

# ROCLA UPDATE ON THE AMERICAS

A PUBLICATION OF THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

## ROCLA

### MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1973, the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA) seeks to build bridges between the Rochester, NY, community and the people of Latin America. Through its monthly presentations, speakers, films, and quarterly newsletters, ROCLA educates local residents about the culture, economics and politics of the countries of Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean and the ways globalization, US trade and drug-war policies impact the lives of their people. ROCLA also supports the work of frontline organizations involved in working for justice and democracy in the global south, including the Latin America Solidarity Committee (LASC), Nicanet, Committee in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador (CISPES), Network In Solidarity with the people of Guatemala (NISGUA), Rights Action and the Pastors for Peace Cuba Friendshipment. We also encourage our members and others to advocate for US policies that support human rights and reverse the often oppressive history of US involvement in Latin America. Annually, ROCLA presents its international and local White Dove Awards for outstanding leadership and service in the cause of human rights in Latin America.

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**Caravanista Ream Kidane (back row, fourth from left) with Cuban kids.**

## NEWS FROM THE 2013 CUBA FRIENDSHIPMENT CARAVAN

by Ream Kidane

On August 1, 2013, over 60 *caravanistas*, American, Canadian and Mexican, returned home from the 24<sup>th</sup> IFCO/Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba. For some, it was our first Caravan. Others had been on the Caravan since the first one back in 1993. For all, it was an incredible experience that we will be sharing with our friends and fellow activists in the communities where we live.

In past years, Caravans have taken several buses across the United States, stopping in host cities, raising money and collecting supplies, and picking up *caravanistas* along the way. *Caravanistas* would cross the Texas/Mexico border together and return together. This year was different. We all met in Mexico City, bringing our supplies with us in backpacks and returning to our respective cities alone or in small groups.

We began our journey in Mexico City, at the Cooperativo Pancho Villa, a community that was established by a small group of mostly women, squatting on the land and building a thriving settlement. One of more than 20 such settlements across the country, the movement is founded on the principles of anti-capitalism, autonomy and independent organization. The members of the community not only welcomed us with open arms, but were a great inspiration as they shared their stories of establishing their community against overwhelming odds, including the continuing opposition of the Mexican government. They have built permanent and safe housing where slums existed before. They have built sewage, electricity and water systems from scratch. No weapons are allowed on the premises and on the rare occasion when police are allowed to enter, they are obliged to leave their guns and cars outside. No one is ever turned away who is looking for housing. They defend the members of their community both in-

(Continued page 2)



## ROCLA'S SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

### TALES OF THE 2013 CUBA CARAVAN

VIC VINKEY  
& REAM  
KIDANE WILL  
SHARE THEIR  
EXPERIENCES

WEDNESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 4  
7PM, DUPC

URGENT  
ACTION

## DEFEND TRAVEL TO CUBA!

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government approved the Fiscal Year 2014 Financial Services bill on July 17, 2013, which includes legislation that will attempt to eliminate educational exchanges with Cuba that are not "for-credit" or in pursuit of an academic degree. This will end the

(Continued page 2)

**CARAVAN** (Continued from page 1)

side and outside their settlement using nonviolent means. They are organized at every level through an extensive democratic structure. They regularly mobilize to hold demonstrations to make demands on the Mexican government. One such demonstration took place with members of our Caravan led by Rev. Luis Barrios, performing an "exorcism" at the US embassy in Mexico City.

From there, we left for Havana. While in Havana we met with the families of the Cuban 5, who are being held in the US for attempting to thwart terrorist attacks organized by counterrevolutionary Cuban exile groups based in the US. Their case is emblematic of the efforts of US-based intelligence groups to undermine Cuban sovereignty. The struggle to free the Cuban 5 has been central to Cuba solidarity movements across the US and Canada.

As we traveled across the island from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, the reception that we received in every city we visited defied any expectations. We were met with warmth and hospitality and exposed to the rich history of Cuba, from the struggle for independence from Spain, to the revolution that ousted the dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and the struggle to maintain the gains of the revolution against the illegal and immoral blockade by the US.

While in Santiago, we learned of the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy and the efforts to rebuild. We helped plant trees and dig up land for constructing new housing. We were immersed in Cuban culture and music. Although just 90 miles away, most Americans remain unaware of the impact that Cuba has had on the world. The health care and educational systems are a model for what can be done with little resources.

This year marked a significant anniversary, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the July 26<sup>th</sup> attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba that signaled the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. It was clear that this event was a profound inspiration to nations all across Latin America and the Caribbean. As one speaker at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration put it, "there was the world before Moncada, and the world after Moncada."

Cubans will openly admit that theirs is not a Utopian society, but there is a profound difference in their vision of what a better society could look like. The central question that we face today, in a world torn apart by economic crisis, is what kind of world do we want to build? A world that serves to meet the needs of human beings, or a world that serves the needs of profit? Cubans have made an important contribution to this dialogue. For Americans, the fight to end the embargo, to defend the right to self-determination for Cuba, and the fight to free the Cuban 5 should be a part of our own struggle for better world. ■

**URGENT** (Continued from page 1)

people-to-people cultural education exchanges that have been taking place since President Obama eased sanctions on travel to the island nation. Continuing these exchanges can help pave the way to eventually unite families torn by the travel ban and embargo and enable Americans to provide aid to Cubans in need.

We have a chance to act early and push our legislators to amend the bill before it goes to the House floor. Write and urge them to stand with the President and defend person-to-person educational travel to Cuba! ■

**SUPPORT REAL IMMIGRATION REFORM IN THE HOUSE!**

On July 30, 2013, the Greater Rochester Coalition for Immigration Justice and the Worker Justice Center of NY held a rally and vigil with members of 37 diverse organizations from throughout Western NY, including ROCLA, at the Batavia Federal Detention Center in Batavia, NY. This facility is where those arrested for alleged immigration law violations and asylum-seekers are held. Farmworkers, community members, religious leaders, advocates, and lawyers demanded real immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for

all, equal protection and due process of law, family unity, humane treatment of immigrants, a moratorium on deportations and dropping the Senate immigration bill (S. 744) enforcement provisions that will double the number of Border Patrol officers and sharply increase the militarization of both the Southern and Northern borders. Call and write your Representative to oppose the current House immigration bills that do not provide a path to citizenship. You can find your Representative here: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/> ■

**LUIS BARRIOS, ACTIVIST PRIEST, SPEAKS IN ROCHESTER SEPTEMBER 28!**

Dr. Luis Barrios, the Co-Director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, an Episcopal priest at St. Mary's Church in West Harlem, NY, and Chair of the Department of Latin American Studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, will speak on Race in Immigration Politics and Policy

on Saturday 28th, 2013, at the Workers United Hall, 750 East Avenue, Rochester, at 7 PM.

As a scholar and native of Puerto Rico, Dr. Barrios has done extensive study and work regarding immigration policy and practice, including the effects on families of U.S. deportations (Continued page 3)

## LUIS BARRIOS

(Continued from page 2)  
to the Dominican Republic and on the exploitation of Haitians on the Haitian/Dominican border. He has also published two books on gangs.

Dr. Barrios is a leading exponent of liberation theology and a former prisoner of conscience for challenging the U.S. Army's School of the Americas. As co-director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace with Gail Walker, daughter of the founder of Pastors for Peace, he has led several Friendship Caravans to Cuba challenging the US blockade and bringing life-saving medicines and medical equipment.

His wide-ranging scholarly work, international perspective, personal activism and faith commitments make him uniquely qualified to discuss the role of race in immigration politics and policy.

Please join ROCLA in welcoming Dr. Barrios to Rochester!

For more information: Grania Marcus, 917-579-0199 or grania\_marcus@yahoo.com

Co-sponsored by the Greater Rochester Coalition for Immigration Justice (GRCIJ), Rural and Migrant Ministry (RMM), League of Women Voters-Rochester (LWV-RMA) and New York Civil Liberties Union, Genesee Valley Chapter (NYCLU-GV). Free and open to the public.

Dr. Barrios will also speak at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church forum at 10:00 AM on Sunday, September 29th, and will preach at the 11 AM worship service. ■



**Randall Shea, with students Edwin Canil Vicente and his cousin, Cesar Canil Xirum (top row, left to right), in 1993.**

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUATEMALA

*In his June 2013 Newsletter, Randall Shea of Guatemala Partners, which ROCLA has supported for many years, describes his students' involvement in preparing the case against former dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt, who was convicted on May 10, 2013, of genocide and crimes against humanity committed during the Guatemalan Civil War. Unfortunately, just 10 days later, Guatemala's Constitutional Court partially overturned the verdict. Excerpts from Randall Shea's report are reprinted here. [Ed. note]*

I am pleased and proud to report that [two] of my former students, Edwin Canil Vicente and Cesar Canil Xirum, have been working with the prosecution team in building the genocide case against [General Ríos Montt].

Edwin was only 6 years old on February 13, 1982, when his village was attacked by the Guatemalan army. He and his family fled into hiding in the surrounding rainforest.

Two days later, Edwin and his family heard army gunfire. As the Christian Science Monitor [later] report[ed]:

Canil's father and older brother went off to check on the army's whereabouts. Just minutes later, the soldiers found young Canil and the members of his family who had stayed behind. "I remember running, my parents told us what to do if the soldiers came so I ran," [Edwin] says. "I turned and saw one of my sisters running behind me but when I turned again she was no longer there."

Canil hid behind a tree trunk and peeked out once he heard no more gunfire. He says he saw that his mother had been struck in the face with a bullet. She had fallen with his eight-month-old sister in her arms. He watched from his hiding place as a soldier came, picked up the crying baby, and cut her open with his knife.

It wasn't until the following day that he was able to reunite with his father and the brother who had left before the soldiers came. "My father was so happy when he saw me and he asked 'Who else is alive?' 'No one,' I said. "Today I have a hard time understanding how I survived."

Cesar's sister María Isabel also was murdered in the massacre.

In 1994, shortly after [their] return to Santa María Tzejá from the Mexican refugee camp, [those] documenting cases of atrocities invited Edwin to give testimony about his case, and eventually he joined the efforts to document [the] cases of other human rights abuses. After their 1997 graduation from high school, both Edwin and Cesar went on to study law at the national university, the University of San Carlos.

In 2007, Edwin became a staff member in the legal department at the Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH) in Guatemala, a human rights organization where he continues as Coordinator today. [In helping to prepare the case against Ríos Montt, his role was to explain] the legal procedures to participants [and] work with expert witnesses including anthropologists, historians, a statistician, a military analyst, and psychologists; [He] also facilitat[ed] relationships between . . . witnesses, translators, mental health experts, international companions [and] logistics coordinators, and analyzed declassified military documents.

In 2008, Edwin's cousin Cesar joined him [at CALDH]. He began as a consultant working to help prepare the genocide case, and then became a case investigator before assuming his current position as Legal Advisor to CALDH. He has made many trips to the Ixil region of Guatemala and investigated 700 [complaints] filed by family members of the victims in that area.

Edwin sees the proceedings and the verdict as part of a process of working towards social justice and the rescue of the historical memory of the Mayan (Continued page 4)

## GUATEMALA

*(Continued from page 3)*  
people, and as a vital step forward, “so that events like these are never again repeated.” ... Cesar states that the trial “has legally demonstrated, in a well-founded manner, that Rios Montt was the intellectual author of the criminal organization which planned, authorized, ordered, and accepted actions that brought massacres and death, subjugation, and internal and external displacement of the Mayan people.” Edwin [and Cesar] agree that the verdict will help assure that “what happened under Rios Montt won’t be repeated against our children and grandchildren in the future.”

I spoke to Edwin’s father, Manuel Canil, just a few days ago and I asked him for his impressions. Manuel stated that, “It is a very dangerous and risky case to be involved with.” He then added, “Well really, it’s the work he was destined to do, when he stayed alive . . . I don’t know how he managed to hide and stay alive in that

massacre. Our war experience has shown us that many families suffered massacres, but in almost every case, there was always a survivor. And here, with us, Edwin got out alive, he escaped from death. Even back in 1982, I believed he would be called to do something special in his future. So we see him now involved in this genocide case.”

I asked Cesar to write a brief message for all of you who ... are supporters of our Santa María Tzejá education program. Cesar writes:

While it may be that we don’t know each other personally, I do consider you as FRIENDS, given the trust and confidence you have shown by sending economic educational support for young people of limited means in Santa María Tzejá. . . .

I want to thank you for the support you have given me to rise from the ashes of what was Santa María Tzejá. I am so pleased we now have the opportunity to contribute to the reconstruction of our country and help strengthen Guatemala as a democratic state living under the rule of law. ■



**Edwin Canil Vicente, Coordinator for the Legal Department at the Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH) in Guatemala.**



## HARVEST OF EMPIRE

**Thurs., September 19, 2013 - 6:15pm**  
**St. John Fisher College,**  
**Basil Auditorium (Basil Hall, Room 135)**  
**Q&A with the director, Eduardo López**  
**following the screening**

At a time of heated and divisive debate over immigration, the St. John Fisher Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Programs is proud to present *Harvest of Empire* (90 minutes in English and Spanish, with English subtitles) a feature-length documentary that examines the direct connection between the long history of U.S. intervention in Latin America and the role that U.S. economic and military interests played in triggering an unprecedented wave of migration that is transforming our nation’s cultural and economic landscape.

Based on the landmark book by award-winning journalist Juan González



Sponsored by  
The Greater Rochester  
Coalition for Immigration Justice.  
Free and open to the public.

**HONDURAS: NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE, NO POLITICAL FREEDOM**

Arianne Walker, a student at Canisius College, Buffalo, NY, accompanied Grahame Russell of Rights Action and others to Honduras in the spring of 2013. There, she saw first-hand the results of the June 2009 military coup that ousted democratically-elected President Manuel Zelaya. At the June 2013 ROCLA meeting, Grahame presented Rights Action's campaigns to support the people of the Aguan region, those protesting the mine in the Siria Valley and the Garifuna people who are losing their land to resort development, as well as others. Since 2009, the US has supported the coup government and legitimized the sham elections it has held. At the same time, assassinations, state repression and persecution of campesinos, journalists, clergy and community, union and opposition leaders, have reached levels not seen since the 1980s. Recently, 21 US Senators wrote to the State Department to express their concerns about the increasing human rights violations in Honduras. According to Rights Action, the current regime, which contains many of the coup actors, remains in power largely because of its political, economic and military ties to the US and Canada. For more information, see [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org). [Ed. note]



**Campesinos in the Aguan region are attempting to reclaim their lands from wealthy landowner Miguel Facussé Barjum, who has illegally and violently taken their lands to expand palm oil plantations.**

In recent years, Honduras' image to the world has been as "Murder Capital of the World," due to its high volume of deaths. Now that it is being associated with this term, the people of Honduras and the government are very bitter towards each other in certain regions of the country, especially in the countryside of the Aguan region.

After reading about all that was going on in Honduras, I wanted to explore and witness everything first hand. Through the generosity of ROCLA and LASC (the Latin America Solidarity Committee), I was able to make my way down there for a very unforgettable experience accompanying Grahame Russell of Rights Action. This was the first time I have ever traveled to a Central American country. Nothing could have prepared me for what I saw: People are dying because of the natural resources of their homeland. There were a few things that struck me the most while I was learning about the injustices that are happening there. These injustices are particularly severe in the Siria Valley, the Aguan region, and an

area named Triunfo de la Cruz, which is a small section in the Caribbean north coast of Tela, Honduras.

We went to the Siria Valley to learn what was going on in the mining areas.

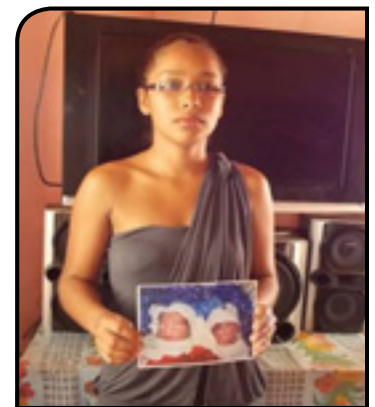
After driving around through small neighborhoods, we came upon a very big and black hill that looked as if it was dried out. Grahame explained to us that this hill used to have vegetation on it, but due to the mining materials it was no longer the same. I learned that the mining companies sprayed that area with cyanide so the gold will separate from the ground and run down into their make-shift catchers. The cyanide also seeped into their water system in the neighborhoods and the people of the Siria Valley were drinking cyanide and didn't even know it. Drinking cyanide can, of course, lead to many health problems and can even result in death.

We met a young woman who drank the water while she was pregnant with twins and went into early labor causing her babies to die shortly after

they were born. She also explained that they did tests on her when she was younger and never gave her the results of those tests. While driving around, we encountered more people who had defects due to the water and the fumes. We met some children and adults that had skin discoloration and painful rashes all over their bodies. They explained that the pain was unbearable and that they couldn't even get the medication for it because it was too expensive. The people of the Siria Valley try to help each other get over the injustices that they face together even long after the mining companies have packed their bags.

The Aguan Region is the region of Honduras that is in the news the most because that is where most of the killings occur. Rich landowner, Miguel Facussé Barjum, has been terrorizing the people of Honduras by taking

*(Continued on page 6)*



**Carol lives in the village of El Pedernal, Siria Valley, beside an open-pit mine. Chronic health problems beset the region. At the age of 19, Carol's twin babies were born prematurely and died within 4 minutes of birth. Tests found she had dangerous levels of lead, arsenic and mercury in her blood.**

their land and ordering the deaths of many *campesinos*. Innocent people are dying and being put in jail over African palm oil trees, one of the biggest exports now. The lands where they are planting these trees used to be owned by the *campesinos*, but little by little the government and landowners are claiming that land and forcefully removing the people living on it. Recently, the 103rd and 104th *campesinos* were killed in the Aguan Region since 2010. Crime there has really escalated and things have not gotten better.

Another region that we visited is named Triunfo de la Cruz where the indigenous Garifuna people live. Miguel Facussé Barjum has also been taking their lands to help build resorts and areas for the rich people to stay. He and his henchmen (death squads) built a wall going right through their territory and, when the Garifuna people tried to take it down, they were shot and killed. The Garifuna people were very humble and welcoming. The time spent with them was my favorite part of the trip. The people were very friendly. While in the community I took a walk and started to question more things. How could someone be so selfish? How could someone be so full of greed to want to displace families for money? Why would someone take over their lands? The answer to that question is in order to plant oil palms, and also to expand tourism. The displacement of families and killing people for money is simply immoral. Everything that I saw on this trip only gave me more fuel to add to my fire of thinking about ways to get more people involved and educated about what is going on in the world, particularly in Central America. ■

Arianne Walker  
June 4, 2013

## GUATEMALAN ARTISTS & ARTISANS

*Author and artist Marilyn Anderson, a longtime active member of ROCLA, anticipates that her forthcoming book, entitled **Prints of Artists and Artisans of Guatemala**, will be published in 2014. More than ten years in the making, the forty-three relief prints in this book represent both a continuation of Marilyn's past work and a return to her roots in the visual arts. The book will showcase her original woodcuts and linoleum prints with text describing them and will be translated into Spanish. The imagery in these prints largely derives from her photographs of artists and artisans in Guatemala. Here she describes her inspirations for writing the book. [Ed. note]*

Learning about the techniques of many crafts was important in my choice of the subject of these prints. This book has the aim to develop deeper appreciation for the beauty and history of the arts and crafts of Guatemala and at the same time to inspire respect and empathy for the artists and artisans. I believe that these artisanal traditions have a vital and unique place in the lives of the people of Guatemala and affect many others throughout the world as well.

An important inspiration for my work was learning to use the backstrap loom. In the 1960s, a sense of wonder at the loom itself led me to learn to weave, taught by a skilled, patient Maya teacher. Once, when I expressed fear that I was intruding on her time, she told me, "Don't worry, I want to teach you." Each aspect of the loom's construction thrilled me for its ingenuity, simplicity and functionality. Learning to weave changed my life and

inspired me to produce my first book in the 1970s, **Backstrap Weaving**.

Using many other arts and crafts in Jacaltenango — where I lived in the 60s and 70s — and seeing them for sale in the market and the community also affected

me. Foods and other articles displayed by vendors were often so lovely that it seemed they were taken out of still life paintings. In my house I used daily many of the articles depicted in this book, made by local or nearby artisans.

It astonished me that almost everyone in Jacaltenango, young and old, knew how many of the arts and crafts were made, especially weaving. A neighbor once remarked that "everybody knows how weaving is done." Family members saw their wives and mothers weaving; children observed weavers and other artisans at work.

Making the prints and writing the captions and text for this book have allowed me to bring together the strands of my work since the late 1960s. Over these years I produced two books about Maya weaving traditions — **Backstrap Weaving** (1975) and **Guatemalan Textiles Today** (1978) — as well as **Granddaughters of Corn** (1988),



a photographic book dealing with the war of the 1980s and its effects on Maya women. In 2001, in collaboration with the Yax Te' Foundation Press, Maya educators and many others, I published a coloring book for children **Artes y Artesanías Mayas de Guatemala/Maya Arts and Crafts of Guatemala**. The multilingual editions of this book — Mayan/Spanish and English/Spanish — both reprinted several times, are close to my heart.

If hand made articles can connect us to their makers to promote understanding and empathy, they also remind us of the human spirit, and the marvel of making things with our hands. Arts/crafts tell us an important part of the long story about being human. They can also be a bridge between cultures — another of my hopes for my book. ■  
Marilyn Anderson  
July 2013



## NOV. 1-3, 2013, TEAR DOWN THE WALLS NATIONAL GATHERING

This year the Latin America Solidarity Committee (LASC) is teaming with the Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ) and over sixty other organizations from many different movements to host the Tear Down the Walls National Gathering in Tucson, AZ, on Nov. 1-3, 2013.

Many movements will be represented at the Gathering, including those on immigrant rights and border militarization, as well as the anti-war, Occupy, prison, sentencing reform and the Palestinian rights movements. This Gathering will enable Latin America solidarity groups to reach many times the number of people we normally turn out for a LASC conference and allow us to strategize with people whose issues overlap with ours but seldom attend LASC conferences.

LASC will focus on a cross-movement strategy discussion of the Drug War. LASC groups are also invited to submit workshop proposals on the many areas of our solidarity work. Professor Laura Carlson, an expert on both Mexico and Drug War, has accepted the invitation to be a featured speaker at Tear Down the Walls and to help lead the strategy discussions.

If you are interested in attending or submitting a workshop proposal, registering or learning more, please contact: [AFGJ@AFGJ.org](mailto:AFGJ@AFGJ.org) ■

## REFLECTIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Gloria Osborne

This year ROCLA awarded the International White Dove Award to the Global Justice Ecology Project (GJEP) whose work for climate justice in Central and South America brings together environmental and social justice groups to combat destructive corporate actions and the planting of genetically modified trees, among other environmental threats.

This could not have come at a more opportune moment as the world awakens to the devastation and losses related to misuse/overuse of our natural resources and the impending dangers of global warming and climate change. For years we have struggled over human rights issues related to land and water use. Now, as we confront the effects of such changes in our own backyard—polluted water and air, genetically modified foods/plants, increasing negative health impacts and acts of terror and violence, we are reminded that our choices may have serious, long-range consequences.

As Orin Langelles and Anne Peterson pointed out in their presentation, people's rights and social and ecological justice are irrevocably and intrinsically entwined. For years, Latin American solidarity groups such as ROCLA have worked with our partners to identify and confront human rights issues throughout Latin America while educating and raising awareness of these problems at home. As our indigenous brothers and sisters remind us, we need to ask: "What effect will this have for the next seven generations?"

They have something to teach us—something so important that they are willing to lay down their lives for it from the Amazon (Pachamama Alliance) to the northernmost borders of Canada (Idle No More Movement). Since the FTAA meetings in Ecuador in 2002, indigenous groups have organized in huge numbers to speak out against racism, war, ecological devastation, climatic disruption, economic devastation, human rights abuses and the oppression of women. Leftist regimes in South America have arisen based on indigenous rights and cultivation of the importance of ecological and cultural diversity. After five-hundred years of indigenous resistance to genocide, and recognizing the ecological imbalance and its implications long before science "measured" its effects, they have proclaimed as one "¡BASTA!" to the degradation of the earth.

As indigenous groups connect around the world, it is clear that we must also return our awareness to the substance of life found in the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we grow and the communities we build. Now, more than ever, indigenous communities are showing the non-indigenous world that by protecting and living in balance with the earth and its rhythms, we can heal both the planet and ourselves. As Chief Jacqueline Thomas of Saik'uz First Nation from British Columbia stated at the climate rally in Washington DC in February, "Never in my life have I ever seen white and native work together until now."

As a permaculturist, I learned that "the problem is always the solution" and the edges where two distinct boundaries meet provide the greatest diversity and opportunity for new growth. If this is true, then certainly we are

cultivating new outcomes as we weave our teachings, spiritual and intellectual, together with communities around the planet—both human and non-human—to create a more diverse and socially just community capable of creating more positive change than the corporations and governments that attempt to control us can do. ■



## ROCLA FALL PROGRAMS!

### September 4: Tales of the 2013 Cuba Caravan

Caravanistas Vic Vinkey and Ream Kidane, who traveled across Cuba with the July 2013 IFCO/Pastors for Peace US/Cuba Friendship Caravan, will join us to share their experiences of the Caravan.

### October 2: Chiapas: Behind the Resistance

Filmmakers Orin Langelles of the Global Justice Ecology Project and Bill Jungels will show their documentary films, *A Darker Shade of Green* and *Broken Branches, Fallen Fruit*, that explore social and ecological justice issues in Chiapas.

### November 6: Hope Travels without a Visa

Nelson Portillo, Ph.D., will discuss his recently completed UN study of the movement of undocumented Salvadoran youth to the US.

All programs will be held at Downtown Presbyterian Church, 121 North Fitzhugh Street, Rochester, NY, at 7 PM. Free and open to the public. Wheelchair accessible. Looped for the hearing impaired. ■

# ROCLA

METRO JUSTICE EDUCATION FUND

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## ROCLA UPDATE ON THE **AMERICAS**

### 2013 ROCHESTER LABOR FILM SERIES

The Rochester Labor Film Series, founded in 1989, is screened annually in September/October at the George Eastman House Dryden Theater in Rochester, New York, and is a joint effort of the Dryden Theatre and the Rochester Labor Council. The series presents motion pictures celebrating workers around the world. The films, diverse in tone and subject, are selected to inform, provoke and inspire.

This year's program depicts a variety of workplaces. Several concern physically dangerous

jobs (*La Camioneta*, *Burn*, *Taxi*, *Black Diamonds*, and *The Miners' Hymn*). Others depict demanding service jobs (*Women of the Sixth Floor*, *The Waiting Room*) or artistic work (*La Camioneta*). Others present the interplay of social class and race (*Nothing But a Man*) or reflect market shifts in manufacture (*Kinky Boots*). But common to all is the story of workers' determined and unflinching response to the physical, social and economic challenges they face.

The first film in the series

will be of particular interest to ROCLA members. *La Camioneta* will be shown on Friday, September 6, 2013, at 8 p.m. and Sunday, September 8, at 2 p.m. In his feature film debut, Mark Kendall follows the afterlife of a former U.S. school bus as it makes its way south of the border to be repurposed as a *camioneta*, a brightly multi-colored vehicle for transporting Guatemalans within and between cities. From the auction of the decommissioned bus to its fateful trip through Mexico and the struggles of its driv-

ers who contend with gangs, Kendall has crafted a careful study, beautifully filmed, of cross-border relations in the era of globalization. *La Camioneta* offers a glimpse of workers' experiences in the world of international commerce without sentimentality or polemic. (Mark Kendall, US/Guatemala 2012, 72 min. Spanish and English with subtitles).

For more information on the films and the dates they are being shown, visit <http://rochesterlabor.org/filmschedule.html>. ■