

Orange County Interfaith Committee To Aid Farm Workers



MARCH 2018

JOIN US ON SUNDAY, MAY 5th FOR OUR FUNDRAISER FOR THE UNITED FARM WORKERS WITH SPEAKER TERESA ROMERO

We are thrilled to welcome Teresa Romero, the new President of the United Farm Workers, who will be our speaker at the next OCICAF fundraiser on May 5th.

The first Latina and first immigrant woman to become president of a national union in the United States, Teresa Romero replaced Arturo S. Rodriguez as the third president of United Farm Workers in December 2018. Formerly the union's No. 2 officer as secretary-treasurer, she has years of experience overseeing the complex financial management, administrative, staff recruitment, personnel, fundraising, IT and social media operations of a far-flung organization involved in field organizing, contract bargaining and administration, legislative and legal affairs, and far-reaching international initiatives.

Romero worked closely with elected UFW leaders as chair of the union's audit and finance committee. She ran fundraising efforts that collected \$1 million to build the UFW's new state-of-the-art 10,294-square foot facility in Salinas serving the largest concentration of unionized farm workers in the nation. Before joining the UFW, she managed a construction company and a law firm that helped workers with immigration and workers compensation claims. Teresa Romero is an immigrant from Mexico who is proud of her U.S. citizenship and Mexican and Zapotecan heritage. She has played an important part in many recent successful union efforts, is admired by her peers for her work ethic, calm competence, organizational skills, ability to build relationships, and Si Se Puede! spirit.



**SUNDAY,
MAY 5, 2019**

**Plumbers & Steamfitters Hall
Local 582
1916 W. Chapman Avenue
Orange**

Pre-paid reservations by May 1st please:

Make your check out to **UFW**
\$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

Gerri McNenny at mcnenny@champan.edu to donate

Contact Suzanne Darweesh at sdarweesh@aol.com for more information

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



Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers

Chair:

Suzanne Darweesh

Treasurer:

Gayle Blume

Fundraising:

Tina Laine
Gerri McNenny

Church Liaison:

Barbara Johnson

Newsletter:

Pam Presnall

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 (UFW)

www.floc.com (FLOC)

www.pcun.org (PCUN)

www.ciw-online.org (CIW)

www.nfwm.org (NFWM)

Darigold and Starbucks

Darigold member farms is accused of wage theft, sexual harassment, racial discrimination, and unsafe working conditions. The Darigold Dozen workers who have protested these working conditions have been fired and sued for their protests. Protests are an American tradition, an integral right of our democracy.

We ask Starbucks, a large purchaser of Darigold products, to use its influence towards ensuring safe working conditions for dairy workers.

Fair Food Program

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida with its accompanying Fair Food Program was founded in 1994. In early March, while little is going on in the fields, a group of CIW farm workers to four major universities (the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; and the University of Florida, Gainesville, FL) asking them to break their food service contracts with Wendy's until Wendy's becomes part of the Fair Food Program.

The workers were met with some success in Florida and in North Carolina in that Gainesville and Carrboro (on the edge of Chapel Hill) passed city resolutions in support of the Fair Food program. At the University of Michigan, campus authorities announced Wendy's will not return to campus: A big success! However, Ohio State University still hosts a Wendy's on their campus.

What does the Fair Food program ensure? It stipulates humane wages and that a penny a pound more is paid directly to the workers; accurate working hours recorded to prevent wage theft; protective equipment with adequate training; shade breaks during excessive heat; lunch breaks, protection from pesticides, sexual harassment, and assault; treatment for injuries and sickness; clean drinking water and field toilets. Violations, clearly spelled out in the Code of Conduct, include forced labor, child labor, physical violence, showing weapons to intimidate workers, racial, religious, and gender discrimination. Farm workers and domestics were not included in FDR's National Labor Relations Act so they have had to fight for every protection guaranteed to other workers.

Taco Bell, McDonald's Burger King, Subway, all have signed onto the fair Food program. Wendy's ceased purchasing tomatoes from Mexico to US and Canadian greenhouses but there is no proof that greenhouse workers have better working conditions.

Smithsonian Exhibit Highlighting the Bracero Program in the U.S.

Julie Taylor, Director of the National Farm Worker Ministry, calls our attention to a Smithsonian exhibit at the Museum of American History. The bracero program began in 1942 during World War II, due to a shortage of male farm workers. Two million Mexican men participated in this program of short-term contracts, one of both exploitation and opportunity. Some of the men journeyed long distances from rural villages, encountering bureaucratic hurdles, medical exams, being stripped and sprayed with DDT. Once the men signed a contract, they could only work for the grower who applied for them. The workers relied upon the growers for housing, food, and medical care. Union workers worried that their presence would affect the union's ability to organize workers.

Inevitably, broken promises ensued. Poor housing sometimes resulted in tents or barns. There were pay disputes, wage theft, discrimination, inadequate health care, lack of water and proper sanitation. The work was grueling as use of the short-handled hoe was prevalent which meant stoop labor. Cotton, dates, sugar beets, lettuce, strawberries were major crops for the braceros. They worked mostly in California, Texas, Oregon, Washington, and Arkansas but also 29 other states as well, sometimes for just a few weeks and sometimes as long as eighteen months. Pay began at twenty cents a box, "You had to kill yourself to make ten dollars," exclaimed one worker. Braceros endured separation from their families and their families left in Mexico also struggled to survive without the presence of the main wage earner.

Some braceros stayed in the US, married local women, and began new families. They often encountered discrimination by local restaurants and movie theaters. The H2A government program we have today evolved from the bracero program which ended in 1964. While there are some improvements such as housing must be inspected by the US Labor Department, who also determine the prevailing wage, there are still negative aspects to the program. Workers can only work for the grower who applied for them. If there is no work yet, H2A workers cannot look elsewhere for work. They cannot negotiate their pay. If they complain about the working conditions they may be sent home without pay and without travel expenses. Sometimes their pay stubs do not indicate accurately what they earned per hour and how many hours they worked. Those of us who care about good working conditions do not wish to see expansion of the H2A program.