

FROM THE GROUND UP

a publication of STUDENT ACTION WITH FARMWORKERS

VOLUME 8 , NUMBER 2

Summer 2000

Student Activists Supporting Farmworkers

Farmworker Awareness Week 2000: A Success!

During Farmworker Awareness Week held in April 2000, SAF supported students to coordinate events about farmworkers. Below are some highlights of the events students organized to bring farmworker issues to the forefront on their campuses.

- University of Notre Dame, Indiana & California State University-Fresno: Students showed videos *Legacy of Shame* and *Harvest of Shame*.
- University of South Carolina-Columbia: Students passed out leaflets for the Mt. Olive Pickle Boycott, presented slides of migrant workers, and made table-tents with facts about farmworkers for cafeteria tables.
- University of South Florida-St. Petersburg: Students conducted a "Teach-In" on Globalization.
- University of Florida-Gainesville: Students hosted activists from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.
- University of South Florida-Tampa: Students sponsored talks by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.
- University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill: Students organized a rally on campus during the state's annual Pilgrimage for Peace and Justice. Speakers included a Farm Labor Organizing Committee organizer, students and faculty activists.
- Duke University, Durham, NC: Students joined a rally for the Mt. Olive Pickle Boycott at a local grocery store.

Student Solidarity with Farmworkers

Student Action with Farmworkers' mission is to bring students and farmworkers together to learn about each others' lives, share resources and skills, improve conditions for farmworkers, and build diverse coalitions working for social change. SAF knows that young people are tremendous assets and leaders in the struggle for farmworker justice. This newsletter explores some of the ways students across the United States accept the challenge to fight for improved living and working conditions for farmworkers.

Young people have been involved in every social movement in the history of the U.S. College is a time when many students open their eyes to exploitation and begin to realize the injustices that exist between races, classes and genders. Student involvement brings essential energy and enthusiasm to movements, and trains the next generation of activists.

During the Civil Rights Era, students laid the groundwork for the activism that continues supporting social and economic justice for farmworkers:

- Thousands of Latino university students joined Cesar Chavez in his 300 mile march from Delano, California to Sacramento in 1966 to demand justice for farmworkers.
- In Texas, the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) joined in the farmworkers' struggle during a march in Austin in 1966 sponsored by a local chapter of the UFW.
- Cuban Eleazar Risco, a Sacramento State and Stanford student, assisted Cesar Chavez in 1967 organizing the UFW's grape boycott in East Los Angeles.
- In Phoenix, Arizona in 1968, students created the Mexican American Student Organization (MASO), which later became MEChA. They advocated for laundry workers at the university by demanding that the university end the contract with the racist laundry company. Inspired by the farmworker movement, they staged a sit-in at the president's office for two days until the university agreed to cancel the contract.

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SAF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to bring students and farmworkers together to learn about each other's lives, share resources and skills, improve conditions for farmworkers, and build diverse coalitions working for social change.

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Students Support Farmworkers Organizing

Marching with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers

Students from different universities in Florida joined in the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) 15 day *March for Dignity, Dialogue and a Fair Wage* February 19 through March 4, 2000. The 50 core marchers traveled through several colleges, including New College and Florida Gulf Coast University, where 30-50 students joined in the march to support the CIW. The goals of the march included raising awareness about the situation of farmworkers in Florida and pressuring growers into a dialogue for improved conditions.

Brian Payne, a student at the University of Florida who is writing his thesis on the Coalition of Immokalee Workers as a social movement, met many students interested in justice for farmworkers during the march. These students are organizing a state-wide coalition of students interested in farmworker issues. They plan to start farmworker advocacy groups on their campuses. Brian said the march created an ideal space for meeting others with similar interests.

CIW • P.O. Box 603, Immokalee, FL 34143 • 941-657-8311
<http://www.geocities.com/coaimmwkr/> • CoalImmWkr@aol.com

Students in Oregon Support PCUN

by Rebecca Saldaña, PCUN student coordinator

Oregon farmworkers have been calling for a consumer boycott of NORPAC products since 1992 because of NORPAC's refusal to negotiate with farmworkers and its blatant violations of workers' rights. Student solidarity was crucial in PCUN's (Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste/Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers' Union) victorious Gardenburger boycott from 1994-1999 and is key to the success of the NORPAC boycott campaign. NORPAC sells over 60% of its processed fruits and vegetables to institutions like your university. However, NORPAC hides much of its products under the packaging of huge food distributors like SYSCO, Food Service of America, ARAMARK, and Nugget. This has made campus campaigns to remove all NORPAC products difficult—until this Spring!

With workers' support, PCUN broke the code! All NORPAC products are tracked by a stamped code that identifies the products as NORPAC whether it is in a Food Service of America Package or a FLAV-R-PAC bag, NORPAC's brand name. As we currently understand the coding system, frozen products that have a code beginning with "5" stamped on the side are NORPAC, and all canned products with a code beginning with "E" stamped on the top are NORPAC. Put the code to the test, and let PCUN know what you discover! Find out where your fruits and vegetables come from! Work with your campus food service director and the food service distributor companies to make your campus NORPAC-free. You, too, can organize a successful boycott campaign on your campus! Contact PCUN for more information.

Student activists from across the U.S. and Canada are standing with the Oregon farmworkers' struggling for justice! From July 8-15, participants in the Summer 2000 Student Mobilization met with workers, accompanied union organizers, attended valuable workshops, networked with one another, and had fun! The week created effective organizers on their campuses for the NORPAC boycott and beyond!

PCUN • 300 Young St., Woodburn, OR 97071 • 503-982-0243
www.pcun.org • farmworkerunion@pcun.org

University-based Farmworker Programs

The University-Migrant Project, U of M

Begun in 1994, the University of Minnesota Migrant Project (U-MP) educates people about migrant farmworkers and encourages civic involvement in migrant related issues.

The U-MP includes the following components:

- **A summer internship program** with a farmworker agency
- **Support for collaborations** with U of M units and farmworker agencies/advocates. For example, in 1996, the U-MP connected U of M School of Dentistry with Migrant Health, Inc. and Migrant Head Start to provide service to more than 330 migrant family members and provide dental students with on the job training and experience.
- **The Farmworker Action Network (FAN)** is comprised of U of M students and community members. FAN promotes education and legislative efforts in support of migrant agricultural workers.
- **The Community Economic Development Program** seeks to enhance farmworkers' economic capacity.
- **The Applied Research Program** locates university departments interested in researching migrant / Latino workers.

José García • U-MP, U of M, 320E VoTech Bldg,
1954 Buford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108
612-624-6756 • migrant@tc.umn.edu

The Migrant Special Education Training Program

An excellent way of serving migrant students is by becoming a teacher who is sensitive to their educational, cultural and social needs. One program that prepares teachers to address the needs of migrant students and their families is the Migrant Special Education Training Program. The MSETP, a federally funded, tuition-free program that provides graduate students with a stipend, is a cooperative effort of the Special Education Program and the Mid-Hudson Migrant Education Center of the State University of New York at New Paltz.

Masters level students enrolled in the MSETP take courses that focus on special, migrant, bilingual, and multicultural education; perform fieldwork experiences tutoring migrant students; work with migrant families in their homes; teach in classrooms and assist staff in community agencies serving migrant families. Graduate students in this program also work with faculty to maintain a Migrant/Special Education web site designed to engage individuals in a discussion of issues related to the education needs of migrant students as well as share information and resources about these issues with professionals and families.

Dr. Spencer J. Salend • SUNY/The College at New Paltz
www.newpaltz.edu/bilingual_special_ed/migrant.html
914-257-2842 • dalessac@newpaltz.edu.

Cornell Migrant Program, New York

The Cornell Migrant Program has been working for more than 20 years on programs including:

- **Multicultural education** to help agencies that serve migrant workers to better understand other cultures and to improve their services.
- **Health care** to provide migrant farmworkers with better access to health services. Programs include the Child Health Voucher Program and Migrant Nutrition Education.
- **Education** for workers and growers, including immigration assistance, academic and health tracking of children and help for growers to avoid illegal discrimination against immigrants.
- **Housing information** to help growers obtain low-interest loans and other sources of support for upgrading migrant housing.
- **Migrant Agricultural Workers Archives** in the Cornell University Library to store historical and unpublished materials relating to migrants.

Herb Engman • hje1@cornell.edu
Vonda Royce • vkr1@cornell.edu

www.news.cornell.edu/general/PRESS92/PR12189202.html



Students and workers in Florida march for the dignity and justice of agricultural laborers with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

SAF's 5th Annual Sowing Seeds for Change Symposium
Friday Nov. 3 – Sunday Nov. 5, 2000
St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas

Join farmworker advocates from campuses, agencies and the fields to share information about farmworkers and build coalitions of farmworker advocates!

Each year SAF sponsors a national conference to facilitate dialogue between students, faculty, farmworkers, unions, farmworker organizations and advocates. This year SAF is co-sponsoring the symposium with St. Edward's University College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP).

Contact SAF now if you are interested in presenting, displaying an informational table or bringing a delegation of students! We are accepting 1 page interactive workshop proposals until September.

Registration fees: \$35 for students/low-income individuals & \$60 for organizations, departments, others (meals and symposium materials included).

For more information, contact SAF:

919-660-3652 • <http://cds.aas.duke.edu/saf/> • mwiggin@duke.edu

**Farmworker Advocacy Day—
The Youth Revolutionize**

by Chakera McIntosh

Do you want a revolution? Do you want a revolution? That was the chant of the day among the youth at Farmworker Advocacy Day held in Albany, NY on May 2, 2000. The members of the Rural and Migrant Ministry's Youth Arts Group brought the words to life that day with their organization of and involvement in some of the days activities.

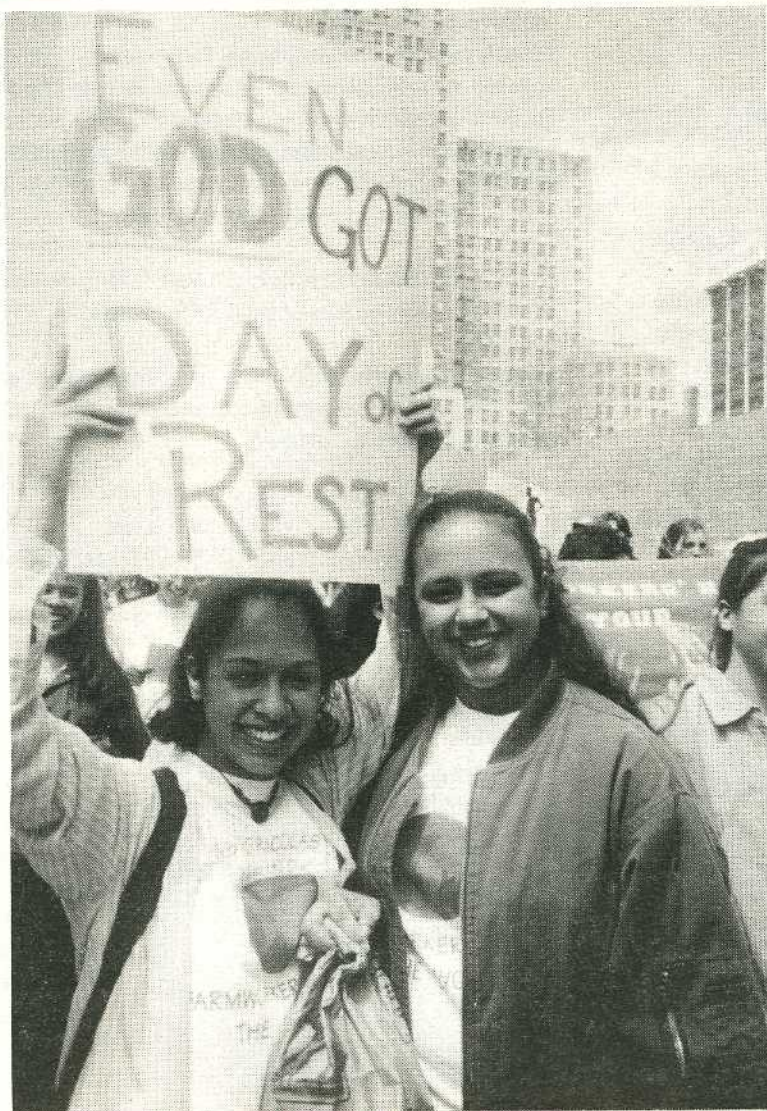
The Youth Arts Group contributed in several different ways to the success of the youth component at Farmworker Advocacy Day. They went to Albany the night before the great event and practiced their skits, songs and dramatic readings for the following day.

The fifteen members of the group organized a part of the day when youth from all around the state of New York could learn about the issues affecting farmworkers. They attempted to reach them through a skit which was mainly about the many injustices that farmworkers face. Injustices such as: the lack of a day of rest and the inability of farmworkers to organize for a change in their situation. The Youth Arts Group also participated in dramatic readings of testimonials written by farmworkers which related their daily struggles.

It didn't end there for this group of dynamic young people. They were involved in the rally and they also went into legislative offices to advocate for the rights of farmworkers as well as any adult could do. The work of the Youth Arts Group is a result of empathy and dedication to a more than worthy cause; to revolutionize an unfair system.

Rural & Migrant Ministry • P.O. Box
4757, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
914-485-8627 • rcyrilwitt@aol.com

Sara Cruz and Bethsaida Alcantara demand a day of rest for New York's farmworkers during Farmworker Advocacy Day 2000 on May 2.



Beyond the Classroom

Hurricane Relief for Farmworkers in Eastern North Carolina

by Joe Bagby, Guilford College, Greensboro, NC

Ten students from Guilford College spent their fall break in October 1999 providing relief materials such as shoes, blankets, and canned food to migrant farmworkers in Greene, Nash, and Wilson counties, in response to Hurricane Floyd and the devastating flooding that followed. We were hosted by Harvest Family Health Clinic of Nash County and Snow Hill Medical Center of Greene County, both organizations that sponsor SAF Into the Fields summer interns.

Three Guilford students who were 1999 SAF interns organized a large-scale collection of food and clothing immediately after the hurricane. The work-trip provided not only a chance to distribute supplies, but also an educational experience for everyone. Many of the participating students spoke Spanish and had traveled to Latin America, but were moved to see Latin Americans living in rural North Carolina in largely "Third-World" conditions. The trip was a chance for me to share my eye-opening internship experience with other students, as well as support farmworkers who had been hit so hard by Hurricane Floyd.

SAF trains interns to be farmworker activists, and that is precisely the role the Guilford students on the worktrip assumed. Although we distributed the food and clothing we had collected, our primary concern was bearing witness to the farmworker community in an exceptionally difficult time. H-2A guestworkers explained that they had worked as few as six days in the previous month, but were still bound by contract to remain at their camps, waiting for any possible work gleaning. Also, many members of these rural communities had an antagonistic approach to the farmworker population in that time of need. A prickly attendant at the Red Cross station in Wilson would give us no more than 200 of his thousands of blankets to distribute, arguing that migrant farmworkers were not legal citizens of the U.S., and therefore were not deserving of the aid.

The decision to organize this trip was easy, and we realized that as student activists for farmworkers, we had allies at our college, in local churches, and in agencies that work specifically with farmworkers. Educational and effective, the student work-trip to support farmworkers can be repeated by any group of concerned students.

The Migrant Student Alliance at CSU-Fresno

By Salina Mendoza, Edited by Fabiola Valdez

The Migrant Student Alliance was revived this semester at California State University, Fresno by a group of students who felt they could make a difference and make other people aware of the situation of Latinos in this country. The Alliance had been established a few years ago, but the lack of leadership and support inhibited it from growing as an organization on campus.

Fabiola Valdez and Juan Carlos Vieyra emerged as the leaders of the group. Both were excited to be a part of MSA after participating in SAF's 1999 summer internship in NC. There, Fabiola understood that much help was needed to support farmworkers and that students could make a big difference in the struggle for justice. Juan Carlos realized that MSA could be used as a voice for farmworkers that needed to be heard. MSA member Gabriela Delgado (Sophomore, Pre-Med) said, "I have become more aware of the struggles of farmworkers and thus, I want to make a change for our people."

Some of the activities that MSA accomplished this past school year include coordinating a Farmworker Clothing Drive, displaying a mural on campus in honor of Cesar Chavez, and organizing a presentation by the California Rural Legal Assistance lawyers entitled "The Struggle of Farmworkers in California." These students have committed themselves to keep MSA from disappearing once again, but instead, to use it as a tool to make other people aware of the harsh difficulties that Latinos have to go through in this country.

Fabiola Valdez
tapatia4ever@hotmail.com

Action Inspiration Motivation!

*by Rebeca Avila, 9th grade,
Randleman High School*

In Randolph County, North Carolina, we have a club that is called AIM Club (Action, Inspiration, and Motivation), which was started in 1997. I got involved with it because it is for Hispanic students and we do fun activities during the club meetings. We work hard and all the students cooperate, too. The club is important to me because it is the only club in the school in which all Hispanics are involved.

Roxanne Taylor and Denise Beane (AIM club advisors) are giving us a chance to be in a club that helps our community. We hope that the Americans understand that we just want a chance to study and have a career. It will help me to have friends from different counties and other schools. The advice I would give other students is that they should stay in school and they need to join a club.

Randolph County AIM Club
Denise Beane & Roxanne Taylor
2222-C Fayetteville St., Asheboro, NC
27203 • 336-318-6166

SAF Materials Available to Organize your Campus

- ❑ **Into the Fields: Mobilizing Students to Work with Farmworkers on Campuses and in Communities** (\$15) This comprehensive manual includes step-by-step suggestions for coordinating educational events about farmworkers, initiating internships with local farmworker agencies, starting a class on farmworkers and more!
- ❑ SAF's **Intern Referral Service** is a directory of internship opportunities with farmworker organizations nationwide. Students can gain valuable experience volunteering or interning with agencies, while organization staff benefit from the assistance and energy of young people (\$5). Check out the IRS online at <http://cde.aas.duke.edu/saf> (Go to the *SAF Programs* page or the *What Can I Do* page). If you are a farmworker agency seeking volunteers, contact SAF to include your agency information in the directory.
- ❑ Sample **farmworker course syllabi** or contact information of professors who teach courses on farmworkers or incorporate farmworker issues into their classes.
- ❑ SAF's **Resource Library** contains books and videos about farmworkers, including information about agriculture, community service, documentary work, international issues, organizing, and education and health. Materials are loaned for three weeks at a time.
- ❑ **Workshops:** SAF offers technical assistance, training and workshops on developing an internship program, coordinating an academic course on farmworkers, grassroots fundraising, educating your campus on farmworkers and more. Contact SAF to discuss your campus' needs and to schedule a workshop.
- ❑ **Listserve:** Update yourself regularly on farmworker issues by subscribing to SAF's listserve. Action alerts, union campaign updates, recent farmworker articles, campus events, and job opportunities are sent weekly. Send an email with the word "subscribe" to <farmworkers-request@duke.edu>. To post an update, job opening, or article on the listserve, send an email to <mwiggins@duke.edu>.

Contact SAF at 919-660-3652 for resources.

Ways To Get Involved

Workplace Giving

Do you work for a corporation or non-profit that has a NC Community Shares workplace giving campaign? If so please designate SAF as your donor recipient.

Host a House Party

Educate your friends and colleagues about farmworker issues! Help SAF to spread the word about our mission and gain new supporters. Hosting a small fundraiser at your home is an easy way to support SAF. Contact Melinda at mwiggins@duke.edu or 919-660-3652.

Honor Farmworker Called Boycotts!

Support farmworkers by not buying Mt. Olive Pickle Products, California Table Grapes, or NORPAC's Flav-r-Pac & West-Pac products.

Thanks to our Donors

Frances L. Ansley, Jonathon R. Beard, Joe and Linda Burton, Thomas & Susan Carson, Carolyn Corrie and Robert Tannen, Ariel Dorfman, Anne Mejia Downs, Michael Evans, Jeanne Giordano, Lucy Gorham & Bill Schweke, Lonna Harkrader, Claudia Horwitz, Clyde & Eva Ingle, Dr. Ellen M. Ironside, James & Sally Kocker, Bob Korstad, Jim Lewis, Roger Manus, Gustavo Montana, Octavia Morgan, John Myers, Grace A. Nordhoff, Greg Schell, James Sessions, Kathy Shoner, Sam B. Trickey, Ruel W. Tyson, Jr., Leslie Vivian, Donald Woolnough, Ed Zuroweste & Candace Kugel and many others who wish to remain anonymous

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