



SAN MATEO COUNTY  
FARMWORKER AFFAIRS  
COALITION

2020 – 2023 Retrospective

# THE FARMWORKER AFFAIRS COALITION

- Formed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Farmworker Affairs Coalition (FAC) is a non-partisan group of community members interested in supporting the farmworkers of San Mateo County.
- The focus of the FAC is on information and resource sharing, facilitating collaboration among stakeholders, and advocating for the needs of farmworkers at all levels. The group was led by volunteers who make decisions based on consensus.
- The FAC met regularly on Fridays at 3pm via Zoom. In 2020, the group met weekly while the world was in lockdown. Later, the group met twice per month in 2021 and eventually monthly in 2022 and through 2023. Regular meetings were concluded in late 2023.

# THE BEGINNING

- The FAC was sparked by group of community members who wanted to ensure farmworkers had equitable access to Covid-19 pandemic info / resources, but there wasn't an existing group (official or otherwise) where they could do this work together.\*
- The group's initial Letter of Intent was sent to the Board of Supervisors in October 2020. The original goals of the group were listed as:

1. **Education:** Organize ongoing bilingual education on Covid-19 prevention and response at both work sites and afterhours at home sites;
2. **Testing:** Provide ongoing testing during non-working hours in accessible locations;
3. **PPE:** Provide PPE, especially N-95 masks required for pesticide handling;
4. **Coordinate access to resources in the event of a positive test,** including housing assistance, food assistance, transportation to services, and financial support; and
5. **Encourage** census participation.

\*One of the early 'unofficial' goals of the group was to help facilitate the creation of an official county group dedicated to supporting farmworkers.

# KEY SUPPORT

- Supervisor Horsley
  - The former Supervisor and his team provided critical support and resources at the county level to help operationalize – and legitimize – the volunteer coalition. He dedicated staff time and resources that increased our scope and impact immeasurably.
- Service Providers
  - These four service providers co-signed the group’s initial Letter of Intent. Their ongoing participation provided the insight and direction needed to keep our work relevant.



# VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Matthew Chidester Representative, City of Half Moon Bay
- Rudy Espinoza Murray Representative, Public/Community Member
- Judith Guerrero Representative, Service Providers
- Brae Hunter Representative, San Mateo County District 3
- Victoria Sanchez De Alba Representative, Communications
- Lena Silberman Representative, San Mateo County District 3
- Lauren Silberman Representative, Agricultural Advisory Committee

# MEMBERSHIP

- SMC D3 Office
- City of Half Moon Bay
- ALAS
- Coastside Hope
- Puente
- Life Moves
- Abundant Grace
- HCH/FH
- Life Science Cares
- SMC Dems Farmworker Affairs Committee
- SMC Health
- SMC Public Health, Policy & Planning
- SMC Department of Agriculture
- SMC Agricultural Ombudsman
- SMC Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Cabrillo Unified School District
- Migrant Education Program
- Harbor District
- MROSD
- Coastside Buzz
- Pacifica for Social Justice
- SF Chinese Progressive Association
- Community Legal Services East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)
- Acterra

# HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- 2020 Covid-19 Response
- 2020 CZU Fire Response
- 2020-21 Castillo Hemp Farm Response
- 2021-23 Ongoing Housing Support
- 2022-23 Speaker Series
- 2023 Mushroom Farm Tragedy Response
- 2022-23 Farmworker Advisory Commission

# NEXT STEPS

- Support the Farmworker Advisory Commission
  - We have asked our members to take the time they were dedicating to the coalition and redirect to the county's new Farmworker Advisory Commission.
- "On Demand" Community Group
  - While we won't be scheduling regular meetings anymore, we will be available to meet in response to specific needs, events, or projects. Please 'activate' us as needed in the future.
- Email List
  - We are looking into migrating our 60+ person mailing list to a Google Group, where we can continue to circulate important updates and continue information sharing.



THANK YOU!

Questions?

