

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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