

La Navidad Jornalera

POR CÉSAR MEZA

"Mi nombre es José T., soy originario de Honduras. Llegué a este país hace cuatro años en busca del "sueño americano," aquél donde vemos a nuestras familias salir de la pobreza, vivir dignamente, tener un recho y un plato en la mesa.

Pero todos sabemos que este sueño no es fácil, la vida en este país es dura y solitaria, que los trabajos no son fáciles de conseguir; y nuestra situación migratoria lo hace aún más difícil. Es por eso que somos Jornaleros y nos esforzamos día a día por una oportunidad de trabajo, parados en las esquinas.

Somos mano de obra obediente, voluntaria, respetuosa y accesible. Al mismo tiempo, somos vulnerables ante los abusos de tantas personas que nos contratan y luego no nos pagan, nos ponen a hacer trabajos peligrosos sin ninguna protección; nos quieren pagar menos de lo acordado, o simplemente cuando ellos, como patrones, quieren. Yo creo que aquí todos tenemos historias para contar.

Es aquí donde el programa de Jornaleros del Instituto Multicultural se acerca a nosotros y nos ofrece apoyo y nos da la seguridad de no estar solos. Que hay un grupo de buenos samaritanos que verdaderamente se interesan por cada uno de nosotros. Que nos conocen a todos por nuestro nombre".

Desde hace 26 años el Instituto Multicultural (MI), ha apoyado a jornaleros como José en las ciudades de Berkeley, Richmond y North Fair Oaks. El programa de jornaleros, de manera combinada, ofrece servicios a más de 800 jornaleros anualmente. Estos servicios incluyen la búsqueda de empleos, vivienda, talleres informativos, clases de computación, GED, atención médica y legal; etc. El modelo usado por el MI es único en el país. Fiel a su misión, el personal del MI sale al encuentro y acompaña a los jornaleros que día a día llegan con la esperanza de encontrar trabajo en las calles.

Acercándose Diciembre una de las preguntas habituales es, ¿cuándo es la fiesta de Navidad? Dentro de la cultura Latina, la Navidad es la fiesta anual de la familia por excelencia. Para los inmigrantes cuyas familias no están en los Estados Unidos, la

Navidad puede ser un momento de soledad y de añoranza de los seres queridos. Para palpear esa carencia emocional, el MI prepara y celebra cada año la Navidad Jornalera. Celebración que consta de una comida caliente, regalos y rifas. Es una forma festiva de decirles a los jornaleros que no están solos.

Invitamos a la comunidad a ser parte de esta hermosa celebración. Para ser voluntario, hacer donativos en efectivo, o en especie puede comunicarse a los siguientes números telefónicos: (510) 847-8714 (Berkeley); (510) 847-1479 (Richmond); (650) 339-2794 (North Fair Oaks/Redwood City).

Fechas de la Navidad Jornalera: 20 de Diciembre en North Fair Oaks/Redwood City; 21 de Diciembre en Berkeley; 22 de Diciembre en Richmond.

"My name is Jose T., I am from Honduras. I came to this country four years ago in search of the American Dream, in which we can bring our families out of poverty, live with dignity, provide food and shelter.

But we all know that this dream is not easy and that life in this country is harsh and lonely, the jobs are not easy to get and our legal status makes it harder on us. That is why we are Day Laborers and we make a daily effort, Monday through Sunday, for a job opportunity whether it be standing on the corners.

As Day laborers we are a working hand that is respectful, kind and accessible.

But at the same time we are vulnerable to the abuse by many people that need us to work and do not pay us or they will have us working in dangerous conditions without any kind of protection. They will try to

underpay us from the original deal, or pay us when they want, simply because they are the employers. I believe that we all have stories to tell here.

But here is where the Day laborer program of the Multicultural Institute come to us and offer their support that give us a sense of security, that we are not alone.

That there is a group of Samaritan's that truly takes interest in us that know us all by name."

BY CESAR MEZA (TRANSLATION BY OSCAR MACHAS)

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For 26 years, the Multicultural Institute (MI) has served many day laborers, such as Jose, in the cities of Berkeley, Richmond, and North Fair Oaks. All sites combined, the day laborer programs of MI provide a variety of services to more than 800 day laborers on an annual basis. These services include search for employment, housing, educational workshops, computer classes, GED prep, medical and legal services, etc. The model that MI follows is unique in the country. We do not rely on any one location or work centers. Staying faithful to our mission, MI staff takes to street to meet and accompany the day laborers who arrive every day with the hope of finding work on the corners.

As December nears, the same question always arises: when will we have the Christmas party? Within Latino culture, Christmas is the prime holiday for family gatherings. For those immigrants who do not have any family in the United States, Christmas can be a very lonely and nostalgic time. In an effort to brighten up the season, MI organizes an annual Christmas celebration, *Navidad Jornalera*.

This celebration includes a lunch, presents, and a raffle. This event is a festive way to demonstrate day laborers that they are not alone.

We invite community members to take part in this beautiful Christmas celebration. In order to volunteer, make cash or in kind donations, please call the following numbers: (510) 847-8714 (Berkeley); (510) 847-1479 (Richmond); (650) 339-2794 (North Fair Oaks/Redwood City). Dates for Navidad Jornalera: December 20 in North Fair Oaks/Redwood City; December 21 in Berkeley; and December 22 in Richmond.

