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May 1st, 2018

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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“We Are All New Mexico”

Lifting Up the Contributions of Workers and Immigrant Communities

ALBUQUERQUE-On May 1st, International Workers’ Day, immigrant and refugee communities, workers and allies in Albuquerque will come together at Barelmas Park to celebrate and recognize the countless contributions that immigrant communities and all workers make to the cultural, economic and social fabric of Albuquerque. The family-friendly community event includes live music, traditional forms of dance, low-wage immigrant workers speaking out, children activities, volleyball and soccer tournaments, and traditional healing services. At this year’s May Day event, El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos (El CENTRO) will also launch their Workers’ Justice Month: Uplifting Workers’ Voices.

The May Day celebration comes just weeks after the Albuquerque City Council passed and Mayor Keller signed R-18-7, strengthening Albuquerque’s status as an immigrant-friendly City, a result of over a decade of organizing led by El CENTRO. Fabiola Bawden, an organizer with El CENTRO, attributes the win to El CENTRO’s active membership, “we have strong leaders who are the pioneers of our local campaigns. Resolution 18-7 was the product of years of organizing to fight against anti-immigrant policies. Our families said “ya basta!” after Mayor Berry invited ICE to collaborate with the Prisoner Transport Center and we continue to say “ya basta!” as Trump attempts to strong-arm local governments into carrying out the work of ICE. As the attacks continue at the national level, on May Day, we will celebrate the strength, resilience, and resistance of our communities.”

Edgar Salinas, a carpenter, father of three, and a member of El CENTRO’s workers’ committee is organizing El CENTRO’s Worker’s Justice Month as a proud immigrant worker, “workers contribute in countless ways to this economy and this May Day we come together to celebrate our families. Throughout May, we will be highlighting workers’ stories and contributions, we will inform workers labor abuses, and we will continue to organize workers interested in fighting back! Look for us in your local neighborhoods, on the streets, churches and other community spaces!”

At this event, low-wage workers and immigrant communities stand together in celebration of New Mexico’s legacy of promoting immigrant and workers rights. Christian Nuñez, a low-wage immigrant worker and member of El CENTRO explains, “our communities are stronger when they are united. Together we share a common future, and together we resist.”

El CENTRO recognizes that their victories have always come directly from their members. Through the fight for Resolution 18-7, working families became the leaders in promoting sanctuary in Albuquerque. One of El CENTRO's most active working mothers and newest member Hilaria Martinez talks about her motivation to remain active in the fight for immigrants' rights, "being an activist has allowed me to contribute to my own community, to feel and know that I am making a difference, helping others to defend their rights and ensure that we continue to fight for new rights. I work hard with the motivation to move my family forward; I dream that my children have a better future, with many more opportunities. I also want my children to continue fighting for other families to achieve their own goals."

Lucía Hernández talks about the leadership of working families, "I am proud that New Mexicans have taken the initiative to pressure our local government into approving policies, such as passing the resolution to strengthen Albuquerque's status as an "immigrant-friendly city." Today, we honor New Mexico's legacy of resistance and the power of our families!"

The organizers will also highlight local immigrant business who have ethical business practices, who support their workforce, and who make vital contributions to the economic and sustainability of New Mexican neighborhoods. Carmen Manriquez, a grandmother and the owner of Carnicería Especial stresses the contributions of business owners, "my husband and I are involved in the local business community, and we can testify the countless ways local business owners participate in our neighborhoods beyond creating jobs and paying taxes by donating our time and resources and by working directly with our communities. My husband and I are pastors at our local church, and we have helped organize Know-Your-Rights workshops for our workers and members of our congregation because we want our children to grow up knowing that they will not be separated from their families."

Berta Campos, owner of Mujeres en Acción, and a single mother talks about the importance of celebrating working families during May Day "for years, community organizations, religious groups, and labor groups have gathered on this day to act and fight for our communities. Today, we come together as a community to celebrate the diversity and strength of our communities."

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**El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos is a grassroots, immigrants' rights and workers' justice organization based in Albuquerque, NM that works with Latino immigrant communities and allies to defend, strengthen, and advance the rights of our community.*

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