



The Dolores Huerta Day of Service

A Community Initiative by Recuerda a César Chávez Committee
Dolores Huerta DOS Subcommittee • Since 2009 • Albuquerque, NM

Document by: Anna Maldonado

The Dolores Huerta Day of Service



The Day of Service is an opportunity for elementary and middle school students to learn about the history of César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, the farm workers' movement, unions and sustainable agriculture. We provide hands-on learning to students in our community within open space environments, local farms and ecosystems. Students spend time planting seeds and trees, learn about food, their environment and the importance of farm workers unions.

Mission

The Day of Service & Learning (DOS) is hosted by the subcommittee under the Recuerda a César Chávez Committee (RCCC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They bring together educators, healers, activists and artists to share knowledge, skills, and creativity with children in the Albuquerque area. Students who attend the Day of Service learn about the migrant farm workers' movement, local food, culture and sustainability. It is in the honor of César Chávez, Dolores Huerta and the farm worker movement that we continue to educate and advocate for fair food and the fair treatment of farm workers near and far. We support our local farmers and educate the future generation in the spirit of "Sí, se puede!"

The History and Legacy Behind the Day of Service

Honoring César Chávez, Dolores Huerta and the United Farmworkers Union

The Day of Service was originally named in honor of César Chávez, the memorable union leader, labor organizer, and human rights activist of migrant farm workers movement in California.

In 2017, the Day of Service was renamed after the life and work of Dolores Huerta in the spirit of "¡Si se puede!" or "Yes we can!" Originally from Dawson, NM, Dolores is the daughter of Juan Fernandez who labored as a coal miner, farm worker and union worker and served in the state legislature.

Targeting grape growers, consumers and government officials, Dolores Huerta, César Chávez and committed UFW union members dedicated their lives to the cause as they shaped agricultural history. Together they advocated for better labor laws, social rights, improved working conditions and better treatment of thousands of farm workers nationwide.

Cherished and honored by many, both César Chávez and Dolores Huerta were each awarded the Medal of Freedom (by President Clinton and President Obama respectively) and have received various awards in their lifetimes. Schools and streets have also been named after them. It is through the inspiration of César Chávez, Dolores Huerta and the farm workers movement that we share the knowledge and legacy with our community for generations to come.

Day of Service Beginnings

The Day of Service originally began in the spring of 2009 in Albuquerque, New Mexico to provide family activities at Sanchez Farm (Bernalillo County Open Space) hours before the César Chávez Marcha y Fiesta in Albuquerque's South Valley. It later evolved into its own day, originally named, the César Chávez Day of Service to honor his legacy as a civil rights leader and advocate for migrant farm workers. It was later named the Dolores Huerta Day of Service to honor her life as a strong advocate and her substantial contribution to the impact on migrant farm workers and unions in our country.

The BioSwale and Initial Projects

The Bernalillo County Open Space mission aligned with the work at Sanchez Farm that originally began as a Public Works project. The BioSwale (now wetlands) was originally the Open Space agency's sole initiative. The partnership created an opportunity for community members to engage in enriching cultural activities. The project later became one of the most efficient and beneficial aspects of Albuquerque's South Valley! An education space was created to teach youth and adults about growing food, ecological habitats, agroecology systems, wildlife and the importance of coexisting and thriving together.

Family activities before César Chávez Marcha

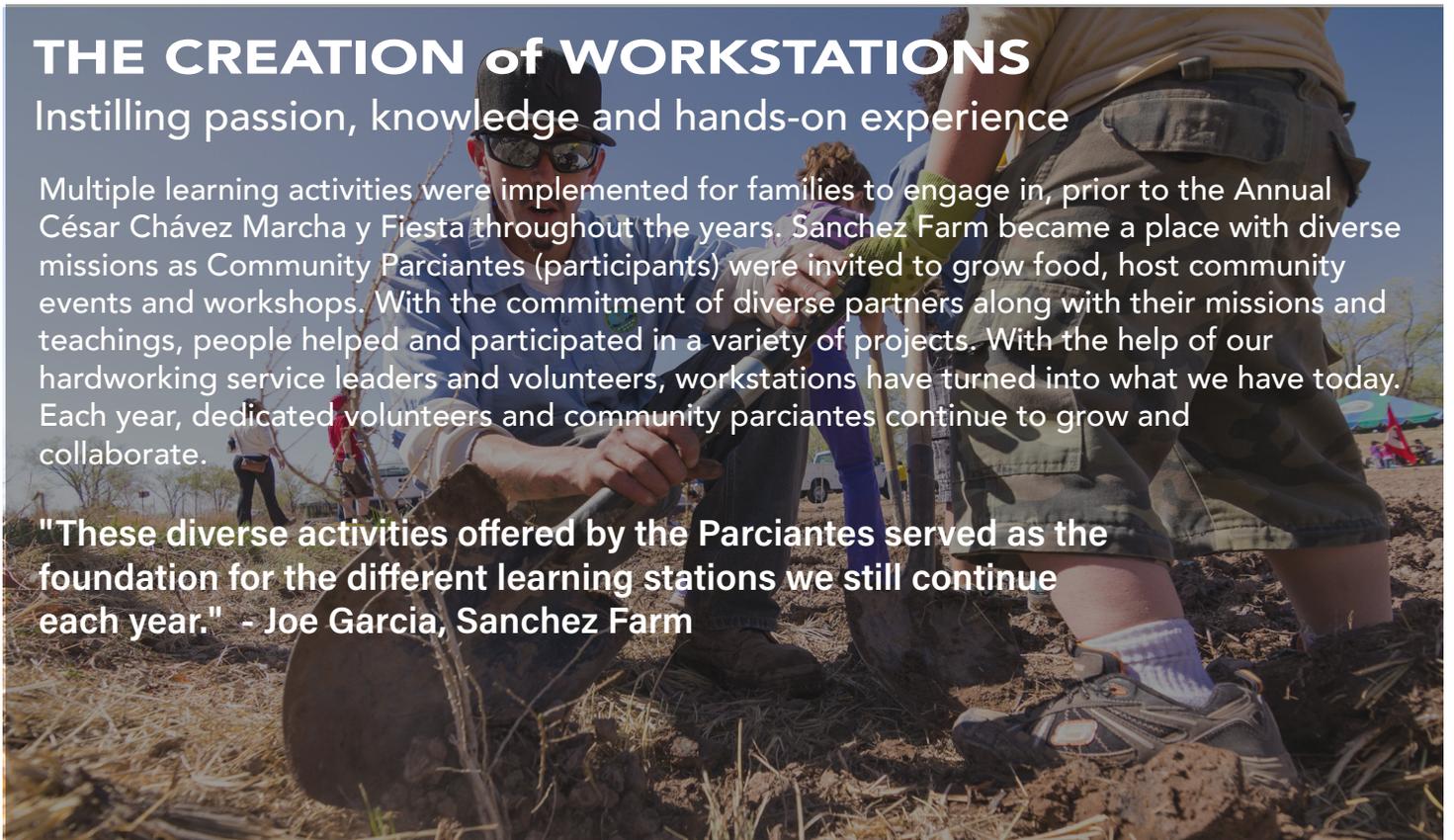
Activities began by blessing the tools and plants. We also provided maintenance on the primary acequia and smaller canals, surrounding our Fruit Tree and Medicine Wheel Garden. As the program began to grow, people in the community were invited to help and they cleared out the canals and maintained acequias with their own tools. We flooded the lower fields using the acequia and gathered in a large community circle to talk about the history of the open space, the mission at La Plazita Institute and the collaboration with the county. La Plazita Institute is a non-profit organization that engages with New Mexico's youth, elders and communities, providing cultural healing services to Albuquerque's vulnerable youth and their families.

THE CREATION of WORKSTATIONS

Instilling passion, knowledge and hands-on experience

Multiple learning activities were implemented for families to engage in, prior to the Annual César Chávez Marcha y Fiesta throughout the years. Sanchez Farm became a place with diverse missions as Community Parciantes (participants) were invited to grow food, host community events and workshops. With the commitment of diverse partners along with their missions and teachings, people helped and participated in a variety of projects. With the help of our hardworking service leaders and volunteers, workstations have turned into what we have today. Each year, dedicated volunteers and community parciantes continue to grow and collaborate.

"These diverse activities offered by the Parciantes served as the foundation for the different learning stations we still continue each year." - Joe Garcia, Sanchez Farm



FUN & IMMERSIVE FIELD TRIP!



Invitation to Schools!

As a result of the diverse projects and family activities experienced at Sanchez Farm, the Day of Service became its own day of learning with invitations extended to schools. The RCCC created a Legacy committee to provide a more direct communication with schools. Students began to learn about the important lives and social justice work of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. Although family activities were lost in replace of inviting schools, we gained hundreds of children who began to learn in a more organized and intentional way with the help of committee members that shared the Legacy curriculum with teachers and students.



The wonderful students and teachers that attend the Dolores Huerta Day of Service are central to the annual event. They are the people that we serve as we teach and share invaluable information about the farm workers movement and our connection to the land. The Day of Service welcomes, serves and caps at approximately 350 participants (including students and teachers) each year.

Educating & Empowering Youth in the Spirit of Service!



Students tour the historic garden and protected wetland areas, where they plant and broadcast seeds at Sanchez Farm and Albuquerque's beautiful open space. They create murals, participate in theater, flag making, and multiple hands-on workshops (workstations) in the spirit of the farm workers movement, culture and local ecosystems.

Ongoing Workstations

- UFW History and Flag Making
- Rural Student Project's Onion Activity
- Teatro Campesino
- Cooking with Solar Ovens
- Growing Living Food with Cactus
- Worm Composting
- Tree Planting
- Acequias
- Water is Life-Local Watersheds



History of César Chávez

Viva La Causa



César Chávez was born near Yuma, Arizona, but when his family lost their farmland during the Great Depression, they moved to California to find work. César finished the 8th grade and became a migrant farm worker to support his family. César, family and fellow workers, all experienced harsh working conditions as they toiled in the hot sun, were paid poverty wages, experienced abusive bosses and were exposed to toxic pesticides. César was driven to make a difference for those around him that faced similar hardships.



César served in the military for 2 years in his early adulthood, then later joined the Community Service Organization (CSO) to assist with voter registration. He became the organization's Executive Director, where he met and served alongside Dolores Huerta. The organization limited support for farm workers, but César & Dolores knew more needed to be done.

César left the organization on his birthday in 1962 and moved to Delano, California with his family where he began the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). He worked tirelessly, going door-to-door, offering benefits and support to farm workers in surrounding towns.

César's community organizing thrived and expanded with the support and social activism work of Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong and many others where they led strikes and boycotts. César joined efforts with Mexican and Filipino farm workers to later create the multiracial United Farm Workers Union in 1966. César was instrumental in co-leading the largest grape strike that officially began on Mexican Independence Day in 1965. The strike lasted 5 years!

March to Sacramento

The March for Justice!



In 1966, César led a large 340 mile march from Delano to Sacramento, gaining national attention at the state's capitol on Easter Sunday. The cause drew in millions of supporters on a national and international level for the plight of farm workers!

The hard work and dedication of César Chávez and union workers gained recognition and support from many celebrities, Sen. Robert Kennedy and civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

César took long fasts that lasted 25- 36 days to further advocate the plight of migrant farm workers, the danger of pesticides & non-violence!

César Chávez continued his work of organizing, striking, boycotting, fasting and campaigning for decades until the early 1990s. While in Arizona, César passed away in 1993 after defending the UFW in a multimillion dollar lawsuit against a large California lettuce grower.

More than 50,000 people attended César's funeral to honor him at the UFW Field Office location where he took his first and last public fasts. César's funeral was the largest labor leader funeral reported in US history.

Although the world lost a great unionizer and civil rights leader, the work and legacy of César Chávez is alive and continues to be celebrated, honored and followed.



"César Chávez, one of the heroic figures of our time."
- Sen. Robert Kennedy

¡Viva La Causa!

Dolores Huerta

Early life & work

In 2017, the Day of Service was renamed after the life and work of Dolores Huerta in the spirit of “¡Si se puede!” or “Yes we can!” Originally from Dawson, NM, Dolores is the daughter of Juan Fernandez who labored as a coal miner, farm worker and union worker and served in the state legislature.

Her mother Alicia Chavez was a business woman and later hotel owner. Dolores later moved to California with her mother, Alicia and siblings. Her mother was highly involved in community activism, inspiring Dolores by showing kindness to the poor in their community offering discounts and free lodging to migrant workers at her hotel.



Inspired to create change!

Dolores was inspired by her mother's example. This shaped Dolores' outlook and involvement as a student and Girl Scout and later as a civil rights leader. After Dolores attended college, she became a school teacher and mother where she realized her passion for social activism and helping the poor!

Dolores Huerta

Early life & work

Dolores felt compassion to help children in her community when she noticed many of her students attending her class hungry and wearing no shoes! She took action to not only help them, but to dedicate her life in helping their parents--the migrant farm workers. Dolores realized their dire conditions when she saw them living in shacks with dirt floors.

Making less than a dollar a day, the farm workers were also exposed to dangerous pesticides with no or little access to proper toilets, sanitation and basic human rights. Moved to create change, Dolores left her work as a teacher and joined the to help the migrant farm workers and the poor in her community.



¡Sí, se puede!



Before the UFW formed, Dolores joined the CSO, founded the Agricultural Workers Association (AWA), and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) where she helped with voter registration, advocated for farm workers' rights and the poor in her community. In 1963, she secured disability insurance for farm workers and "Aid for Dependent Families" (AFDC) in California.

Dolores was the main UFW spokesperson, lobbying and negotiating with growers and officials on behalf of suffering farm workers! She used her compassion and bilingual skills to be a voice for the people! She continues to empower people near and far!

Combining Efforts for the Cause!

Stronger Together!

1955 was a pivotal moment in history where Dolores met César Chávez, the Executive Director of the CSO. They soon realized their shared calling to help migrant farm workers, but their vision was not aligned or supported by the CSO. They supported each other with the urgent need to create lasting change for farm workers so they resigned from the CSO in 1962 and began the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA)! Together they organized the farm workers and later merged with the Filipino-based Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee!



NFWA ▶
Mexican



◀ **AWOC**
Filipino



Larry Itliong & Filipino Striking Efforts



Larry Itliong

Life & Work

Larry Itliong was born in the Phillipines and migrated to the United States for a better life. He worked as a farm worker and organizer in California and in the canneries of Alaska where he got the nickname "Seven Fingers" after his fingers were severed in a canning accident.

Larry helped begin the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) organization comprised mostly of Filipinos. He led farm walkouts and strikes in California's Coachella Valley before the big Delano Grape Strike, demanding higher wages. In 1965 they demanded \$1.25 per hour and the right to organize.



The Beginning at Delano!

Larry Itliong and the AWOC gathered on September 16, 1965 at a church to ask César Chávez, Dolores Huerta and the NFWA to join the Filipino-led strikes in Delano, California. César didn't think the NFWA would be ready until 1968 and the organization only had \$100 to start efforts.

It was at this same meeting that the NFWA, comprised mainly of Mexican-American farm workers families voted to to join the AWOC for the strike. This began the official five-year Delano Grape Strike!

The Delano Grape Strike

¡Viva La Huelga!

Sept 16th, 1965



Dorothea Lange, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Why did the farm workers go on strike?

Low Pay

Many grape pickers in 1965 were only making about \$.90/hour (equal to \$7.25/ hour in 2019).

Extreme Poverty

Farm worker families slept on dirt floors and went hungry.

Lack of Sanitation

No access to toilets and clean drinking water. Many had to drink from the same cup.

Illness and Death

Migrant farm workers got very sick from heat exhaustion and pesticides. Some even died from harsh working conditions.

Suffering Children

The children of migrant farm workers worked on the fields and were sometimes born with deformities or without limbs due to harsh pesticides.

They demanded higher pay & the right to organize!

The Delano Grape Strike was one of the longest strikes in the nation's agricultural (farming) history!

The Delano Grape Strike

¡Viva La Huelga!

Protecting Farm Workers' Rights



What does **HUELGA** mean?

Huelga means strike in Spanish! It is an act of protest and is a temporary refusal to work until conditions are improved by an employer.

Photo Credit: doloreshuerta.org

The Delano Grape strike made a difference in the lives of farm workers to improve their working conditions!

Let's continue to advocate for farm workers rights today who receive low pay and face similar hardships!



United Farm Workers (UFW)

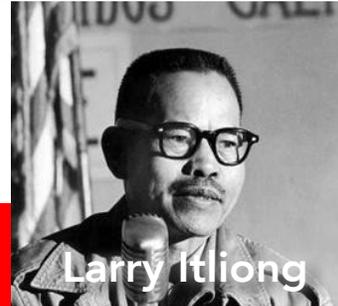
UFW Co-Founders



César Chávez



Dolores Huerta



Larry Itliong

Philip VeraCruz



Jessica Govea
Thorbourne

What is a Labor Union?

It is an intermediary organization between its members and their employers. Labor unions empower workers to negotiate for improved working conditions, benefits and collective bargaining.

The UFW multi-racial group had Chicano, Filipino, Anglo, Black and even Japanese members! Their work was stronger together, creating change for the farm workers!

What did the
UFW provide
for its
members?

A union-based hiring hall
Health clinic & Health Plan
Credit Union
Community Center
Co-op Gas Station
Agbayani Retirement
Village for aging Filipinos

The UFW worked hard improve wages and working conditions for farm workers.

BOYCOTTS & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



The strikes and boycotts worked!

26 grape growers signed contracts
and unionized by 1970!

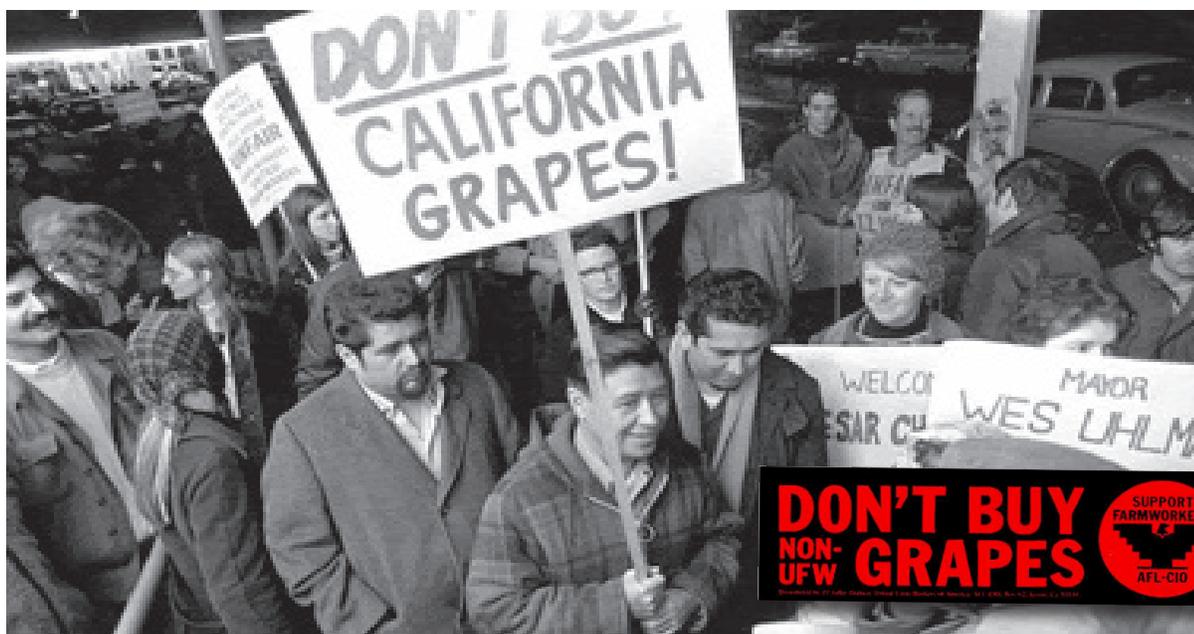


Many grape and lettuce growers in California signed labor contracts to guarantee higher wages and better working conditions for farm workers!

BOYCOTTS & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



In support of the Delano Grape Strike, Dolores Huerta directed the first National Table Grapes boycott. The long journey in the 1960s-1970s resulted in signed labor contracts and laws enforced to protect farm workers. In 1975, Dolores Huerta helped implement the Agricultural Labor Relations Act. It was the first law enacted in the United States that granted farm workers in California the right to organize, request higher wages and better working conditions.



Life after the United Farm Workers

Dolores Huerta 90 & thriving!



Female Empowerment!

Dolores continues to organize, protest advocate for human rights! At age 58, Dolores was hospitalized to have her spleen removed as a result of a police attack at a protest in San Francisco!

The injury didn't keep her down. After her recovery, Dolores focused on women's rights and advocacy for social justice and civil rights issues.

Dolores Continues her work past 90yrs!

To further her mission, Dolores began her own foundation in Stockton, California--the Dolores Huerta Foundation!

Today, she continues her work, traveling to schools and communities to campaign, improve legislation and defend social rights for women, children and the working poor, helping and empowering people across the country.



Medal of Freedom!

In 2012, Dolores received the medal of freedom from President Barack Obama for her commitment to civil rights, social justice and advocacy! It is one of the highest honors to receive as a United States citizen! We honor her work and dedication!

DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION
FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



Credits & References

Day of Service History, Joe Garcia

Legacy Presentation, Sayrah Namaste

The BioSwale and Initial Projects, Joe Garcia

Workstation History, Joe Garcia

Invitation to Schools, Anna Maldonado

**History of César Chávez, Dolores Huerta and UFW,
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History and Acequia, Joe Garcia

Dolores with Kids, Linda Benavides & Valerie St. John

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Anna Maldonado, DOS Gathering with UFW Flag

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