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NEA honors Migrant Justice with its César Chávez Acción Y Compromiso Award *Annual gala also marks 50th anniversary of the NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner*

BOSTON—For its efforts and success in establishing a safe and fair working environment for immigrant workers in Vermont, especially in this time of fear and uncertainty for many immigrant families, NEA has awarded Migrant Justice the prestigious [NEA Cesar Chavez Accion y Compromiso Human and Civil Rights Award](#).

“César Chávez notably said ‘If you want to remember me, organize.’ Migrant Justice embodies his spirit and carries his torch forward,” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. “Migrant Justice is organizing farmworkers to address the challenges they face and bringing about systemic change to improve and advance their fundamental human rights. They are a national model for their cutting-edge human rights organizing and concrete victories. Migrant Justice motivates us, inspires us through their deeds and actions, and embodies what is just and right about César Chávez.”

Migrant Justice is a Vermont-based, worker-led organization that fights for the rights and dignity of immigrant dairy workers. In 2014, Migrant Justice organized a broad coalition to pass state legislation that explicitly prohibits Vermont police from using resources for the purposes of immigration enforcement. Migrant Justice also is expanding its Milk with Dignity Campaign by calling on Vermont’s Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream, a major consumer of the Vermont dairy industry, to take responsibility for abuses of farmworkers’ rights.

“Migrant workers who put in long, hard days on our state’s farms deserve fair wages, fair benefits, and dignified treatment,” said Martha Allen, a K-12 librarian from Canaan, Vt., who serves as the president of Vermont-NEA. “As fellow Vermonters, these hard-working people are more than just the folks who literally put food on our tables, they are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, daughters, sons, husbands, wives – they are our friends. Please know that as fellow working people – as fellow Vermonters – we stand with you in your fight for dignity, fairness, and power. We also want to tell Donald Trump’s ICE that in Vermont, our message is simple: All, I repeat, all, are welcome here.”

NEA first presented the group with the award in March, during unprecedented federal raids and crackdowns on outspoken immigrant activists. Although NEA’s awards always have been reserved for presentation during the annual July dinner, [NEA took the unprecedented step to show support for the two Migrant Justice leaders](#) who were arrested by federal immigration agents during Trump administration’s roundup of high-profile activists, and for the hundreds Migrant Justice supporters who rallied for their release in Boston.

“When Donald Trump’s ICE targets immigrant community leaders for arrest, he is targeting workers’ rights to organize,” said dairy worker David Diaz, a member of Migrant Justice’s Farmworker Coordinating Committee. “This tremendous show of solidarity from the National Education Association strengthens our resolve to continue to fight for a dairy industry free from human rights abuses.”

Migrant Justice is among the 12 human and civil rights heroes recognized by NEA at its 2017 Human and Civil Rights Awards on Saturday, July 1 in Boston. To view more information about Migrant Justice, please click [here](#).

To read Migrant Justice's full bio, please click [here](#). Watch this [video](#) of Migrant Justice as they fight for the rights and dignity of migrants working on Vermont dairy farms.

Since 1967, NEA has recognized and honored those heroes who have fought – and continue to fight – for human and civil rights. This year, NEA honored the outstanding work of [12 of America's social justice](#) heroes at its annual Human and Civil rights Awards Dinner, a moving and inspiring gala, on July 1 in Boston.

NEA also recognized the [anniversary of its merger with the American Teachers Association](#), which represented black teachers in segregated schools. ATA originally created the Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner, and, as part of the merger, NEA continues this tradition 50 years later.

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