

NEWS & VIEWS

The National Farm Worker Ministry

Spring 2018



All Photos this page by John Caleb Wise

During the NFWM Board winter meeting in Orlando, FL, we made new friends with many members of the Orlando YAYA chapter and visited with old friends as several YAYA alumni and former board member, Tess Browne, SCN joined us. We spent time with old friends at the Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and met new friends at the Hope CommUnity Center in Apopka.



Former farm worker Linda Lee leads the Apopka ToxicTour.



YAYA members lead us in a legislative training.



FWAF General Coordinator Tirso Moreno updates us on farm worker conditions.



CIW joined us to give an update on the Fair Food program.



We toured the FWAF Community Garden at the Hope CommUnity Center.



Irene Arellano, CLUE Los Angeles, brings a faith/labor perspective to the Board.



Sam & Christina



Tess & Emily

Celebrating Connections



Gavriel & Sharon



Karen & John

Board meeting brings together YAYAs, Board members and Farm Workers

The NFWM board met in Orlando, FL January 26-27, 2018. The first day we traveled to Apopka and began with a visit to the Hope CommUnity Center, a service learning community dedicated to the empowerment of central Florida's immigrant and working poor communities. Three members of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur came to accompany this underserved community with the resources needed to move toward social and economic justice. They began by forming community and that has been the bedrock of this ministry ever since.

Our next stop was the Farmworker Association (FWAF). Here we heard about the challenges of the H2A program on farm workers in the area. Growers are using guestworkers to displace the workers who reside in this community. Farms can dismiss workers who know their rights and have experience working and replace them with guestworkers who are new to the area, not as familiar with their rights and easier to exploit. Part of the focus for FWAF right now is to inform farm workers, both of their rights and of the challenges of the legislation being proposed in Congress.

In the afternoon, board members spent time on a "toxic" tour of Lake Apopka and heard how systemic racism has exacerbated this problem. They heard

from Jeannie Economos, FWAF staff and head of the environmental work there, as well as Linda Lee, one of the few remaining African-American farm workers who has survived despite exposure to pesticide poisoning. Farm workers served by FWAF shared their personal stories from crossing the border to abuse to being displaced by guestworkers to family separation. It was heartbreaking; and a clarion call to action.

Remembering Nan Freeman

At the end of the board meeting, members spent time reflecting on the anniversary of the death of Nan Freeman, martyr of the Farm Worker Movement. Nan's death, although forty-six years ago that week, still resonates today and especially so as we were meeting with Orlando YAYAs. Nan was a college freshman at a Florida school who had gone to help with a strike and was killed by a truck coming through a barricade. Her loss is remembered today and her commitment to farm workers is an inspiration for all of us. I was pleased to meet with her sister, Liz Freeman, this fall in Massachusetts. Liz is still connected to the Farm Worker Movement and tells the story of her sister.

YAYA Past & Present Gathering

At the 2018 Winter Board Meeting, current and former YAYA members and other young participants were able to meet to transfer and exchange knowledge and support.

Former members shared past difficulties and successes in organizing and gave their perspective on topics such as retaining members, key factors of impactful campaigns, tools for responding to conflict, and navigating dynamics of oppression and privilege within the group. They also spoke on avoiding burnout, self-care, and community-care and plan to stay in touch for continued exchange of ideas and support for our work in accompanying farm workers.

Soccer Fundraiser a Big Success!



NFWM-YAYA had another successful soccer fundraiser this year! Hit the Fields for Justice 2018 was a beautiful collaboration and cultural exchange between immigrant organizations. With Hope Community Center, FWAf, Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Hussein Islamic Center, YAYA organized a series of soccer games for people of all ages. Attendees brought food from their cultures and we shared messages of solidarity as we all work together in response to attacks on immigrant rights.

A huge thank you to all donors who sponsored a player on the YAYA team! We lost, again, to the 12-16 year old FWAf youth team. But we'll be back at it practicing for next year! And a big thank you to the amazing YAYA volunteers and our organizational partners. The day was full of smiles, laughter, soccer enthusiasm, face painting and crafts, delicious foods and new friendships.

Support Dreamers!

Throughout the fall and winter, NFWM-YAYA members, some of whom are DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients, have been working hard to get a Clean Dream Act passed. Their stories are compelling and an important part of the nation-wide conversation about immigration reform. During the federal budget spending bill...



"Funeral of Dreams" hosted by the Hope Community Center

fiasco of January, young people held emergency... rallies around the country to remind us that real people are being harmed and they, and this country, need real solutions.

Dreamers are doing their part – let's do ours. Whenever and however you can, SUPPORT A CLEAN DREAM ACT. Demand that politicians stop playing politics with the lives of immigrant young people like

YAYAs with FLOC!



NFWM-YAYAs Sabrina Ahuja, Javier Torres & Taylor Snider

In February, Sabrina, Javier, and I (Taylor) flew to Tennessee for FLOC's staff retreat. The point of the retreat this year was to flesh out a plan of action for the boycott of the VUSE e-cigarette produced by Reynolds Tobacco company. FLOC is targeting VUSE because it is made by a large tobacco company who has the power and influence to be an example for other tobacco companies. We are demanding that they give the workers in their supply chain the right to bargain on a level playing field on their own behalf. This is especially important because it allows for all the diverse problems that workers face in the tobacco fields to be addressed of their own agency.

The trip in and of itself was spectacular. FLOC President Baldemar Velásquez broke out his guitar and sang a few songs, and everyone had a chance to tell stories and laugh. As YAYAs we were welcomed warmly and our ideas were valued alongside anyone else's.

CIW Is Putting Pressure on Wendy's!

By Julie Taylor, Executive Director

On January 18th, CIW invited a group of faith leaders across the country to join in a day of Fasting and Action. In Raleigh, NC, I found myself socked indoors by a snow and ice storm so participated in "Snow and Solidarity" by fasting and using social media to get the message out.

Across the country, Sister Mary Martens of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the only one registered in IA. She fasted and went to Wendy's website and sent an email under the category "marketing/advertising," to tell them it would be wonderful marketing for Wendy's to support justice for farm workers by joining the Fair Food Program. She also phoned the 800 number and gave the same message to a "customer support advocate" to send along to the CEO.

On the West Coast, Rev. Connie Yost, an affiliated community minister with First Unitarian Church, Portland, delivered store manager letters to two of her local Wendy's and Rev. Ed Brandt made a visit to the south Salem, OR Wendy's and talked with the manager, a young Latina, about CIW and the Wendy's boycott.

These efforts, multiplied by over 160 faith leaders' actions around the country, let Wendy's know that the faith community is still here and are still pressing them to sign the Fair Food Agreement.

From March 11-15 CIW hosted a five-day Freedom Fast in New York City. Farm workers and their allies were outside the Manhattan hedge fund offices of Nelson Peltz, Chairman of Wendy's board of directors. The fast culminated in a march from Dag Hammarskjold Plaza to Peltz's office and back to break the fast. This event was so close to the publication/ mailing of this newsletter, we invite you to look for ways to continue to connect to CIW's campaign and the Wendy's boycott at nfwm.org.

NFWM Donates for Florida Hurricane Relief

National Farm Worker Ministry has had a Florida Emergency Fund for a number of years. Originally, funds were given for hurricane relief in the early 2000's and also used for the Community Disaster Center in Pierson, FL that opened in October of 2011 to assist with emergency preparedness for that remote community. Previous storms and floods had found that needed supplies were not getting to this area so the Center provided a place where they could be stored. Some funding remained after that project so, in light of the impact of Hurricane Irma last fall, NFWM gave checks to both FWAf and CIW at the board meeting, closing out NFWM's Florida Emergency Fund.

NFWM Adopts Statement on Harvest Without Violence



Photo courtesy of CIW

At NFWM's board meeting, Nely Rodriguez of CIW and Uriel Zelaya Perez of the Alliance for Fair Food spoke to us about the March Freedom Fast, their Harvest Without Violence efforts and the Wendy's boycott. The NFWM Board adopted the following statement for CIW's Harvest Without Violence, which was mailed to the Wendy's Corporation and posted on our website. We invite supporters to promote the Harvest Without Violence.

NFWM Statement:

Women deserve better than violence and harassment.

The National Farm Worker Ministry embraces the *Harvest without Violence* efforts of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Even as new awareness of the sexual harassment of women is surfacing in media workplaces, the political arena and employment settings around the country, farm worker women have lived under the reality and threat of this violence for decades. We are outraged by the abuse, assault, intimidation, harassment and rape experienced by farm worker women.

In migrant labor camps we have listened to the stories of farm worker women about being violated by their coworkers and threatened with deportation if they do not provide sexual favors for their supervisors. In other settings we have met women dressing like male workers so as not to attract attention and heard women share painful stories of abuse and violence. These are some of the reasons we support the Coalition of Immokalee's Fair Food Program. This "worker-driven social responsibility" model of organizing provides farm worker to farm worker training that includes a protocol for addressing sexual harassment and violence.

The National Farm Worker Ministry joins the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in standing with farm workers to eliminate violence by supporting the *Harvest without Violence* focus of the Fair Food Program. We call on all our member organizations, supporting organizations and people of conscience to join us in endorsing *Harvest without Violence*, to raise awareness of this terrible problem and to work to promote the Fair Food Program.

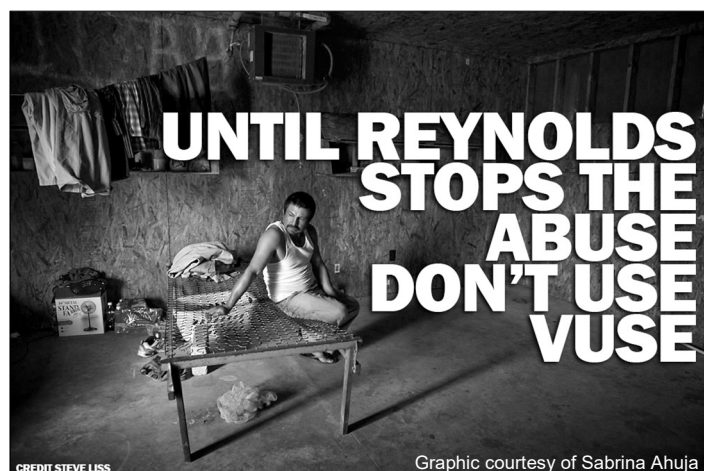
The National Farm Worker Ministry is a faith-based organization committed to justice for and the empowerment of farm workers since 1971. NFWM educates, equips and mobilizes member organizations and other faith communities, groups and individuals to support farm worker led efforts to improve their living and working conditions.

NFWM Board Endorses FLOC Boycott of Reynolds VUSE e-cigarette

At the winter meeting, the NFWM Board endorsed the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's (FLOC) boycott "as a means of using our economic power to support the farm workers who are struggling for justice."

For ten years, FLOC and their allies, including NFWM, have asked Reynolds American Inc. to work with farm workers to end human rights violations in the tobacco company's supply chain. For five years, we heard "any problems are not our responsibility." Then in 2012, Reynolds made the announcement that they would engage in multi-stakeholder talks; thus far, all FLOC has gotten from these talks is bad faith discussions and suggestions for band-aid solutions.

And so the farm worker members of FLOC voted to call for the boycott to make it clear to the company that the status quo can not continue. Consumer and supporter actions are key to putting greater pressure on big tobacco to come to the table in good faith. Some campaign actions will directly target Reynolds (and its parent company British American Tobacco). Others will target convenience store chains, which FLOC has repeatedly asked to intervene with Reynolds on behalf of farm workers, but which have not even responded. Thirty-six percent of tobacco sales are through convenience stores.



Until Reynolds signs an agreement guaranteeing workers a voice in their work place without fear of retaliation & the right to collective bargaining, join us in boycotting the VUSE e-cigarette!

Visit NFWM's website [Boycott VUSE](#) page to read NFWM's boycott endorsement resolution, for background on the campaign and actions you can take to support farm workers.



Farmworkers pick the tobacco leaves.



Growers sell the leaves to Reynolds for a price set by Reynolds that doesn't take into account the cost of providing safe and dignified working conditions.



Reynolds extracts the nicotine, converts it to a liquid and inserts it into VUSE e-cigarettes.



Convenience stores sell VUSE to consumers across the US.

Harvest of Justice Season!



You may recall the colorful, inspiring Harvest of Justice Table Prayer pamphlets NFWM, with much help from Gen Cassani, SSND, printed and distribute from 2001-2009.

NFWM is reviving the Harvest of Justice (HOJ) Season - now the six weeks between Labor Day & World Food Day (October 16th). HOJ provides digital resources that you can print on your own, including prayers/reflections built around a theme, farm worker facts/information, opportunities for action, and aides in holding education/giving events in more formats and with more resources which can be adapted for different user's needs.

This June, look in our ENews and website for how to find all the resources you will need this Fall to join the Harvest of Justice!



Paul Chavez, Chris & Pudge at the 2016 memorial service for Helen Chavez.

NFWM remembers Pudge Hartmire

On November 2nd, the Farm Worker Movement lost one of those whose support over the years helped to found the United Farm Workers Union and the National Farm Worker Ministry. Pudge Hartmire was the wife of Chris Hartmire, first leader of the National Farm Worker Ministry and much like Helen Chavez, she was carrying the family at home in support of her husband's organizing. Ever the delightful tease, Pudge accompanied Chris for 62 years. Our love and condolences go to Chris and his four children and eight grandchildren. Presente!

Are you over 70 ½ years of age? Do you have an IRA? Donating to NFWM could save you money!



There is an important tax incentive for donating to charity called the Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Rollover Provision.

Once an individual with an IRA reaches the age of 70½ they are required to take annual withdrawals from the IRA, and then to pay income tax on that

withdrawal. However, if they give directly from their IRA to a nonprofit charity, then they don't pay income tax (this amount is capped at \$100,000).

Have questions? Visit nfwm.org. Go to the the "Take Action" tab and choose "Make an IRA Charitable Rollover to NFWM" for more information and Frequently Asked Questions. You can also always call us at 919.807.8707. We're happy to help.

News from the UFW

Wages have doubled at Gourmet Berries in Kern County, CA for the 400 workers who signed the contract during the 2016 convention. UFW is also working to finish the building in Salinas where more organizing can take place.

In light of the immigration challenges in our country, much of their focus has been on federal legislation. The basic strategy is to continue to add cosponsors to the "blue card" legislation, the Agricultural Workers Program that provides a path to citizenship for farm workers who have been working in this country. In addition, they are opposing any expansion of the current H-2A program, specifically the creation of an H-2C category that would remove provisions for housing and transportation costs and increase from seasonal to year round employment extending the time that workers are away from their families.

A training on this legislation was given by the YAYAs at our board meeting. Orlando YAYAs are meeting with Florida Congressional representatives and setting up meetings for farm workers and advocates in FWAF.

NFWM and YAYAs continue to support a clean Dream Act. NFWM assisted immigration advocates recently by sending a letter to Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina.

NFWM Member Organizations

Here is the answer to the NFWM Membership Organizations quiz in last Fall's newsletter. Since our incorporation in 1971, NFWM membership is purposefully composed of organizations in order to expand the network of farm worker supporters through member constituencies. Each member organization appoints one representative to the Board of Directors.

Alliance of Baptists ✕ California Church Impact ✕ Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network ✕ Church of the Brethren ✕ Church Women United in Illinois ✕ Church Women United of S. California & S. Nevada ✕ Cumberland Presbyterian Church ✕ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ✕ Episcopal Church ✕ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ✕ Farm Worker Ministry Northwest ✕ Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls ✕ The Loretto Community ✕ NFWM Florida Advisory Group ✕ Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers ✕ Presbyterian Hunger Program PC (USA) ✕ School Sisters of Notre Dame ✕ Sisters of Charity, BVM ✕ Sisters of Charity of Nazareth ✕ Sisters of the Humility of Mary ✕ Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi ✕ Society of the Sacred Heart ✕ United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries ✕ The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society ✕ The United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries ✕ The United Methodist Women

Farm Workers, Immigration Reform & the Guestworker Program

By Dominique Auliso, YAYA Coordinator

There is currently a very real shortage in farm labor in some areas of the U.S., which is due largely to the fear experienced by workers to travel and cross the border. Many employers/growers are filling farm jobs with guestworkers through the H-2A seasonal visa program, which ties a worker's visa status to their employer and is notorious for worker abuses. Use of the H2A program doubled over the past five years with 200,000 visas certified in 2017.

In 2017, Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va) introduced the Agricultural Guestworker Act, HR 4092, a boldly anti-immigrant bill. It guts worker protections and seeks to replace the entire undocumented farm labor workforce with "H-2C" visa holders under a new, expanded visa that includes year-round jobs. It would lower wages, require workers to pay their own transportation to and from the U.S., find and pay for their own housing, buy health insurance and shoulder half the costs of legal arbitration against employers, even if the worker wins the case.

NFWM-YAYA and the Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) have been conducting legislative visits in the Orlando area to educate legislators about Goodlatte's harmful H2C visa bill. We are asking legislators to instead co-sponsor the "blue card bill" for farm workers, or Agricultural Workers Program Act (AWPA), HR 2690/S.1034, to show a public commitment to worker justice. This bill would grant farm workers who have been working in agriculture in the U.S. for at least two years temporary work authorization and a pathway to citizenship.

During the visit (pictured above right) we thanked Rep. Darren Soto for being an original co-sponsor of the blue card bill. Antonia Trejo, a founding FWAF member has worked in agriculture in the U.S. for 30 years. She shared about the benefits of granting farm workers the opportunity to adjust their immigration status and keep their families together, as she was able to do through the 1986 amnesty.

Yesica Ramirez spoke about the growing number of workers arriving at the FWAF Apopka office after being dismissed from their jobs because their employer is now contracting H-2A workers. She talked about the frequent cases of wage theft, pesticide accidents and sexual abuse that they see,



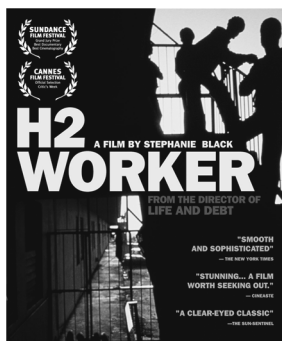
Antonia Trejo - FWAF leader, Dominique Auliso - NFWM, Alex Barrio - District Director for Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL) , and Yesica Ramirez - Apopka Area Community Organizer for FWAF.

which will only become more prevalent if worker protections are removed from the program.

On paper, one of the mandates of the H-2A program is that it should not displace local workers. However, in practice replacing local available workers with H-2A workers is very common. In central Florida alone, there are 130,000 ornamental nursery workers, as well as workers in other crops who could be displaced if the guestworker program is expanded to year-round jobs. Many agricultural employers, including the Western Growers Association, don't want the H-2C program. They prefer long-term stability in their workforce over short term visas.

NFWM-YAYA and FWAF also made recent visits to the offices of Senator Bill Nelson and Representative Val Demmings. We will be visiting other legislators in central Florida in the coming weeks.

Join NFWM-YAYA & FWAF. Contact your legislators to ask them to oppose any legislation that would expand the agricultural guestworker program and weaken worker protections. Ask them to show their support for farm worker families and for worker rights by co-sponsoring the Agricultural Workers Program Act HR 2690/S 1034.



Learn More About the Guestworker Program. Get the film, H2 Worker!

The documentary film, **H2 Worker** follows farm workers who are part of the H-2A Guestworker Program harvesting sugar cane in Florida. Though originally released in the 1990's, the H2 Worker is still an invaluable resource to understanding the current debate over guest worker provisions of immigration legislation and the rampant abuses that exist within the current program.

Get your copy of the film for a donation of \$35 to NFWM. Host a film screening or just watch it on your own. Learn more to help farm workers at this critical time. Email nfwm@nfwm.org or call the office at 919-807-8707 to get your copy.

National Farm Worker Ministry

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Farm workers give
to us every day.

We GIVE

monthly because NFWM
sustains a movement of
people of faith working for
farm worker justice. And
we want to sustain NFWM!

We're Lori & Imani Fernald
Khamala and we encourage
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