For many of CATA’s members employed in the food system, food justice is a form of social and environmental justice that hits close to home. And how could it not, when you spend your day laboring in pepper fields and peach orchards or hunched over the assembly line at a tomato processing plant? Inside the mere act of working within the food system lies the lifeblood of the food justice movement and that is why we here at CATA are so proud of our Food Justice Program.

Like all of CATA’s work, the Food Justice Program is based on the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was instituted in 1948 which states that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food...” We have taken this definition a little farther and believe that every human being has the right to healthy and nourishing food that is accessible and that comes from ecologically and socially-just production.

CATA’s approach in the Food Justice Program is a holistic one which involves substantial effort on various fronts. On a broader, national and international-scale, we continue to be very involved in the Agricultural Justice Project (AJP) and the Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA, www.thedfta.org). In both of these entities CATA is an integral member as a strong...Continued on page 3

CATA members hard at work clearing out the plot for the Bridgeton Organic Community Garden and building the fence that now surrounds it.
As a migrant worker organization, we employ three guiding principles that represent the core of our work:

1. To grow in membership.
2. To achieve adequate working and living conditions and a living wage for our members.
3. To make sure that our members are treated with dignity and respect.

The General Assembly, held this past September, is the place where everyone gathers to approve our goals and objectives for the next several years. It is also the time when we elect our Board of Directors for the next two years to oversee the implementation of the objectives. These three main principles guide the actions that we take as we work together promoting workers’ rights.

At the center of these principles is the affirmation that workers are the main actors in taking charge of their reality. To be able to grow in membership, our members need to be responsible for recruiting people. To achieve just working conditions, members need to take charge of organizing themselves at their workplace. This means our work is focused on promoting the capacity of workers to make their own decisions. In following these principles, we increase the ability of workers to speak for themselves in those matters that affect their lives; to understand their reality and act on it in order to achieve change.

As a way to share these principles with others and give concrete examples of what we want to achieve, we engaged with our allies and created a set of standards dedicated to setting a high bar for the way farmers and farmworkers are treated. These standards are in turn being used as a certification label for organic food production. Meeting these standards ensures a fair price for farmers and fair, living wages for workers. The creation of the standards is part of the Agricultural Justice Project (AJP) that created the Food Justice Label, assuring consumers that their food was produced in a just and fair way, taking into consideration the environment and all the workers along the food chain. Our participation in AJP provides a direct link to our commitment to these three principles and how they are to be implemented through our work.

We realize in CATA that social change is a long term process, years in the making; it is a daunting reality but a necessary one. It requires dedication, patience and a commitment to maintain at its core the direct participation of workers as the main actors.
Food Justice … Continued from page 1

advocate for farm workers and other food chain workers. This work is important to our work as a whole because it takes into account the necessity of working with all stakeholders within the food system including farmers and food businesses, such as a promising new relationship with Harvest Local Foods, an urban CSA based outside of Philadelphia.

Meanwhile, at the local level, thanks to funding from the Kresge and Claniel Foundations, we continue to conduct workshops and outreach on food justice and healthy and organic food, and connect with other community organizations like churches, health services, and community development groups. The local Food Justice Projects are growing in force while at the same time serving as effective tools in energizing our membership base and attracting new members. One of our main projects this year has been the Bridgeton Organic Community Garden which has blossomed in the past 6 months, quickly becoming a great source of pride and feeling of ownership for CATA’s members.

The seeds of the garden were first sown last summer by the New Jersey Food Justice Committee, a group of CATA members who are inspired by organic agriculture and driven to grow their own food. After an exhaustive search for land and the ensuing legal logistics, we were able to identify and secure a small, formerly-vacant lot in the middle of a residential neighborhood where CATA members live. The mission of the garden is to increase access to healthy, organic food by giving community members the space and resources to grow their own fruits and vegetables. It is a unique project in that it has very real and tangible results and allows CATA to have a greater presence in the area. Besides fostering friendly community interaction and beautifying a vacant lot, the garden promises to serve as a vehicle for health education and promotion for healthier lifestyles as well as empowering people in their own food sovereignty.

Be on the lookout for Facebook updates and emails about our progress as the growing season nears and feel welcome to stop by at the opening season garden party we’ll be hosting in the spring. We are hoping for it to be fully functional by next season (we’ve already planted garlic!) but we still need a lot of supplies, tools and materials. If you would like to support the garden project, your donation will be ever-appreciated and immediately put to use. Thank you for supporting us in this endeavor!

CATA’s General Coordinator Celebrates 20th Year

In 2012, Nelson Carrasquillo celebrates his 20 year anniversary as General Coordinator of CATA. CATA honored him at our General Assembly where members and staff thanked him for all of his hard work and the tireless effort that he puts forth everyday. Below, Nelson receives a plaque from members of the Board of Directors and a book of letters from past and previous staff, acknowledging his 20 years of dedication to the organization and its causes.

Mariana Dalke, a nutrition specialist, gave a workshop on eating healthy and how to identify healthy foods to residents in Bridgeton, NJ as part of the Food Justice Project.
**CATA Opens New Office in Salisbury, MD**

After collaborating with the Latino community in Maryland for over 10 years, CATA is happy to announce that we opened an office in Salisbury, MD. Having a physical presence in Salisbury will help CATA promote its mission and provide Immigration services to the migrant communities in Salisbury and the surrounding areas. Leila Borrero Krouse, an Immigration Specialist, will run the office. Ms. Borrero Krouse has over 20 years of experience working with migrants and the Latino community.

For the past several years, CATA envisioned providing necessary immigration services to the as a vehicle for building relationships with members of the migrant community. In doing this, CATA builds better relationships with the Latino community and shares important information and trainings on the rights of migrants in their workplaces and in the community. Opening this office and working with Ms. Borrero Krouse can now make this vision a reality.

In October, CATA held an Open House at the new office, where over 30 friends, allies, and partners attended to welcome CATA into the area. CATA is very excited for this opportunity to have a base in Maryland, as we make even more connections with the many migrants in the area, working together to organize and strengthen the communities where they live and work.

**COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

My name is Yesica Segura and I was elected President of the Board of Directors of CATA at the General Assembly that was held September 30. I have been a member of CATA since 2005 and I was very honored to be given this position.

CATA’s General Assembly was a successful one. It was held in Bridgeton, N.J. with over 40 members in attendance. The objective of the Assembly is to set the goals of the organization for the next 2 years. The members decide what their priorities are and the work they are going to do around those priorities.

This year our members identified workers’ rights issues, immigration issues, and food justice as topics they wanted to focus on. Specific tasks included continuing the fight to raise the minimum wage in New Jersey, assisting with Deferred Action applications, creating community gardens, and compiling a book of healthy recipes from our members.

The Assembly is also the time when we review what has been accomplished in the past two years. Members were recognized for their outstanding commitment to workers’ rights. CATA announced the opening of its newest office in Salisbury, MD.

My goal as president is to support this work and do everything it takes to make our communities and lives of our members better.
Food Justice Certified: A Vision for a Just Food System

BY: JESSICA CULLEY

Eating is an agricultural act.
- Wendell Berry

For more than 15 years, CATA has been an integral partner in the development of a social justice labeling program, the Food Justice Certified label. This label tells consumers that food has been produced under just working conditions, which meet high bar standards of workers’ rights.

“By defining the question of fairness in the food system…fairness for farmers in terms of contracts and pricing, and fairness for workers in wages and working conditions, we are able to create a system that allows for the advancement of both – together,” Nelson Carrasquillo, CATA’s General Coordinator commented when asked about the most important aspect of the standards used in the Food Justice Certified Label.

CATA’s participation in the development of this program has been from the perspective of our membership, and upholding closely the principles and tenets of our universal human rights. For CATA, this program for represents the aspirations we have for the labor conditions for all farmworkers and food chain workers, while being a standard that we believe is attainable.

The full standards used by the Food Justice Certified Program are available to all on our website, www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org. The standards cover farmers, buyers, farmworkers, workers at other food businesses, interns and apprentices etc. There is a section of standards containing the details for each relationship in the food system: between farmers and buyers, farmers and workers, etc. Each section of the standards is guided by the same general principles:

- **Right to Organize/ Freedom of Association** – We believe that both farmers and farmworkers need to be able to organize without the threat of retaliation – so that farmers can be able to access fair and adequate prices for their goods and farmworkers can achieve fair wages and working conditions.

- **Living Wages / Fair Pricing** – Both Farmers and farmworkers (and all others in the food system) deserve to be able to provide for themselves and their families decent standard of living. Feeding the world is a dignified profession and deserves to be recognized as such.

- **Transparency and Disclosure** – We believe that all relationships in the food system should be governed by honesty and transparency. Crucial to this is building a system where farmers can disclose their costs to buyers, and buyers to farmers, and where workers are also aware of the larger financial realities of the places they work.

The standards of FJC are detailed and rigorous. However, even with the work entailed in coming up to compliance, several farms have said how useful the process was for them to improve communication and build a common understanding with their workers.

Thus far only a handful of farms and businesses are certified through FJC (you can see more information about them on the FJC website). However, we are planning for expansion in California and the Northwest as well as the Northeast. We are also exploring how institutions like universities and hospitals might be able to use their food buying power to help create a demand for certification from farms and businesses.

If you are interested in learning more about FJC or how you can promote this domestic fair trade initiative, call us at 856-881-2507. We eagerly look forward to the day that you can find FJC in your local coop or grocery store. Watch out – socially just food is coming your way!
Announcement: CATA Receives Eat4Health Fellowship

CATA received a Fellowship award by the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation supported by multiple funding partners to work on a leadership development program aimed to fill gaps in existing food policy. The goal is that the voices of low income people of color are able to better inform policy-makers and push them to protect the environment, promote good health, and rebuild strong local communities. Nelson Carrasquillo, General Coordinator of CATA was named as the Fellow and will be working with the Union of Concerned Scientists. Below is the official announcement as released by the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation.

Four community-based activists from New Jersey, Michigan, Louisiana and Texas were recently introduced as the first fellows in the Everybody at the Table for Health initiative created by the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation. This innovative initiative is also supported by other funding partners: the Compton, Kresge, Surdna and Lawson Valentine foundations, New York Community Trust, and Schmidt Family Foundation’s 11th Hour Project.

Zigbi, EAT4Health’s program director, who has managed grantmaking in the area of sustainable agriculture and food systems at the Noyes Foundation for more than 12 years, says “Our goal is to bring about better food and farm policy by supporting community-based leaders who will help bridge the gap between grassroots community organizing and national advocacy. Ultimately, we hope EAT4Health will lead to enactment of federal food and farm policies that support community well-being, which we define as environmental, economic and food justice for all.”

The fellows have been impacted by food system inequities personally and have demonstrated a long-term commitment to their communities, Zigbi says. The four fellows also have advocated successfully at the local level and are excellent public speakers.

Stacey Barbas, Kresge Foundation senior program officer for health, says Everybody at the Table for Health fits in well with Kresge’s commitment to improve food systems and policies nationally, especially those that affect disproportionately poor communities.

“Too often the people who bring food to us—farm workers and fast-food restaurant employees—don’t have access to good food or a role in determining policies and processes related to food production and distribution. Everybody at the Table for Health promises to strengthen community-based organizations’ involvement in federal food policy work and give the fellows a taste of what it is like to work on the federal level and with national media,” Barbas says. Everybody at the Table for Health received a three-year, $450,000 grant from Kresge.

Each fellow will work with a national advocacy group based in Washington, D.C., and his or her sponsoring community-based organization to design a work plan and project that builds and leverages the power of grass-roots leadership and the national organization’s expertise. The fellowships are for three years.

For more information, visit: www.eat4healthpartners.org
CATA Members Speak Out in Support of Raising the Minimum Wage

BY: MEGHAN HURLEY

One of the guiding principles of CATA’s work is to empower workers to improve their living and working conditions. With this in mind, CATA has been hard at work in New Jersey supporting legislation that would raise the minimum wage. These efforts would directly affect our members’ quality of life, giving them the right to a better salary and would bring them closer to earning a living wage.

In New Jersey, there are two different pieces of legislation up for consideration that would raise the minimum wage. One is a bill that would raise the minimum wage to $8.50 with increases each year based on the cost of living, the other, a ballot initiative to be voted on in 2013, establishing a constitutional amendment setting the minimum wage at $8.25 with the same increases.

At the time this article went to print, CATA members were preparing to give testimony and participate in a press conference showing our support of the bill to raise the minimum wage. Several CATA members have provided testimony, both written and spoken, at hearings in support of these pieces of legislation, sharing the most important point of view, that of someone trying to survive on minimum wage. Below are a few excerpts from their testimonies:

“It’s not necessary to be good at math to understand our lives, the people who earn the minimum wage and who work seasonal jobs. We ask that in some way, you make an effort to increase the minimum wage, to be able to overcome the poverty that we find ourselves in. We are only asking for what is fair to be able to survive.” – Zenon Perez, CATA member and former farmworker. He now works as a gas station attendant in South Jersey.

“Gas prices are going up, food prices, medical costs. But what doesn’t go up is our pay. For example: when I first started working here, in 1986, gas was selling at $0.99 a gallon. Food also was less expensive. They paid us $5.25 an hour, which was the minimum wage at that time. Right now, gas is selling at $3.69 a gallon. Just like gas prices are going up, all our costs go up. But the minimum wage has only increased $2, to $7.25. It's not equivalent.” – Juan, a farmworker who has worked on a vegetable farm in Vineland, NJ for 25 years.

“Someone who has between 2 and 3 kids and is single and works in a packinghouse earning $8.50 an hour, for 40 hours a week, would be earning around $340.00 per week. This would be about $1,360.00 a month, but of course we have to remember that we will have to deduct taxes, health insurance, Social Security, and maybe for the majority of people something else. Knowing this, we will have to take into account that this isn’t all. Now comes the true fight to stretch the money to the limit.” – Yesica Segura, CATA member and President of the Board of Directors.

Verbal testimony given by CATA members at a hearing in October was featured in several news articles because of the powerful impact it had on Committee members. For CATA and its members, raising the minimum wage is not a political issue; it is a moral issue, necessary to ensure that all workers in New Jersey are compensated fairly for their work and able to meet their own needs and the needs of their family members.

Go here to send a letter to your legislator telling them you support a strong minimum wage: http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5699/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=11976
Yes, I want to be part of the farmworkers’ struggle for justice!

Here is my donation of:

$30____ $50____ $75___ $100___ $250___ Other_____

Name:_____________________________________________

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Glassboro, N.J. 08028

If you prefer, you can donate online through our secure website:

www.cata-farmworkers.org