Did you know that over this next year CATA will be celebrating our 40th Anniversary? It’s incredible to look back on the body of work, both the big accomplishments and the small everyday work, that CATA has done over these 40 years. The occasion provides the opportunity to look back and see not only what we have done as an organization - the victories and struggles big and small - but the character and the values that have kept us together for this long. Our work has been driven by grassroots community leadership and members who refuse to give up in their quest for justice and the recognition of their rights as immigrants, their rights as workers, and their rights as human beings.

During this year, we have been thinking a lot about the role that CATA plays in the communities where we work in Southern New Jersey, Southeastern Pennsylvania, and the Delmarva Peninsula. Last year, when we worked on our strategic plan, part of the process involved completing a community needs assessment. When we talked with members about the work that CATA does and where in the community folks would find both support for individual issues as well as support for community advocacy, members consistently said that CATA WAS the only organization in the community doing this work.

It's made us think about how we talk about CATA, with both members of the Latino immigrant community and with our supporters and allies. The reality is that there are many organizations in the rural communities where we work. There are organizations that represent farm owners, there are organizations that represent political interests, there are organizations that represent corporate interests. BUT, CATA is one of the only organizations with the mission to organize and fight with and for immigrants to work for better working and living conditions.

For the past 40 years, CATA has been a place where the Latino immigrant community can come together to make their voices heard, to share their perspectives, and to make sure they are being represented. That is something special, something that sets us apart and something that deserves to be celebrated!

There will be several opportunities over the next year for you to join us in celebrating our history as well as the history we hope to make in the future. We hope you will continue to support this work by acting in solidarity with calls to action by farmworkers and by supporting CATA’s work financially. Thank you for standing by us for these past 40 years, and we hope to have your support for many years to come.
SAVE THE DATE!

Celebrating 40 Years in the Fight for Justice!

¡Celebrando 40 Años de Lucha!

March 25, 2020
Philadelphia, PA

Join us to Celebrate and Honor the hard work of CATA’s members over the past 40 years and help us to support our work in the years to come.
CATA Community Gardens

CATA’s organic community gardens in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland continued to grow, providing the community access to organic produce, medicinal herbs, and a place to practice and share their ancestral knowledge of agriculture.

CATA Employees Celebrate 25 Years of in the Fight for Justice!

This year, CATA’s Lead Organizer Manuel Guzman and CATA Administrator Marge Niedda celebrated their 25th year of working with CATA. They were honored at this year’s General Assembly along with CATA Board President Humberto Avila who has been a CATA member for almost 20 years. We are proud to have them as part of the CATA team and admire their true dedication to CATA’s mission and work. Congratulations and here’s to many more!
CATA’s History Through

1980s
Unos de los primeros miembros de CATA.
Some of the first CATA members.

1993
Marchas de Trabajadores Agrícolas en Puerto Rico
Farmworker Marches in Puerto Rico

2002
La Unión de Trabajadores de Kaolin firma su primer contrato
Kaolin Workers’ Union signs first contract

2006
Marcha y Manifestación de Derechos de Inmigrantes en Philadelphia
Philadelphia Immigrant Rights March and Rally

2016
Marchando durante la Convención Democrata Nacional en Philadelphia
Marching during the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia

2017
Manifestación a favor de DACA en Bridgeton, NJ
Rally in support of DACA en Bridgeton, NJ
The Years 1979 - 2019

1995
Marcha por los Derechos de los Inmigrantes en Philadelphia
Immigrant Rights March in Philadelphia

2001
Huelga Global de Mujeres
Global Women's Strike

2007
Pintando la mural de CATA en Guanajuato, Mexico
Painting the CATA Mural in Guanajuato, Mexico

2010
Protesta en Cumberland County
Protest in Cumberland County

2017
Reunion de la Coalición Nacional de Trabajadores Avícolas en North Carolina
National Poultry Coalition Convening in North Carolina

2019
Marcha para licencias de manejo en Woodbury, New Jersey
Driver's License March in Woodbury, New Jersey
With New Grant, CATA Reaches Out to PA Immigrant Community

By: Emily Wilkes

Stay calm and keep the door closed. Ask the agent or officer to show a badge or identification through the window or peephole. Ask if they have a warrant signed by a judge. Don’t give a fake name or false documents. Don’t carry the passport from your home country. Don’t sign anything. But once again, most importantly, do not open the door – and make sure your children know to do the same.

Nancy Lopez Sosa and Gabriel Mendiola repeat these instructions with every person they visit on their outreach campaign as part of CATA’s Enforcement Resistance Initiative. The primary goal is to ensure that families are ready to respond in case of an ICE raid. Prevention against ICE’s illegal tactics, they explain, is one of the most effective strategies in keeping themselves and their families safe. Although Nancy and Gabriel emphasize prevention over what to do in case of apprehension, they also provide instructions and support in case that happens.

In early 2019, CATA received an Enforcement Resistance Initiative Grant from PA is Ready! – a network of organizers and immigration advocates from the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition – to mitigate the impact of these raids. To carry out this initiative, CATA hired Nancy Lopez Sosa as a part-time staff person to educate the Latino immigrant community in Pennsylvania. Nancy, along with Kaolin Workers Union representative Gabriel Mendiola, are building a prepared community base that will be equipped with the knowledge necessary to respond to a possible raid.

Although the grant specifically funded the Know Your Rights training and the ability to bring Nancy onto the staff, the Pennsylvania office also participates in a variety of other movements and initiatives to better the lives of the local immigrant community. They work with MILPA - the Movement of Immigrant Leaders in the movement to secure access to driver’s licenses for the undocumented community. In fact, Gabriel sat with Senator Killion to discuss this very issue; after a productive meeting, they are now working to pass the bill through the agricultural committee to gain their support before advancing the bill further.

Additionally, in every conversation during outreach visits, Nancy and Gabriel make sure to explain CATA’s work around labor rights. They explain to individuals and families that they are protected under US labor law, regardless of their immigrant status. They therefore have the right to safe working conditions, to report wage theft and other workplace abuses, and claim workers comp.

At the end of the visit, they hand out a flyer with the upcoming dates of workdays in the community garden. Many in the community take a particular interest in the garden when they discover that after helping, they have access to a box full of organic free groceries that are far healthier than what they could find in a grocery store. This year, the garden produced an abundance of peppers, tomatillos, cilantro, and corn.

On this particular afternoon, as they’re beginning to wrap up their outreach visits, someone across the hall pokes their head out of the door. “I remember you from a few weeks ago,” he tells Nancy and Gabriel. He thanks them for their continued work. After he closed the door, the two were over the moon. “That was so sweet that he remembered us!” they exclaim, making them feel that their work is meaningful, memorable, and impactful.
On July 18th, 2019, the Environmental Protection Agency rejected a petition by environmental and public health groups to ban chlorpyrifos, a widely-used pesticide that is linked to neurological damage in children and farmworkers. With this decision, the federal government essentially gives the go-ahead for agricultural workers and their children to continue being poisoned.

CATA has been working with other organizations both within New Jersey and nationally to ban the use of chlorpyrifos in agriculture. Chlorpyrifos is an organophosphate, a class of chemicals first developed by the Nazis for chemical welfare. Later repurposed for agricultural uses, chlorpyrifos is one of the most frequently used pesticides in the United States despite numerous studies that demonstrate exposures during childhood leads to a reduced IQ, loss of working memory, and attention disorders.

This acutely toxic pesticide was nearly banned several times. In 2000 the Environmental Protection Agency banned its use in private residences, citing evidence listed above about capacity for neurological damage. However, despite its ban in and around homes, EPA re-registered chlorpyrifos for use in agricultural fields. Poisoning among agricultural workers continued despite mounting evidence that chlorpyrifos exposure led to changes in the brain’s physical structure.

Two years later, after years of continued research demonstrating its harmful effects and an outpouring of public comments imploring the ban, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals directed EPA to discontinue the use of chlorpyrifos. EPA’s own scientists then released a report that revealed there is no safe level of exposure to chlorpyrifos; all workers who mix and apply chlorpyrifos are exposed to unsafe levels, even with the maximum personal protective equipment for weeks after its application.

When Trump’s administration took office, they inherited a court-ordered deadline for the banning of chlorpyrifos scheduled for March 31st, 2017. Although EPA had been on course to ban chlorpyrifos from all food crops, the Trump administration’s former head of EPA Scott Pruitt met with the head of the largest manufacturer of chlorpyrifos, Dow Chemical (now Corteva Agriscience). On March 29th, two days before the court-ordered deadline to ban chlorpyrifos, Pruitt refused to comply, falsely claiming the science was “unresolved.” The Trump administration’s EPA denied the conclusions of its own experts. The unsafe use of chlorpyrifos has continued, putting many agricultural workers, children, and consumers at risk.

Now, there is a push to ban the toxin on a state-by-state level; thus far, Hawai’i, New York, and California have banned chlorpyrifos. CATA has once again been an advocate in this fight against the use of chlorpyrifos. For example, on June 17th, 2019, the New Jersey Senate received testimonies from CATA, Earthjustice, the School of Public Health at the University of Maryland, and nearly forty scientists and health professionals with expertise in toxic chemicals that harm the developing brain. There is also a campaign to ban chlorpyrifos in Maryland led by the Maryland Pesticide Education Network.

CATA urges your support in making New Jersey a safer and healthier environment for vulnerable communities. This is a public health crisis, although the most vulnerable communities have already been subjected to its fatal effects. Additionally, even if chlorpyrifos is banned at the state level, the likelihood remains that it will be replaced with an equally dangerous alternative. For now, however, the fight to end the use of chlorpyrifos goes on, and as long as that fight is alive, CATA will continue to advocate for healthier and safer spaces for all.
I want to be an ally with CATA’s work for justice!

You can mail your tax deductible checks payable to:
CATA, P.O. Box 510, Glassboro, N.J. 08028

If you prefer, you can donate online through our secure website: www.cata-farmworkers.org

CATA is proud to be a member of EarthShare New Jersey (ESNJ), a non-profit organization created to support workplace giving and provide other resources to environmental nonprofits across the state.

Also, please consider making a donation to CATA through your workplace. Don’t have a workplace giving campaign at your office? Contact CATA to assist you in setting one up. For more information on ESNJ go to www.earthsharenj.org.