



HAPpenings !

HISPANIC AFFAIRS PROJECT

HAP is dedicated to providing attention to the needs and social development of the Hispanic immigrant community via a focus on leadership formation, community organizing and advocacy

March 2014

PROGRESS IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Members of the Western Slope Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking (WSITC) presented on the goals of this community organization at a session of the Mesa County Board of Commissioners, Monday, March 3.

At the end of the session, the Commissioners read a proclamation to raise awareness of the community and organizations to eliminate this problem.

The proclamation includes a commitment to provide resources and training to law enforcement agencies and social services that help possible victims. In the document, they recognize that human trafficking is a modern form of slavery and that the people of Mesa County must be united regardless of their religious affiliations, politics, race or nationality to defend the dignity of all human beings as a principal of the Constitution.

A collaboration of multidisciplinary and multi-sector agencies, including the Hispanic Affairs Project is cooperating in this initiative and invites interested persons to participate in our activities.

For more information call 970-249-4115 or 970-260-9465.



Professors Beverly Lyne and Tom Acker receive the proclamation from Commissioner Rose Pugliese March 10 in Grand Junction.

Tom Acker, a member of the HAP board of directors and of the Colorado Collaborative to Combat Human Trafficking Advisory Board explains that the plan of action involves three over-arching goals:

- **Prevention:** educating the community in order to identify [human trafficking] and increase the protection of vulnerable sectors of society like immigrants, refugees, migrant workers and youth, etc. Also, the importance to involve all those sectors in the prevention
- **Protection:** improving training and collaboration agencies that serve these populations and direct support of potential victims.
- **Prosecution:** combining our recourses to effectively eliminate this problem and assure that Colorado has adequate legislation oriented toward the protection of victims.



Comisioners Steve Acquafresca, Rose Pugliese and John Justman in the Public Hearing Room

Red de Colorado para Combatir el Trafico Humano—Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking
CONEHT 1-866-455-5075 Toll Free - 24 hours

2014: YEAR OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE MIGRANT WORKERS

Every year Colorado receives hundreds of migrants with the H2A visas to work in the farm fields or in the livestock industry with sheep or other animals. The lack of consistent federal and state laws has turned these workers into possible victims of labor trafficking, especially in the sheep industry.

For this reason, HAP is carrying out various efforts to demonstrate the abuses that many of these workers suffer.

Some of these actions are:

1. supporting the bill against wage theft in coordination with social justice organizations in the state of Colorado.
2. Documenting abuses against H2A visa workers that include visits to their places of employment to distribute food and clothing thanks to the support of churches and friends.
3. Participating in the suit brought up in the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights and the United Nations High Commission of Human Rights regarding serious violations of international agreements in the protection of migrant workers, the lack of access to justice especially the lack of access to social service agencies at their workplace. This suit is in coordination with dozens of agencies that represent the 50 of the United States.
4. Coordinating a campaign of community education about the lives of the migrants and their families in the Grand Valley and their economic contributions. We are doing this in collaboration with the Catholic Migrant Farmworkers Network (CMFN), celebrating together a year of solidarity with the migrants!!



Andrea Dulac of CMFN, during a visit to the board of directors of HAP, Friday, January 10 in Delta. Below: Ignacio Alvarado provides information to a worker during an outreach visit.



THE WAGE THEFT IN COLORADO

Together with 43 organizations, HAP supports legislation that protects workers and their families. The Wage Protection Act may be a better way to resolve disputes related to the payment of salaries. This would provide greater ability to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment to help through a quick and easy resolution without having to resort to the courts. This would avoid costly litigation for businesses and workers in lawsuits related to wage theft.

Holes in current laws to protect salaries affect thousands of workers especially low wage families and immigrants. Members of HAP in coordination with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, CIRC, have convened informational meetings and trainings to identify and help workers recover their stolen salaries.



This bill also known as SB14-005 is good for Colorado and good for all of us!

THE SHEEPHERDERS

Marcial has worked in the sheep industry for 15 years. Due to personal needs he is in debt to his employer for \$3000 with 10% percent of interest. This has resulted in his remaining on duty, which is common in the sheep industry, 24 hours/ 7 days a week. Marcial's salary is \$875 per month and in the interview, he described his work: Marcial is a heavy machine operator. According to the Department of Labor regulations, this type of work qualifies him for a very different salary. Marcial is earning 10% for what any other machine operator earns in any part of this country. Another worker on the same ranch received news that

his son needed emergency surgery for appendicitis, for which he asked the ranch owner to send money that he had in his bank account to cover the hospitalization. The rancher never sent the money and when the worker asked for an explanation the response was "I didn't have time to do it". In spite of the fact that on the walls of the ranch are taped the Department of Labor regulations, Marcial and his colleagues are not allowed to leave the ranch even on Sundays to go to church. Nor can they socialize with anyone not from the ranch, nor consider forming any kind of association among themselves. These workers are afraid to ask permission to go to church or to take time off to go shopping. These fulltime workers live below the poverty



INFORMATIVE SESSIONS

How do you apply for a driver's license in Colorado?

An expert in the documentation required for a driver's license will answer your questions.

- **Grand Junction: Thursday April 3 at 6:00 PM in the community room of the Central Library.**
- **Montrose: Saturday, April 5 at 3:00 PM in the HAP meeting room.**

Other workshops including: How the Judicial System Works, Civil Rights, Labor Law, Consumer Protection Against the illegal practice of immigration law by notaries.

Contact us for more information about DACA and other issues related to Immigration. Many families have received assistance with immigration applications under the direction of a BIA agency. You can find more information at: [www.hapgj.org--\(970\)249-4115](http://www.hapgj.org--(970)249-4115)

Wage theft hurts workers, responsible businesses and our state budget



OUR YOUTH, OUR FAMILIES



Aranza Pacheco (above on the right) has participated in many HAP activities, including vigils, marches and a visit to the Colorado State Capitol Building.

On February 18th of this year, she testified in front of the Montrose City Council in support of the construction of a new Community Recreation Center.

“A Community Recreation Center is not only a place for recreation, but a unifying space necessary for integrating the different cultural groups living in this community... and as a member of the immigrant community, as a young woman and student, I support the Center because it’s something good for the whole community,” she stated.



Aranza is the daughter of Maria and Rosendo Pacheco, members of the Montrose Hispanic Committee who routinely collaborate in activities aimed at integrating the immigrant community. Maria is a volunteer at the library’s computer courses, at Johnson Elementary and the school district’s Migrant Education Program. She’s also a certified Zumba instructor, and works with a group of women to promote a more active and health lifestyle.



NEW MEMBERS IN GRAND JUNCTION

My names is David Medina and I was born in Houston, Texas. I’m the son of an immigrant family that came from Michoacan, Mexico, and I’m the youngest of three siblings.

About a year ago I started participating in HAP activities. I was invited to participate by some younger members of the Hispanic Committee and I learned all about the work being done in the region. I really enjoyed working as a volunteer at the workshops for youth interested in applying for work permits (DACA).

My mother has been a role model for me. Thanks to her example, I’ve come to value the importance of helping others.

As a family, we’ve seen injustices and discrimination. And we think we can make a difference, be better people and help in making a better community. Just like any other family, we hope



to be happy and have a better life respecting the dignity of each individual.

These past months I’ve participated in meetings in members’ homes, in the walk for immigration reform, and in December I made a lot of calls to district voters so they, in turn, would call their representatives and convince them that their vote in favor of immigration reform would be good for the country and could make a big difference for families like my own. In two weeks I called 490 families. I’m grateful for the opportunity to help and to give back a little of what I’ve received in this country, which is my country.

David was one of the volunteers that made more than 4,100 phone calls to residents asking for their support in contacting congressional representatives and votes in favor of reform

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

During this term, the board of directors welcomed Naomi Bjorklund of the **Wolcott Family Foundation**, Mary Folchert from the **Human Development Commission**, and Edgar Balzac of **Colorado Legal Services**.

These organizations are part of the developing movement for social justice in Colorado and contribute to community initiatives.

Edgar Balzac of Colorado Legal Services, CLS (third photo down), explained that many cases of human trafficking may appear as domestic violence disputes, and that we have laws that can protect victims even if they're undocumented.



HAP says goodbye to Yolanda Quezada, Director of the **Latino Community Foundation de Colorado (LCFC)**. Her contributions to the development of this organization, and to many other groups working for the welfare of the Hispanic community, will always be affectionately remembered. Photo below. LCFC has provided technical assistance to improve institutional sustainability and growth during this term



THE CHIAPAS PROYECT

With solidarity, a better world is possible

January 1st of this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). On that day twenty years ago, indigenous groups from southern Mexico began an uprising in protest of more than 500 years of social and economic marginalization. Chiapas is one of the poorest states in Mexico, yet one of the richest in natural resources.

In 2006, the Montrose Social Justice Committee began the sale of organic coffee to create a fellowship project with a group of women workers from the high mountains of Chiapas. The goals of this project have been to learn about the causes of migration, discover the social realities of life in Mexico, and contribute to the halt in migration for economic reasons by supporting small-town production initiatives.

With the sale of coffee and other donations, we've sent \$9,629 dollars, which have gone to the organization of projects, environmental programs, and the support of school-aged children and widows of the war. We've also benefitted from the exchange, especially in the growing faith that "a better world is possible," said one Committee member.

"It's been a pleasure to work with all of you and see HAP grow over the past two years. It's a group with great leadership, so please keep up the good work on the Western Slope."
Yolanda Quezada



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