

ROCLA UPDATE ON THE AMERICAS

A PUBLICATION OF THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

SAVE THE DATE

ROCLA CELEBRATION & FUNDRAISER

Friday, March 10, 5:15pm • Gates Presbyterian Church, 1049 Wegman Road

The 29th Annual Rice & Beans Dinner and White Dove Awards

ROCLA's 2017 International White Dove Award will honor **Pueblo Kichwa de Sarayaku of Ecuador** for their inspiring campaign in defense of their rights, territory and cultural heritage in the Amazon before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The **Worker Justice Center of New York** and the **Workers Center of Central New York** will jointly receive ROCLA's 2017 Local White Dove Award in recognition of their efforts to organize upstate New York farmworkers to fight for their rights and for drivers licenses. **See inside for details!** ■

Donate your Auction Treasures for the Rice & Beans Dinner!

By Esperanza Roncero,
Auction Coordinator

ROCLA's Rice & Beans Dinner with our Live and Silent Auctions is coming Friday, March 10, 2017! Now is the time to start your Spring cleanout and part with items you no longer need—they might find their way into someone else's heart via ROCLA's auctions. We are making it easier than ever this year!

Suggested items to donate:

Paintings, art prints, sculpture, quality posters, books, small furniture, jewelry, candelabras, pottery, good picture frames, skates, sports gear and other such items in good condition. You can also donate a service such as knitting lessons, babysitting, etc. Please no clothing or shoes.

Please email or call our Silent Auction coordinator and provide a brief description of your item, the original cost or estimated value, and a suggested minimum bid. Those who have received the donation form by email can fill it out and include it with their donation. If you have any questions about auction items, please email Esperanza Roncero, this year's Silent Auction Coordinator: eroncer5@naz.edu or phone: 607-434-1962.

Where to drop off your donation(s):

1) *Metro Justice Office:* Please call or email Andrew Thomas at Metro Justice (585-397-3535 or andrew@metrojustice.org) to arrange a time for drop off and to ensure that someone is in the office to receive your dona-

tion when you arrive. The Metro Justice office is located in the Hungerford Building, at the intersection of Main Street and North Goodman Street: 1115 East Main St., Door 7, Suite 207A, Rochester.
2) *YMCA Westside Branch,* 920 Elmgrove Road, Rochester. (Town of Gates across from the former Kodak Elmgrove plant.) Be sure that the articles are marked ATTN: Tom Ward.

To have your donation picked up:

Tom Ward has offered to pick up donations. You can



reach Tom at 585-341-3105 or at tomw@rochesterymca.org.

Items worth over \$100:

These items (for example, a stay in a Bed & Breakfast) will be included in the Live Auction, which will also take place during the dinner. If you have an item that you believe could be worth over \$100 for the live auction, please contact Arnie Matlin at 585-768-6277 or ahmatlingvcp@igc.org. ■

TICKETS & AD REQUEST

ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA
CELEBRATION & FUNDRAISER

29th Annual Rice & Beans Gala Dinner & White Dove Awards

FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 5:15PM

Gates Presbyterian Church*
1049 Wegman Road
Rochester, New York



This year ROCLA will honor the **Kichwa People of Sarayaku, Ecuador**, with the International White Dove Award for their groundbreaking victory defending their territory and their many years of resistance and defense of the Ecuadorian Amazon from oil exploration.

The **Worker Justice Center of New York** and the **Workers' Center of Central New York** will share the Local White Dove Award. Their dedicated staff members Rebecca Fuentes and Carly Fox have worked in partnership with dairy farmworkers in Upstate New York to facilitate unprecedented farmworker organizing and advocacy to gain their rights as workers.



AD ORDER REQUEST

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<input type="checkbox"/> 1/2-page.....	\$ 75.	4-inches	x 5-inches
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-page.....	\$ 125.	8-inches	x 5-inches

Check this box if you need us to design your ad. It will cost an additional 20% of the price of your ad.

For more information or to place an order, please contact **Arnie Matlin**, ahmatlingvcp@igc.org or mail this form to: Arnold Matlin, 2290 Anderson Road, Linwood, NY 14486 to reserve your ad space.



**GREAT
FOOD,
GOOD FUN,
A SILENT
AUCTION,
& WHITE
DOVE
AWARDS!**

Tickets:

Hero: \$100; **Champion:** \$50; **Friend:** \$30; **Student:** \$15.

We encourage organizations to buy a table of 8 at last year's price, \$25 per person.

For Reservations: Kathy Goforth: kathy.goforth@rochester.rr.com, (585) 467-4091.

Please make your check payable to ROCLA/Metro Justice Education Fund and send to: Kathy Goforth, 45 Lynbrook Drive, Rochester, NY 14609

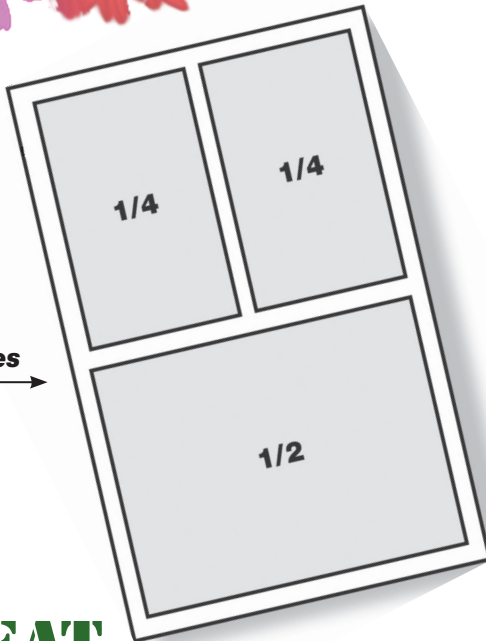
Auction Items to Donate: Esperanza Roncero, eroncer5@naz.edu, (607) 434-1962.

To volunteer to help: Gail Mott, interconnect_mott@frontiernet.net; (585) 464-0878.

All proceeds benefit ROCLA's work for peace and justice in Latin America.

*The church is wheelchair accessible and looped for the hearing impaired.

Ad shapes →



2017 White Dove Award Winners

Sarayaku community honored for fight against oil company



This year, ROCLA will present its International White Dove Award to the Kichwa people of Sarayaku for their groundbreaking victory defending their territory and for their many years of resistance and defense of the Ecuadorian Amazon from oil

exploration. Nelson Gualinga, the Vice President of the community, will join us in Rochester direct from Sarayaku to receive the award in the name of his community.

The Kichwa people of Sarayaku live deep in Ecuador's Amazon rainforest. In 1996 the Ecuadorian government imposed oil concession blocks in Sarayaku territory without the consent of the 1,200 people who live there. The community only learned that its land had been opened for oil exploration when the helicopters arrived, followed by men with guns. But instead of becoming another story of pollution and devastation, the story of Sarayaku has been one of resistance. Managing to beat back oil drilling plans on their lands, the Sarayaku people have come to symbolize indigenous resistance against oil, logging, and mining throughout the Amazon.

In April 2012 the government of Ecuador acknowledged responsibility for illegally licensing an oil company to do business on indigenous territory without the community's consent. Then, in July, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) ruled that the government must consult with indigenous communities prior to such enterprises and pay for physical and "moral" damages to the community. The IACHR verdict is a major step forward in safeguarding indigenous rights—particularly the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in development decisions that affect their territory—and sets a precedent for cases around the world in which indigenous peoples struggle to defend their territories and rights.

However, the fight is not over for the people of Sarayaku. The government of Ecuador has yet to fully comply with the ruling, which requires the removal of more than 1 ton of dynamite still buried on community lands, in addition to the monetary compensation. The people of Sarayaku have built a network of national and international allies and have been featured in many media around the world. Recently, representatives of Sarayaku travelled to North Dakota to join the Standing Rock brothers and sisters in their struggle for water.

ROCLA needs your financial support to bring Nelson Gualinga from Sarayaku to Rochester. If you can help, please contact Paola Betchart at paola.macas.betchart@gmail.com. ■

Local White Dove Award honors fighters for farmworker justice



DAVID SOMMERSTEIN / NCPWR

The Worker Justice Center of New York (WJCNY, Rochester and Kingston, NY) and the Workers Center of Central New York (WCCNY, Syracuse, NY) will share the 2017 Local White Dove Award. Specifi-

cally, ROCLA will honor the extraordinary and tireless work of Carly Fox, Senior Workers' Rights Advocate at WJCNY, and Rebecca Fuentes, Lead Organizer at WCCNY, who have worked together since 2013 to facilitate farmworker organizing and leadership development, and to support advocacy actions in partnership with Upstate New York's dairy farmworkers. As a result, dairy workers are confronting their fears and vulnerability to advocate for their right to organize to gain workplace safety, fair wages and drivers' licenses.

The Worker Justice Center, formed in 2011 by the merger of Farmworker Legal Services of NY (FLSNY) and the Workers' Rights Law Center (WRLC), has expanded the decades-long work of FLSNY to provide direct legal services to low-wage workers with an emphasis on migrant and seasonal agricultural workers, to empower communities and to advocate for institutional change.

The Workers' Center of Central New York is a grassroots organization focused on achieving workplace and economic justice. Through community organizing, leadership development, popular education, and policy advocacy, the WCCNY empowers low-wage workers to combat workplace abuses and improve wages and working conditions.

Recently, both organizations joined as plaintiffs with dairy farmworker Crispin Hernández as lead plaintiff in a lawsuit brought by the New York Civil Liberties Union. The lawsuit is based on the blatant suppression of Crispin Hernández' right to freely meet with other workers and WCCNY staff to discuss concerns about working conditions. The first lawsuit of its kind in New York, it challenges a Jim Crow-era state law that unconstitutionally denies farmworkers the right to organize without retaliation. A win would mean that Hernández and other farmworkers would have a powerful tool to challenge a wide range of horrendous working conditions.

Carly Fox, who will receive ROCLA's Local White Dove award for WJCNY, and Rebecca Fuentes, who will receive the award for WCCNY, have both brought extraordinary dedication, heart and intelligence to their direct participation with farmworker organizing and leadership development. As *compañeras* in their laser focus on workplace safety and justice through tireless advocacy,

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Rebecca Fuentes

they have facilitated worker-led groups to participate in advocacy actions.

Carly has been actively working with the dairy farmworker group *Alianza Agricola*, which in partnership with WCCNY and other allied groups is spearheading the statewide *Green Light NY: Driving Together!* initiative. This campaign is aimed at restoring the right of all New Yorkers to obtain driver's licenses, regardless of their immigration status. Rebecca has been at the forefront of developing and facilitating dairy farmworker leadership and effective organizing in Central and Northern New York since 2011. She has also helped lead dairy farmworker efforts to organize against wage theft, for workplace justice and safety on dairy farms, for the rights of farmworkers to collectively bargain, and in support of the *Green Light NY campaign*. Organized farmworkers recently gained a major victory at Marks Farms in Lowville, NY, one of New York States' largest dairy farms.

ROCLA is proud to honor the groundbreaking work of these two organizations. ■



Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz (1926 - 2016)

By Vic Vinkey

On November 26, 2016, Cuban leader Fidel Castro died at the age of 90. It is hard to write about Fidel, whose nearly 60 years of rule had many contradictions. His years as Cuban leader also had one large and lasting unknown: what might have happened in Cuba if the U.S. government had not oppressed Castro's fledgling socialist experiment with more than half a century of embargo, invasion, assassinations and endless vile propaganda.

Few would object to describing Castro as a true revolutionary. Beginning as a Jesuit-trained lawyer, the guerrillas Castro led succeeded in defeating Cuba's brutal dictator Fulgencio Batista, who ruled Cuba from 1952-1959 with the U.S. government's financial and military support. Batista's government had used political repression, torture, assassination and even the American Mafia to solidify his control, fill his pockets, and generate increas-

ing poverty and inequality among Cuba's citizens. Foreigners owned 70% of Cuba's arable land.

In 1959, after Fidel's guerrilla army overthrew Batista, the vast majority of Cubans and even world leaders welcomed the new government. But by late 1960, some of Fidel's policies, including the executions of some 500 former Batista functionaries, the imprisonment of many others and the nationalization of American-owned industries including sugar, provoked the increasing opposition of the U.S. The U.S. ended all exports to Cuba and broke off diplomatic relations in 1961, thus driving Castro into the arms of the Soviet Union.

Yet Castro's economic and other policies, aimed at eliminating the wealthy ruling oligarchy and instituting land redistribution, free education through university, free health care, housing for all and widespread racial equality became the hallmarks of a new Cuban society and were

admired by many other countries, including most of Latin America. In the years that followed, Cuba's new exports to poor countries included doctors, health care and literacy programs. At one time Cuba had more doctors in developing countries than the entire United Nations, including in Haiti before the 2010 earthquake. I personally saw Cuban doctors establish clinics in remote provinces of Venezuela. Cuban literacy efforts were also widely admired and many poor Latin American countries used literacy programs originally developed in Cuba.

I met Fidel just once. In 1996, our Pastors for Peace group was invited to a celebration thanking us for bringing 300 personal computers for use in their widespread system of medical clinics. He sat and talked with us into the night. If only he could have talked to all Americans as he talked to us that night. We remembered Fidel when we were invited in 2013 to a celebration marking the 60 years since the attack on Moncada Barracks, the beginning of the revolution. Sadly, Fidel, who was then ailing, could not be present. The leaders of many Latin American and Caribbean countries spoke that day. They said many things, and one said, "Fidel, you taught us not to be afraid."

Goodbye Fidel. We wish our government had not been an enemy of reform, and fervently hope that a new Republican administration will not destroy the ongoing thawing of the U.S.-Cuban relationship begun under President Obama.

Vic Vinkey is a member of the ROCLA Steering Committee and has visited Cuba several times with Pastors for Peace. ■



U of R students seek to create "Sanctuary Campus"

By Melissa Holloway, Riva Yeo and David Markakis

The movement for a sanctuary campus at the University of Rochester began in November 2016, when an ad hoc committee of both students and faculty members began meeting regularly to discuss how the university currently handles and supports undocumented students, how changes to federal policy may pose threats to these students and to pinpoint what actions the University of Rochester administration could take to address these threats to protect undocumented students. While approximately 28 campuses have declared themselves "Sanctuary Campuses," and some 100 are in the process of exploring such actions, the term "Sanctuary Campus" varies in its use at different U.S. campuses. At the University of Rochester, we define it as a campus that uses all lawful means to protect the lives and identities of its undocumented students.

We then drafted and circulated a petition to members of the university community and the Greater Rochester community. The petition makes eleven demands specific to the University of Rochester. Among the demands are a public declaration of the university as a sanctuary campus, expansion of financial and administrative resources

provided for undocumented students given certain changes to federal policy, accommodations for students in case they are forced to leave the country, and a pledge to practice as little cooperation with federal immigration authorities as legally possible.

At this writing, the composition of those signing the petition indicates that support for this initiative is widespread: 645 students, 102 faculty members, 263 alumni, 49 staff members, 49 community members, and 26 family members. Community support is still growing—many Rochester activists are hoping to push the City to implement sanctuary policies as well, and the University group is making contact with many different supportive individuals and organizations. The University administration is very open to discussing the demands outlined in the petition, as they are generally supportive of our undocumented student population. However, the administration is currently reluctant to make any public political statements or declarations. We plan to continue to pressure the administration to make a public statement.

Right now, it is important that we build alliances on this issue, and Rochester activists/individuals and organizations can show support by contacting us to strengthen the coalition in the community. Email mhollow3@u.rochester.edu for more information, or to sign the petition, go to https://docs.google.com/a/u.rochester.edu/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeTz0naI2XliCmJ2OJLGv8LQnGIKNF9GqsIi_nMGUjah1nulg/viewform.

The authors are University of Rochester students working on the Sanctuary Campus initiative. ■

February ROCLA Program: The U.S. Elections – what they mean for Latin America

Wednesday, February 1, 7pm
Downtown United Presbyterian Church
121 North Fitzhugh Street, Rochester
Free of charge *

ROCLA had planned this program before the November 8th elections, but now we know the results! On February 1, Donald Trump will already be president.

Latin America is always affected by U.S. foreign policy. We will hear two experts give us their analyses of what the people of Latin America can expect to see in the next few years.

SUNY Geneseo professors Dr. Ryan Jones (history) and Dr. Karleen West (political science) will share their knowledge and their expertise with us.

Save the date for this important program!

*wheelchair accessible; looped for the hearing impaired

ROCLA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Your membership supports ROCLA's work!

By Kathy Goforth, ROCLA Treasurer

We are pleased to report that as of January 1, 2017, ROCLA has gained 8 new members in 2016, as well as several new friends and newsletter readers.

Maybe some of us are still in the winter and election doldrums, but we need you, our faithful members, to step up! So far we have received dues from only 55 members, a total of \$2,440, since we sent out ROCLA's fall membership renewal appeal in October. That leaves us very short for the coming year.

We use your membership donations to further the work of 20-plus organizations and individuals working for justice, democracy and human rights on the front lines in Latin America and the Caribbean. Your membership contributions also help underwrite our monthly programs on critical issues related to Latin America, including travel funds and honoraria for our speakers, and bring ROCLA's White Dove Award winners to Rochester to share their incredible work and stories. And, as a member, you receive our quarterly newsletter and invitations to various events, including ROCLA's Annual Rice & Beans fundraising dinner.

Please do your share to keep ROCLA alive and well, and begin or renew your membership – still only \$30 – now. We are counting on you!

Make your tax-deductible check payable to MJEF/ROCLA and mail it to Kathy Goforth, 45 Lynbrook Drive, Rochester, NY 14609.

Thank you for your continuing support! ■

METRO JUSTICE EDUCATION FUND
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ROCLA UPDATE ON THE
AMERICAS

HELP KEEP ROCLA'S WEBSITE CURRENT!

ROCLA has an informative website (see: <http://rocla.us/>) where webmaster Jim Bearden posts current information about Latin America on an ongoing basis, as well as announcements of programs and other news. If you have information, articles or action opportunities about Latin America that you believe may be of interest to ROCLA members, please email the link or content to Jim at: jeb.bearden@gmail.com. ■

SIGN UP FOR ROCLA'S EMAIL LISTSERVE!

When you sign up for ROCLA's email list, you will receive your newsletter earlier than the print version and in color, and ROCLA will save the cost of paper and postage. To sign up for the ROCLA e-mail list, please go to www.rocla.us and **click on "Subscribe to ROCLA Email."** Then enter your name and email address and click on **"Subscribe."** Stay informed about ROCLA programs, upcoming events and urgent actions! ■

ROCLA

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1973, the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA) seeks to build bridges between the Rochester, NY, community and the people of Latin America. Through its monthly presentations, speakers, films, and quarterly newsletters, ROCLA educates local residents about the culture, economics and politics of the countries of Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean and the ways globalization, U.S. trade and drug-war policies impact the lives of their people. ROCLA also supports the work of frontline organizations involved in working for justice and democracy in the global south, including the Latin America Solidarity Committee (LASC), Nicanet, Committee in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador (CISPES), Network In Solidarity with the people of Guatemala (NISGUA), Rights Action and the Pastors for Peace Cuba Friendshipment. We also encourage our members and others to advocate for U.S. policies that support human rights and reverse the often oppressive history of U.S. involvement in Latin America. Annually, ROCLA presents its international and local White Dove Awards for outstanding leadership and service in the cause of human rights in Latin America.

Steering Committee Marilyn Anderson, Paola Betchart, Kathy Goforth, Bob and Marilyn Kaiser, Grania Marcus, Arnie Matlin, Lew Montemaggi, Peter and Gail Mott, Esperanza Roncero, Vic Vinkey, Tom Ward • **Publishing Team** Editor: Grania Marcus, Designer: Jim Anderson