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**American Friends
Service Committee**

Area Office of the Carolinas

MAY 2016

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
CITLALY MORA

AFSC RECOGNIZED AT NOTABLE LATINOS OF THE TRIAD GALA



May Quote:
“One is called to live nonviolently, even if the change one works for seems impossible. It may or may not be possible to turn the U.S. around through nonviolent revolution. But one thing favors such an attempt: the total inability of violence to change anything for the better.”

-Daniel Berrigan

Over 100 Latina/o leaders, and non-Latina/o allies, were recognized during the Notable Latinos of the Triad event that took place in Greensboro on Thursday, April 28.

Hosted by the Latino Community Coalition of Guilford County (LCCG), the event celebrated the achievements made by the Latino community and by organizations and individuals that have made significant contributions to the immigrant community.

The celebration featured a keynote speech by NC Justice Center staff attorney Raul Pinto, a sit-down dinner, and live entertainment by West End Mambo.

AFSC's NC Immigrant Rights Program was

recognized for its work, as well as many people affiliated with AFSC.

It is incredible to see all the individuals that have been a part of AFSC's social justice work in the past and present. It speaks to AFSC's impact in the community.

Congratulations to all the AFSC honorees (and indeed ALL the honorees!), including the following:

Current Interns: Yubi Aranda Sandoval, José Oliva, Fernando Jimenez, Jose Sandoval

Former Interns: Maria Cortez-Perez, Yazmin Garcia Rico, Kelly Morales, José Bernal, Brianna Higgins, Adamou Mohamed

Staff: Leticia Benitez, Lori Fernald Khamala

Community Leaders Learning Program

Members: Carmen Custodio, Saúl R Rodriguez Arellano

Program Committee

Members: Kathy Hinshaw, Steve Sumerford, Yazmin Garcia, Ann Marie Dooley

Supporters: Irving Zavaleta Jimenez, Margarita Kerkado, Gudelia Marquez, Dulce V. Ortiz, Fredd Reyes, Whitney Vanderwerff, Addy Jeffrey

In the end, the words of Raul Pinto resonated with the audience as he concluded his speech by stating, "Don't stop at being notable. Be better, work more, celebrate more, and love more."

-Fernando Jimenez, AFSC Intern

POLICE DASH AND BODY CAM FOOTAGE-PUBLIC OR PRIVATE?

Sometimes a very personal tragedy can lead to a whole community dialogue. The Vo family, Vietnamese immigrant residents of Greensboro, lost their adult daughter, Chien Vo, in a terrible and unfortunate shooting by a Greensboro police officer in 2014. Chien Vo suffered from mental illness. For two years, the family had not been able to see the footage that existed from the police body cam.

On Monday, May 9th, the debate whether police dash and body cam footage should be released to the public cleared one obstacle: the City Council voted 6-2 on the public release of the shooting, after pleading by the Vo family.

A week prior, the Council chambers overflowed with community members from Greensboro and across the state. On the way to the meeting, the South East Asian Coalition (SEAC)- a community group based in Charlotte- held a peaceful march of local constituents from the door steps of Beloved Community Center (BCC) to the electronic doors of the concrete court house building. Leading the marchers was the Vo family. The vocal procession shouted many

chants, one was "JUSTICE, TRANSPARENCY and TRUTH."

The family, joined by SEAC, AFSC, BCC, a pro-bono attorney and community supporters, sought justice, transparency, and truth. They were present to demand access to view the final moments of their beloved daughter, Chieu Vo. Upon seeing the disturbing footage, the family was understandably upset by what they saw- especially because it differed from how it was previously represented to them.

Many attending the city council meeting stood in solidarity with the family and delivered a raised fist salute to the council for policy change.

For more info: SEACvillage.org

-Toni Etheridge, AFSC Program Associate



REFLECTION: EVENT EMPOWERS WOMEN BUT LEAVES SOME BEHIND



On March 24th, several city mayors in North Carolina joined together with U.S. House

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Congresswoman Alma Adams at UNC-Charlotte Center City to lay out an economic agenda. The agenda sets to empower women to achieve greater economic security, raise wages for women across the country, and enable working parents to support their families.

This economic agenda confronts the gender pay gap. Women earn less than men: on average, women earn 79 cents for every dollar a man makes. Based on four policy components (paycheck fairness; work and family balance; retirement security; and Medicaid, Medicare & childcare), this initiative would open a gateway to educational opportunities, vocational training, entrepreneurial and investment pursuits.

I sat and listened to each of the distinguished policy makers like Greensboro Mayor Pro Temp Yvonne Johnson and Rep. Pelosi mention the need for "diversity at the [work] table," vocally celebrating an intentional and concentrated drive that is designed to support and include more women, diverse women, in the workforce.

However, I felt an important group of women had not been mentioned. Sadly, I did not hear the inclusion of women with a criminal record being called to sit at the economic table. Still today, employers pass over individuals with a criminal record. And if they are considered, the pay is less. To deny a woman with a record can negatively impact her family's future.

I know this because this is an experience I share with them—a record. In my twenties, I made a poor decision, and this resulted in a misdemeanor charge for shoplifting, then restitution and a lifelong criminal record.

A criminal file remains like a stubborn stain, ruining and blocking potential economic opportunities. Some organizations and companies, including AFSC, perform full background checks but welcome the experience and expertise of an individual despite a misdemeanor record.

In my opinion, many more companies and entrepreneurs should be as welcoming, because people make mistakes. My hope is this new policy moves beyond being what seems to me as a symbolic initiative and will offer women from all walks of life and education the chance to sit and participate at the table. For all women to engage, decision makers and employers must be open to a woman's potential contribution—not past criminal conviction.

-Toni Etheridge, AFSC Staff

See the full Women's Economic Agenda here:

<http://tinyurl.com/l69xpg>

BLACK LIVES MATTER GATHERS STEAM IN GATE CITY

From a hashtag to a national organization, #BlackLivesMatter has become well-known in our society. Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an ideological and political intervention in a world where black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. BLM seeks to affirm black people's contribution to society, black humanity, and black resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

Greensboro hosts one chapter of Black Lives Matter, and while the location changes depending on available resources, meetings are scheduled for last Thursday of every month. The past meeting was held on April 28 at Shiloh Baptist Church and involved updates from all the BLM committees. BLM is currently working on projects such as voter registration, black affirmation trainings at high schools, protests against North Carolina's House Bill 2, and "Trans 101" workshops, among others.

The recent passing of House Bill 2 predominantly affects those of the LGBTQ community, and more specifically, transgender people of color. Because communities of color are already policed at higher rates than predominantly white neighborhoods, criminalizing behavior in public bathrooms is likely to (and already has) resulted in increased surveillance

and police involvement in areas inhabited by people of color.

Additional restrictions in HB2, such as preventing North Carolina cities from raising the minimum wage, will also further marginalize people of color. In response to this legislation, Black Lives Matter has partnered with such organizations as Fight for 15, the NC NAACP, and the Queer People of Color Collective.

-Naomi Madaras, AFSC Intern



AFSC AND YWCA "STAND AGAINST RACISM"

Each April, the YWCA USA honors national Stand Against Racism day. This year, on April 26, YWCA High Point Latino Family Center (LFC) invited AFSC to present its AALBBA workshop (African-American & Latino Bridge Building & Awareness). The purpose is to bring young people together to discuss the real tensions between Latino and African-American communities and for both groups to learn about each other's diversity and find ways to support one another in issues that impact both communities.

AVANCE, a YWCA LFC high school youth group, were our main participants of the day. "It makes me mad when people talk bad about another race like the black community," one of the participants commented when asked to share their stereotypes and biased experiences. The question highly affected the student and could go no

further in expressing her uncomfortable experiences with racism and bias. Others highlighted the hostility in school environments amongst other concerns.

Students filled out a survey at the end of the workshop to evaluate their experiences. It also encouraged them to think about what kind of messages they receive from friends, family, and the media are in regards to the African-American community. The most common response was "somewhat negative;" while the second most common response was "somewhat positive."

"I think this conversation is greatly needed in my school. We have to talk about this gap between us [African-American & Latino]," one student mentioned. AFSC's AALBBA Project has been introducing the workshop

in high schools in the surrounding areas to keep having these crucial conversations and provide a safe space to do so.

Building allies is not easy nor will it be done from one day to another but building bridges between people of color allows them to realize that unity is power.

-Maria Cortez Perez, Former AFSC Intern and current staff at the YWCA High Point Latino Family Center



TRIAD ENCUESTRO PREPARES STUDENTS FOR UNDOCUGRADUATION



The Let's Learn Triad (LLT) group hosted its first *Encuentro* (gathering) on Saturday, May 7 to prepare students for the 4th annual UndocuGraduation in Raleigh, NC on May 19. AFSC interns successfully coordinated this day-long event for undocumented students of the Triad. Approximately 30 students and allies participated through a series of workshops that provided participants with skills to build allies, resources for college access, and effective skills for lobbying on tuition equality for undocumented students. During our closing, former LLT coordinator Maria Cortez, shared her story of dedication and challenges, encouraging students to keep working

hard to achieve their dreams.

This is not an easy journey for the thousands of undocumented students that graduate from high school in North Carolina every year. Gerardo, who graduated from high school in 2006, participated in this year's Encuentro and shared with the students, "I would have loved to have something like this when I was in high school, I believe I could have benefited from it." These students are our future, they are North Carolina!

Join us on May 19th to advocate for SB463 and HB 1081 and urge your representatives to support In equal rates for ALL students in our state!

Call for more info: 336-854-0633

-Leticia Benitez AFSC Fellow

Join us for a statewide
UndocuGraduation
Thursday, May 19 | NC General Assembly | 16 W Jones St. Raleigh, NC

**ARE YOU AN UNDOCUMENTED OR DACA STUDENT?
DO YOU BELIEVE IN EDUCATION FOR ALL?**

Join us for the 4th annual UndocuGraduation, on May 19, to recognize the 31,000 undocu/DACAmented students in our state and demand that our representatives pass in-state tuition!

9:30 am Welcome & Training
10:15am Lobbying
11:45am UndocuGraduation Ceremony

WEAR YOUR CAP & GOWN

Questions & RSVP:
Find us on Facebook
"UndocuGraduation-
Tuition equity for all!"

letslearn.adelantenc.org

Support Tuition Equity in North Carolina | Good for our students, good for our state

FARMWORKERS MARCH ON REYNOLDS URGING UNION RECOGNITION



The pouring rain did not drown out the cries of farmworkers and their supporters on Thursday, May 6 in Winston-Salem, NC, outside the Reynolds American annual Shareholders meeting. The protesters were urging the company to recognize the union FLOC (Farm Labor Organizing Committee) and work with growers to improve pay, conditions and treatment of the workers who pick tobacco for Reynolds' products. AFSC staff were pleased to again be among the supporters advocating for farmworker justice. Inside the Shareholders meeting, for the first time ever, Reynolds American CEO Susan Cameron used a portion of her opening message to talk about problems faced by farmworkers in their supply chain. She has not previously directly addressed the issue in her remarks.

We recognize this as progress, and it is now time for Reynolds to sit down with the farmworker union FLOC and negotiate an agreement. Farmworkers, the vast majority of whom are immigrants, face some of the worst conditions and lowest pay of all workers in the nation. It is time for the corporations that make millions off the backs of these workers to join in the efforts to ensure that workers are fairly treated and compensated.

-Lori Khamala, AFSC Staff