



THE INTAKE

Your Contributions to Justice at Work
Issue 13, Volume 1

Solidarity Through Sport

JUSTICE AT
WORK

Last month, Building Justice, a worker committee formed by the Brazilian Worker Center and Justice at Work to combat wage theft, hosted its first ever "Soccer and Solidarity." The committee, made of workers from construction, cleaning, and maintenance industries, brought fellow workers, worker center staff, and friends and family together for a day of recreation and fun. MassCOSH, Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores, Pioneer Valley Worker Center, Cosecha, and Justice at Work came out to present our respective work and play in a co-ed tournament. The Building Justice team took home the trophy, but we all felt like winners.

“It’s so important to enjoy a day of leisure and fun in order to get to know other groups made up of people who share our values.”

- Helio Moreira,
Building Justice member

First Ever Law for Worker Centers

Your support brings attorneys together to learn from each other and organizers

Earlier this spring, you enabled us to hold our first ever Law for Worker Centers convening in partnership with the National Legal Advocacy Network (NLAN), a key national ally. Lawyers from legal aid agencies, private firms and law school clinics, who represent worker organizations and/or their members within this region, joined worker center leaders for a day of team building exercises, large group sessions, and breakouts. Topics included using litigation to support organizing, counseling workers and organizers taking direct action, and obtaining immigration relief for workers experiencing labor and immigration rights violations.

With your support, we plan to turn the Boston-based Law for Worker Centers into a tradition, while working with national partners like NLAN to participate in something similar for folks from around the country.



“Getting to hear from other advocates who represent worker center members was really helpful. One thing we’ll do now is ask workers about potential workers’ comp claims.”

- Reena Parikh, founding director of Boston College Law School's Civil Rights Clinic

Cleaning Worker Wins Backpay & More

You helped ensure that labor law works.

Zoe Abreu worked arduous hours cleaning an office building in Quincy. Her employer denied Zoe and her coworkers any vacation or paid sick leave, and failed to pay them the minimum wage when it was raised in January of 2021. Zoe and several co-workers voiced their concerns to a kind tenant who felt that they deserved better treatment. The tenant shared a letter discussing the hardships the workers faced with other tenants with the hope of raising the concerns with the property owner. Soon thereafter, Zoe was fired and lost her housing as a result.

Justice at Work learned of Zoe's situation and connected her with the Matahari Women Worker's Center, so she could receive support as we represented her before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Thanks to a brave co-worker who testified that Zoe was fired for "not keeping her mouth shut," the NLRB process led to a settlement that provided Zoe, who did not want to return to the same job, 100% of her backpay (the wages she lost due to the illegal firing), as well as consequential damages, including expenses she incurred for storage of her belongings. The NLRB under the Biden Administration has been pursuing consequential damages for workers as another way to hold employers accountable.

Today, Zoe's employer has lost their contract and a unionized cleaner has taken it on. Zoe's former co-workers now work for the new company and enjoy the benefits that come with union membership. Zoe's case is a testament to workers that through working together, change is possible.



“I exhort others to fight for their rights. We are not alone--there are people who are willing to help us. The road is not easy, but there is always a light at the end of the tunnel.”

- Zoe, alongside Justice at Work Senior Staff Attorney Pablo Carrasco.

Fifth Annual Summer Institute

You Allowed us to Train Organizers on how to Support Workers in Today's New Normal

Last month, with your support, we wrapped up our fifth annual Summer Institute: Worker Rights in Today's New Normal. Seventeen staff of eleven worker organizations from as far as Springfield, MA, and Bridgeport, CT, joined us for two in-person sessions in Boston and two Zoom sessions to practice law and organizing skills through role-play based workshops. When not playing different roles, such as worker, advocate and/or employer, participants shared their own stories and approaches and received presentations by our legal team. We focused on accessing paid time off and better work conditions as communities continue to struggle with COVID, while also using COVID to leverage worker voice.

“[A] support group that includes other organizations that work on behalf of employees provides other points of view and broadens our vision. The sessions were varied and entertaining which made us all attentive and engaged.

- Silvia Salinas, Connecticut Worker Center



Seafood Processors + Dairy Farmers

You are Building Worker Solidarity Across Industries

“I like how they visit the farms to talk to workers and make sure they are being treated well. Visiting workers is something that can be implemented in New Bedford by us members of Pescando Justicia.”

-Antonio Sam, Pescando Justicia member



In July, nineteen worker members of Pescando Justicia, along with staff from Justice at Work and the Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores, traveled from New Bedford to Burlington, Vermont to meet with members of Milk With Dignity. As Pescando Justicia organizes on the Southcoast to improve conditions in the seafood processing industry (see our Spring newsletter), they have found inspiration from Milk With Dignity, a Worker-Driven Social Responsibility model in which the dairy farmers' code of conduct has been enforced through pressure on corporate buyers such as Ben & Jerry's. During the course of the overnight trip, the dairy farmers described how they live on isolated ranches, dependent on their employers for housing, and how they have overcome their fears and are now pressuring Hannaford supermarkets to join Milk With Dignity. Thanks to your support, Pescando Justicia left energized and poised to incorporate the new learning in their ongoing efforts.



DANCE FOR JUSTICE XI

Friday October 7th

6pm-10pm

The Anchor

1 Shipyard Park

Charlestown, MA 02129

Featuring live music from Kina Zoré and Manolo Mairena y Su Pura Vida. Dance classes and performances!

Purchase your ticket at

<https://jatwork.org/11th-annual-dance-for-justice/>

or use the enclosed RSVP card.

Contact info@jatwork.org or (857) 242-1165 for more info

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