

# **A Beautiful Story About a Great Relationship! Spring 2012**

## **Chapter 1: Cocinas Sanas (Healthy Kitchen Project)**

Once upon a time, there was a grass roots organization committed to transforming harmful, unsustainable attitudes and conditions surrounding immigrant farm work in Whatcom County. Their program desperately needed a kitchen for some of their work until one day, in 2010, they found a home at BUF. The purpose of the Cocinas Sanas is to promote good nutrition through healthy eating habits among Latino farm worker families throughout Whatcom County. They do this work one Saturday a month in the BUF kitchen where C2C staff, volunteers, and farm worker families cook together and offer community and support to each other at the same time. Instruction is provided to extend the farm workers' knowledge of the basic principles of nutrition, health, traditional cultural foods, recipes and practices, and responsibly grown local food. The program has also used the BUF kitchen to make and sell traditional tamales at Christmas time.

## **Chapter 2: Community Events & Marches & Protests**

Long long ago in 2005, BUF had its very first chance to work with C2C in their early efforts to transform the conditions of farm work and food production in Whatcom County. We collaborated with them to protest the minute-man presence and behavior on our Northern border through rallies and testimony. We went on to participate in marches/rallies/picketing, showed films, held classes, initiated writing campaigns, supported human rights conferences, walked in support of food justice and humane detention, hosted workshops and summits with officials, held Sunday services, and participated in conferences with representatives, all in support of food justice and immigrant/worker rights. Through this work, we have built a strong cornerstone for our growing partnership with C2C. One special opportunity we have had every year is to participate in C2C's annual Cesar Chavez potluck community event.

## **Chapter 3: Food Justice**

Bringing us to a more recent time in our story, the BUF Green Sanctuary Team (GST) began exploring how we could partner C2C on food justice issues. GST is currently designing a food justice program titled "What's on YOUR Plate?" As part of our process GST has met with C2C's Rosalinda Guillen to learn how they are involved in food justice issues, and so far GST has identified two ways to assist: first, include farm workers into conversations about local food systems and make their views visible. In many instances, farm workers, the value of their contributions, and the challenges of their working conditions are left out of conversations about food systems. Secondly, C2C is very involved in the creation of the national Domestic Fair Trade standards that were finalized in December. As this program rolls out and farmers begin to look into the feasibility of being certified, we can help bring awareness to the standards and build consumer interest in certified products. This is just the beginning of the food justice partnership possibilities.

## **Chapter 4: Immigrant Rights in Action**

We continue our story with information about our shared partnership between BUF's Immigrant Action ministry team and the Immigrant Solidarity committee from C2C. In the past 4 years, we have shared many projects and activities that focus on our common goal of improving lives for immigrants in Whatcom County: co-sponsoring events such as David Bacon's presentation, Immigrant Justice Summit, and immigrant rights film series. We have participated in their Worker's Marches, and worked with them in fundraising for Cesar Chavez event and dinner for workers at Yamato Motors, jailed in the ICE raid. We have shared a postcard campaign for immigrant reform at the national level, a letter writing campaign to Wells Fargo to pull out of financing the Tacoma Detention Center and shared a political meeting with C2C at Rick Larsen's office to express our concerns on legislation affecting immigrants. We are currently involved with C2C in developing a citizenship class for Latinos who have legal permanent residence.

## **Chapter 5: Programs for Young People**

Our story wouldn't be complete without some young people to be a part of it. C2C has always valued work with young people, and has developed dedicated programming, just as we have at BUF, to enrich, educate, support, and foster the development of young people. The focus of their work has been with lower-income young people of color. Their largest program is the Raices Culturales Youth Mentoring Project, which provides musical, writing, poetry, dance, yoga, nutrition and Spanish language development opportunities for young people. Cocinas Sanas also provides healthy physical activity and nutrition education opportunities for the children who come to this program with their families. Some of C2C's new youth initiatives include food justice community gardening for youth, developing youth leadership through reports and presentations related to the racial profiling campaign, registering high school seniors to vote, and working with the Health Department on assessing the best ways to serve pregnant Latina teens. Though there has not been joint programming developed for the young people of BUF and C2C, our formalized partnership may encourage the development of such programming in the longer-term future, which would provide a multi-cultural experience for young people in both organizations.

## **Chapter 6: Justice**

A good story always has to have a solid foundation. Such cornerstones of our social justice work at BUF are reflected by the cooperative work of Community to Community: equal rights for people of color and women, and economic justice for all. Five of the six goals set forth in C2C's mission are: 1) Empower under-represented peoples to have an equal voice in decision-making processes; 2) Develop cross-cultural awareness; 3) Promote community relationships towards self-reliance; 4) Work in solidarity with those that strive towards human rights for all; 5) Rescue the value of feminine intellect and leadership. These goals are reflected in C2C's organizational leadership by women of color, their programs detailed in previous chapters that are hands-on and community-based, and movement building. In their movement building work, C2C "works to identify common goals and actions among people from marginalized communities....We strive for solutions with dynamic participatory processes with equity that will guide our communities beyond the shifting of power and towards system transformations." First on the agenda, C2C has

asked for our help in transforming food production in Whatcom County to integrate sustainability and social & economic justice into every aspect of this system. Many other opportunities for us to put our values in practice will surely follow.

*History written by Kara Black, Spring 2012*