

# Orange County Interfaith Committee To Aid Farm Workers



OCTOBER 2018

## JOIN US ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17th FOR OUR NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY FUNDRAISER WITH SPEAKER JULIE TAYLOR

We are thrilled to welcome Julie Taylor, the Executive Director for the National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM), a faith-based organization that brings support to US farm workers as they organize for better wages, decent living and working conditions and safety.

The National Farm Worker Ministry has a 45+ years history of standing with farm workers as they organize for justice. With 27 denominations, religious orders and groups, NFWM has a long history of connecting the farm workers and their organizers to the faith community who choose to stand with some of the most marginalized in our society. Julie spent 13 years on their board before taking this position in September 2015.

Prior to that Julie worked for the national office of United Methodist Women, first as the Executive for Child and Family Advocacy. In this position, she directed their Initiative on Domestic Violence in partnership with United Methodist Men and addressed public education, child labor, farm worker conditions, reproductive justice and older women's concerns.

Her most recent job with United Methodist Women included serving as the Executive for Spiritual Growth, Julie's responsibilities included resourcing faith development, fostering spiritual and theological foundations for the work of United Methodist Women, assisting with leadership training, and helping to produce spiritual growth studies each year. She received her master's degree in Christian Spiritual Formation and Leadership from Spring Arbor University, Michigan and has a bachelor's degree in Christian Education from Asbury University, Kentucky. Originally from Eclectic, AL, Julie currently lives in Raleigh, NC.



**SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 17, 2018**

Sisters of St. Joseph  
Multipurpose Room  
480 S. Batavia  
in Orange

**5PM Silent Auction/  
Social Hour  
6PM Dinner  
7PM Program**

Pre-paid reservations by November 12th please:

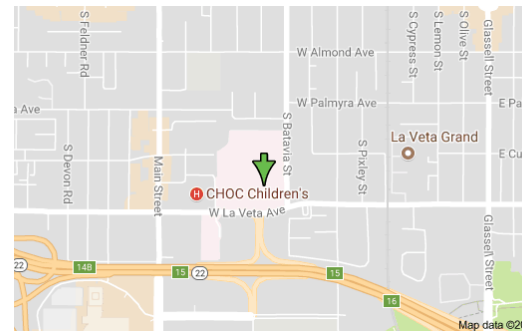
Make your check out to **NFWM**  
\$25 per person (\$10 students)  
and \$30 at the door

Send to:

Pam Presnall  
8502 E. Chapman Avenue, #153  
Orange, CA 92869

Contributions to the silent auction are welcome. Please contact  
Tina Laine at [tinal6@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tinal6@sbcglobal.net) to donate

Contact Suzanne Darweesh at [sdarweesh@aol.com](mailto:sdarweesh@aol.com) for more information



**Darigold Update:** From September 24-28 the UFW held a 5 day fast in front of the Darigold headquarters in Seattle, Washington. Arturo Rodriguez, leader of the UFW, committed to fast in public witness and solidarity with the "Darigold Dozen," twelve dairy workers who brought a lawsuit against Ruby Ridge Farms (part of the Darigold cooperative of dairy farms) to remedy work conditions that Ruby Ridge refused to address. In retaliation, Ruby Ridge fired the workers and then sued them. Workers deserve to have their issues addressed without fear of retaliation.

## Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers

### Chair:

Suzanne Darweesh

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### Fundraising:

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### Church Liaison:

Barbara Johnson

### Newsletter:

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### Labor Liaison:

Marti Schrank

**Others:** Irene Arellano, Chuck Buck, Mike Clements, Sara Halverson-Cano, Bill Steiner, Henry Weil



Dairy workers  
speaking about the Darigold fast

### Farmworker Web Pages:

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

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

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

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

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

## ARTURO RODRIQUEZ ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT TERESA ROMERO TO ASSUME ROLE OF UFW PRESIDENT

Arturo Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers, has announced his retirement effective at the end of the year. He has been president since the death of Cesar Chavez. In announcing his retirement, he cited two of his proudest achievements, the passage of overtime pay for farm workers last year by the California legislature, a first anywhere in the US. Secondly, he mentioned the enactment of protections against heat stress and heat stroke. It was only a few years ago that farm workers were dying in the fields because they were forced to continue back-breaking work under the hot sun and excessively high temperatures. Now California farm workers have the right to periodic shade breaks and clean water to drink.

Jose Medina says he has had the privilege of working with Arturo for nearly thirty years and never ceases to be in awe of his tireless dedication to advocating for the rights of farm workers.

Arturo also announced that Teresa Romero, will assume the third presidency of the UFW, the first woman president. She has worked closely with the leadership of the UFW for many years.

## NEWS BRIEFS

**The Coalition of Immokalee Workers**, based in Florida, is a worker based human rights organized internationally recognized for its achievements in the field of social responsibility, human trafficking, and gender based violence at work. Its first major effort to achieve recognition began here in Orange County with Taco Bell, headquarters in Irvine. It took three work stoppages and a month long hunger strike in 1998 and a 234 mile march in 2000 to end 20 years of declining wages in the tomato industry. "Taco Bell has a policy that it would not buy food from contractors that mistreat animals", announced Lucas Benitez, one of the CIW leaders, "All we are asking is that they have the same policy for humans." It has been a long struggle of many years for better wages and working conditions but eventually Taco Bell, with the help of many OC supporters, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, KFC, Pizza Hut, Chipotle, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Fresh Market all signed the Fair Food Program which agreed to pay a penny a pound more for tomatoes, enact protections against slavery and sexual assault with an enforcement mechanism. Nine major investigations and federal prosecutions freed over 1,200 Florida farm workers from captivity and forced labor.

The National Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Los Angeles spoke out in support of farm workers as did Eric Schlosser in his book, "Fast Food Nation." The CIW received a Presidential award for its human rights work on behalf of Florida farm workers. The Robert Kennedy Foundation also honored the CIW.

Wendy's has been the last hold-out among the major fast-food chains for the last five years. Due to consumer pressure, especially on college campuses, Wendy's announced this summer that it would no longer purchase tomatoes from Mexico's abusive tomato industry but would buy from greenhouse operations in the US and Canada instead. Unfortunately, indoor working conditions are not inherently safe and so we must try again to persuade Wendy's to do the right thing. The LA Times reported in 2014 that working conditions in Mexico were close to slavery.

**Families United for Justice** in Washington state now has 375 members. Their second year of a Sakuma Farms contract has brought higher wages, better working conditions, improved housing, and a place at the table where piece rates are decided. FUJ has also established an 18 acre cooperative. A board will be set up which will include 50% women. They will buy a 60 acre field to grow blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries.

On a less positive note, farm work does not stop for smoke. Honesto Ibarra died last year from a combination of smoke inhalation and excessive heat. He complained of not feeling well but nothing was done for him. All the workers who protested were fired.

UFW workers at **Chateau St. Michelle Winery** have a new three year contract which guarantees medical and dental benefits.