 YOU’RE ALIVE — KEEP GOING!
2017 Event - RSVP appreciated
831-724-4108

Dec 17

Winter Solstice/Light and Darkness Celebration
Sunday at 4:30 p.m. Potluck - No Charge
Lake Freedom • 60 Sunflower Lane
hosted by Bill and Karen Cane

Photo by Karen Cane
YOU'RE ALIVE—KEEP GOING!

Many years ago, in the 1970’s, a number of us were struggling against overwhelming odds. We were fighting to stop the Vietnam War. We were fighting for the farmworkers, for prison reform, for a living wage, etc. We felt as if the powers that be were against us – similar to what we feel today with Trump, white supremacy, prejudice against immigrants, and denial about climate change.

At that time (over 40 years ago), a brilliant philosopher-mathematician-theologian, Bernard Lonergan, was giving a talk at the University of San Francisco. I went to the talk, which had one strong theme: that the future would be determined by people who were fully alive. Afterwards I invited Lonergan to meet with a few of us—hoping that he would enlighten us in our struggles.

We sat down with Lonergan and described how difficult things were. The government seemed immovable in regard to the Vietnam War; Big Agriculture kept the Farmworkers down; the big corporations simply refused to pay poor workers more money. In short, we had monstrous powers against us in our struggles.

Lonergan listened intently to all we had to say, but made no comments. He didn’t point out different ways for us to do things, or anything that might help us succeed.

At the end of the evening, he just looked us all over and said one thing: “WELL, YOU ARE ALIVE! KEEP GOING!”

That was it. He was asking us to believe what he had said in his talk: that the future belongs to people who are fully alive. He
simply acknowledged us as being among the people to whom the future belongs!

TODAY

I think about what we are struggling for today—for immigrants, for healthcare for all, for stopping climate change. . . and it seems it will never happen. But the advice of so many years ago still rings in my ears:

"YOU’RE ALIVE! KEEP GOING!"

In order to keep going, we have to let go of the desire to win quickly. We have to keep at it even though the odds are against us.

I remember the struggle to stop Burger King and McDonald’s’s from using plastic to serve customers. At the time, we seemed to be getting nowhere. They were big corporations and we were a bunch of scattered people trying to influence them. But now when I go to a Burger King, I smile. There is no plastic—everything now is cardboard or paper.

We actually won that battle. But it took a long time—and it demanded persistence.

I recall the struggle to stop destroying the ozone layer—

“Now Safeway and the big markets have organic vegetables and fruits.”

Photo by Karen Cane
how long it lasted, and how we seemed at times to be getting nowhere.

I recall the struggle to encourage organic vegetables and fruits. Decades ago, where I live, there were only two little stores where we could get them. Now Safeway and the big markets have them!

So when I begin to feel hopeless about our present struggles, I try to remember historian Page Smith’s advice about historical change. It takes a long a time, Page used to say, “at least forty years.” He used the example of school playgrounds in America. From the time school playgrounds were first fought for until the time when they were generally accepted in American schools was forty years. (And who could be against school playgrounds?)

**HOW CAN LOVE OVERCOME MURDER AND DEATH?**

We have a quote from historian Rosenstock-Huessy on our living room wall:

“HISTORY HAS ONE THEME AND ONE THEME ONLY: HOW CAN LOVE OVERCOME MURDER AND DEATH?”
And that is the struggle we are involved in: trying, with Love, to overcome murder and death. If we are struggling against murder and death, we are doing what is most important in History.

Climate change is a case in point. Those who deny it and refuse to do anything about it are on the side of death. They are putting future generations at terrible risk.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation has been struggling for the elimination of nuclear weapons for decades. Another struggle for life, against death.

The struggle to overcome murder and death never ends.

IF’S EFFORTS

IF keeps supporting local efforts on behalf of farmworkers, undocumented immigrants, and poor families. And larger efforts to clean up the environment and stop climate change.

It is easy to become discouraged, to give up, to throw in the towel. But really, the struggle for Love to overcome murder and death is unending. It’s what life is all about.

So the statement, “You’re alive. Keep going!” is something we have to repeat to ourselves again and again. To repeat to ourselves and to repeat to one another!
THE STRUGGLE ON BEHALF OF FARMWORKER FAMILIES

Dr. Ann Lopez, Director of the Center for Farmworker Families, which IF helps support, has sent us the following report.

FARMWORKER FAMILIES AND THE INJUSTICES THEY FACE
By Dr. Ann López, Director
Center for Farmworker Families

Farmworker family integrity in the State of California has been under assault since farmworker family members first set foot into the state of California. The following mechanisms serve to fracture and disrupt family integrity:

1. NAFTA

The North American Free Trade Agreement, signed by Clinton into law in 1994, destroyed the corn-producing economy of the Mexican countryside and forced millions of Mexican farmers to leave their farms and seek survival for themselves and family members in Mexico. Many family members chose an undocumented border crossing to the United States as a survival option. Prior to NAFTA there were approximately 4 million undocumented people living in the U.S. Currently, there are at least 11 million; the large majority of whom are former Mexican farmers who came to the U.S. as economic refugees of NAFTA.
Santa Cruz County is currently home to an estimated 21,000 farmworkers, 83 percent of whom are estimated to be undocumented. Farmworker families are binational with some family members still living in Mexico and other members living in the US. Mexican family members form strong familial bonds. The binational family member separation has created great suffering and pain in these families, since undocumented members in the US. are unable to return home to visit Mexican family members; even when members in Mexico are ill or dying.

2. THE 50-MILE REGULATION

Farmworker families that live in one of the 24 state-run migrant camps during the growing season face a second challenge. The camps are one of the few housing options in which farmworkers can find decent, affordable housing. The camps are typically in operation between May and November.

A California state regulation requires that migrants leave the camp at the end of the growing season and must move at least 50
miles away from the camp for several months if they wish to return to the camp the following season. The consequence of this regulation for the children in farmworker families is detrimental and unacceptable.

Farmworkers enter the camps in May, and thus, their children enter School #1 at the end of one school year. They remain in School #1 until the end of November when they are forced to move at least 50 miles away. The children then enter School #2 from approximately December 1st until the end of April, at which time they return to the camps and enter School #1 again. Some of the children attend as many as four schools in two countries, with two languages and in two cultures each year.

What nearly every farmworker family wants and what motivates them to do the daily back breaking work in the fields every day is the belief that their children will become educated and have a better life; out of farm
work. However, the chances of success for these children is next to none. There has not been a single high school graduation in Watsonville’s Buena Vista migrant camp in 20 years!

The ONLY children that graduate from families in the migrant camp are those that are sent to live with a family member or friend where the children can have consistent education in one school for the entire school year. Those parents that send their children to live elsewhere complain about missing their children. California is the only state in the entire country that has a 50-mile regulation requirement for living in the migrant camps. Typically, children who can’t graduate from high school eventually drop out and become farmworkers like their parents or join gangs.

3. ICE

Beyond the formerly described familial threats to integrity, there is the ever-looming risk that undocumented family members
may be “retained” by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). Teachers have described how some of the children in their classes complain about not being able to concentrate in class because they fear returning home after school to an empty home because their parents have been deported. Parents describe how they feel like they are jailed in their own homes; fearful of leaving for work or shopping because they don’t know where or when ICE could arrest them.

**4. THE THREATENED REPEAL OF DACA**

Finally, President Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals provided some measure of hope and security for undocumented children wanting to pursue an education or career. Many of the young DACA students and professionals are the children of farmworkers who were able to realize their parents’ dream of a better life for their children.

However, with President Trump’s recent threat to end DACA and deport qualified DACA participants, all bets are off. This assault on the family would remove these talented young people and send them back to Mexico. For the majority of DACA recipients, the U.S. is the only country that they know, since they arrived in the country at a very young age.

A Center for American Progress survey of roughly 3,000 DACA recipients found that nine out of 10 had jobs, and about 72 percent of respondents were in higher education. After qualifying for DACA, nearly 80 percent said that they acquired Driver’s
licenses, and about one-half became organ donors. The Center for American Progress estimated that the U.S. would lose about $460 billion in GDP over the next 10 years without DACA.

The current status of farmworker families with the assaults they face as described above is difficult at best and impossible at worst. No other families in the US. are subjected to so many assaults and threatened potential separations of family members. We, as citizens, must recognize the pre-eminent importance of farm labor in our state and country. After all, they do provide the fruits, vegetables and nuts that are the components of a healthy diet. We must recognize the assaults on farmworker family integrity as unacceptable and insist that our legislators remediate the laws and institutions that continue to threaten farmworker families.

NOTE

Over 30 community organizations are working to get the state of California to change its 50-mile regulation. A number of newspapers have printed articles criticizing this regulation. Letters to legislators in California would be very helpful at this time.

There are many movements trying to stop Trump and the federal government from sending DACA students back to Mexico. Letters to US Congresspersons would help.
HELPING
FARMWORKERS AND
OTHERS TO GROW
THEIR OWN FOOD

Mesa Verde Garden’s mission is to achieve health by ensuring food security for people in the Pajaro Valley, home to many families that harvest the fresh fruits and vegetables many of us enjoy. Mesa Verde is helping to create community gardens where people can grow organic fruits and vegetables for their own consumption. Our organization helps people get access to fresh, healthy produce for themselves and their families through a network of eight community gardens.

Vicente Lara, Executive Director

Mesa Verde Garden
Integrities

It is estimated that three out of every four adults and half of all children in the Watsonville area struggle with obesity and a host of chronic diseases, especially diabetes. While increasing access to fresh organic produce is important, there are other factors that lead to poor health. In the Pajaro Valley, the USDA has designated several neighborhoods as “food deserts”, meaning that some people live outside easy reach of a grocery store that sells fresh fruits and vegetables. As a result, families already coping with the Central Coast’s high cost of living consume a cheap high-calorie diet which leads to many life-threatening diseases.

In response, we are organizing hundreds of low-income families and enabling them to grow their own food in community gardens. What starts as growing food soon becomes building community, knowing neighbors, and sharing produce, skills, and stories. By collaborating with local families and generous community partners, we foster justice, improved nutrition, and overall community health. Together we nurture the seeds of positive change!

For more information about Mesa Verde Gardens, visit www.mesaverdegardens.org or call Vicente Lara, Executive Director, at (831) 288-2142.

Sanctuary Cities—A Letter from Bob Aldridge

Bob Aldridge, author of First Strike and America in Peril, has been fighting for peace and justice for many decades. In the following
letter, he encourages us to help immigrants by expanding the number of 
Sanctuary Cities in the US.

I wish to propose some brainstorming on Sanctuary Cities. You 
are all familiar with Donald Trump’s threat to end DACA 
(Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program in six months if 
Congress doesn’t put it into law (It was initiated by a Presidential 
Memorandum). DACA allows some individuals who arrived in the 
US illegally when they were minors to have a 2-year renewable 
derement from deportation and also be eligible for a work permit; 
and, I assume, be allowed to attend college. Those whose 
derement ends before six months have until October 5, 2017 to 
apply for renewal. After that date renewal and new applications will 
not be accepted unless Congress acts. Approximately 800,000 
people are affected by DACA.

Back in 1985 when Ronald Reagan denied asylum to 
Guatemalan and El Salvadoran refugees who faced execution in 
their home country, San Francisco became the first Sanctuary City. 
More followed. They don’t all have exactly the same rules but the 
general pattern for offering sanctuary is:

• Don’t enforce federal immigration laws.

• Don’t share information about immigrants with the federal 
  Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agency.

• Don’t honor ICE’s “Immigration Detainer” orders to notify 
  ICE when illegal aliens are released from jail or prison.
• Don’t participate in raids or arrests although ICE can, on its own, conduct arrests and raids in Sanctuary Cities.

• Sanctuary City police can still arrest aliens for criminal behavior.

As states and counties declared sanctuary, the term “sanctuary jurisdiction” came into use. There are currently four Sanctuary States (California, Connecticut, New Mexico, and Colorado); and 127 sanctuary counties out of 3,142 counties or county equivalents in the US. California is NOW officially a Sanctuary State.

A mere four days after Trump’s inauguration last January he signed Executive Order 13768 to step up deportations and cut off federal funds to jurisdictions offering sanctuary. Section 5 of the Order outlines deportation procedure and ends with a clause permitting any immigration officer to act on his or her own prejudice—an alien may be deported if “in the judgment of an immigration officer, (they) otherwise pose a risk to public safety or national security.”

Section 9(a) of the Order states that “jurisdictions that willfully refuse to comply with 8 U.S.C. 1373 are not eligible to receive Federal grants, except as deemed necessary for law enforcement purposes by the Attorney General or the Secretary (of Homeland Security).” Sanctuary Cities sued in U.S. District Court charging that 8 U.S.C. 1373 violates the Tenth Amendment, which reads: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or the people.” That means Trump can’t use federal funding to coerce cooperation. The US Supreme Court
decision in Printex v. United States (1987) goes further. The late Justice Scalia’s statement in the majority opinion read in part: “The Federal Government may neither issue directives requiring the States to address particular problems, nor command the State’s officers, or those of their political subdivisions, to administer or enforce a federal regulatory program.” A federal court order stopping EO-13768 is still in effect. Sanctuary Cities still exist.

If Trump discontinues DACA in six months it could mean a mass deportation of many people who have lived in this country since infancy. They know no other life. If ICE makes its raids and roundups it will be Kristallnacht all over again.

A proactive way to prevent “Kristallnacht-USA” is to develop more Sanctuary Cities. There are currently only 28 Sanctuary Cities out of over 30,000 incorporated towns and cities in the US. If we could significantly increase that number in the next six months we could prevent a huge number of inhumane deportations. ICE can’t deport them alone. They need local support and they won’t get that in Sanctuary Cities. So I propose that we brainstorm a strategy to get several thousand additional Sanctuary Cities within the next six months.

**HOW WE CAN HELP**

There are simple ways to begin.

Support the little Sanctuary groups that have risen up all around us. Either become a part of a group or give them some money.
If you know any city officials in your area, suggest that they consider a *Sanctuary City*. In the past, the word “Sanctuary” scared a lot of people. But now, with Trump’s anti-immigrant bias and his sending ICE troops in to arrest immigrants, Sanctuary has become as patriotic as the Statue of Liberty!

And most important of all, we need to keep reminding ourselves: WE’RE ALIVE -

*We need to keep going!*

**HOPEFUL DEVELOPMENTS**

ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), a coalition of non-governmental organizations in more than a hundred countries was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It helped organize a landmark victory: the world’s first legally binding treaty banning nuclear weapons. The treaty was adopted by 122 U.N. member states in July, signed by 51 countries during the U.N. General Assembly Week in September. The treaty prohibits the development, testing and possession of nuclear weapon, as well as using or threatening to use these weapons. It was adopted and signed by dozens of countries, despite the fierce opposition of the United States and other nuclear-armed nations.
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