



HAPpenings!

HISPANIC AFFAIRS PROJECT

HAP promotes social integration of the immigrant community in western Colorado through leadership development, community organizing, and providing key services

Newsletter



A Western Colorado Rich with Many Cultures and Stories

On this occasion, we would like to honor the young people who form part of dance groups across Western Colorado. Many of them are first or second generation members of immigrant families that are helping to preserve cultural diversity. They form an important part of HAP's activities, especially helping to promote the Welcoming Colorado Campaign.



City of Grand Junction Observes 9th Annual International Day of the Migrant



Welcoming Colorado partners, including the School District 51 Migrant Education Program, Mesa County Library Literacy Center, HAP, and Child and Migrant Services, co-hosted a lively community celebration in observance of December 18, 2014. Community members attended the city council meeting for the official Proclamation, and Councilman Bennett Boeschstein attended the Welcoming Colorado event to read it publicly for the community. Dancers from Nepal shared their beautiful talent, as did over 30 young dancers honoring their Aztec roots and the Mexican tradition of dancing for Our Lady Guadalupe. The rich cultural diversity created an atmosphere where families with very different backgrounds could share a meal and get to know one another, all the while taking advantage of the historic Riverside Community Center.



The Camper

“The camper (Sheep wagon) is a home to H2A visa migrants who come here to work in the sheep industry. It is a mobile home with a limited space where the worker must live all year round. Most of the workers cannot leave the ranch, go to town or visit other people. In these conditions, the camper has become a form of imprisonment for the herder and the employer or manager of the ranch are like a guard who takes food to a prisoner. Some shepherders have new and more comfortable campers, but some live in very old campers, infected by mice, with broken glass (in the windows), heaters that do not work and the winter months are unbearable for them.....and the boss gets angry with the shepherders if they complain about the conditions.

This was the answer of an employer when the worker asked for a better place to live. **“You live in worse conditions in your countries, so why are you complaining about “the luxury” you have here?”.**

Many times the shepherders do not say anything and try to put up with inhuman conditions because they are afraid to lose their job and leave their families without financial support”.

Words of Martha, member of the outreach team.



**In Colorado,
immigrants deserve
a fair chance!**



Below: the central axis of an iron camper, in use since 1956



Building Bridges toward Trust with Law Enforcement

For the past 6 months, HAP leaders have been participating in a proactive collaboration between law enforcement agencies in the Grand Junction area, Latino leaders and advocacy organizations known as the “Law Enforcement Latino Alliance (ELA). LELA is working to build relationships and create mutual trust. Three public forums have been hosted to begin dialogue around critical issues impacting the Latino community and share important information about the role of law enforcement.

The first, bilingual, public forum addressed laws and protocol related to driver’s licenses, car seats and laws related to driving while impaired. Colorado State Patrol and Grand Junction Police Department officers presented information to help community members better prepare for and/or avoid contact with law enforcement for traffic-related matters. Members of the immigrant community voiced questions and concerns with regard to how contact with law enforcement may have immigration consequences, as well as detainer policy for the County Jail. Important reassurances were given regarding the role of GJPD and State Troopers in terms of immigration enforcement.

The most recent public forum focused on the defini-



tion of Domestic Violence, local resources available to victims and options available to people living in households affect by Domestic Violence. Although the forum focused on abuse between intimate partners, many of the resources available in the community (including Latimer House) are also available to victims of child abuse, as well. Officers explained arrest standards, as well.

The March public forum will address issues related to juveniles and families, with a special emphasis on human trafficking. HAP leaders will share the work being done in our local community and across the state, especially around Prevention, Prosecution, Protection, and Partnerships. Stay tuned to HAP communications for date/time for this invaluable forum.

The Frustration with Licenses for All Colorado Residents

One year after the implementation of SB 251:

- Only five offices in the entire state provided this service.
- Applicants could only make an appointment online on a website which was accessible for a few minutes after 12 midnight.
- The total cost for this license is \$64.50.
- The cost of implementing the law is paid by the applicants, not by taxes charged to citizens of Colorado.
- The law which was intended to provide identification for all residents left out those that are here on a work visa and had a Social Security number.

Our congressional allies presented an amendment to improve this service, but the congressional majority has decided to vote party line instead of as servants of their constituents. The Congress withheld the funds

(in spite of the fact that they belong to the applicants) and has reduced the providers of this service to only ONE statewide office—in Denver. So now the average time by which Colorado authorizes a driver’s license for the beneficiaries of this law has gone from 4 to 16 years.

A law supported by the Colorado Sheriffs’ Association and the economic sector whose function was to improve safety on the roadways is being dismantled by party interests in the current Statehouse.

“My name is Sonia Lopez and I live in Antonito, CO. I had my appointment with the DMV in Grand Junction, but because I was missing one document I was prevented from [getting my license]. I made that trip with my whole family including my disabled son, spending a lot of money and now I may never be able to get a Colorado drivers’ license”.

A Community with Great Leaders

My name is Estrella and I am a leader with the HAP Grand Junction Committee, along with my husband, Alejandro, and my children, Maya (11), Nube (9) and Phoenix (4). My parents brought me to the U.S. when I was just one year old. I learned to walk behind the Grand Junction train station before our family moved to California, where I was in school until moving back in 1992.

I began participating in HAP in July of 2012 after attending an information meeting at St. Joseph's Church about Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). I offered to help with the workshops HAP was organizing to help young people eligible to apply for employment authorization and deferred action.

Later, I helped lobby for the approval of the driver's license law for all people residing in Colorado; upon winning the campaign, I was part of the team that led information sessions about the requirements. I personally helped over 20 people to get their driver's license. I was able to be a liaison between the DMV and the applicants, helping over 100 people to get their appointments. On January 19, we made a presentation about the challenges faced by those attempting to get the license to the traffic unit of the Mesa County Sheriff's Office; ongoing communication with law enforcement will continue to develop mutual understanding and support. I have also worked on campaigns for detainer reform and wage left.



On January 10, I participated in the Public Policy Summit of the Colorado Latino Forum (CLF) and I had the opportunity to talk to State Legislators, Joe Salazar, Jessie Ulibarri, and Crisanta Duran, as well as Governor Hickenlooper. I thanked all of them for their support for driver's licenses. I met many people at the summit who share my passion for improving the lives of all those living in Colorado, not only immigrants.

I have recently gone back to college to continue my education, but my free time is for my family and for helping my community.



Above: Estrella and her husband during an act of civil disobedience in Washington DC on August 8, 2014 to demand immigration reform.

At left: Together with champions for pro-immigrant legislation at the Colorado Latino Forum.



“My motivation for helping others is my own family. We have known fear because of an obsolete immigration system that can destroy family unity at any moment.”

**Generous Churches Bless Shepherds
Gracias!**

Many thanks to the numerous faith communities that hosted collections of clothing, medicine, blankets and food for the outreach to shepherders this winter. Not only did people donate financial resources to help make outreach visits possible, but many people donated items that will make a concrete difference to the individuals working in harsh conditions for the remainder of the winter.

(Luke 6:20-21).- “As our congregation learned about the isolation and gross mistreatment of the hard-working people in the shepherding industry, we were moved to support HAP’s shepherd’s outreach project. Our hearts broke over the stories of loneliness and suffering, and we wanted to do what we could to bring hope. Being part of God’s work to ease the isolation and pain shepherder’s endure is a privilege”. **Laura Cartwright, Assoc. Pastor, 1st United Methodist Church, Grand Junction.**

“As a faith community, we have the opportunity to serve many of our brothers and sisters that work in this region as shepherds; they are isolated in places difficult to access and often in deplorable conditions, trying to do everything they can for their families. They deserve to be treated like human beings, and they need help to achieve this. We are helping by collecting clothing, medicines and phone cards to call their families.”

Fr. Albeiro Herrera Ciro, St. Michael’s Catholic Church, Delta



“Our migrant brothers who labor as shepherders in Western Colorado's high country are among the least visible in our corner of the world, and for this reason Community Spirit UCC has a heart for helping meet some of their basic needs during the cold, dark days of winter...Safe working conditions and fair treatment are essential to the shepherders' lives here in the United States, and so we also support and pray for those advocating for their needs and laboring for justice on their behalf”.

Pastor Karen Winkel, Community Spirit Church, Montrose

Churches that have helped support our activities:

- Catholic Churches of the Grand Junction Deanery
- First United Methodist Church, Grand Junction.
- Rice Bowl- Catholic Diocese of Pueblo.
- Unitarian Universalist Church, Grand Junction
- Three Valley Worship Group (Quaker), Montrose

- Community Spirit Church-UCC, Montrose.
- St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Montrose.
- Gunnison Congregational Church– UCC, Gunnison

Become a member of HAP and support our work. Make an online donation at www.hapgj.org. Or call 970.249.4115

Check the online calendar on our website regarding upcoming meetings about Administrative Action (DAPA) and the expansion of DACA... and click on “Events and Meetings” for flyers and details. Join HAP to receive flyers and invitations by e-mail, or find us on Facebook:

- “HAP: Western Colorado Justice for Immigrants Committees”
- “Comite Hispano de Grand Junction ~ HAP”
- “Comite hispano montrose hap”



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