

NEWS



VIEWS

The National Farm Worker Ministry

NFWM Meets with Sakuma & Driscoll's WHO REALLY HAS THE LAST WORD?

by Julie Taylor, NFWM Executive Director

On February 12th, a delegation of NFWM met with Danny Weeden, CEO of Sakuma Brothers Berries and John Erb of Driscoll's Berries in Washington, DC. It was the result of months of correspondence and phone calls.

Almost a year ago, Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) had been in touch about having NFWM join them in their boycott of Sakuma and Driscoll's berries. NFWM contacted Danny Weeden for a visit prior to the summer board meeting in Bellingham, WA to learn first-hand about the labor dispute. Mr. Weeden would not meet at that time and had subsequently asked for a meeting.

Both Mr. Weeden and Mr. Erb wanted to share about the scope of their work and their values. Improvements have been made at Sakuma's since Mr. Weeden arrived but there are still questions about conditions and how they are "listening" to the farm workers even as they refuse to negotiate with FUJ. Questions and answers went back and forth across the table. NFWM reiterated its commitment to stand WITH farm workers, not to speak for them. We urged Mr. Weeden to meet with FUJ and create a contract together. At times it seemed like a struggle to get in the last word. But NFWM ended with a prayer. And that was the last word for this meeting.

We continue to stand with FUJ and urge Danny Weeden to meet with them. The boycott continues. Go to our website to see how you can help us in this campaign.

In mid-April, Familias Unidas President Ramon Torres and FUJ members and boycott organizers will be wrapping up a major west coast tour to energize support for the boycott of Driscoll's berries. Plans include a major action at Driscoll's headquarters in Watsonville, California on March 31 and an action on April 9 at the US Mexico Border where members of FUJ will meet with farm worker members of the newly formed San Quintin Mexican union, La Alianza de Organizaciones por la Justicia. For updates and news, visit boycottsakumaberries.com.

January Board Meeting Collides with Historic Winter Storm

by Nico Gumbs, YAYA-NFWM Coordinator

The weekend of January 22nd was supposed to kick-off the NFWM's Winter board meeting but Jonas (the storm, not Alex, our Development Manager) had other plans.

NFWM staff was worried that a quorum would even exist amongst organizational members for Friday's meeting. We had an important budget to pass! Luckily between the board members present in the DC area, the Executive Committee which had arrived early, and with a conference call line, we made the quorum. The Board passed the 2016 budget and did other essential business; then we heard from five of NFWM's farm worker partners based in the D.C. area.



Photo by Alex Jonas, NFWM

Bruce Goldstein (President, Farmworker Justice), Giev Kashkooli (UFW Political and Legislative Director), Michael Szpak (AFL-CIO Strategic Campaign Coordinator for the FLOC Reynolds American campaign), Peter O'Driscoll (Project Manager for the Equitable Food Initiative) and Reid Maki (Child Labor Coalition Coordinator) all spoke. Then the snow began to fall in earnest and NFWM Board President Sylvia Campbell adjourned the meeting at 2pm.

Board meetings have always served as a re-energizer for me – the opportunity to meet new board members, reconnect with seasoned ones, and hear from the farm worker partners who are laying the foundation for justice in their respective farm worker campaigns and communities. Although I didn't get all these opportunities this time, I learned how to drive in the snow and shoveled my first car out – with two past Presidents – Sam Trickey & Felix Garza (pictured above).



CIW CALLS NATIONAL BOYCOTT OF WENDY'S

For only the second time in its history, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers have called a national boycott. During the first stop on the CIW's 2016 Workers' Voice Tour in New York City, the CIW announced the boycott of Wendy's - the lone holdout among the big five fast-food companies to sign on to the Fair Food Program. The boycott comes after an energetic 3-year campaign against Wendy's, including a national student boycott.



Photo courtesy Carol Barton
At NYC rally: United Methodist Women Executive for Community Action Carol Barton, left, and Judith McRae, Pres. NY Annual Conference UMW.

CIW is calling for consumers to boycott Wendy's because:

- Rather than support US growers setting new standards for human rights in the agricultural industry, Wendy's has shifted its purchases from Florida to Mexico.
- Wendy's released a new supplier code of conduct this past January that contains no effective mechanisms for worker participation or enforcement, choosing public relations over human rights protections.
- By refusing to participate, Wendy's is deriving a very real cost advantage over its competitors while continuing to provide a market for less reputable growers, thus profiting from farm worker poverty.

YAYAs Supporting CIW in Florida

Beginning with pre-tour preparation, YAYAs organized speaking opportunities for CIW in February in Orlando, FL. Also, several YAYAs also drove up to Gainesville for the March 11th stop on the University of Florida campus.

In their ongoing collaboration with several Unitarian Universalists fellowships in the Orlando area, YAYA Coordinator Nico Gumbs and YAYA members organized 40 people from Orlando to travel by bus to West Palm Beach, vacation home of Wendy's chairman Nelson Peltz, for the finale of the Tour. Joining the YAYA and UU contingent were students from Timber Creek High School, Student Labor Action Project - UCF, and Rollins College who all came out in full support of the CIW. The march of more than 600 people garnered terrific visibility for the CIW and the newly called Wendy's boycott.



Thanks to First Unitarian Church of Orlando & University Unitarian Universality Society for getting the bus!

MORE NEWS FROM CIW'S WORKERS VOICES TOUR

As we did in 2004, NFWM helped bring out support along the way for the 2016 Workers' Voice Tour. As well as UMW in NYC (see left), NFWM Board members Andrew Kang Bartlett, Stephan Bartlett & Felix Garza helped organize the March 10th stop in Louisville, KY with overnight housing, dinner and celebration of International Women's Day at La Casita Community Center and a march through the campus of the University of Louisville.



Photo by Felix Garza

"The farmworkers have been inspiring. To have a group that has been so exploited and is one of the poorest paid workforces in the country to take time and organize this campaign for 20 years is impressive," said Kang Bartlett.



to **BOYCOTT WENDY'S** until they sign on to the Fair Food Program!

NFWM supporters' solidarity and determination during the boycott of Taco Bell and the historic 2004 Truth Tour were vital to winning that first big campaign. Now its time for another big victory with Wendy's. NFWM calls on our supporters

JOIN FLOC, NFWM & TRIANGLE FRIENDS OF FARMWORKERS on MAY 5th

in the streets of Winston-Salem NC and the board room of
REYNOLDS AMERICAN TOBACCO (RAI) at the annual RAI Shareholder Meeting.



For updated information on the actions planned, visit our Facebook page or join our mailing list on the home page of our website.

Reynolds and the other big tobacco companies have run out of excuses. The Dunlop Commission provides the best process for Reynolds to show leadership in the tobacco industry and end the exploitation and abuse of farm workers in the tobacco fields. Join us in May to tell the billion dollar company that now is the time to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with farm workers to guarantee freedom of association in the supply chain.

NFWM member organizations are currently sending letters directly to Reynolds American CEO Susan Cameron and other tobacco company CEOs calling for deliberate negotiations with FLOC which results in a MOU.

The United Farm Workers have TWO important on-line petitions. We encourage you to visit www.ufw.org and TAKE ACTION

It happened again: Workers sprayed with pesticides while laboring for Gerawan

After a 2013 pesticide exposure incident, it took 15 months for the Fresno Ag Commissioner to investigate and rule Gerawan's behavior against the law. This February, Aurelio Landa was pruning in a Gerawan orchard when a neighboring orchard was sprayed with pesticides. Landa and coworkers felt nauseous, dizzy, and teary-eyed. Three hours later, they were taken to an office where a doctor took no blood tests or offered medication. Landa and his fellow crewmembers were told to go back to work.

Help Aurelio and the Gerawan workers by signing a petition that the workers will hand into the Fresno County Ag commissioner.

Another dairy worker drowns in a manure lagoon in less than a year

Less than a year after dairy worker Randy Vasquez drowned in a manure lagoon in Washington state, Ruperto Vazquez Carrera, 37, died in a similarly gruesome way on Feb. 16th in the neighboring state of Idaho. According to the UFW, in Washington, on average, one person dies every 16 months at a WA dairy and one worker is injured every day. In Idaho, in 2013, three dairy workers died in one year alone.

Go online and send a message to the Governor of Idaho and tell him to meet with the UFW to talk about remedies that could prevent further tragedies.

UFW's 20th Constitutional Convention

Join farm workers and their allies - including NFWM - at the United Farm Workers' Convention and Awards Dinner on May 19-22 in Bakersfield, CA. NFWM Director Julie Taylor, Board President Sylvia Campbell, NFWM-YAYA Coordinator Nico Gumbs and long-time YAYA member Jonathan Alingu will be attending and helping out. If you've never attended a farm worker convention, it is a wonderful way to experience farm workers exercising their voice. NFWM is a co-sponsor of the convention.

For more information visit:

www.nfwm.org
www.nfwm-yaya.org
www.boycottsakumaberries.com
www.ciw-online.org
www.equitablefood.net
www.floc.com
www.floridafarmworkers.org
www.pcun.org
www.ufw.org

Tribute to the Pinellas Support Committee of NFWM

For more than thirty years, farm worker advocates, grounded in and compelled by their faith, educated and mobilized people in the Clearwater/Tampa area on behalf of justice for farm workers. NFWM salutes their faithful commitment and their perseverance all those many years. It is with sober hearts we announce that the Pinellas Support Committee of NFWM (PSC) formally disbanded this past January.

The PSC had its roots in several Church Women United (CWU) units in the Pinellas area in the early 1980s. Under the leadership of Frances Steward, a migrant task force was created and became active with NFWM. In 1984, they took on the name Clearwater Support Committee of NFWM.

The support committee members made presentations in churches, arranged labor camp visits, and participated in many, many actions in support of justice for farm workers – first on behalf of the UFW and of FLOC's Campbell Soup boycott. The committee started holding the November Sacrificial Soup Supper; the 30th being held this past year. By the late 1990's the group had grown to more than 200 members and changed their name to the Pinellas Support Committee of NFWM to reflect their reach; and they appointed a representative to serve on the NFWM Board. When the Coalition of Immokalee Workers began organizing in the late 1990's, the PSC responded with their typical Si Se Puede enthusiasm.

Many stalwart advocates served in the PSC leadership over the years. Shirley James, one of the original members, served in many capacities, including Chair and more recently Treasurer. Others include Dwight Lawton, Wallace Webb, and Maria McCourt, who became chair when the Tampa Support Committee folded into the PSC



Shirley James and Joe Morgan accept a Certificate of Appreciation to the PSC from NFWM, January 2006.

in the later 2000's. And all along the way, NFWM Florida staff provided significant support to the group – first Connie Caldwell and then for many years and in many ways, Roberta Perry.

Thank you to the PSC steering committee members who have served for the last several years - Maria McCourt, Shirley James, Joan Smith, Harriett HaSidi and Bob Lux. And a tremendous thank you to the many people in the Pinellas area who over the years have given their time, talent and faithful commitment to justice for farm workers.

Sakuma Refuses NFWM Postcards



Gabi Rios (second from right) reporting to the crowd waiting outside, including FUJ President Ramon Torres (center) and Tirso Moreno, General Coordinator of Farmworker Association of Florida (left). FWM-NW member Debi Covert-Bowlds (right) connects to the NFWM national office via her phone.

On January 8th, a delegation from Farm Worker Ministry – Northwest (FWM-NW) attempted to deliver 750 postcards to Sakuma Bros. CEO Danny Weeden at Sakuma's office in Burlington WA. The postcards were collected by NFWM in support of Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) and called on Sakuma to negotiate a binding contract with FUJ. Mr. Weeden would not meet with the delegation but he did meet with FWM-NW President and NFWM Board member Gabi Rios. The more than hour long meeting was cordial and Gabi did emphatically make the point that support for FUJ was going to continue until Sakuma recognizes FUJ. In the end, Mr. Weeden refused to accept the postcards.

Note: Weeden did finally accept NFWM's postcards during our meeting with him in Washington, D.C. (page one).

TAKE ACTION!

Send your postcard directly to Sakuma's Weeden and to Driscoll's CEO Murphy

Download postcards at www.nfwm.org. Click on "Support Familias Unidas" under the "Farm Workers" tab.

Party with a Purpose Host a House Party for NFWM!

Carolyn Jaramillo, a member of the Loretto Community, was once told by a fellow Loretto member, "You're not passionate for a cause unless you're willing to raise money for it!" Carolyn took that to heart. Carolyn hosted her first house party for NFWM in 2007 and has hosted one every year since! She says, "People look forward to it. Plus, it gives them an opportunity to have a good time and support an important cause."

Will you consider hosting a house party for NFWM this year?

We're here to help you with the process! We just created a "House Party Planning Kit" that has everything you'll need to host an event for NFWM. House Parties help raise funds and friends that enables us to work for justice for farm workers! Go to www.nfwm.org to the "House Party" page under the "News & Action" tab to download your copy today. You can also contact Alexandria Jonas at ajonas@nfwm.org.



Why host a house party?

1. They're fun! Good people, good food and a good cause is always a great combination!
2. There is a legacy of hosting house parties in the farm worker movement! In the 1960's and '70's, the United Farm Workers used house parties as a way to help gain support and fund strikes and boycotts.
3. House parties raise much needed funds and new supporters for NFWM's work in solidarity with farm workers organizing for justice!

YAYAs in Action

Thank you to everyone who responded to the call last fall for help providing tools to the Fellsmere Campesino Garden. YAYA's delivered tools in November. Working with the Campesino Garden project of the Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) continues to be one of the great ways our YAYA program connects young people personally and sustainably to the farm worker justice movement.

Here's part of what Andrea DeWitt said about her first Campesino Garden experience this past February:

"Unfortunately, it is a sad reality that many farm workers do not have access to the fresh food that they work so hard to harvest for consumers like you and me. That is why community gardens like the one in Fellsmere are so important. These gardens give farm workers and allies the chance to engage in sustainable agricultural practices that give farm workers access to healthy, pesticide-free fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other crops."



Spring is one YAYA's busiest times of the year. Check-out all the news on the YAYAs in Action page at www.nfwm-yaya.org & sign up for YAYA e-newsletter too!

Thank You to the NFWM Board!



NFWM Board, staff and guests
January 2016 Board Meeting

A number of NFWM Board representative changes have taken place in the past several months. We send a hearty THANK YOU to those going off the board for their faithful service and to those coming on for their eager start.

- Church of the Brethren:
Jeff Boshart replaces Nate Hosler
- Church Women United of So CA & So NV:
Gwendolyn Williams replaces Ilse Peetz
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:
Alaide Vilchis Ibarra replaces Mary Minette
- Loretto Community:
Rox Monterastelli replaces Carolyn Jaramillo
- Farm Worker Ministry of the Northwest:
Gabi Rios replaces John Hasenjaeger
- And thank you to Gladys Santiago, whose member organization, Dominican Sisters of Peace, has become a Supporting Organization.
- Former Pinellas Support Committee: Maria McCourt

National Farm Worker Ministry

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Return Service Requested

Farm workers give to us every day.

I GIVE

quarterly simply to return
in a small way NFWM's
profound impact on my life:
giving me the opportunity
to work for justice.

My name is Olgha Sierra Sandman
and I encourage **YOU** to join me &
become a sustaining donor today!



National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM) is a faith-based organization committed to justice for and empowerment of farm workers. NFWM educates, equips and mobilizes member organizations and other faith communities, groups and individuals to support farm worker led efforts to improve their living and working conditions.

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