

# SOLIDARIDAD

 **Witness for Peace**  
Transforming People — Transforming Policy

WINTER 2012

Volume 4 Issue 4

## Working for Peace in President Obama's 2nd Term



*WFP partners across Latin America, like John Henry González, are calling for an end to military aid, a new approach to drug policy, fair trade and immigration reform. WFP is working hand in hand with them to make sure their voices are heard in Washington.*

PHOTO CREDIT: MELISSA COX

Marisa Cortes is a Colombian immigrant who works in education with immigrant families. November 6th was the second time she was able to vote in a presidential election. “I voted because many immigrants cannot vote, so I wanted to be sure that I did,” said Marisa.

People across the globe followed the elections, as they know our elections will have an impact on them. When Marisa spoke with her father in Colombia, he regularly asked her about the elections, who was ahead and who she was going to vote for.

“If I were able to sit down with the President, I would ask him what his plan is for passing comprehensive

immigration reform and drug policy reform,” explained Marisa.

As the confetti settles after the post-election campaign celebrations, like Marisa we are left wondering if this election will lead to positive change for our partners in Latin America and our immigrant sisters and brothers here in this country.

Only time will answer that question, but WFP has plans to do all we can to make sure policymakers understand many in this country and across the hemisphere believe supporting peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas is crucial over the next four years.

Alongside our tremendous supporters like you, we plan to pressure Washington to pass progressive comprehensive immigration reform that prioritizes human rights; outlines clear and non-discriminatory pathways to citizenship and residency; outlaws legislation that encourages racial profiling and/or denies basic human rights to members of immigrant communities; and ends border militarization, raids and deportations that lead to human rights abuses and separate families.

When it comes to drug policy, it is clear that this country and our world need a new approach. WFP is already pushing for policies that eliminate the use of military aid as a tool to fight drugs and support non-violent community-lead solutions to drug-related harms while addressing the underlying issues of poverty and inequality that fuel the drug trade.

Today some of Washington’s key partners in the drug war have begun questioning the central tenets of our approach to drug policy. WFP believes policymakers should allow different countries and states in the U.S. to explore new policy approaches to drug policy in order to nurture rather than silence the debate for effective solutions, including those that go beyond prohibition and look at new forms of regulation of drugs.

For too long the drug war and economic interests have skewed foreign assistance toward military aid that inevitably ends up

*(Continued on back page)*

# Message From Sharon

This edition of the WFP newsletter has an in-depth view of our work supporting peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas in the context of President Obama's second term. Some of our work for justice will have a smoother path and much will continue to be challenging.

But I want to shift gears away from the aftermath of the elections and look ahead.

The last six weeks of the year are a time to take stock. To remember what we have accomplished, what we have left to do, and, most importantly, to give thanks.

It starts with Thanksgiving and goes through New Year's Eve.

I want to get a head start in mid-November and say THANK YOU to you!

Witness for Peace members like you have been so very generous this year. You have given your time to volunteer at WFP events and activities. You have spoken out for justice by sending messages to policymakers at a breakneck pace. You have joined WFP delegations to Cuba, Nicaragua, Colombia and Mexico to learn about the impacts of U.S. policy and stood with people seeking justice.

And, despite difficult economic times, you have given financial support to Witness for Peace that has been crucial to our efforts to protect human rights, defend fair trade and advocate for immigrant rights.

Thanks to your support, our mobile human rights accompaniment team was able to respond to the call for urgent physical accompaniment from Honduran human rights groups investigating the DEA's involvement in a massacre in Honduras.

Thanks in no small part to your support, WFP was able to support injured

Colombian GM workers seeking justice after being fired for workplace injuries. At the time of this writing, they are still seeking resolution after mediation with GM did not reach an agreement, but they sense a settlement is close.

With the generous contributions of WFP members like you, we are able to pressure policymakers to make peace, justice and sustainable economies a central aspect of foreign policy.

We here at Witness for Peace have a lot to be grateful for this Thanksgiving and holiday season. At the top of our list stands your name, along with the thousands of others that make our work possible.

Thank you!

In deep gratitude,



Sharon Hostetler,  
Executive Director

P.S. We have exciting plans for innovative work supporting human rights, fair trade and immigrant rights in 2013. I hope you will stay in touch to find out how you can get involved in this work for justice.



## DELEGATIONS

### Colombia

***Examining the Past and Present Failures of the "War on Drugs" and Exploring Grassroots Alternatives***

January 4-14, 2013

*Delegation Coordinator*

Elise Roberts, 920-421-2269  
wfpumw@witnessforpeace.org

### ***Social Movements in Colombia***

January 18-28, 2013

*Delegation Coordinator*

Kristen Wassil, 919-856-9468  
kristen@witnessforpeace.org

### ***Seeds of Resistance: U.S. Policy Impacts on Food Sovereignty in Colombia***

February 8-17, 2013

*Delegation Coordinators*

Verena Wieloch, 857.222.6463  
magicbean73@gmail.com  
Jessye Weinstein  
Jessye.Weinstein@gmail.com

### Nicaragua

***Advocacy and Social Change in Context of Globalization***

March 9-19, 2013

*Delegation Coordinators*

Elise Roberts, 920.421.2269  
wfpumw@witnessforpeace.org  
Jim Dimock, 507.389.5533  
james.dimock@mnsu.edu

### Mexico

***Roots and Realities of Migration***

May/June

*Delegation Coordinator*

Emily Zucchini, 919-856-9468  
emily@witnessforpeace.org

### CUBA TRAVEL PROGRAMS

For more information about legal travel on the following professional research programs to Cuba please contact Marazul Charters, Inc. a licensed travel provider with whom we are referring:

Louisa Sanchez, lsanchez@marazul.com  
201-319-1054 Ext. 15

### Cuba

***Research Program for Professional Organizers***

December 10-20, 2012

### Cuba

***Research Program for Educators***

February 15-25, 2013

### Cuba

***Research Program for Professional Agricultural Workers***

April 17-27, 2013

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Grassroots Action

**Witness for Peace New England** just completed a whirlwind tour with Ligna Pulido, a Colombian Indigenous activist. The tour covered five New England states, with over 20 engagements in colleges, universities, and community organizations. The NE region also has a student just trade delegation to Nicaragua in the works for March. Contact [wfpne@witnessforpeace.org](mailto:wfpne@witnessforpeace.org) for more information

**Witness for Peace Northwest** enjoyed a wonderful nine-city speaking tour with Daisy Rojas of Havana, Cuba during October. Daisy spoke to universities, churches, activist groups, media, and elected officials about daily life in Cuba under the U.S. economic embargo and travel ban. If you missed Daisy, or want a chance to learn more about Cuba, Amy, the Northwest Field Organizer, will be leading a sustainable agriculture professional research delegation to Cuba from April 17-27th, 2013! Amy has also been dreaming about delegation possibilities to Colombia, Honduras, and Mexico. Contact her if you're interested in hearing more!

**Witness for Peace Southeast** had an exciting fall! Our annual Fall Organizer's Retreat provided networking opportunities for over 50 students, activists, and immigrant allies in North Carolina. Our speaker, Itzel Polo Mendieta from Mexico City, toured churches and universities in Kentucky, North Carolina, and Virginia. We are now recruiting for several important delegations. January 18-28, WFPSE will explore social movements in Colombia, standing in solidarity with Drummond coal workers and learning strategies for organizing. This June, we invite you to join our annual Roots of Migration Delegation in Mexico, or a professional growers delegation in Cuba! Visit [wfpse.org](http://wfpse.org) for more information.

**Witness for Peace Southwest** is encouraging members to volunteer with No More Deaths on the Arizona/Mexico border and planning a fall retreat and conference in Ojai, California; we will launch a fall speaker and webinar series on Honduras, Migrant Rights, and Colombia as well as recruit for a Cuba Delegation in December. Check out the Southwest Facebook page ("Witness for Peace Southwest") and get involved by emailing [southwestwfp@gmail.com](mailto:southwestwfp@gmail.com) or calling 805-421-9708. The Southwest Region will be having holiday celebrations in December and January while preparing for a delegation to Uraba, Colombia March 23-31, 2013. Stay posted for a webinar report back from the 2012 delegation to Uraba, Colombia. To get the latest news and event announcements from the Southwest Region email [southwestwfp@gmail.com](mailto:southwestwfp@gmail.com).

**Witness for Peace Upper Midwest** has just finished a successful October speaker tour with Tomas Gómez Membreño from COPINH in Honduras, including new programming in Kansas and Missouri. The region is also working with midwestern colleges and universities to create credit and financial aid options for students who travel on Witness for Peace delegations.

**Witness for Peace Mid Atlantic** hosted Leonila Romero González, from Veracruz, Mexico on a speaker tour Oct. 6-27. Leonila, who works with a Catholic migrant ministry, Las Patronas, to aid Central American migrants on their way through Mexico, spoke to over 1,000 people in three states and Washington, DC about the challenges faced by migrants and the urgent need for immigration reform and new trade policies in the U.S.

**To get in touch with your regional organizer or to learn more about upcoming events and delegations, please visit [witnessforpeace.org/grassroots](http://witnessforpeace.org/grassroots).**

## Organizing to stop NAFTA on steroids, Mexico Caravan, School of the Americas Vigil.

Witness for Peace participated in the Sept. 9 stakeholder session of the Leesburg Round of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations that the United States Trade Representative (USTR) held in Leesburg, VA Sept. 6-15. At that session, WFP and other organizations demanded transparency that has been sorely lacking in the negotiation process for this proposed NAFTA on steroids.

During the 10 days of the Leesburg Round, only one hour was allotted for civil society groups to provide input regarding this free trade agreement that will have far-reaching effects for the U.S., Mexico, and many other countries that touch the Pacific Ocean. This pittance of time for civil society to voice concerns demonstrates the concerns of USTR that justice-oriented people will derail the TPP, as we successfully did with the menacing Free Trade Area of the Americas.

On the September 9th, WFP rallied against the TPP in Leesburg with unions, environmental organizations, and other concerned groups. We at

WFP will remain vigilant and steadfast in our opposition as the USTR pushes harder for this behemoth that will further endanger the livelihoods of many in Latin America and give corporations special rights over national and local labor, health, and environmental laws!

Immediately following the day of action on the TPP negotiations, WFP collaborated with other organizations for a visit of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity caravan from Mexico to Baltimore and Washington, DC in September. We accompanied Mexican victims of the drug war and arms trafficking as they presented their appeals to congressional offices (and in several cases to the Representatives themselves) for change to U.S. policy.

Looking forward, we are very excited to see many WFP supporters at the School of the Americas Vigil in Fort Benning Nov. 16-18! We will join our voices to demand the SOA be shut down once and for all! If you are in Georgia, please come by our table or events to say hello.

For full program updates and travel schedule details, visit [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org).



(Continued from front page)



*Marisa Cortes, an immigrant from Colombia, voted for the second time in a presidential election. "If I were able to sit down with the President, I would ask him what his plan is for passing comprehensive immigration reform and drug policy reform," said Marisa.*

PHOTO CREDIT: JESS HUNTER-BOWMAN

in the hands of human rights abusers. WFP will continue our work to demand

that foreign assistance support sustainable, community-led development projects; poverty reduction programs; and humanitarian assistance rather than military aid to human rights abusers.

Such a policy shift would require an end to military training programs, such as the School of the Americas, that have been linked to human rights abuses.

Finally, it is time for Washington to make people and the environment the central considerations when negotiating trade agreements, rather than the demands of the Chamber of Commerce and corporate profits. The United States Trade Representative is currently negotiating the Trans Pacific Partnership, known as "NAFTA on steroids." WFP and our partners are

working to make TPP negotiations open and transparent, allowing civil society access to negotiators and draft text for input. But this is not sufficient. We must block this trade deal that would benefit major corporations while hurting workers across the globe.

Even after the elections, our work is cut out for us as we seek to support peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas. We appreciate your continued support as we take our policy priorities to Washington.

You can get even more involved in this work by signing up for our urgent email alerts at [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org). You can also stay updated by following us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/WFPeace](https://www.facebook.com/WFPeace) or on Twitter @WitnessforPeace.

## Frank Dorman: a witness for peace has left us

In 1984, there were not many people who were willing to travel to war-torn Nicaragua to stand with farmers facing constant shelling from U.S.-backed Contra forces. But Frank Dorman was not like most people, and he'd heard God's call to work for social justice.

That call first took him to Alabama in 1964 to join Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the march from Selma to Montgomery.

Soon thereafter, he finished seminary and was ordained as a minister with the United Church of Christ, where he ministered for two decades. But Frank's calling wasn't limited to the interior of the church and he participated in many marches and protests on issues related to human rights, justice, civil rights, war and nuclear proliferation. His commitment to justice led to 19 arrests for nonviolent civil disobedience.

In 1983, Frank began working with Witness for Peace as the organization's Massachusetts coordinator. Soon thereafter, he led one of the first WFP delegations to Nicaragua in 1984. The delegation visited Nicaraguan communities under attack by U.S.-backed Contra forces that killed and wounded innocent civilians. Frank and other participants brought back testimony from victims to raise awareness about the impact of this covert war and cut funding to the Contras.

Frank continued to work with Witness for Peace in Massachusetts until 1990. He remained a faithful supporter even after ending his work with the organization.

Witness for Peace was saddened to learn of Frank's passing on July 3, 2012 in Boston at the age of 85. His prophetic witness for peace and justice inspired those who knew him and he left a lasting imprint on Witness for Peace. The entire WFP community sends our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

