

NEWS



VIEWS

The National Farm Worker Ministry

THERE IS A LOT TO CELEBRATE!



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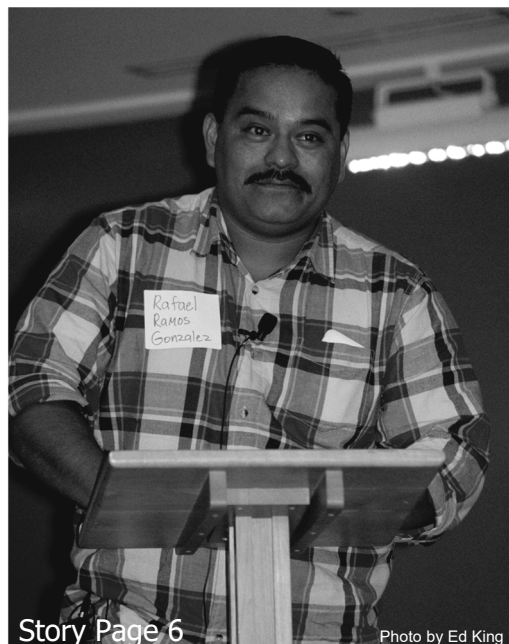
Photo courtesy of UFW

CA Governor Brown Signs Overtime Bill for Farm Workers



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Photo courtesy of FUJ



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Photo by Ed King

Familias Unidas por la Justicia Wins Union Election

NFWM Anniversary Dinner a Huge Success

Clockwise from top: UFW members celebrate the signing of the overtime bill in front of CA state capitol. FLOC Member, Rafael Ramos speaks at NFWM's 45th Anniversary Dinner. Members of FUJ march in celebration of their union election victory.

A Reflection on the Past Year

by NFWM Executive Director Julie Taylor

Looking over the last year at NFWM, I am struck by the variety of experiences I have had. It has been great meeting many supporters, faith allies and especially our farm worker partners. I was privileged to attend the UFW's 50th Anniversary of the grape boycott and 30th convention. I am also blessed to have traveled to the home bases of all of our farm worker partners.

When I began last September, there was a letter on my desk from Danny Weeden, CEO of Sakuma Bro. Berries in Burlington, WA. He was responding to the letter he received from our board of directors that notified him that we had endorsed the Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) boycott to pressure the company to sign a contract with the union.

The next move was for me to send a letter back to Mr. Weeden introducing myself and acknowledging his request to meet with us. A series of e-mails led to a February meeting in Washington, DC between Danny Weeden of Sakuma, John Erb of Driscoll's, six NFWM board members, one proxy and three staff. The meeting gave Mr. Weeden an opportunity to share some of Sakuma's history, talk about improvements made since his arrival, and express his company's intention to improve conditions for Sakuma farm workers. Our delegation asked questions, offered suggestions and made it clear to both Sakuma and Driscoll's that NFWM would stand with the farm workers until FUJ asked us to stop.

FUJ and Sakuma are now in contract negotiations and FUJ has called off the boycott. Just a couple of weeks ago I met with Rosalinda Guillen and Felimon Piñeda at the Community to Community office in Bellingham, WA. It was a humbling experience to receive their abundant appreciation for our support on behalf of the efforts NFWM's supporters made. You sent postcards; you participated in public protests; you made phone calls; you delivered store manager letters; you shared social media messages; YOU MADE AN IMPACT!

I am buoyed by this victory, although cautiously hopeful because, as Olgha Sierra Sandman reminds us, it is not a complete victory until the contract is signed. She is right, but I will admit I saw such hope on the faces of the farm workers that their efforts have gotten this far. They know there will be compromises but they are looking forward to having their voices heard at the negotiating table.

FUJ is a very new union and they have made deep commitments about how to operate, including rotating leadership among those who are continuing to work as farm workers. Members contributed to lengthy and multiple pre-contract discussions of every aspect to be negotiated. It is especially tricky given their multi-lingual group speaking Triqui, Mixteco and Spanish.



Photo by Sharon Stanely-Rea

Julie leading a reflection at the August board meeting using a Communion set once used by NFWM's forerunner, Christian Migrant Ministries.

While the berry boycott is over, NFWM is still in the throes of CIW's boycott of Wendy's. We continue to support FLOC's Reynolds American campaign as they put pressure not only on RJR but also other tobacco companies in the US and abroad. PCUN and the UFW are currently working on the political elections in their states. Our other focus is on the consumer rollout of the Equitable Food Initiative and the impact it may have on our country's agribusiness system. More on that in the coming months.

Denominations, religious orders and other supporting groups have ongoing challenges of declining memberships and decreasing funds but their work to accompany farm worker groups has never been more important. At a recent board meeting, after visiting labor camps in North Carolina, one board member remarked that the housing was much improved than those they visited even a decade ago – this due to the union contract and FLOC's work. We acknowledge more needs to be done but there ARE improvements.

People of faith and conscience are more necessary now than ever to share in the education and mobilization of our country's consumers and NFWM recognizes it's strategic role in equipping our faith partners for this work. We are all in this together, Friends. At our 45th Anniversary celebration we repeated the claim of a previous anniversary celebration, "THIS FAR BY FAITH." Yes, indeed. Our faith will carry us forward to impact the future. It will take all of our efforts to fundamentally change the system.

And we can. Si Se Puede!! YES, WE CAN!

Boycott Wendy's!



As this newsletter reaches your mailbox, the Coalition of Immokalee workers will be wrapping up their Behind the Braids fall tour and mobilization supporting the Wendy's boycott. November 11-13 is the national weekend of action. Look for updates on our Facebook page or visit CIW's website.

In July, the NFWM Board unanimously endorsed the CIW's boycott of Wendy's. **We call on our supporters to honor the Wendy's boycott** and, so that Wendy's feels it, take a store manager letter (at nfwm.org) into a Wendy's store & ask the manager to tell the corporate office they have lost a customer until Wendy's signs on to the Fair Food program.

California Overtime Bill is Law



Farm workers were excluded from the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which gave many labor protections to US workers including the right to overtime pay. That has changed in California thanks to the UFW and Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego) who championed the legislation.

On September 12th, CA Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB 1066 into law marking a historic victory for more than 800,000 California farm workers and setting an example for other states to follow. The law, which will be phased in over 4 years, mandates that farm workers will be paid overtime after eight hours on the job or 40 hours in a single week.

Thank you to NFWM supporters around California who advocated in favor of the bill with key CA Assemblypersons. And a special thank you to Suzanne Darweesh (pictured above), Co-chair of the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farmworkers (OCIC), other OCIC members, NFWM Board member Rev. Sophia DeWitt, and former NFWM Board President Bro. Mark Schroeder for assisting the UFW in this effort.

Sam Trickey Sues Wendy's



Many of you may have seen the news from CIW that a friendly shareholder has taken the Wendy's corporation to court for the fast food company's refusal to join the Fair Food Program. That shareholder is longtime NFWM Board member, current Treasurer and Past President, Dr. Sam Trickey of Gainesville, FL. For more than forty years, Sam has engaged in many actions on behalf of justice for farm workers. His ownership of Wendy's stock began that way. It makes this unprecedented action possible. As Dr. Trickey says, "Bad corporate social policy makes for bad business outcomes. As a Wendy's shareholder, I'm frustrated at the under-performance of the stock and the diminution of Wendy's reputation entailed in their stubborn refusal to join the Fair Food Program long after it has become a fast-food norm."

For the press release and court filing announced by the law firm Pomerantz LLP, visit:

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/pomerantz-law-firm-announces-filing-215712705.html>.

FUJ Wins Union Election!

On September 12th, farm workers at Sakuma Bros Berry Farm voted in a historic election to have Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) represent them. FUJ won with 77% of vote.

Since FUJ and Sakuma began negotiations they called off the boycott of Sakuma, Driscoll's and Häagen-Dazs strawberry ice cream.



Photo by Alexandria Jonas, NFWM

NFWM applauds the courage of the workers who for three seasons have stood up for what is just and right. We give thanks that Sakuma's CEO Danny Weeden brought the company to the table with the workers. After the election, the union and the company have 125 days to negotiate a mutually-agreed upon contract before they are required to go into arbitration.

THANK YOU to all our supporters who helped the farm workers come this far. Please keep them in your prayers so that they gain a fair contract soon.

Thank You Nico Gumbs



Nico Gumbs & Gabi Rios at July 2015 FUJ march in WA

Nico Gumbs, YAYA (Youth & Young Adult) Coordinator at NFWM since 2012, left the position in September to move from Florida to North Carolina. At our August board meeting, we honored Nico with a video retrospective, a cake and a very hearty aplausa. The words of one board member to Nico speak for all of us, "Thank you for the wonderful person you are, your willingness to go the extra mile, all you have done for farm workers and for NFWM & YAYA."

With Nico's leadership, numerous young people developed organizing and leadership skills to create change for farm workers. Nico built and solidified important relationships throughout central Florida with the Fellsmere community and FWA's Campesino Garden project, several Unitarian Universalist fellowships, the Labor movement, our long-time partner CIW, and others.

We miss Nico and Nico's leadership of the YAYA program. But we know they will continue with us in the farm worker movement for justice. As Nico said, "I will forever carry the legacy of standing in solidarity with movements as I move forward." Many, many thanks, Nico!

Welcome Andrew Eastes

NFWM is pleased that the Duke Divinity School Field Education office has again placed an intern with us and even more pleased that Andrew (Drew) is that intern. Drew can be reached at aeastes@nfwm.org.

Greetings! My name is Andrew Eastes. I am from a small town in middle Tennessee where I grew up in a Pentecostal church. In 2015, I graduated from Lee University with a degree in biblical and theological studies, and I am now in the second year of the M.Div. program at Duke Divinity School. My



academic interests revolve around how preaching and worship shape the church's activity in the world. When not weighed down with schoolwork, I enjoy reading, spending time with friends, and watching sports (especially Tennessee football and Duke basketball).

Over time, my interests have specifically turned toward the church's role in pursuing justice. As a result, I requested to be placed at a non-profit agency this academic year for field education, and I was delighted to be partnered with National Farm Worker Ministry. I realize that there will be much to learn over the next eight months, but I am excited by the opportunity of serving with NFWM and advocating for this great cause! ¡Si Se Puede!

Please spread the news that NFWM is looking to hire a new YAYA Coordinator. For position and application information, visit www.nfwm.org.



Posing with Delores Huerta at the **UFW's 30th Anniversary Convention** in May are long-time YAYA member Jonathan Alingu (left) and YAYA Coordinator Nico Gumbs (second from right) - they volunteered as part of the Digital Media team and are pictured alongside NFWM Director Julie Taylor

and Board President Sylvia Campbell. Board Member Suzanne Darweesh attended as well.

In July, Nico co-facilitated workshops with the CIW at the **United Church of Christ quadrennial National Youth Event**. The workshop "Urbanities in Solidarity with Farm Workers" focused on the many issues farm workers face in and out of the fields and the ways NFWM-YAYA and CIW are working together to address them.

As YAYA Coordinator and a member of the Student/Farmworker Alliance steering committee, Nico Gumbs attended the September **Wendy's Boycott Summit** in Immokalee, FL and co-facilitated a workshop on "Bringing the Heat to the Streets: How to Organize an Action."

More YAYA Highlights at nfwm-yaya.org

Stories from the Fields: Pablo Hernandez Avila, FLOC Member

This story was graciously shared by our friends at the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. To read more stories that are part of their series, Voces: Somos FLOC / Voces: We are FLOC, visit www.floc.com

When Pablo first came to the US to work in the fields, he landed in rural Virginia. It was 1990, and he remembers the first grower he worked for taking him and his coworkers to the store to buy them all envelopes, notebooks, and pens to write letters home to their families. "We used to finish work and go back to the camp and write letters to our families, sometimes three or four a week," he says.

Pablo worked in the fields of Virginia for 18 years. Then in 2009, he was sent to work in North Carolina, an experience he will never forget. "The grower was violent," he recalls, "he screamed at us, and everyone was afraid of him." It was common knowledge that the grower kept a gun in his truck, and while he never openly threatened anyone with it, the message was clear: do your work and don't complain.

In 2013, he landed at a farm in Louisburg, NC, where he was offered extra work driving the van of workers to and from work and between the fields each day. When he noticed he wasn't being paid for the extra hours spent driving, he confronted the grower. But the grower refused to pay. Feeling like he had no other option, Pablo continued driving for the rest of the season, but was never paid for his time. He wasn't offered employment at that farm the following year, a move which Pablo is sure was a result of him questioning his pay.

Earlier this year, through a routine union visit at Pablo's camp, Pablo learned that because he was covered by FLOC's union contract, he had the right to file a complaint about the wages stolen from him in 2013. He filed the grievance, and signed up to be a member of FLOC.

Pablo won his grievance, and he and another worker who also drove the van received thousands of dollars in back wages.

Pablo says he joined the union because he wants to see workers get a fair share of the wealth in agriculture. "The growers invest a lot of money. But it's us, the workers, who plant and harvest that money. They invest a lot of money, but we invest our time. We deserve good pay."

For years, Pablo has watched growers exploit and silence workers on the various farms where he has worked, and now he is determined to do something to change it. He works tirelessly educating his coworkers about their rights under the union contract, and encouraging workers to speak up when there is a problem. "When worker's voices aren't heard, when they say we don't get to have an opinion, that is the same as saying that we are slaves," he says. "The slaves didn't have a voice or a vote. They worked and worked, and if they spoke out they were mistreated."

Now, Pablo is a union leader at his camp. He just attended his first union meeting where workers received training on their rights under the contract, and strategized how to organize their coworkers and build the union. At the meeting, Pablo presented his case to over 50 workers as an example of why having a strong union and grievance procedure is so important. He's not shy when it comes to encouraging others to become members. "I invite everyone to join the union and make complaints about problems," he said at the meeting. "If we stay quiet then we are siding with the person who is doing wrong."



Photo by Alexandria Jonas, NFWM

Members of FLOC in North Carolina during one of their regional members meetings in July at the Dudley office. Pablo, along with other workers, spoke passionately about how working with a union contract is making a difference in their lives. Pictured with the workers are volunteer drivers whose generosity makes these meetings possible - Thank You!

NFWM's 45th Anniversary Dinner — a Big Success!



On August 27, at the end of NFWM's summer board meeting, NFWM Board members, staff and supporters celebrated the Ministry's 45th Anniversary at the "This Far By Faith" benefit dinner. Pullen Memorial Baptist Church of Raleigh generously hosted the event. In addition to great food and good company, there was also a silent auction and wonderful speakers.

We were particularly honored to have Rafael Ramos, long time FLOC member, speak. Rafael is from a border city where many of the US based maquiladores have closed, so he came to the US for work. Rafael says the union is like his insurance, fighting against the injustices suffered by farm workers in the fields. "We do not come to this country to become rich. We come so we can bring dignity to our lives in Mexico."

Due to the generous support of so many of you, we far surpassed our fundraising goal and raised over \$16,000 in honor of NFWM's milestone anniversary! Thanks for helping ensure NFWM's work for the future!

Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers' annual fundraiser for NFWM is a showing of "Food Chains" along with good fellowship, substantial appetizers, sweets and a silent auction. The event is November 13th at 5 pm at Fairview Community Church in Costa Mesa, CA. Email Suzanne Darweesh sdarweesh@aol.com for info. Thank you OCIC for your faithful support!

Farm Worker Ministry--Northwest held its board meeting this past October 2nd in Seattle, WA. NFWM ED Julie Taylor had the privilege of joining them to talk about the history of NFWM, update them about current campaigns and our farm worker partners and discuss the ways NFWM and FWM-NW work together.



Give a Tribute Gift to NFWM

You can make a contribution "in honor" or "in memory" of as a thoughtful and meaningful way to recognize someone special in your life while supporting NFWM's work.

Make an honor gift to recognize anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, holidays or any special occasion. Memorial gifts are a great way to continue the legacy of a person after they have passed away. After all, NFWM continues to be built on the legacy of farm workers and their supporters fighting for justice.

To choose to give a Tribute Gift, please fill out the form below and use the enclosed remittance envelope or go to the "Take Action" tab at www.nfwm.org or call the office at 919-807-8707.

The person you give a gift in honor or memory of will be included on a leaf on NFWM's online Tribute Tree. Additionally, an acknowledgement will notify the person of your choice of your thoughtful gift.



Your Name/Address:

City/State/Zip Code:

You Phone:

Name of honoree:

Your Email:

☐ Gift in Honor ☐ Gift in Memory Occasion/Reason:

Acknowledgment
Card Recipient:

Gift Amount: \$

Their Address:

City/State/Zip Code:



In Memoriam - iPresente!



Former NFWM Board President Bro. Mark Schroeder with Helen Chavez at the 2012 dedication of the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument in La Paz, CA.

Helen Fabela Chávez, the widow of Cesar Chávez, died June 6th. Helen is lauded as a strong and unassuming woman whose life, work and support alongside her husband were crucial to the building and sustaining of the United Farm Workers.

Mrs. Chavez, a woman of deep and abiding faith, was always a friend of the National Farm Worker Ministry, serving as an honorary member of NFWM's 75th Anniversary Committee. Longtime NFWM Board member Olgha Sierra Sandman said on hearing of Mrs. Chavez's passing, "Descansa en Paz, Helen, a brave and valiant woman whose life testified to the love and support of her husband and the Union they both founded."

We remember **Sarah Hall Goodwin** of Alexandria, VA, who died this past August. Sarah was on the NFWM staff in the 1960's in California and continued throughout her years to support justice for farm workers and NFWM.

Anita LaPlaca, registered nurse, certified medical Spanish interpreter, world traveler and nature enthusiast lived and worked in North Carolina for some years where she became involved in farm worker justice issues and with NFWM. Anita died in August at home in Cape May, NJ. NFWM is honored to have had Anita as our friend.



Doris Rhoades (left) with former NFWM Executive Director, Virginia Nesmith in Bakersfield, CA in 2010.

Geraldean Matthew,

(pictured right) following years of working the fields around Apopka, FL, came on staff of the Farmworker Association of FL. Among much other work, she co-coordinated the Lake Apopka Farmworker Environmental Health Survey to identify the health conditions of former Lake Apopka farm workers and their experiences of pesticide exposure. She was the inspiration for the Lake Apopka Farmworker Memorial Quilt Project. Geraldean, who passed away on September 3rd, is remembered with great affection as a strong warrior in the struggle for social and environmental justice.



Photo taken in 1971, when Leo Nieto (left) was Chairman of the Board and Chris Hartmire was NFWM Executive Director.

Rev. Leo Nieto died on May 13th. Rev. Nieto was the first Chairman of the Board of NFWM, elected at the May 1971 Board meeting held at La Paz, CA. Leo and then wife Mary Jean (Friel) worked during the 1970's for the United Farm Workers, living for some time at La Paz. Leo was a UMC minister and he became the first District Superintendent for Hispanic Churches in the California-Pacific Conference. Leo lived at Pilgrim Place, Claremont, CA at the time of his death.

A great friend of NFWM, **Doris Rhoades**, died on June 22nd. Doris was a missionary and reformer in China and Hong Kong for many years before moving to the states and later marrying Benton Rhoades. Benton, who passed away in 2003, was a long time member and past President of the NFWM Board. The NFWM family came to know and love Doris as she joined Benton at Board meetings. Doris's gracious and loving spirit is missed.

National Farm Worker Ministry

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Pablo's Story



What FLOC means to workers in North Carolina.

Earlier this year, through a routine union visit at his camp, Pablo learned that because he was covered by FLOC's union contract, he had the right to file a complaint about wages stolen from him in 2013. He filed the grievance, and immediately signed up to be a member of FLOC.

Pablo won his grievance and he and another worker received thousands of dollars in back wages.

Read Pablo's full story on page 5.

This past summer, our partner the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) ran the series **VOCES: SOMOS FLOC / VOICES: WE ARE FLOC**, sharing stories of six FLOC members. With permission, we are reprinting Pablo's story in this NFWM News & Views. Read more stories at www.floc.com

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.

JOIN US !

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