

# District 1199NM Newsletter



March 2021

Labor leader and civil rights activist Cesar Chavez dedicated his life to the struggle of farm workers in the United States to improve their working and living conditions. Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association (later the United Farm Workers of America) and won important victories to raise pay and improve working conditions for farm workers in the late 1960s and 1970s. In early 1980's Cesar Chavez came to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Here is the story as told by Delma DeLora, RN and current President of District 1199NM.

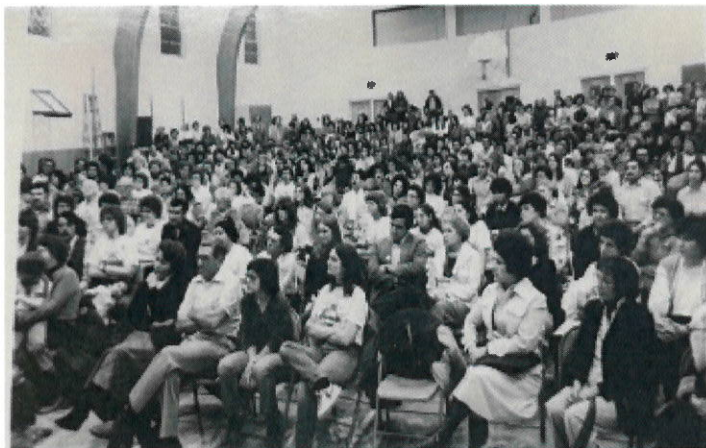


"In the early 80's we were in the middle of an organizing campaign for the Service Workers at St. Vincent Hospital. We were marching, handing out leaflets and speaking daily to the workers about joining our union. (The nurses formed their union in mid to late 70's) It was a time of struggle for our union.

We had little knowledge of Cesar Chavez except to know that he was a national figure. Our lawyer Morty Simon told us that he had been contacted by the Cesar Chavez staff. Cesar Chavez heard about the Service Workers struggle in Santa Fe and wanted to come to speak to the workers. We had three days before he was arriving!"Delma said they were overwhelmed, "We were a young union and had no contacts or knowledge about how to put on a major event for a National Union Organizer and Civil Rights Leader." They dropped everything they were doing and scrambled to find a location for him to speak. Local well-known community leaders stepped in to help Delma's team find a place for Cesar Chavez to speak and helped send out the notices to the community that he was coming to town to speak with all of them and the St. Vincent Hospital workers. Delma and her team did several interviews with local media.



"We had a food committee where families from all over the area brought home cooked food to feed everyone, music was provided by AFL-CIO Field Organizer Mathew Taylor and many other local artists, microphone system provided by local business, tables and chairs and kitchen area provided by Father Salazar at his St. John's Catholic Church on Sage Road. It was a huge event, and we packed the gym at St. John's, as well as the surrounding parking lot and streets. Last minute we started putting up speakers on the outside so our people could hear his remarks."



"I expected Cesar Chavez to be a loud and rowdy man, larger than life, but he was small in stature, quiet and quite humble in his bearing. He smiled as he walked in and walked up to the microphone, shook hands with those who were there to greet him and after Father Salazar's prayer simply started speaking quietly thanking everyone for coming.

His words lifted us all up and we gave him our loud and enthusiastic applause. Afterwards we offered him food and his staff then told us he was a vegetarian, unknown to us at the time. Everything we had was made with meat which dismayed us...he told us kindly not to worry he would be able to find something to eat, it all smelled delicious. His kindness was in everything he did. He then left the church asked where the hospital was and went directly to the new hospital to speak to the workers there. We told him that we were in a campaign and they wouldn't let us or him in." He told us, "They will let me in. I am going to talk to the people." He walked around the halls of the new hospital and visited with all he met. He spent an hour in the hospital and then came outside to speak with a large group of us outside the hospital. Finally, the hospital came to disperse us." We won huge recognition from our local community and won the campaign for the Service Workers months later."Delma believes, "It was the most exciting moment our Union has ever had. Cesar Chavez came twice again to support all the workers in Santa Fe and after his last visit in 1993 he drove to Arizona and then soon after died in his sleep.

**"His legacy lives on and that is why District 1199NM celebrates his birthday March 31 every year as a District wide holiday. Santa Fe and Albuquerque offices will be closed in honor of his birthday.**

## March 8th Women's Committee



*Courage in women is often mistaken for insanity.*

**International Women's Day Event** – Sponsored by the March 8th Women's Committee and co-sponsored in part by District 1199NM on March 7th via a Zoom. The March 8th Women's Committee has celebrated International Women's Day for 35 years in New Mexico. This year was the first Zoom event, and it was just as inspiring as other past events. We were excited about our speaker, Dr. Amy Cohen. She is the Executive Director for EVERY.LAST.ONE. <https://everylastone.org/> (ELO).

She and the other women of ELO have worked tirelessly to free children who are in ICE custody and who have been separated from their families.

Families and children who come to the United States from Central America are seeking refuge from life-threatening violence. They endure harrowing journeys, trusting they will find safety. Instead, the US Government puts them in freezing cages, forces them into institutional detention and has failed to release them to family and sponsors who offer them homes.

Please go to the above web address and find out more about ELO and how you can get involved or donate money to support of this vital work. We All Can Do Better.

### **New District-wide Digital Member Card**

Becoming a union member has never been easier! As of January 2021, District 1199NM non-members can sign up for membership in the Union with an online digital membership card accessed on the web page at [www.nmhospitalworkersunion.com](http://www.nmhospitalworkersunion.com)

Now online membership cards are ready! [https://www.nmhospitalworkersunion.com/index.cfm?zone=membership/member\\_form\\_start.cfm](https://www.nmhospitalworkersunion.com/index.cfm?zone=membership/member_form_start.cfm)

### **IN VIRAL PSA'S District 1199NM's HEALTH CARE WORKERS URGE MASK USE AND VACCINATIONS ...Article Courtesy of AFSCME**

"These health care members wanted to make these PSAs to show how the pandemic is taking a toll on our health care system," said Delma DeLora, District President of 1199NM. "Health care professionals are going above and beyond to ensure every New Mexican gets quality, compassionate care. But as a community, we all need to do our part in slowing the spread of this virus by wearing masks, maintaining social distance with people outside our immediate households, and getting the vaccine when it becomes available to you." [Click here for the complete article.](#)

### **District 1199NM Thanks all members who participated in this endeavor!**

"We have risen to the challenge...Have You? GET YOUR VACCINATION!"

**American Income Life Insurance** provides a **FREE \$4000 policy for members only** for accidental death/dismemberment. Call the office if you are a member and have not designated a beneficiary for your policy. When no beneficiary is designated, AIL will issue the benefit check to the estate.

Legislation-During this year's legislative session District 1199NM supported the following pieces of legislation.

HB 203 Health Security Planning and Design Act: while the act did not pass, we were successful in securing the funding to establish an advisory committee.

HB 20 Paid Sick Leave Workers in the private sector will now be eligible for 8 days of sick leave per year.

**UNION WEBSITE:** [www.nmhospitalworkersunion.com](http://www.nmhospitalworkersunion.com)

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