

NFWM Board Meets in Fresno, CA to Support the UFW, Workers at Gerawan Farming, and Immigrants & Refugees



Photo by Alexandria Jonas/NFWM

UFW President Arturo Rodriguez (center) meets with NFWM Board and Staff January 27 in Fresno, CA.



Photo by Alexandria Jonas/NFWM

UFW members and Gerawan workers tell the NFWM board what working for Gerawan Farming is like and why they are fighting for their union contract.

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Photo by Alexandria Jonas/NFWM

Robert Kennedy, Jr. joins UFW / NFWM rally at the Coyle Federal Building in Fresno to call for NO MASS DEPORTATIONS.

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Thank you to FIRM (Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries) for graciously hosting NFWM's Board meeting.

NFWM Statement on Executive Actions on Immigrants

February 2017

In light of the mandates given to us in our sacred texts and in the face of hostile rhetoric, fear-mongering, and sweeping Executive Actions threatening to drastically alter the role of immigrants in our country, National Farm Worker Ministry feels impelled to speak prophetically.

From the First Testament, Deut. 10:19 says, "You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (NRSV) And from the Second Testament, under "Marks of the True Christian," Romans 12:13 says, "Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." (NRSV) Very simply, Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)" (NRSV) The Holy Scripture is clear.

As citizens of this country, our moral responsibility and noble heritage of welcome is expressed on the Statue of Liberty:

*"...Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore..."*

Farm workers have heard that welcome. They have come, doing work that others will not, under conditions others reject, and have been welcomed as long as they are useful and invisible. We cannot stand silent as the noble welcome of the Statue of Liberty is withdrawn.

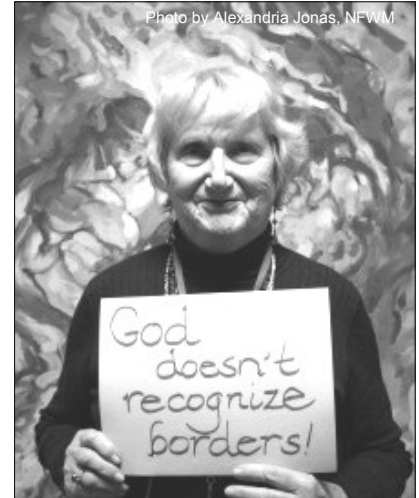
For almost 50 years NFWM has stood in solidarity with farm workers, the majority of whom are immigrants, in their struggle for just wages and decent working conditions. As the sole faith-based organization supporting all of the major farm worker unions and associations in the US, NFWM staff and board members have visited labor camps and met with workers from California to Florida and from Washington to Arizona. We recognize that farm worker labor benefits each of us every day. We are grateful and we will persevere alongside these men, women and children from near and far until that day they gain the dignity their work

deserves and full protection of their basic human rights.

Already burdened, farm workers now face cruel, needless disruption due to our country's failed immigration policies and new deportation mandates. Farm worker families are being ripped apart. Children are being sent to so-called "home" countries that they cannot recall ever seeing. Essential farm workers are

being deported, disrupting agricultural economies and communities. Muslim workers face the possibility of registries. Walls disrupting centuries of cross border life in border towns are to be extended. Vast expenditures on enforcement threaten to hijack federal and state budgets.

National Farm Worker Ministry rejects this grim vision. Our faith traditions tell us that workers are not invisible, not disposable, not a commodity. Prophetic history tells us that the rhetoric-filled and vague Executive Actions are a tragic contradiction of the noble welcome on the Statue of Liberty. We believe in compassionate, just immigration reform that does not inflict cruel disruption on the lives of those who literally feed us. We therefore stand today, as we have for decades, with farm worker organizations whose members labor for economic and social justice for farm workers and press for practical, compassionate immigration policy. We welcome the immigrants/strangers/refugees among us because they ARE our neighbors.



Suzanne Darweesh, Co-Chair,
Orange County Interfaith Committee
to Aid Farmworkers

As well as increasing fear in immigrant communities about deportations, U.S. growers are voicing concern that they will face serious labor shortages. **NFWM applauds the right-thinking solution to the problem from the biggest fresh garlic producer in the U.S., Christopher Ranch in Gilroy, CA.** At the end of last year, the farm, which employs 600 people, was short 50 workers and lacking applicants. In January, the company announced a raise in pay for farm workers from \$11 to \$13 an hour this year, and then to \$15 in 2018. Now the company has a waiting list of 150 people. Ken Christopher, VP at Christopher Ranch, said, "I knew it would help a little bit, but I had no idea that it would solve our labor problem."

(for more see, "How this garlic farm went from a labor shortage to over 150 people on its applicant waitlist," Natalie Kitroeff, Los Angeles Times, February 9, 2017)

Farm Workers at Gerawan Continue Fight for their Contract

Twenty-seven years after workers at Gerawan Farming first voted to be represented by the United Farm Workers during the last major organizing drive under Cesar Chavez's leadership, the workers still do not have their contract. Gerawan, headquartered in Fresno, CA, is one of the largest stone fruit producers in the U.S. and sells its Prima label throughout the country. After decades of campaigns against the union, Gerawan is now refusing to implement a contract with the UFW ordered by the California mediator in 2013 under the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. In fact, the company has gone so far as to challenge the constitutionality of the Mandatory Mediation law in court. That decision is now before the California Supreme Court.

The actions of Gerawan Farming have been and are so disgraceful that the NFWM Board held its recent board meeting in Fresno to impress on Gerawan Farming that we are paying attention and remain steadfast in our call to implement the workers' contract.



NFWM Board in Action in Fresno, CA

NFWM's board members met in Fresno at the invitation of the UFW specifically to take action in the Gerawan campaign. We were also invited to participate in an immigration rally at the Coyle Federal Building where Arturo Rodriguez and Robert Kennedy, Jr. were the main speakers. Many Gerawan workers attended the rally.

Board members present all signed a letter to the Gerawan CEO, Dan Gerawan, to ask him to do the right thing and implement the union contract lawfully issued by the neutral state mediator. Julie Taylor, Sharon Stanley-Rea, Edie Rasell and David Wildman were accompanied by two UFW organizers and four Gerawan workers to deliver this letter. Normally the office door is locked but the delegation found it open and was able to hand deliver our letter and signatures. We are working with the UFW on follow up to this.

As well as the report from this meeting, our board heard updates on the UFW from Arturo Rodriguez. We also hosted the Gerawan delegation for dinner and sharing. It is always good to hear from farm workers directly. Their voices are what keep us going. And it is vital that they see

the faith community supporting them as they step out in resistance to the companies that exploit them. Updates were also provided by the staff for other farm worker campaigns and are included in this newsletter.

We were blessed to see past board members: Bro. Mark Schroeder, Rev. Gene Boutilier and Carolyn Jaramillo who joined us for this meeting. Our time together gave us the chance to see how our lives and work intertwine with farm workers and each other. As the Executive Actions rolled out in real time, we paused to pray together for what was happening in airports and ports of entry around the country and world.

Along with approving the budget for 2017, we elected our officers for the coming year: Sylvia Campbell, President; David Wildman and Sharon Stanley-Rea, Vice Presidents; Hector Rodriguez, Secretary; and Sam Trickey, Treasurer. Additional members of the Executive Committee are: Suzanne Darweesh, Mary Martens, Felix Garza (Past President), and John Hill. And we welcomed to his first meeting our new board member, Jeff Boshart, who represents the Church of the Brethren.



NFWM Responds to Jan. 26 & 27 Executive Action Announcements

NFWM board and staff were together on when the public announcements of the Trump Administration's Executive Actions related to Refugees and Immigrants were issued. Many of our board members work on those issues in their professional or community lives. We had the privilege to take time during the meeting to listen to each others' reactions, reflect on news as it emerged and support one another in our deep concern for how the Executive Actions could impact, indeed were impacting, refugees and immigrants, which includes many farm workers. And we prayed together.

When I heard about the executive orders I was horrified, in disbelief, struck by the irony that while the board was working for the people who put food on our tables, the administration was working against them. It felt like our work was being derailed. But then I was encouraged when I saw people across the country flooding airports to protests the orders," said Rox Monterastelli, Board member representing the Loretto Community.



Rox Monterastelli



Photos by Alexandria Jonas, NFWM

News from Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ)

Contract negotiations between FUJ and Sakuma Bros Berry Farm continue with the expectation that a contract will be in place by the beginning of the berry season. "Our negotiations team is working hard learning all the details of what a union contract is and farm workers from other companies are waiting to see how this new process will work," said Ramon Torres, FUJ President.

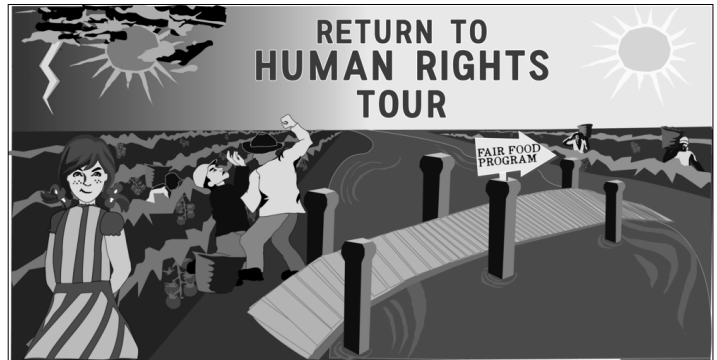
Congratulations to Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ) for being named one of the International Labor Rights Forum's 2017 Labor Rights Defenders Award honorees.



FUJ is supporting farm workers at Golden Eagle Farms, a multi-national agricultural corporation with 1,900 acres of blueberries in Everett, WA. Workers began picketing the farm on February 20th after the farm's

labor contractor Sheila Monterey, based in California, denied the workers' demand for additional bathroom facilities so that women workers have a port-a-potty separate from the men. The labor contractor then fired the workers for asking. Public support is growing for the demand that the workers be re-hired and WA State labor laws be obeyed. FUJ has learned that Golden Eagle processes the blueberries in Canada and ships most of them to DOLE. FUJ asks supporters to stay updated on action requests through facebook.com/FamiliasUnidas/.

Join CIW's Return to Human Rights Tour - March 2017



From **March 16th to 29th, 2017**, members of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and their allies will embark on the longest protest action in the last 10 years of the Campaign for Fair Food in mobilizing for the national Wendy's Boycott.

The Return to Human Rights Tour will travel to the heart of Wendy's territory for a **major action in Columbus, Ohio, on March 24-26**. There will be a vigil outside of Wendy's headquarters in Dublin, OH, a World Café-style gathering at Ohio State University and a Parade for Human Rights through the streets of downtown Columbus. The Tour will end the following week with a vigil in Tampa, Florida — stopping in nearly a dozen cities

over the 13-day journey. Plan to join the CIW in a city near you. **For up-to-date information on the actions in each city and to register go to ciw-online.org.**

MAR 16 GAINESVILLE, FL
MAR 17 ATLANTA, GA
MAR 18 NASHVILLE, TN
MAR 18 ST. LOUIS, MO
MAR 20 MINNEAPOLIS, MN
MAR 21 MADISON, WI
MAR 22 CHICAGO, IL
MAR 23 LOUISVILLE, KY
MAR 24 DUBLIN, OH
MAR 26 COLUMBUS, OH
MAR 27 CHAPEL HILL, NC
MAR 29 TAMPA, FL

If you do not live near one of the Tour cities, please continue supporting CIW by boycotting Wendy's and by taking a [store manager letter to a Wendy's near you](#). Download the letter from www.nfwm.org.



iPRESENTE!

Rev. John Nasstrom (August 2016)
Mary Nasstrom (May 2016)

Rev. John Nasstrom served with Lutheran World Relief in Brazil and then with the Lutheran Council USA. He became involved in the National Farm Worker Ministry during its early days, helping to draft in 1971 NFWM's statement of purpose. Rev. Nasstrom went on to serve as Board chairperson.



iPRESENTE!

Dozier H. VandenBosche 1925-2016

Dozier and her husband Rev. August VandenBosche were instrumental to the growth of the farm worker movement for justice in Florida from the 1960's on when Rev. VandenBosche, a Presbyterian minister, was Director of the Florida Migrant Ministry and brought it into partnership with the UFW, FLOC and NFWM.

News from FLOC

New FLOC Contract for 10,000 Farm Workers in Southeast

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee has negotiated and signed its fourth 4-year collective bargaining agreement covering H2A guestworkers with the North Carolina Growers Association. FLOC won the first contract in 2004 following the Mt. Olive Pickle boycott.

The 2016 contract includes a number of provisions improving the rights of the workers. For instance: 1) guaranteed 1 day off per week; 2) improved bus quality for transportation to and from Mexico, and a process for workers to get reimbursed if the buses have mechanical problems causing workers to lose work; 3) tightening up the grievance procedure by making time limits shorter to resolve grievances more quickly.

In 2014 alone, FLOC resolved 878 grievances, with complaints ranging from wage theft to housing conditions, from outbound travel reimbursement delays to denial of medical care or workers' comp claims.

BAT Buying Reynolds

Reynolds American Tobacco is being bought by British American Tobacco, which already owns 42% of Reynolds, for \$49.4 billion. The sale, which is expected to be finalized in 2017, will create the world's largest publicly traded tobacco company. FLOC launched a campaign against Reynolds in 2007 to improve the living and working conditions for tobacco farm workers in the Southeast. FLOC's campaign includes other giant international tobacco companies and will now focus even more on British American Tobacco.

Farm Workers at Jackson Farming Get Court Settlement



Last year NFWM supported FLOC in its campaign for seven farm workers at Jackson Farming in Autryville, NC who were blacklisted for the 2016 season after they spoke out about wage theft and unjust firing. Thank you to those of you who signed on to the 10,000 signature petition to the farm's owner, NC State Senator Brent Jackson (R-Sampson). NFWM staff participated in the press conference and petition delivery to Sen. Jackson's Raleigh office. Jackson would not meet workers' demand for restitution so the workers sued with FLOC's help. Jackson Farming has settled out of court for just under \$100,000.



**TOLEDO IS THE PLACE
TO BE IN SEPTEMBER**

**September 8 & 9, FLOC members from
across the South and Midwest will come
together for their quadrennial convention &
50th Founding Anniversary Celebration.**
Volunteer to help & watch democracy in action!

**The NFWM Board will hold its semi-annual
meeting in conjunction with the Convention.**



World's Tobacco Workers Uniting in Global Fight for Justice

In October 2016, FLOC's Pres. Baldemar Velasquez, Justin Flores and Raul Jimenez participated in the IUF (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations) Global Tobacco Conference in Malawi, Africa. Union leaders from 8 tobacco growing countries in Africa and Latin American produced a draft declaration calling on tobacco companies to guarantee the right to freedom of association in their supply chains by creating a practical mechanism that allows workers to negotiate the conditions of their labor without fear of being fired or retaliated against.

In January, Velasquez traveled to Myanmar to the World Conference of Agricultural Workers' Unions to invite *all* agricultural workers to join this fight. The agricultural sector unions of the IUF officially ratified the draft declaration and vowed to fight together with FLOC. The final version of the declaration will be presented to the IUF 27th Congress in Geneva in August 2017.

**Tobacco workers across the world deal with
many of the same issues such as poverty
wages, child labor, sexual harassment, lack of
access to water, and job insecurity.**

Welcome Dominique Aulizio YAYA Coordinator



Dominique (right) in 2011 when active with the Orlando chapter.

NFWM is pleased and proud to announce that Dominique Aulizio has been hired to join the NFWM staff as our Youth & Young Adult (YAYA) Coordinator. Dominique will start work on March 6th with a week's orientation in Raleigh and then she'll return to Florida and the YAYA office in Orlando.

Some of you may recognize Dominique. She is a founding member of the Orlando

chapter of YAYA and was very active from 2007 through 2011 while she was a student at the University of Central Florida. She was also a part-time staff person in 2010, assisting in the Florida office.

Since graduation, Dominique has remained active in social justice causes, including serving as a Peace Accompanier in Antioquia, Colombia with Fellowship of Reconciliation, as an organizer for the "Expose the TPP" Florida Speaking Tour and as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice Miami Chapter.

We are excited by the opportunity to have Dominique lead YAYA's future and be a part of our national work. After March 6th, you can contact her at daulizio@nfwm.org.

National Farmworker Awareness Week is March 24 – 31

This is the time of year when farm worker advocates honor the legacy of Cesar Chavez by lifting up *La Causa* in their communities. Even more so, now is the time to lift up the cause of all immigrants. For education and worship resources, visit nfwm.org. For NFAW resources, visit www.saf-unite.org/

- Take Action in Support of Immigrants.
- Organize an educational Harvest of Justice event at your congregation or community group.
- Host a film screening about farm workers for your friends and neighbors.
- Take time in your faith community's service to remember farm workers with a prayer.

GET INVOLVED!

Farm Workers Need Our Support Now More Than Ever!

Farm Workers Today are enduring:

- A climate of fear and uncertainty in immigrant communities
- Undocumented immigrants and farm workers being scapegoated as criminals
- Increased immigration raids
- Increased separation of families

In these times when immigrants—and the majority of farm workers are immigrants—are at greater risk and need greater protections, we call on farm workers supporters to step up and help out.

NFWM expects more policy changes and legislation we will need to fight alongside farm workers. They depend on people of faith and consumers to support their campaigns and amplify their voices. Your contribution to NFWM makes that work possible.

There are a number of ways to give:

Make a one-time gift.

Your support makes a real difference.

Become a Sustaining Donor

Make an even bigger impact by becoming a monthly or quarterly donor. It's easy! Sign up through check, bank draft or credit card.

Give a Tribute Gift

Make a donation in honor or memory of someone special and designate a leaf on NFWM's tribute tree.

Host a house party

This is a great way to teach folks about farm worker's issues and pass the hat to support NFWM. We have a House Party Kit to help you step-by-step.

Take a special offering at your church

Pray for farm workers in your service and include NFWM in a 5th Sunday or special offering to put faith into action.

Give online at: www.nfwm.org

Give by mail at: NFWM

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**Farm workers give to us every day.
Let's give back to them.**

National Farm Worker Ministry

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For APRIL 2nd, the United Farm Workers are organizing marches in key agricultural areas where they have field offices. The UFW is encouraging folks to put on their own support marches that day. Check www.ufw.org for more news.



When you have people together who believe in something very strongly - whether it's religion or politics or unions - things happen."

Education of the Heart
Quotes by Cesar Chavez



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Susan Alan
Dominique Aulisio
Alexandria Jonas
Julie Taylor



NFWM is currently doing behind the scenes work to launch a new ... and improved ... website this summer. We will integrate our NFWM and YAYA websites into one and add new interactive tools and updated content.