



HAPpenings!

HISPANIC AFFAIRS PROJECT

We are an organization dedicated to the development of leadership, community organizing, and the provision of key services for the integration of the western Colorado community.

November 2016



The Second Annual Gunnison Valley Diversity Walk

Nearly 100 community members of Gunnison and Crested Butte walked from the North end of Gunnison's Main street downtown in celebration of Diversity. Students from Western State Colorado University, the Union Congregational Churches of Gunnison, Six Points Developmental Center and the Hispanic Affairs Project organized the event. One woman wore a sign that said; "**Make America kind again**", County Commissioner Jonathan Houck marched alongside Orquidea Blanco, one of the Immigrant families that showed up. It was a beautiful, brisk October day, the event was organized wonderfully with the Crested Butte Peace Museum bringing a mobile art installation of photos of famous leaders that were carried during the walk. It was a beautiful wall of people demonstrating the most important values in our valley. *By Mary Burt.*



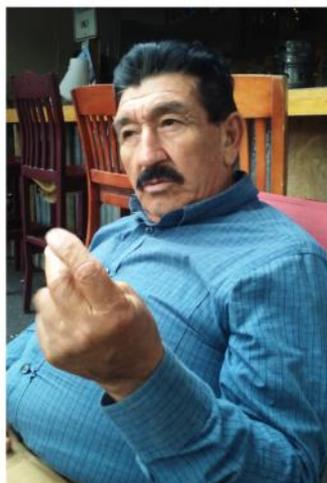
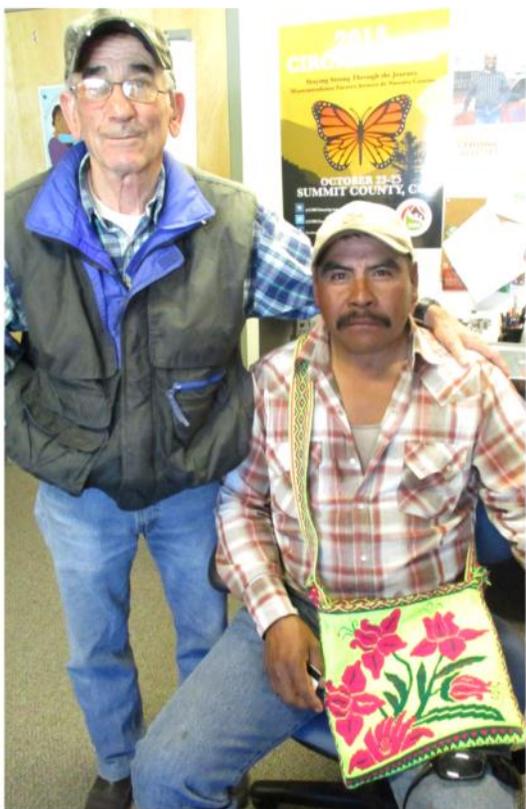
Advancing in Labor Rights

Hundreds of workers are heard in Federal Court.

The Chief Judge B. Howell has accepted the standing of our suit in the name of the H2A-sheep herders showing that the DOL and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) arbitrarily created a permanent foreign labor force without the approval of the Congress. This allowed the sheep industry to establish their own regulations, outside federal standards that apply to entire industry with foreign temporary workers.

Now, workers who are members of HAP and hundreds of others who work in at least 15 States, can be heard in a federal court: Hispanic Affairs Project, et to the. v. Perez, 2016 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 122181, 2016 WL 4734350 (D.D.C. Sept. 9, 2016).

In 2010, HAP with other organizations tried to introduce a bill for State law and were not successful; in 2015 we won in Federal Court in our suit for a wage increase, and now we hope that the sheep herders are included in a labor system that respects their rights and their dignity as human beings.



Above: Ignacio Alvarado, an ex-sheep herder and a active member of HAP. Left: Basilio Collado also a former Shepherd, attending a worker in the office of HAP in Montrose.

“I was born in the mountains in southern Chile. I came to Craig, CO with visas H2A to work at one of Colorado's largest ranches. Because I was very responsible in my work, I gained the affection of my employer, who offered to sponsor my residence after 6 years working on his ranch.

One day I started having health problems, due to a tick bite. It is common in the countryside to be bitten by these insects that affect the body's joints . I fell ill with fever and became unable to walk, nor do anything. The boss went to Nebraska and promised to send someone to take me to the hospital. They never came for me. I decided to leave the ranch any way I could, and I called some friends who picked me up and took me to the hospital....

I decided to never return to work with him, but knowing the abuses in this industry, I began to visit the workers to share information about their rights with them. One of my experiences of advocacy was to go to the Capitol of Colorado in 2010 to advocate for a law. It was impossible to have a conversation with the employer representatives who accused us of be obstructing their businesses.

Visiting the workers is very difficult. I have been threatened with death. But I know what means to be working on the sheep ranches. I have visited hundreds of workers and will continue to do it while I can.

I became a citizen of the United States in 2006, and I believe this country can do much more to care for migrant workers...”

**Red de Colorado para Combatir el Trafico Humano/
Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking
(CoNEHT) 1-866 / 455-5075**

Concluding Hispanic Heritage Month

Several celebrations took place in the region to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month. The 114th Congress of the United States passed a resolution (S.574) honoring the immense cultural and economic contributions of Latinos in the USA. Grand Junction held multiple events, including the library's Culture Fest and a Naturalization Ceremony at the National Monument.



This is Fernando

On Saturday October 15, a group of thirty or so bystanders and members of Hispanic Affairs Project, Western Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce, and ART Sub-committee gathered before the colorful expansive image created by Jeremy Velasquez in Grand Junction. The title of the original 60 x 15 ft. mural, "Fernando" is appropriate for the significance of the event. According to Jeremy, his friend Fernando has given his whole adult life over to his

labors as an agricultural worker here in the Grand Valley. In order to convey that, Jeremy "imbedded" Fernando's weathered visage into the furrows of an imaginary Palisade field with an idealized, slightly cubist, rendering of the Book Cliffs in the background.

"The artwork is not necessarily just about Fernando," Velasquez said. "It's for people like Fernando who emigrated from other places to come here ... for health, wealth." The mural can be visited by any passerby under the 5th Street overpass along the River Front Trail, just west of the Botanical Gardens.

In the shade of the overpass, Lorie Gregory, Parks and Recreation city of Grand Junction, Tom Acker, Hispanic Affairs Project and Jerry Martinez of Western Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce and the artist, Jeremy Velasquez commented on the importance of the work by Mr. Velasquez. The artwork is part of a program that was commissioned by the Art on the Riverfront Trail Project.

Being an Immigrant Today

Never before in our recent history has the immigrant community been as afraid as on the day after Election Day. Some children asked their parents if they could stay home from school. They were afraid of hearing words of hate and intolerance. They had good reason to think that. In many schools, the number of verbal aggression incidents increased. In some cases there were also reports of aggression towards non-immigrant students. Some parents did not go to work in the days after, including some with immigrant status because of the feeling that we were not welcome anymore. A state representative from the office of refugees was verbally assaulted at a meeting where they had been invited to explain the process of resettlement of families in CO. After the elections, HAP's local Community Committees have led info-sessions. The people have expressed their fear and frustration. The youth have taken a step forward, forming working groups to defend their right to work. Meanwhile, members of Congress have said that in January they will review President Obama's executive orders. One of those orders is DACA: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which gives work permits to youth



who arrived as children. DACA has been a model policy for the economic security of low income families and an important step in the integration of 60,000 youth in Colorado's labor force. Together with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, CIRC, we are preparing activities to protect the right to work.

Join us! Be part of the social movement for justice.



Thanks for All the Solidarity

This is a note of appreciation for all the members of HAP and allied groups who worked hard to make the voices of minorities and low income families be heard in the recent elections. The increase to the minimum wage was a great victory. We know how to turn Fear into Hope. We are a movement which believes in the values of justice, respect, human dignity, and democracy. We all did our part. We greatly appreciate the notes of solidarity and calls of support we have received in these last couple of weeks



Let's Build a Wall

In this time of festivities we invite you to contribute to the HAP programs. Together we will build the wall that we need. We are a nation of immigrants and children of immigrants with a 240 year history. **Make a donation in honor of your ancestors or of an immigrant that you wish to honor with your contribution.**

Each brick of our wall will have the name of one of them. The wall will be built on the HAP website beginning January 20, 2017. This campaign is our best answer to build a wall that will help to make a better nation with justice, respect and solidarity. **If you share these values, be part of our work.**



Our programs include:

1. Immigration Legal Assistance.
2. Migrant Outreach.
3. Combating Human Trafficking.
4. Welcoming Colorado Initiative.
5. Leadership Development.
6. Supporting Pro-Immigrant Policies.
7. Community Resource Center

Yes, I want to support HAP!

You can have an impact! Donate Online at:
www.hapgj.org

My donation is in honor to: _____

\$20 \$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

I would like to contribute \$ _____ Annually: \$ _____ Quarterly \$ _____ Twice a year

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Your donation to HAP is tax-deductible

Make a check payable to **Hispanic Affairs Project** - 300 N. Cascade Avenue Suite C4 Montrose CO 81401