the YAYA's passed along letters to store managers and expressed their tremendous disappointment as consumers that both companies have failed to sign on to the Fair Foods Agreement.



Photo by YAYA

### From the Garden

The Fellsmere Campesinos Garden is an important project where members of the farm worker community of Fellsmere, members of FWAF (The Farmworker Association of Florida), and allies work together to grow healthy food. The gardens provide food for the farm workers who work tirelessly to pick fresh food that they may not have access to or money to buy. On February

7th, YAYA's worked at the garden in preparation for FWAF's Campesino-á-Campesino Agroecology Encuentro. It was a great day where everyone got their hands dirty while weeding, composting, fertilizing in the garden. Of course it was also filled with good food, fun, and lots of laughter.



Photo by YAYA

YAYA & FWAF Members at the community garden

### NFWM Board Meeting

Heather Bryan of Orlando YAYA attended the NFWM board meeting in January. She met board members and helped staff.

Heather said was honored to represent her fellow YAYAs as she reported on YAYA activities. "It was really amazing to be surrounded by the older generation who have been involved in this movement for decades. But it was powerful for me to be able to lift up the younger generation who are putting in work and who are ready to inherit the future."



Photo by Alexander Jones

UMW Cecelia Williams and YAYA Heather Bryan at CIW's office

### Hit the Fields for Farm Worker Justice

On Saturday March 28th, the Alliance of Active Women (AMA), and NFWM-YAYA are hosting the fourth annual fundraiser soccer game between the YAYA team and the farm worker team of the community of Seville. Funds collected will support the work of AMA and NFWM-YAYA while strengthening the relationship between the two communities.

For the past six years AMA and NFWM-YAYA have been working together on many issues facing farm worker women in Volusia County, FL. AMA has plans to increase health services in the community by conducting free testing that includes, cholesterol, blood pressure, blood glucose check as well as workshops on occupational health for farm workers who have no medical insurance.



Photo by YAYA

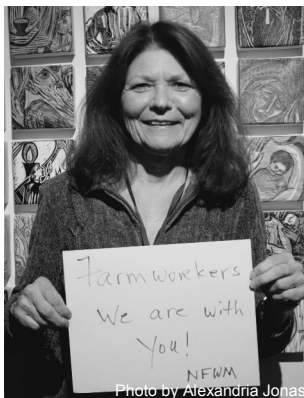
YAYA-AMA Soccer Teams

It's not too late to sponsor a player this year!

Visit the YAYA website for all the news...and sign up to receive YAYA e-news at [nfwm-yaya.org](http://nfwm-yaya.org)

## Note from NFWM's Board President

*Sylvia Campbell represents the Alliance of Baptists on the NFWM Board and is a member of Ravensworth Baptist Church, Annandale, VA, a Supporting Organization of NFWM.*



Sylvia with a solidarity statement for farm workers  
Photo by Alexandria Jonas

My congregation is one which loves children and loves the National Farm Worker Ministry; so each time I return from a NFWM Board meeting, I am given the opportunity to report the Ministry's work to the church membership through a Children's Sermon. As I gathered materials to prepare the children's lesson for National Farm Worker Week, I realized that I had come full circle. My first board meeting with NFWM took

place in Immokalee, Florida; and now 10 years later, the work of the Ministry had taken me back to Immokalee for the January, 2015 Winter Board Meeting.

A lot has happened during my 10 years of service and association with NFWM. I've shared with my church on many occasions that I found a home at that very first NFWM meeting - home in an organization committed to justice for farm workers and whose staff and board are defined by their integrity, skills and strength for the work ahead.

Though faces have changed over the years, the personality of the Ministry I encountered in the beginning remains the same. The staff and board's commitment to and passion for justice are a constant and continue to guide the work. During this winter board meeting, we adopted the 2015 budget, evaluated the progress on fulfilling our strategic intents, were updated by staff, and participated in the "farm worker day" to deepen our knowledge of farm worker conditions and campaigns. Our goal is always to understand from farm workers themselves how we best can support them as they seek justice in their lives and labor.

Throughout my years with the ministry, I've had the privilege of working with a remarkable staff and board. Together, we have worked hard, taken big steps, shared victories with our Farm Worker partners and pledged our support for the journey toward justice. During the past 10 years, the members of my congregation, active and strong supporters of the Ministry, have heard many stories of the work of the NFWM and the farm workers it supports. On March 22, they again celebrated their congregational partnership as they listened to the stories of the NFWM's work in Immokalee this January.

## OCIC Celebrates 50 Years

Founded by the late Nat and Ralph Kennedy with assistance from Rev. Chris Hartmire, the late Jean Giordano and Frank Forbath, the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers in CA is the oldest farm labor support group in the nation.



Photo by Mary Cappellini  
Arturo Rodriguez & Frank Forbath

On March 7th, 125 people came together to celebrate the OCIC's 50 years. By video, Rusty Kennedy spoke about his parents. Frank Forbath and Chris Hartmire remembered the early days, both the difficulties and the courage of those who stood firm. Keynote speaker, Arturo Rodriguez, UFW President, stressed the need for immigration reform for undocumented farm workers. He also thanked everyone for continuing in solidarity until companies like Gerawan Farms negotiate in good faith with its workers.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Alexandria Jonas  
Development Manager



Coming from a rural farming town in Southern Illinois, Alex thought she understood agriculture. But it wasn't until doing social justice work through a Young Adult Mission Program of the United Methodist Church and living (quite literally) on the other side of the planet that she learned about how and by whom most the world's food gets harvested.

After working in the Philippines with farm workers and indigenous communities, Alex returned to the US to continue her service as the NC state organizer of NFWM from 2007 through 2011. "The challenges farm workers face and, most importantly, their struggle for self determination is similar all over the world. I am so humbled to be able to work in solidarity with them."

After time away doing economic justice work and she and husband Eric having their daughter, Marilea, Alex is back at NFWM as Development Manager.

Alex says, like many who are connected to NFWM, this movement caught hold of her and it will always be an important part of her life. She believes NFWM is a one-of-a-kind organization that truly lives out its firm belief in taking its direction from those who are impacted most. "I continue to be amazed by the farm workers and their supporters who are among some of the most inspiring justice seekers I've ever known."



## Be a Harvester For Justice

We are so honored to support farm workers and we hope you are, too. If you're eager to be in solidarity with farm workers, we've got an easy way for you to do it: Join our group of monthly and quarterly givers, **NFWM Harvesters**.

Harvesters are very important to NFWM. In fact, they're the backbone that sustains our work. And these generous folks are more than just kind, they're also practical: *They know*

*that giving monthly allows NFWM to spend less time fundraising and more time working with farm workers.* And in the end, that's what it's all about.

Make a Harvester Commitment Today.

**NFWM HARVESTERS**  
**12 Gifts in 12 Months**

Support Farm Workers All Year Long



You can choose to auto-draft your bank account (use a voided check in the remittance envelope provided) or set up recurring giving via credit card at [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org).

Want more details? Contact Alexandria Jonas at [ajonas@nfwm.org](mailto:ajonas@nfwm.org) or 919-807-8707.

**National Farm Worker Ministry** (NFWM) is a faith based organization committed to justice for and empowerment of farm workers. NFWM educates, equips and mobilizes people of faith and conscience to support farm worker led efforts to improve their living and working conditions.

Please contact us for resources, recent news or to make a contribution to our work:

NFWM National Office  
112 Cox Ave, Suite 208  
P.O. Box 10645  
Raleigh, NC 27605  
919.807.8707  
[www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)

**Interim Executive Director:** Susan Alan

**News Editor:**  
Alexandria Jonas

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