Addison Allies Network

Addison County Farm Workers Coalition

Coordination Meeting June 27, 2018

Approximately 20 people met at 3:30 at the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society.

I. A few themes emerged from a “mixer” exercise. Among others were:

1. Sadness at the recent policy separating children from their parents at the border;
2. Desire for empowerment around change;
3. The feeling that it would be helpful if farm workers had more opportunities to connect with one another;
4. A desire to have an organized set of resource materials for farm workers and volunteers;

II. Veronica and Lile, coordinators of the Addison Allies Network, had a few questions for the Addison County Farm Workers Coalition:

1. What have been the persistent or historical challenges in this work?
2. What has been the history of support in Addison County for migrant workers?
3. What legal services are available?
4. What are the obstacles/mechanisms for access to banking and money movement services?
5. What has the strategy been engaging with farmers to encourage their support?
6. What handbooks are available.

III. There was general discussion on these questions including

1. Attempts to get local banks to clarify their documentation requirements for opening accounts. A Taxpayer Identification Number appears to be necessary; unclear what other documentation is necessary. Veronica said she had difficulty getting a clear answer. The Vermont Employees Federal Credit Union was not any more helpful.
2. Robert referred to a guide he had written for those volunteer-driving, entitled “No Fuzzy Dice” as one item (or any item hanging from a rear view mirror) that can create a pretext for a traffic stop. Migrant Justice may have copies of this.
3. There was discussion as to whether there had been increased ICE presence in Addison County; the consensus was, “not significantly.”
4. Immigration law services are scant in this area. Erin Jacobsen (South Royalton) is one resource, but is very sought-after.
5. Farmers used to advocate for their migrant farm workers but in the current political environment they have become harder to engage.
6. There was no sense as to whether or not there had been I9 employment documentation audits in this area.
7. ACTR can use volunteer drivers who would do well to have access to the “No Fuzzy Dice” guide. Must have 5 year’s driving experience and a social security number to enable a background check.
8. ACTR is in the process of extending its “dial-a-ride” program to farms for about $10.
9. Vermont 211 may have a “stash” of useful manuals and guides.
10. Vermont Legal Aid has a process for creating a “springing guardianship” that only comes in to effect if children are separated from their parents. However it requires a prior power of attorney, which some immigrant families are not comfortable executing ahead of any eventuality. Others don’t know anyone with documented status who could execute such a document.
11. There is a log of communications and resources on the CVUUS web site; we considered collecting this information in a form more organized around farm worker issues, and easier for continuous updating. This may be an on-going project.

IV. There was a question as to whether different organizations are “stepping on each others’ toes.” Securing rides for workers was cited as one example where the Open Door Clinic does this, but reaches out to AAN when necessary, occasionally resulting in duplication of effort. What other kinds of coordination might be helpful? There was concern that the resources available for driver’s privilege cards might involve duplication. There are two translations of the drivers study manual each with a slightly different purpose. Veronica coordinates one hour of training with a certified driver’s ed instructor for people but Vermont Adult Learning used to do this, and at one time the Parent Child Center used to have a certified driver’s ed instructor.

V. There was discussion of the status of DMV’s practice of turning over information on people seeking driver’s privilege cards to ICE. It is unclear what the status of that practice is. The ACLU reached a settlement regarding one case with the DMV, and the DMV was called to task by the legislature on this practice, but we are unclear as to whether it continues. Rep. Diane Lanpher was key to creating the driver’s privilege program and may take an interest in its status. Those working with Migrant Justice pointed out that this legislation was the result of a great deal of effort and should be used in order to solidify it as a common occurance.

VI. Upcoming events:

1. Families Belong Together demonstration
   1. Saturday June 30 8:30AM carpool to Burlington for a 10AM rally – contact Johanna Colwell;
   2. Saturday June 30 11:00AM carpool to Rouses Point demonstration at ICE facility.
2. There is a “Cards for Kids” program where local kids can send cards to incarcerated migrant children. Contact Cheryl Mitchel for more information.

VII. Information collection and dissemination efforts.

1. Laura Asermily maintains one email list; Cheryl Mitchell maintains another. A sign-up went around for both.
2. Addison County Farm Workers Coalition had a web site; do we want to bring it back to life or bring its information on to a new web site?
3. Veronica has a great deal of information on her computer that she is willing to share in some publicly available place to be determined.

VIII. Next steps: we discussed whether we wanted to meet monthly, quarterly, or what. There was no consensus and we fell back to having better electronic communication.

People were invited to share the work they’re doing in nine categories:

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| **Health Care:**   * Open Door Clinic Interpreting: Alan Moore * Open Door Clinic Interpreting: Jordan Young | **Social & Emotional Support:**   * Kathy C. - AAN * Claire Bove – GED program * Jordan Young – Mental health counseling translating and programs in the planning stage * Veronica Ciamba – AAN * Jordan Young – LGBTQ outreach * Jocelyn Tenorio - Juntos | **Legal Help:**   * Laura Asermily – Consulate visit * Organize & coordinate consulate visit * Robert Appel |
| **Labor & Housing:**   * Jose Antonio Rodriguez * Ladybelle Isabella Fiske McFerlain (sp?) has land, rooms, houses; can put up some people; able to provide some work too * Robert Appel | **Language & Learning:**   * Lauren Ross * Kathy C – AAN * Mary Worthington * Lisl Anderson – teach English – AAN * Jocelyn Tenorio – Juntos * Veronica Ciamba * Cheryl | **Transportation, Rides, Licenses, Cars, Insurance:**   * Give rides – Lise Anderson – AAN * Jose Antonio Rodriguez * Mary-Claire Crogan – ACTR Dial-a-ride programs * Veronica Ciamba * Kathy C – AAN * Norm Tjossem – provide rides of all sorts, assisting in drivers license procurement, shopping & money transfers, connecting ESL teachers w/ students |
| **Advocacy – Workers & Farms:**   * Clare Bove – GED program * Ladybelle | **Community Education:**   * Kathy C – AAN * SURJ – Joanna working on changing hearts & minds * Veronica Ciamba * Laura Asermily – “Migrant Support in Addison County” blog at CVUUS.org * Jocelyn Tenorio – Juntos – bring speakers | **More:**   * Note taking – Jordan Young * Outreach to farmers – would like to do this – Lisl Anderson * Mentoring for children 6-12 years old through the Center for Community Engagement at Middlebury College * Ilsley Library has computers and internet * Ilsley Library would like to be more welcoming/accessible to make our circulating collection available. |