

MAY-JUNE 2018

Newsletter Editor: Citlaly Mora



**American Friends
Service Committee**

Area Office of the Carolinas

AFSC OF THE CAROLINAS

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MOTHER'S DAY SPENT IN SANCTUARY AMIDST UNCERTAINTY

Families across the country whose loved one have been given deportation orders face difficult decisions. On the one hand the person ordered to be deported may leave on their own, while the rest of the family stays behind, effectively fracturing the family. On the other hand, they could all go back effectively deporting the entire family, or they can resist deportation through sanctuary. For families who choose this option the road ahead is challenging, but one worth taking if it means keeping their families together in the only place they call home. This Mother's Day as many of us celebrated with our loved ones, local immigrant mothers found themselves in this situation.



Rosa del Carmen Cruz entered Sanctuary in Chapel Hill's Church of Reconciliation on April 17th. She spent the holiday away from her children who live in Greensboro. She is the most recent case in North Carolina of people who have taken sanctuary in our state. Rosa has appealed her case twice and her latest deportation order stated for her to depart by May 14th, a deadline that has passed by as she only sees death and violence awaiting in her native country of Honduras. Meanwhile, Juana Tobar Ortega remains in Sanctuary as she marks her one year anniversary of being in St. Barnabas Episcopal Church. Juana and Rosa are just two

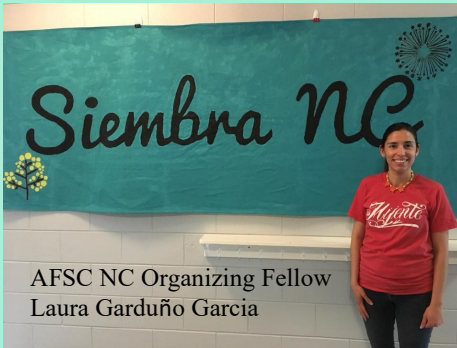
of the many mothers who fear what the future holds with an administration that increases deportations and cracks down on enforcement. For many immigrant mothers, this year has been a tough one; the fear of deportation and separation from their children remains imminent and ever present for them as ICE ramps up their deportations that make mothers and children priorities. This month, we also witnessed the arrival of a caravan of Central American refugees at the U.S.–Mexico border. Many of whom were mothers and children who sought asylum and turned themselves to the authorities. This amidst the announcement of Attorney General, Jeff Sessions who said in order to discourage further migration separation of mothers and children may begin to happen once they are taken into custody at the border. The political climate and the policy choices are creating uncertainty and fear among immigrant residents that need support and vocal supporters to stand behind them now more than ever. We're proud to participate in a new statewide coalition to expand the use of the sanctuary strategy to stop deportations.



AFSC OF THE CAROLINAS

AFSC LAUNCHES GRASSROOTS UNDOCUMENTED GROUP

Over the last decade, AFSC's NC Immigrant Rights Program has been one of the major organizations across the state and in the Greensboro area actively pushing for pro-immigrant policies. AFSC is critically and uniquely positioned in North Carolina to respond to the current and increasing threats to immigrant communities. For the last year, we have focused more intensively on base building with Latinx immigrants in the NC Triad area (Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem, Thomasville etc); strengthening leadership of undocumented individuals and resisting deportations. The AFSC organizing team has helped to found Siembra, a grassroots group of undocumented Latinx residents in Greensboro and surrounding areas. Siembra members defend their communities from ICE, the police, abusive employers; advocate for healthy schools for their children; and work for lives with dignity alongside other communities in North Carolina.



AFSC NC Organizing Fellow
Laura Garduño Garcia

AFSC and the Siembra group have already had successes: We have led North Carolina to become the state with the most Sanctuary congregations in the country, being actively involved in two cases (managing media and advocacy campaign), supporting four others, and helping to establish a NC Sanctuary Coalition. We have convened a leadership group of undocumented immigrants who meet weekly; these participants are committed to understanding the issues, building their leadership skills, and working toward strategies for change. We organized multiple Power of Attorney clinics, held 22 Defend Your Rights trainings attended by hundreds of people and organized undocumented students and parents to attend Guilford County School Board hearings, garnering a subsequent agreement with the schools for parents to meet after hours. We have also intervened in cases of wage theft, housing discrimination, and mobilized the community to support businesses that were targeted by ICE.

SIEMBRA LOCAL UPDATES

Triad DACA Recipients Shift Strategy on DREAM Act



Back in September, when Secretary Jeff Sessions announced the end of DACA, AFSC/Siembra organized a Labor

Day march attended by hundreds of immigrant community members. After the march, about a dozen DACA recipients met continuously to learn the history of how bold activism pressured then President Obama to sign the Executive Order that resulted in the DACA Program.

Through this learning, the group crafted its own plans to push North Carolina Senator Thom Tillis in his own Washington DC office to revise the proposed legislation he co-sponsored known as the SUCCEED Act that touted to offer a conservative solution to the end of the program.

Despite organizing several public events and private meetings to call on North Carolina elected Senators and Congressmen, Siembra NC DACA recipients were disheartened by the lack of political will necessary to bring forward a permanent legislative solution for their futures.

Despite the flooding the nation's capitol by national groups, the numerous visits to elected officials, government shutdowns, a March 5th deadline, and all the local actions DACA lead groups crafted to influence and pressure politicians, the political and partisan divides prevent a solution for the future of DACA recipients from becoming a reality. Siembra's DACA recipients recognized that our calls for a legislative solution were not influencing at all those who have the power to affect the laws. It is time to influence who gets to power. For that reason, Siembra members have been coming together to learn about how immigrant groups can influence the outcome of elections including at a recent day long *Escuelita*, and what other ways we can take action that will create real change.

MORE LOCAL SIEMBRA UPDATES

Learning From Others To Create ICE FREE ZONES

Members from Siembra NC have sought guidance from national Latinx-led organization Mijente, and their affiliates, including the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR), which has a fifteen-year history of educating, organizing and empowering Latinx people in Georgia.



GLAHR has worked incessantly to resist ICE collaboration with local police in the state of Georgia, the only state in the south that in 2017 had two counties limit their collaboration with the agency, and have successfully empowered dozens of immigrant communities around the state to defend themselves. Siembra NC members have visited GLAHR in Atlanta and Juntos in Philadelphia to learn from their techniques and “ICE FREE ZONES” community defense strategy.

to sign up for text message alerts to resist ICE operatives in the community and receive notifications to keep each other safe.

One neighborhood at a time, Siembra NC volunteers learn directly from personal accounts about the issues that worry community members the most. From the collection of exchanges Siembra NC is then able to organize neighborhoods to find opportunities in which the power of collective action can lead to positive results for the immigrant community. It was this outreach in neighborhoods and local churches that connected us with Sergio Hernandez., the worker who won \$14,000 in back wages following community action on wage theft.



The ICE FREE ZONE community defense plans are directing the work that Siembra NC volunteers are encouraging members of the immigrant Latinx community to build in their own

neighborhoods everywhere in the Triad. Three times a week, volunteers knock on dozens of doors in neighborhoods to introduce Siembra NC and hear directly from families on the matters that are worrying them.

Volunteers like Laura and Maria always start each introduction stating the purpose of the visit, “Siembra NC is working to protect the dignity of our immigrant families by resisting ICE, protecting our full wages, protecting our children in schools and fair housing.” Information on Defending Our Rights is a key part of each exchange at the door, in order for every person to understand how to defend their rights in case they encounter ICE agents. Siembra volunteers encourage people

Trainings for ICE Rapid Response & Resistance

Following ICE raids in NC’s Triangle area, Siembra members led a training for 150 people in how to respond to ICE Raids. One method being used is to help people in neighborhoods learn to recognize when ICE might be present in their neighborhood and alert their neighbors.



Unfortunately, ICE agents frequently lie about who they are, so it is important for community members to be able to identify which cars should be in their neighborhoods. If there are suspicious vehicles, they can call a volunteer dispatcher to send someone out to monitor and verify if it is ICE or not.

THOUSANDS OF EDUCATORS DEMONSTRATE IN RALEIGH

May 16th was the first day of the short session for the North Carolina General Assembly. It also happened to be the day when nearly 20 thousand teachers took a personal day from work to demonstrate over the needs of students and NC public schools. Teachers marched in a sea of red to demand wage increase, more per pupil funding, and better schools with the needed supplies.

Organized by the North Carolina Association of Educators, teachers rallied and met with representatives throughout the day to discuss their needs and ways to improve public education. The General Assembly is deliberating on the budget and teachers hope that their large presence will remain in the mind of legislators as they allocate funds.



PALESTINIANS MURDERED ON ISRAEL'S ANNIVERSARY

This week, the United States moved their Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, signaling their recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. This action was met with protest by Palestinians whose rights have continued to be systematically denied. Israel's response has been violent and killed dozens of protestors and injured hundreds. This comes at the same time that Israel celebrates their anniversary and Palestinians mourn the U.N. Partition or what they refer to as "Nabka"; a day when over 750,000 Palestinians were driven out and 500 homes were destroyed.

AFSC began work in the region in 1948 and since then we have seen a massive dispossession and displacement. Israeli occupation continues in the West Bank and Gaza. With the latest incidents of state violence against non-violent protest we must hold our leaders accountable and demand some action be taken in this latest incident of violence that prevents us from achieving peace.



Violating international law by declaring Jerusalem Israel's capital and moving the U.S. embassy are dangerous actions that risk violence and jeopardize efforts to realize a just and lasting peace.

POOR PEOPLE’S CAMPAIGN STAGES PROTESTS NATIONWIDE

After leading NC’s NAACP Chapter, Rev. William Barber is kicking off the new phase of the Poor People’s Campaign. Barber along with others is leading forty days of direct action that addresses poverty, racism, and advocates for a “Moral Revival” in the United States. The Poor People’s Campaign was started fifty years ago by Martin Luther King Jr. , and never regained traction after his assassination. Now, activists are working on a state level strategy to bring attention to many of the social issues that are rooted in systemic problems. In Raleigh, over two hundred people gathered in the state Capitol to kick off the six weeks. Protestors blocked traffic in front of the Legislative Building, leading to the arrest and citations of dozens of supporters. At the end of the six weeks, the campaign will finish off with a rally in Washington D.C.



A red graphic with white and black text. At the top right is a small white star icon. The main text reads: "AFSC SUPPORTS THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN". Below this is a small logo for the Poor People's Campaign with the tagline "A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL". At the bottom, the website "AFSC.ORG/POORPEOPLESCAMPAIGN" is listed.

DEFENDING AGAINST WAGE THEFT

Sergio Hernandez, who owns a small Greensboro painting company, took a job in 2016 for Chapel Hill-based Magnum Fine Home Builders. Though the work was completed, Sergio's business never received the full payment for the work. His business incurred material and labor costs, all of which Sergio paid for through credit lines to fulfill his company's obligations. He attempted to collect the payments for more than a year without results.

Sergio's wife attended a meeting at a local church organized by Siembra NC, AFSC's grassroots undocumented group, and learned that the group was able to offer support to people like her husband who had experienced wage theft. After learning about his options and rights as a business owner, and having been stymied in his efforts to quietly collect on the debt, Sergio decided it was time to go public.

On Feb. 17, about forty people - including six of the painters who completed work for Magnum Fine Homes - protested at one of the company's current work sites, delivering dozens of copies of the unpaid invoice that Sergio had already sent numerous times. Afterwards, an attorney specializing in wage theft offered to support Sergio in the next phase of his fight, and the company has finally reached out offering to negotiate.



UPDATE: Sergio has begun receiving payments for the money owed to him!!!

Inspired by the victory, Siembra has heard from other workers in similar situations and has already held one other wage theft protest. We hope for a similarly happy ending.

Last month, several areas in North Carolina were hit by ICE raids in their communities. The closest one to us was in the Triangle area in Carrboro. Western North Carolina also suffered from ICE arrests in their community.

Due to this, many communities started legal funds for the affected families who were taken into ICE custody, including the stepfather of Siembra member /volunteer and Guilford College Student, Maria Peralta. (Donate here: <https://www.youcaring.com/mariaperalta-1165901>)

In Chapel Hill, we held a workshop that dozens of people attended in order to inform themselves how to respond and support immigrants who may be victims of ICE Raids.

During the Mexican Consulate visit that AFSC / Siembra hosted for Mexican nationals trying to get identifications, Siembra was also able to provide Know Your Rights information to the attendees. We remain vigilant as ICE ramps up their deportation and arrests all over the country.



SUPPORTING TORNADO RELIEF EFFORTS

Greensboro's tornado relief efforts are still underway as families try to recuperate from the tornado that hit the city back in mid- April.

Dozens of homes were lost and destroyed but with the help of many organizations and community residents, the city is rebuilding and assisting those impacted by the storm.

Siembra, along with other community groups and non-profits have been active in the cleaning of debris and trying to assist those whose homes were affected. Efforts continue as the federal government begins to release funds to help with the rebuilding and the city of Greensboro continues to release information on how you can help if interested.

