



Seeds

The Agricultural Worker Health Initiative Program Quarterly



Fresno County promotoras embrace leadership development training

A core group of San Joaquin, Mendota and Firebaugh California Poder Popular participants interested in facilitating positive change in Fresno County came together to take part in a unique leadership training program. Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) staff members, who are certified to deliver the respected Ford Institute Leadership Program, recently conducted the first two weekends of the training program. Proteus Inc. is partnering with RCAC to host the program.

Taught over the course of four weekends in four months, the leadership development curriculum involves 60 hours of instruction that include 16 modules designed to help participants gain skills and tools to enable them to become better leaders who effectively collaborate to get things done.



Promotoras learn new skills in Fresno County leadership development training program.

RCAC has worked with the promotoras in Fresno County in collaboration with The California Endowment for several years. This training builds on the leadership skills the promotoras have already acquired and practiced.

Several promotoras (volunteer community health promoters) and community residents met July and August to learn

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Poder Popular shares 20-year vision

The State Board of Food and Agriculture and the California Department of Food and Agriculture plan to create a California strategic agricultural vision to guide public policy and investment priorities at the state and national level for the next 20 years. The agencies held a series of listening sessions in July, as a forum for the agriculture industry and public to give input, which they will incorporate into the vision.

To manage the input they received, the agencies asked agriculture industry representatives and the public to respond to the following questions:

1. What is your vision for California agriculture by 2030?
2. What will be the biggest challenge in achieving that vision?
3. In 2030, how has public perception of agriculture changed?
4. What is a "must have" in an Ag Vision for California?

Poder Popular participants answered in writing and physically attended sessions as groups to ensure their input was received directly and not misplaced, overlooked or misinterpreted.

Cesar Hernandez, CAUSE, Ventura County AWHI project manager, alerted the Poder Popular network that the sessions were taking place and encouraged Poder Popular members to participate. Martha Guzman Aceves of California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation also

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Educational materials created by diverse agencies across California to train farm workers as leaders, agents of change and advocates in their communities are now available at www.rcac.org; click **El Rincon del Promotor**.

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Seeds is the newsletter of the Poder Popular program, part of The California Endowment's Agricultural Worker Health Initiative.

Fresno County begins leadership training

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about communication skills, community development models, project selection tools and characteristics and practices of successful community leaders. They discussed working in groups, planning and holding effective meetings, project management and Myers Briggs Type Indicator personality types.

“One of the things I noticed and was very appreciative of is that the first workshop was very interactive. Participants initially commented that they were nervous about the time involved in committing to a two-day workshop. Later, they noted that the time went very quickly and they hardly noticed because they were busy and active and learning the whole time,” said Julia Hernandez, Proteus, Inc. project coordinator and Poder Popular strategy participant.

As part of the training, the Fresno County group will conceive, design and execute a class project that directly benefits their community.

The training provides them with community development and communication skills. They learn theoretical models, and practice using tools such as asset-based community development. They give presentations, practice giving and receiving feedback and consensus building. They train with each other in a safe environment to build confidence. Then, they use the tools and skills in real situations in the community as they work on developing their training project and as they participate in other groups and activities in their daily lives.

According to participants, the nearest hospital to San Joaquin is in Fresno, approximately 45 minutes away. The city has no high school, so they send their children to Tranquility, a town nearly five miles away. The community has plenty of room for improvement, and leadership development training helps give them a roadmap to implement needed change. 🌱

Report on California fires released

The National Latino Research Center (NLRC) at California State University, San Marcos recently released its *San Diego Firestorm 2007 Report: Fire Impact on Farmworkers & Migrant Communities in North County*, a report about the impact of the October 2007 California fires on farm workers. NLRC presented the report at the July National Council de la Raza conference in San Diego, among a group of concerned Poder Popular representatives.

The Poder Popular program is a grassroots, community empowerment, health literacy and leadership development project that recognizes agricultural worker strengths and assets. The project uses popular education to build an organic base of leadership to combat health threats and promote well-being and community health.

The Firestorm report indicates that emergency response systems in farm worker

“The Firestorm report indicates that emergency response systems in farm worker and Latino communities in the San Diego area did not function adequately.”

and Latino communities in the San Diego area did not function adequately.

The report also suggests that it is important to examine government policies, procedures and standards to rectify missteps and ensure humane treatment of all individuals, including poor and marginalized populations impacted by disasters.

While the government response to the crisis among farm workers was less

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Woodlake Concilio de Salud celebrates

By Isabel Arrollo, Woodlake Poder Popular program coordinator

Woodlake Concilio de Salud celebrated its first year anniversary at F. J. White Elementary multipurpose room in June. Sixty community members joined in the fun. Generally, concilios are formal groups of farm workers and community stakeholders who create a collaboration and an agenda to improve their community as part of the Poder Popular strategy.



Woodlake Concilio de Salud members receive high praise at anniversary celebration.

The Woodlake concilio follows the general model and has helped create positive change. Currently, the concilio is working on an Anti-Bullying campaign focusing on parents and teachers. Concilio members have developed questionnaires for teachers to be distributed in the schools and around the community. The concilio also is working on a health asset map to make available for community residents. The health asset map will give the community a visual awareness of local health resources that can be used to improve the community's overall health.

At the anniversary celebration, United Way of Tulare County and Tulare County board of supervisors gave Woodlake concilio members certificates of appreciation for the strides they have made in the community. Additionally, the City of Woodlake presented the concilio with a proclamation to appreciate members' leadership, volunteerism and commitment to Woodlake. Radio Bilingüe provided music

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Listening sessions gather input for vision

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Poder Popular participants give input at listening sessions to impact new vision.

was instrumental in helping coordinate the vision statements and the logistics of attending the listening sessions.

At an early listening session held in Sacramento, Poder Popular successfully petitioned the agencies to change the meeting times to evening hours, after work when more farm workers could participate. They also convinced the hosts to provide Spanish translation.

Each Poder Popular site collected responses from its communities. Group members then attended listening sessions in their areas, where their

spokespersons presented their ideas. The result was a unified voice of Poder Popular, speaking out about issues that concern California farm workers. Their concerns include:

- Jobs for youth
- Envisioning a change from chemical pesticides to organic alternatives for pest control
- Developing a food bank to provide healthy food to seasonal workers when not employed
- Work permits for undocumented workers, and pathways to legal status
- Living wages, year-round work and work benefits
- Accessible and binational health care coverage

The call to action and the Poder Popular groups' ability to respond illustrate the grassroots empowerment that has grown during the course of the program. They used their partnering, organizing, communication and presentation skills to express with confidence their own vision for the future of agriculture at the state and national level. 🌱

Study finds fires impact farm workers uniquely

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than exemplary, the study confirmed that lideres comunitarios (community leaders who are primarily Poder Popular participants) mobilized emergency relief resources and provided much-needed assistance.

Some general research findings in the report include:

- Farm workers and migrants were disproportionately exposed to fire impacts with limited or no relief.
- Large numbers of farm workers and migrant workers living in substandard housing conditions in rural communities lost housing during the fires and had no recourse for recovery.
- Some farm workers and migrants who were fearful of deportation

during evacuation did not evacuate their homes in mandatory evacuation zones.

- Farm workers and migrants were unaware of emergency relief services and procedures to solicit assistance.

Farm workers are still recovering from the October 2007 fires. They did not receive equal and adequate access to resources and relief. This report details impacts and addresses areas where reactions to the crisis could have been handled better for the farm workers. For a full copy of the report, including recommendations to improve farm worker treatment in times of crisis, access the report at <http://www2.csusm.edu/nlrc/publications/Reports/NLRC%20Wildfires%20Report%202007%20Rev.pdf>. 🌱

Concilio members celebrate

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and small gifts for attendees. Argelia Flores, Poder Popular program director, acknowledged concilio members, partners, friends and allies. Concilio members then shared their experiences during the past year.

“Generally, concilios are formal groups of farm workers and community stakeholders who create a collaboration and an agenda to improve their community as part of the Poder Popular strategy.”

Presently, Woodlake Concilio de Salud consists of eight members: Laura Armstrong, YMCA director; Ruth Ruiz, Woodlake Schools; Guadalupe Vargas, Woodlake Women's Association; Malorie Serrano, Family HealthCare Network (FHCN); John Zapalac, chief of police; Jose Marquez, migrant parent; Laura Dominguez, asamblea member; Veronica Sanchez, FHCN. 🌱

Did you know?

According to the Rural Migration News, v. 13, no. 4, Oct. 2007, most U.S.-grown garlic is produced in California. It is grown in the fall and harvested in July-August. Machines loosen the soil from the bulbs of fresh garlic. Workers follow and cut root and stems from the bulbs.

For more information about farm workers, visit <http://migration.ucdavis.edu>.

AWHI advisory committee ends

By Shoshana Zatz, RCAC rural development specialist

The Agricultural Worker Health Initiative (AWHI) advisory committee has worked since its inception in 2004 to assist The California Endowment and RCAC staff on issues impacting agricultural workers and their families as they relate to the AWHI Poder Popular program. The AWHI advisory committee helped build and sustain a strong, interconnected and collaborative network of farm workers, advocates, service and technical assistance providers, private sector and other key stakeholders.

AWHI's vision is of strong and vibrant communities sensitive to the social, economic, infrastructure and health needs of farm workers and their families. The advisory committee helped bring this vision closer to reality. With less than a year remaining until the project's completion, the advisory committee has disbanded and all resources and efforts are focused on implementing and sustaining the Poder Popular strategies into the future. Thank you again, to all who served. 🌱

Poder Popular Program Members

Region and Agency

- COACHELLA** — Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment
- FRESNO** — PROTEUS, Inc.
- MERCED** — Golden Valley Health Center
- MONTEREY** — Foundation for Monterey County
- NAPA/SONOMA** — St. Joseph Community Health Systems
California Human Development
Vineyard Workers Services
- SAN DIEGO** — CSU San Marcos:
CSU San Marcos Foundation
National Latino Research Center
Vista Community Clinic
Community Housing Works
- SOUTH KERN** — Catholic Charities,
Dolores Huerta Foundation
- TULARE** — United Way Tulare County
- VENTURA** — CAUSE (Ventura County and AWHI Collaborative)

VENTURA continued —

- Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Program
- Interface Children Family Services (St. Paula Farm Resource Center)

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