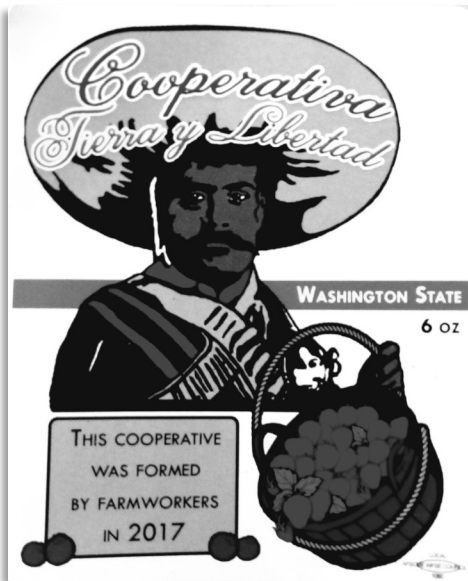


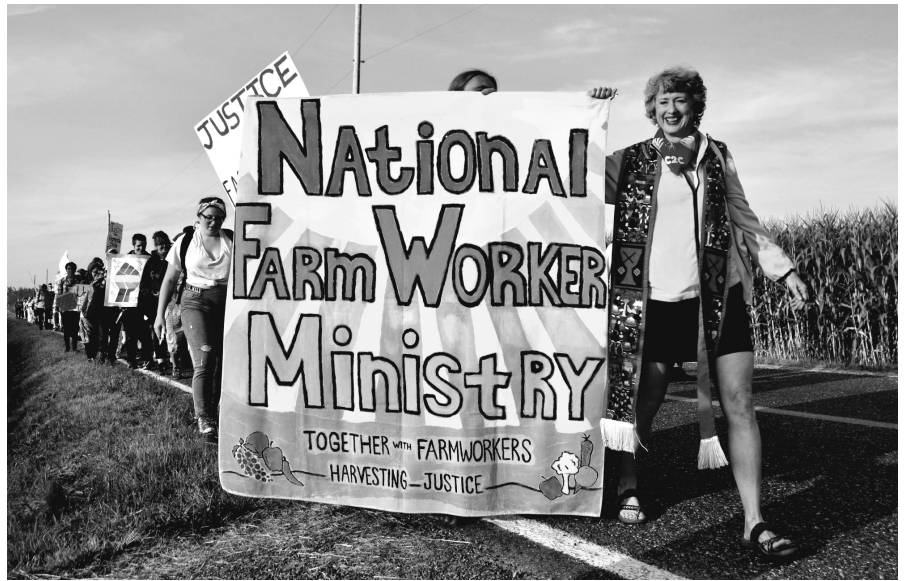
# NEWS & VIEWS

*The National Farm Worker Ministry*

Fall 2018



Cooperativa Tierra Y Libertad Berry Label



NFWM at Familias Unidas por la Justicia's march honoring farm worker Honesto Silva Ibarra on the one year anniversary of his death.

**NFWM Board, Staff, YAYAs & Friends meet in Bellingham, WA with Familias Unidas por la Justicia, Community to Community, Farm Worker Ministry Northwest, PCUN and United Farm Workers.**

Clockwise: NFWM at Tierra & Libertad, farm worker owned berry cooperative. Cumberland Presbyterian's Joy Warren (center) presents letters from children to Ramon Torres for members of Familias Unidas. NFWM Board & friends with Reyna Lopez of PCUN.



All Photos this page by Alexandria Jonas / NFWM

## My NFWM Board Meeting Experience

By Tareek Leonard

*Since the beginning of the YAYA Orlando Chapter ten years ago, at least one member of YAYA has participated in each bi-annual board meeting, barring hurricanes. YAYA members reschedule college assignments, take off work and come to pitch in and share their perspectives. Here is the story of the August board meeting from YAYA member Tareek Leonard. Thank you Tareek for sharing!*

In early August I had the amazing opportunity to attend the NFWM's Board meeting in Bellingham, WA. It was a four day experience that included everything from budget discussions to a twelve-mile march. The whole experience can be, for me, encompassed in the word "reaffirmation." When doing the often unrecognized work that I've begun to do, and members of the NFWM board and others have been doing alongside farm workers long before I was born, it's easy to get burnt out. While we constantly imagine and work towards a world we want to live in, we are still subject to the world we do live in; one crafted around "isms," like Ageism, Sexism and Classism. We can fall victim to the world as it is and give up, so sometimes we need a reaffirmation as to why we do farm worker solidarity work and just who it has the power to help.

One highlight was an activity we did that focused on challenging strongly held biases. By taking a critical look at a list of stereotypes about age groups ranging from "millennials" to "traditionalists" and voicing those judgments to the room, we were able to see the ways in which ageism manifests itself in society. It turns out that being over 50 doesn't automatically make you a social and political conservative and being younger than 30 doesn't mean you know how to work the latest iPhone!

On the Friday, we received updates from NFWM staff and our partners. We met with Indira Trejo, Global Impact Coordinator for the UFW. She informed us of the fight that the UFW has been waging with Darigold, the largest dairy processor

and cooperative in the Pacific Northwest. Darigold continues to ignore the abuses against dairy workers and the immigrants who stand at the vulnerable intersection of being undocumented and farm workers.

We also met with Reyna Lopez, the new Executive Director of Pinos y Campesinos



PCUN's Reyna Lopez & NFWM Board President Sylvia Campbell.



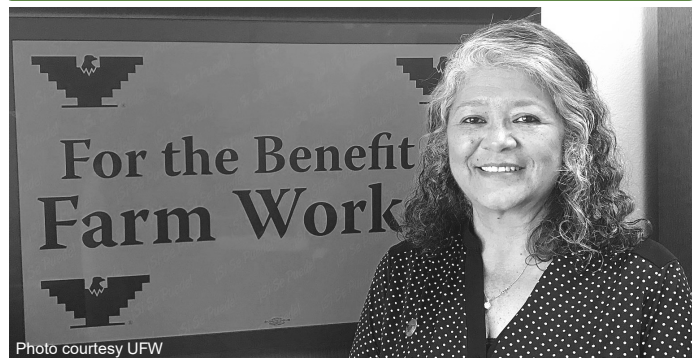
Photo by Alexandria Jonas / NFWM

Unidos del Noroeste. She spoke of how PCUN has been a cornerstone in her life as a child of migrant farm workers, as well as for many others. Seeing powerful women like Indira and Reyna in the positions that they are in affirmed my belief that diversity and inclusivity must start from the top and work down.

On Saturday, we met with Ramon Torres, President of Familias Unidas por la Justicia. He talked about Initiative 1631 on Climate Justice in Washington state. He spoke also about Honesto Sylva Ibarra, a H2A guestworker who died August 6, 2017 from a combination of smoke inhalation and a heat wave while working on Sarbanand Farms. Workers on that farm faced constant abuses.

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## Teresa Romero Named UFW President



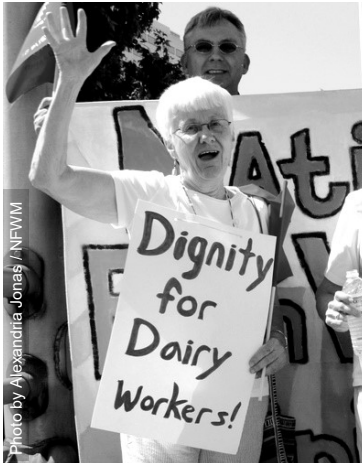
The UFW has announced that Secretary-Treasurer Teresa Romero will replace Arturo Rodriguez as UFW president. She will be the first Latina and first immigrant woman to become president of a national union in the U. S. Teresa was unanimously voted to the position by the UFW National Executive Board and will stand for election as president at the UFW 21<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Convention in 2020.

Arturo is stepping down in December after 45 years with the UFW, the last 25 leading the union following Cesar Chavez's death in 1993. He will continue working with the union as UFW president emeritus.

NFWM looks forward to working with Teresa as we have for decades with Arturo and the UFW organizing staff to move justice for farm workers closer to reality.



## United Farm Workers Stand Up to Darigold



On September 20<sup>th</sup>, the UFW, dairy workers and supporters embarked on a five-day fast in front of Darigold's headquarters in Seattle, WA to protest the abuse of workers in the dairy industry and support the "Darigold Dozen." Twelve dairy workers from Ruby Ridge Farm, part of the Darigold Cooperative of dairies, had accused the dairy of forcing them to work

long days without breaks or clean drinking water and not paying them for all the hours they worked.

In retaliation, Ruby Ridge fired the workers. The workers and the UFW sued, the dairy counter-sued, and the case was to be heard on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Erik Nicholson, UFW National Vice President, said, "We know nothing more to do to call attention to the dire situation than to fast. This is a fast for reconciliation, it's time for the state's dairy farmers to partner with dairy workers, not see them as adversaries or tools that they can throw out when they are done with."

Leading up to the Seattle actions, the Seattle City Council had unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Darigold Dozen. NFWM joined in by promoting a National Day to Fast, Pray and Act with a focus on calling the CEOs of Darigold and Costco. This was followed by a national call to deliver store manager letters to Starbucks. NFWM facilitated more than 40 of these deliveries in almost 10 states.

The court case has been postponed until February 2019, but our support for the dairy workers continues. **NFWM calls on Darigold and Ruby Ridge to do the right thing and work with, not against, their workers. And we urge the retailers who purchase Darigold products like Costco and Starbucks to join us in that call.**

## Hurricanes, Flooding, Fires, Extreme Heat and Farm Workers



Last year Hurricane Maria ripped through Florida and this year Florence hit North Carolina. Fires in California and the northwest have sickened farm workers returning to work in smoke-filled fields, if a crop was still left to harvest. And every year, farm workers around this country work in high temperatures, often with few breaks, no available shade and not enough clean water.

While we can respond after the fact, there is also something we are doing now to mitigate the effects of natural phenomena on farm workers. Public Citizen, the UFW Foundation, Farmworker Justice and coalition partners launched a campaign in July 2018 to win worker protections from heat stress through national, state, and local advocacy.

We are raising awareness around climate change's impacts on the health and safety of workers and other vulnerable populations, and advancing standards to prevent injuries and deaths from heat stress. Help spread the word about #BEATTHEHEAT. Visit [www.citizen.org/our-work/health-and-safety/heat-exposure](http://www.citizen.org/our-work/health-and-safety/heat-exposure)



FLOC Clinics and SCORE Medical Missions Give Medical Care to Hundreds of farm workers and community members in NC following Hurricane Florence.

Farm work was seriously impacted when Hurricane Florence flooded the agricultural heart of North Carolina during the height of the harvest season. Many in farm worker communities were afraid to go to shelters, many lost their housing and belongings, and almost all have lost weeks of work. For farm workers who already live on the margins, weeks of lost work is devastating.

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee has been working tirelessly to help workers move from farms with no work to farms needing workers, as well as meeting basic needs like food, clean water and health care. Many NC based farm worker support organizations have been collecting needed supplies, making labor camp visits and providing much needed help. **Thank you to all who have supported these efforts.**

# YAYA — Inspiring each other & the farm worker movement!

by YAYA Coordinator Dominique Aulio

On September 7, NFWM held a YAYA Member Appreciation Dinner in Orlando to celebrate the thousands of hours that YAYA members spent fighting alongside farm workers during the 2017-18 academic year. We were joined by our Executive Director Julie Taylor and several farm worker and community organizations, who helped us honor the YAYA members and volunteers. We also enjoyed spoken word and music by local artists, and some amazing Indo-Pakistani food catered by the parents of YAYA members Faiza and Kamilla.

We would like to highlight here some of this year's great work. First, the **YAYA members put their all into legislative battles this year** for a Clean Dream Act, a pathway to citizenship for farm workers (the Blue Card), and a permanent status for refugees with Temporary Protected Status. YAYA members made five separate trips to Washington, D.C. this year to take action with United We Dream. They also visited legislators, organized a four day fast in Orlando, and trained other students, farm workers, and the NFWM board on how to hold an effective lobbying visit. Shout outs to Stephanie, Tareek, Karen, Tosh, Christina, Zubir, Elliana, and Ofelia for your leadership on legislative issues.

The glue of the Orlando YAYA Chapter were the 2017-2018 co-chairs Kathleen Melendez and Faiza

Begani, who **led a group of 20 active members** and many more supporters in taking action in solidarity with farm workers throughout the year. Their vision for justice in agriculture and their commitment inspired everyone including me to work through difficulties and put forth our best efforts. And our Orlando office ran in large part on the **generous volunteer hours of our two interns**, Gabriela Hernandez and Christina Buro. Their administrative and logistical support made all of this work possible.

You can see why it was so important to us to thank the YAYA members for all of their heartfelt, hard work. We are ready for another year of action, solidarity, and transformative change in the farm worker movement. **YAYA thanks you for all your support and action in solidarity with farm workers** in your local communities. **We inspire each other.**

Photo courtesy Paola Sarmiento





## CIW Targets College Campuses

The Fair Food Program of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers continues its focus on eliminating sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the fields. With a Week of Action October 22-28, CIW launched a major Wendy's boycott organizing effort with students on five campuses: Florida Atlantic University, University of Florida, University of Michigan, University of North Carolina and Ohio State University and on other campuses.

United Methodist Women have been collecting postcards in support of *Harvest Without Violence* and will be asking Wendy's executives for a meeting to deliver the postcards and discuss Wendy's signing the Fair Food Agreement.

Along with supporting this effort, NFWM will be working with the Coalition on a Faith Leaders Conference in New York City on January 28<sup>th</sup>. The conference will bring faith leaders from across the country in a one day event that will culminate in an action at the office of Nelson Peltz, Chairman of Wendy's board of directors. The conference will help galvanize the voice of the faith community in support of CIW and a worker driven social responsibility model of operating.

## Victory for NC Farm Workers!



NFWM celebrates with FLOC and its allies the September 20<sup>th</sup> injunction by a federal judge of an anti-worker, anti-union North Carolina law while the case proceeds through the court.

SB 615, passed in 2017, strips the ability of farm workers to organize and make collective bargaining agreements with their employers. FLOC challenged the law as unconstitutional with assistance from the Southern Poverty Law Center, the American

Civil Liberties Union, the North Carolina Justice Center, and the Law Offices of Robert J. Willis. MAY JUSTICE PREVAIL!

"We're happy that the federal court saw clearly that this racist law was an effort to stop farmworkers from having the resources to fund their own institution and fight for a more fair workplace," said FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez.

Visit [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org) to support the boycott of Reynolds American VUSE e-cigarette and help farm workers win the right to self-determination!

## Have you seen our new website?

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

NFWM launched our new combined NFWM & YAYA website! There are more stories, more photos and more information packaged to be user-friendly for all technological skill levels. Check it out for yourself!

**Want a chance to win a Tote Bag?** Listen to an interview from NFWM's 40th Anniversary oral history project (hint: history), Read a farm worker's story (hint: who are farm workers), Check out a campaign NFWM is supporting (hint: take action) and learn about an issue that impacts farm workers (hint: farm workers' issues). **Send us the 2 people, 1 campaign and 1 issue you found!** The first two correct entrees win a shopping bag. Email [nfwm@nfwm.org](mailto:nfwm@nfwm.org) or snail mail to our Raleigh office.

**The Harvest of Justice Season** (HOJ) is an opportunity to raise consciousness, commitment & contributions for farm workers! Nestled between Labor Day and World Food Day, the 2018 HOJ season focused on stories and actions that amplify our farm worker partners' campaigns and enhance our knowledge of farm worker realities, particularly around immigration concerns.

HOJ can be observed in a variety of ways. NFWM board member Mary Martens included information from our weekly website postings in a mailing to her community, the Sisters of Charity, BVM. Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters featured HOJ resources at their monthly "Prayer for the World" service. St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Orange City, FL observed a fusion of HOJ and *Empty Bowls* fundraising for hunger.

Harvest of Justice can be observed at any point during the year. It's always a good time to connect with those who feed us. For resources, visit our website or contact our office. Help us educate, equip and mobilize for the farm worker movement! [Nfwm.org/resourcecenter/harvestofjustice](http://Nfwm.org/resourcecenter/harvestofjustice)



National Farm Worker Ministry's  
**HARVEST OF JUSTICE**

Giving thanks and  
working for justice  
alongside immigrant  
& migrant farm workers

**WEEK 5**  
**2018**

## Ramón Ramírez Going Strong!

Over 30 years ago, Ramón Ramírez co-founded PCUN (Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste), Oregon's farm worker union and the state's premier Latinx organization. Ramón stepped down from the day to day directing of PCUN but remains as its President and Policy Director. When NFWM welcomed PCUN's new Executive Director Reyna Lopez to our August Board meeting, we were put in mind of our long history with Ramón and so we asked two NFWM folks to give us remembrances of him.

### From Virginia Nesmith, Executive Director of NFWM from 1998 – 2013

My first Board meeting as Executive Director of NFWM was held in Oregon. I was installed at PCUN headquarters, the farm worker union with whom I had the least history. But after receiving a warm welcome from Ramón, who expressed great appreciation for the work of the Ministry, and marching with the workers who joined in that welcome, PCUN came alive for me.

I had the good fortune to work with Ramón for years after that, not only on PCUN campaigns, but on immigration reform as he and PCUN members made cross country trips to join other workers in appealing to Congress, on the development of the Equitable Food Initiative, on the Board of Farmworker Justice and at events led by other farm worker groups. Ramón had a unique ability to both lead PCUN in its own organizing work and still make time to support other farm worker organizations nationwide in their own campaigns - without seeming stressed about any of it! I am grateful to know Ramón and to have witnessed the many ways in which he did, and will, put his big heart and agile mind to work. Que Viva Ramón Ramírez!



Photo by Alexandria Jonas / NFWM

Ramón Ramirez, Rev. Ed Brandt, UFW's Erik Nicholson and former NFWM Director Virginia Nesmith during NFWM's August 2011 meeting in Oregon.

### From Rev. Ed Brandt, retired Lutheran Minister & former chair of the Oregon Farm Worker Ministry

The advocacy and mentoring of Ramón Ramírez helps define the farm worker movement in our region and across the country —past, present and future.

Decades ago Ramón encouraged the Northwest faith community to join the farm worker struggle for collective bargaining, higher wages, paid breaks, affordable housing and more.

Today he is working hard to recruit Latinx community and political leaders and make our nation a sanctuary for all.

The organizations and leaders Ramón is mentoring will impact our communities for generations to come.

### (By Tareek Leonard, CONT. FROM PAGE 2)

Ibarra's death was the tipping point which spurred the workers to strike and then led to the farm firing hundreds of workers who stood up for their late brother. Commemorating the courage of these workers was the motivation on the following day to take part in a 12-mile march. The march correlated to the 12 hours that farm workers spend out working each day during peak season.

We visited Tierra y Libertad, an eighteen-acre cooperative established by Ramon Torres, Modesto Leal, and two other indigenous Mexican farm workers. This Co-op personifies self-determination for farm workers, and also a resistance to settler

colonialism. Hearing them talk about the struggles they faced getting to this point and also running the organization reminded me just how much the system is set up for farm workers not to succeed in becoming the masters of their own labor.

But tasting the literal fruits of their labor as I picked their blueberries made me super optimistic about the future of not only Ramon and his partners, but also the farm worker struggle. Hearing from the folks at the board meeting and our partners like Indira and Reyna and Ramon, who allow us to stand in solidarity with them, reaffirms to me just how important this fight for justice is, and why I want to invest my all into it.

## We Mourn the Passing of Father Kenneth Irrgang

NFWM honors the memory of Fr. Ken Irrgang, who passed away on May 7, 2018 at the age of 89. Fr. Ken came to work at NFWM in 1977 and was assigned to the United Farm Workers as their Chaplain, a post he filled with tremendous faith and a gracious heart until 1989. Fr. Ken remained an ardent supporter of NFWM, the UFW and the farm worker movement for justice until his death. We are grateful for his passionate commitment these many years, which extended to the generous monetary bequest he left.

### Excerpt of the UFW Tribute to Fr. Ken

Of the priests who were United Farm Workers' chaplains over the years, none served longer or with more commitment—and none was more beloved—than Rev. Kenneth E. Irrgang. For 12 years, from 1977 to 1989, Fr. Ken worked with the movement at the National Chavez Center at La Paz in Keene, Calif. He celebrated Sunday masses and presided over countless baptisms, weddings, funerals, marches, union conventions and other special occasions. "The years of my involvement with migrant farm workers [were] the most meaningful years of my priesthood and, indeed, my entire life," said Fr. Ken.

A memorable moment was the mass ending Cesar's 36-day water-only fast over the pesticide poisoning of farm workers and their children on August 21, 1988. Thousands of farm workers and supporters stood silently under a huge tent erected to shield them from the hot sun at the movement's Forty Acres property outside Delano. Also there were national labor leaders, Hollywood entertainment figures and members of the Kennedy family. Just as Senator Robert F. Kennedy had handed Cesar a small piece of semita bread to conclude his first public fast, of 25 days, over nonviolence in 1968, 20 years later RFK's widow, Ethel Kennedy, did the



same to end the '88 fast. There were a number of co-celebrants at the mass, Catholic clergy who outranked Fr. Ken. But Cesar asked Fr. Ken to preside as the main celebrant.

He was front and center in historical events in California. He was unfailingly humble and modest, but he led a very consequential life.

One of Cesar Chavez's favorite Biblical passages was from the Book of Micah: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God." Those words aptly describe the life and labors of Ken Irrgang. He preached the gospels and also strived to live out their lessons every day of his life.

### Bishop Richard J. Garcia

Another great friend of the UFW and the farm worker movement passed away July 11, 2018, the Most Reverend Richard J. Garcia, Bishop of the Diocese of Monterey, CA. From the UFW's tribute, "It was with profound sadness that the farm worker movement and the Chavez family learned of Bishop Garcia's passing. His works on behalf of the farm workers are well known to all of us. He was always present with the farm workers, even when it was difficult or inconvenient.... Bishop Garcia was unfailingly generous with his time and unequivocal in fulfilling the Church's commitment to the poor."

### Rev. Buckner Coe

Rev. Buckner Coe passed away on May 11, 2018 in California. Buck Coe was a United Church of Christ pastor who served various churches around the country. His last job before retirement was on the staff of NFWM in the 1980s, working with the UFW. Rev. Coe's son Andy Coe was on staff first from 1972-74. As a pastor, Buck was very outspoken on issues of peace and social justice, marching in 1965 in Selma, leading a fair housing campaign in the Chicago north shore suburbs, and campaigns against the Vietnam War.



## National Farm Worker Ministry

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Nan Freeman's sister Liz contacted NFWM to let us know that she was supporting the UFW's Darigold workers and would be joining our October call to Fast, Pray, Act during her Yom Kippur observance. Liz's powerful remembrance and reflection are on NFWM's website; excerpts below.

My family and I became involved with the UFW when my sister Nan Freeman participated in a demonstration at the Talisman Sugar Central. She was a freshman at New College in Florida and died early that January 1972 morning on the picket line.

**NAN WAS THE FIRST  
MARTYR OF CESAR'S UFW**

*Liz Freeman*

**THE STRUGGLE  
CONTINUES**



We must continue to support those that feed us so that they may enjoy a life with their families. The struggle continues. We must continue the work begun by Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Chris Hartmire, and others.

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