

Ethnography of an Anti-Racist Collaboration

PCUN and ROP's ten-year relationship has contributed to numerous victories for immigrant and farm worker rights, as well as greater consciousness among white, rural activists around what it means to provide solidarity as anti-racist allies. Ramón Ramírez calls the partnership "a two-way street," in contrast to many "predominantly white organizations that try to dictate what the needs of our community are" and coalitions where the involvement of groups of color was "an afterthought."

Now, thanks to participation in the Leaders for a Changing World project, this relationship will be the subject of an in-depth ethnographic study. Extensive interviews with members will reveal their understanding of the relationship between the two groups, how they interpret the concept of anti-racist or anti-homophobic solidarity organizing, and how that translates into their approach to activism.

Leadership for a Changing World:

Award Program Recognizes Friends of Western States

The leaders of three organizations in Western States Center's network have won prestigious Leadership for a Changing World awards from the Ford Foundation. Chosen from more than 1,300 nominations, each will receive \$115,000 to advance their work over the next two years. The program also includes a multi-year research initiative that works with awardees to explore how leadership is created and sustained. Views congratulates our region's winners:

Montana Human Rights Network

Christine Kaufmann, raised a Mennonite with a commitment to justice and service, and Ken Toole, a multi-generation Montanan, worked together to build the Montana Human Rights Network into an organization of over 1,400 members and 10 local groups. MHRN promotes the democratic values of pluralism, equality, and justice; challenges bigotry and intolerance; and organizes communities to speak out. Their strategy is to talk with community leaders, then build coalitions across constituent groups, encouraging them to form local human rights groups. Christine and Ken — both of whom serve in the Montana legislature — say, "Speaking to people's values, whether one-on-one or in a public setting, and seeing that people can be reached on that basis, makes us realize that the democratic values which motivate us are widely shared."



Ramón Ramírez

Ramón Ramírez was born and raised in East Los Angeles. Inspired by the work of César Chavez and Dolores Huerta, he became active in the Chicano movement's opposition to the Vietnam War at the age of 15 and later joined the Chicano and farmworker movements. Reluctantly becoming the president of PCUN after the sudden death of co-founder

Cipriano Ferrel in 1995, Ramón says he leads the farmworker union "by involving and relying on my fellow workers and leaders, by challenging others to assume their share of responsibility — and by recalling the examples of leaders like Cipriano, who led with great dignity, humility, and honesty." Accomplishments include defeating repressive legislation through a strong immigrant rights coalition, and building 108 units of affordable housing and the Cipriano Ferrel Education Center, a Head Start and multi-purpose education facility.

Ramón Ramírez is chair of the board of Western States Center.

Marcy Westerling

Marcy Westerling grew up listening to her father's



stories of his adolescence in Nazi-occupied Holland, where his family hid Jews in their home. Marcy vowed never to hesitate to do her part in fighting back. Since founding the Rural Organizing Project in 1992, Marcy has lent support to "human dignity groups" in over 50 rural communities and small towns in Oregon. Drawing on the American tradition of the small town church or grange, these groups engage people in face-to-face political discussion, channel action and give voice to progressive rural citizens. "I love being able to affirm people's values while helping them to develop their skills, analysis, and commitment to become proud, progressive leaders," Marcy says.

