



## Progress on the Tobacco Campaign!

**Reynolds and other tobacco companies come to the table, while FLOC members and supporters turn the heat up in the streets.**

Last year, we reported that after 5 years of Campaigning, we achieved the first one-on-one meetings with Reynolds, thanks to the efforts and activism of FLOC members and supporters. However, no agreement has been signed so the fight continues!



This year, consumers rallied to pressure convenience store chains that make billions from tobacco sales to step up and tell Reynolds about the concerns of consumers at Kangaroo Express, 7-Eleven, and Wawa, holding pickets and rallies at dozens of store locations throughout the country. Labor activists in Europe joined the fight, convinc-

ing British American Tobacco (BAT), a company that owns 42% of Reynolds, to tell the tobacco giant to sign an agreement with FLOC. As we go to press, allies in Europe from the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the UK and the International Union Federation (IUF), based in Geneva, have just conducted a consultation in the British Parliament on the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month. This was a major forum for FLOC as President Velasquez presented the case for the farmworkers.

Farmworkers also made their presence known at the Reynolds Annual Shareholders meeting for the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, with a large demonstration on the streets of Winston-Salem and a delegation of 50 inside the meeting. Inside, activists and farmworkers made it clear that foot-dragging will not be accepted and that the Campaign will continue until Reynolds comes to an agreement with FLOC to address human rights abuses in the tobacco supply chain.

Thanks to all who continue to support farmworkers as they take on the task of organizing a union in the South!

# 12<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Convention

## Members Call for Massive 2014 Sign Up Campaign

On October 12, 2013, nearly 400 FLOC members traveled to Durham, NC for FLOC's 12th Constitutional Convention. Delegates read, debated, and passed 16 resolutions which will give the elected FLOC leadership guidance on what issues to pursue as vital to the farmworker movement. Members spoke passionately to each of the resolutions, which addressed key field issues such as wages, housing, breaks on the job, but also broader political issues, such as immigration reform and a continued effort to convince tobacco manufacturers to clean up their supply chain.

In a unanimous vote, delegates passed a resolution to continue the Reynolds Campaign and to launch a massive sign up campaign to organize 5,000 new tobacco farmworker members in the 2014 harvest season.

Luz Alba, the chair of the constitution committee stressed the importance of organizing new members. "These companies are getting rich off of our work, and as we grow, we build the strength we need to win dignified work conditions!"



"This Convention was a crucial part of building real self-determination, so that us farmworkers can finally speak for ourselves and work so that our own organization can fight for the issues most important to us." -FLOC President Baldemar Velasquez



Delegates received greetings from special guests, who pledged their support for the farmworker efforts, including J. David Cox, President of the AFGE and Rev. Dr. William Barber II, President of the NC NAACP.



North Carolina delegates travel to FLOC Convention.



*Speaking to the resolution on the fight for a just minimum wage for farmworkers, FLOC member-delegate Pedro Ramirez said, “[translated] We work extremely hard under the most difficult circumstances so that we can feed and clothe our family and making less than \$8 an hour is not a dignified salary, so I support this resolution and look forward to working on it!”*



*Over 80 volunteers worked tirelessly with staff to run the convention and we are immensely grateful to everyone who contributed to make this historic event possible!*



Highlights of the convention included rousing speeches of support and encouragement from J. David Cox, President of the AFGE and the inspiring leader of NC's Forward Together Movement the Rev. Dr. William Barber II, President of the NC NAACP.

## **AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Shuler Visits Tobacco Farmworkers in NC**

FLOC's Camp Solidarity program has brought hundreds of people out to the heart of NC tobacco country to talk with tobacco farmworkers, learn more about tobacco work, and build solidarity in our struggles.

Each year several prominent labor leaders make the trip to visit the fields and pledge to support farmworker organizing, and this August we were proud to host AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Schuler for a Camp Solidarity visit. Accompanying her were five members of the United Steel Workers, representatives from the NC AFL-CIO, President of Farmworker Justice, Bruce Goldstein, and other FLOC allies.

The delegation visited a labor camp in Sampson County where, huddled in a small dining room, they shared stories about their work, families, and their personal struggles. "I have been living in the U.S. for 40 years and have been working in the fields since the age of 17," He described the difficulty of being away from home and staying in touch with family back in Mexico. "Sometimes I'm afraid that they might think that I'm dead."



2013 Camp Solidarity Delegation



### **The Union runs in the family**

Albino Cruz Bueno first came to work in the fields of North Carolina in 2004. A few years after that his son, Abel Cruz Cabrera, followed in his footsteps.

Both father and son are active members of FLOC and both attended this year's Monterrey Leadership Training. Albino comes early each year to work planting strawberries and then hops from camp to camp working with different growers that have work available for him. At each camp, he continues to organize, urging others to make complaints when the contract is not being followed and talking to workers about what FLOC does to defend their rights. "I know that as workers, we don't have to be afraid to make complaints, we have a Union and a contract to protect us."

Abel attended all Union gatherings this year, including the Moral Monday protests that were happening in Raleigh during the summer. "It was amazing because there were people from other Unions, it was good to see that people are getting organized and motivating to see that as a worker I am part of something bigger." After attending, he kept his co-workers informed and excited about FLOC.

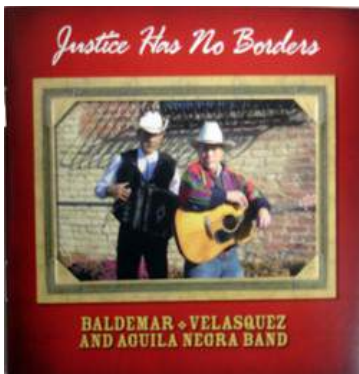
The family's youngest son Abel was able to come in work in NC. The first thing he did when he arrived was to sign a union card.

# FLOC/CMWJ MEDICAL CLINIC CONTINUES TO SERVE MEMBERS

Wendy Avina and Kelsey Baron with assistance from Mario Vargas conducted the CMWJ mobile clinic visits this summer. With urging from President Velasquez, ProMedica hospital consortium joined the list of partners that include University of Toledo Medical College (UTMC), St. Charles Hospital and Mercy Partners, providing the mobile unit with a driver, dozens of medical students and volunteer doctors and nurses. Coordinating much of the follow-up service was Dr. Richard Paat who is renowned for his mission services in Central America.

Services were wide-ranging from OB/GYN, dental, vision, musculoskeletal therapy, dermatology to HIV screening.

CMWJ continues to organize to expand services to migrant workers that remain one of the areas most underserved and hard to reach population.



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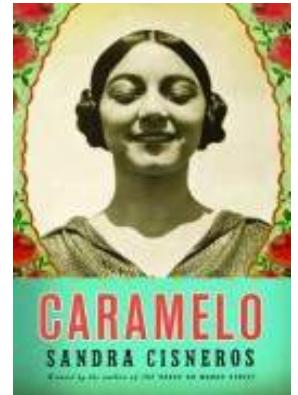
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## Building Power Among Immigrant Communities in OH and NC

In 2013, FLOC associate members in Ohio and North Carolina have been actively organizing in their community around the most pressing local issues, while joining the fight for Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR).

In Goldsboro, members of the local organizing committee, “Fuerza y Libertad” held a series of events throughout the summer to educate peers on how to avoid immigration scams and how to keep the pressure on North Carolina congressmen around the need for reform at the local and federal level. In one of the biggest demonstrations in city history, activists took over downtown Goldsboro, with a march and rally, which was attended by former farmworker and labor leader Eliseo Medina.

In Ohio, the fight against racial profiling and border patrol harassment continued in the courts, in the workplace, and in the streets. HOLA (Hispanic Organization for Leadership and Achievement) a community organization that recently affiliated with FLOC, saw major victories, as public actions led to the release of members and the reunification of hard working families. FLOC members assisted in the fight



FLOC members participating in Moral Monday Protest.

for workplace rights and organizing locally to have a say in the politics of NW Ohio; FLOC members also joined with our labor movement family to take the fight to Springfield, Ohio and tell House Majority Leader John Boehner, “enough delay, we need a vote on immigration reform now!”



7-11 Convenient store picketing to ask them to pass along consumer concerns about farmworker rights to Reynolds in Toledo, Ohio!



2013 Immigration march in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

*Regardless of the fate of immigration reform, an organized community is an empowered community. As this is printed, immigrant workers are meeting to make plans for 2014 to bring the movement to the next level!*

## Toledo Volunteer of the Year:

### Yazmin Ruiz



Born in Morelos, Mexico, Yazmin, was brought to the USA in 1991 lived one year in California then moved here to Toledo Ohio. Yazmin was introduced to FLOC in 1997 when her mom would clean and volunteer here in the offices. This year she was involved in everything from Cooking to Driving members to FLOC events never saying NO, despite her personal problems like her young son David having brain and neck surgery also living in a women's shelter for three months but she still kept volunteering and supporting FLOC. A Dreamer now, with help and guidance from FLOC, she has received Deferred Action. She has obtained her driver's license, high school diploma, rents her own house and even has a job with the Lucas County.

She was asked once, "Why do you keep volunteering?" She just smiled with that smile that she always carries and answered, "I JUST LOVE FLOC."

## NC Volunteer of the Year:

### Dave Austin

Dave was born in the small town of Chillicothe, Missouri, and remembers his first experience with farm work being "putting up hay" for \$1/hour during his summers in high school. He joined the farmworker movement when he got involved with the Triangle Friends of the United Farmworkers, and later went on to be a part of Farmworker Support Action Team (FSAT). Dave began volunteering with FLOC in 1999, shortly after FLOC expanded to NC. He was with us since the first day of the Mt. Olive boycott and has been key in the current fight with Reynolds. "Farmworkers, among the most and longest oppressed in our nation's history, and seemingly powerless, are finding a way to radically change the entire commodity supply chain – an amazing effort."

We cannot thank Dave enough for his unwavering support of the farmworker movement over the years!

