

## CLUE-VC History

In our 20+ years....

### **We helped win local Living Wage ordinances.**

CLUE began in 2001 by playing a key role in local campaigns to win Living Wage ordinances in Ventura County. We brought the voices of clergy and other people of faith to speak to decisionmakers about the urgency of providing stable livelihoods for struggling workers. The resulting five policies required cities and the county to hire contractors that paid a living wage to workers. These rules also provided a level playing field for companies bidding for contracts and benefitted companies that maintained a stable, decently paid workforce.

### **We helped create 550 units of decent, affordable farm worker housing.**

Our decade-long partnership with local organizations, especially House Farm Workers! resulted in the creation of at least 550 units of new housing for farm workers and farm worker families. In addition, we have also added our voices to help save numerous other affordable housing projects attacked by NIMBYs. We worked to create and retain "Inclusionary" (affordable housing) ordinances in the city of Ventura, and we helped strengthen local "Housing Elements" (cities' affordable housing plans).

In 2008 we created the unique Farm Worker Housing Immersion Program that enabled congregants and others to spend a day visiting with and learning from farmworkers in their new homes and in the fields. Hundreds were exposed to a significant part of Ventura County life which they otherwise would not have known.

### **We spearheaded the local Sanctuary project.**

CLUE was instrumental in guiding a young mother into sanctuary at a local church in 2007, after she was threatened with deportation and separation from her husband and three children. For three years "Liliana Santuario" was protected by a small but valiant church and by the dozens of CLUE volunteers who "accompanied" her by maintaining watch 24/7. National publicity about her family and others in sanctuary led to a major revision in deportation priorities in 2011. (CLUE's role in this, above.) After more than 3 years in sanctuary, Liliana was finally allowed to return to her Ventura County home. The Simi church and CLUE volunteers continued their

support of Liliana and finally, 4 years after entering sanctuary, [Liliana received her Green Card](#) (permanent resident status)! CLUE is extremely proud of spearheading this local movement!

## **We helped change national deportation policy.**

CLUE-VC impacted national policy by lifting the voice of "Liliana Santuario" and her family into the national debate on deportation. Working with our partners in the New Sanctuary Movement, CLUE-Ventura County provided the policy language that was used in NSA Administrative directives to ICE District Directors in 2011-12. These directives reprioritized deportations, putting last on the list for deportation the undocumented parents of U.S.-citizen children and students who came here as children. These policies were a tool for thousands of families throughout the nation to prevent separation, and they were the direct precursors to DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), the Obama Administration 2012 program which allows certain undocumented young adults to obtain a work permit. If "all politics are local," we can see Ventura County has certainly impacted national action!

## **We founded Dreamers Without Borders, a county-wide movement of undocumented students.**

We were the first Ventura County organization to focus on undocumented youth, to foster their leadership among their peers in their schools and communities. These high school and college students acted as delegates to the annual Immigrant Day in Sacramento, where they advocated with legislators for bills affecting immigrants. They acted locally to outreach and educate immigrant families, and they trained their high school and community college peers and mentors to assure all were aware of the new California laws affecting undocumented immigrants. The Dreamers played a critical role in the underserved immigrant communities, where so many families are "mixed-status," living in the shadows, isolated from the mainstream and subject to mis- and disinformation. As they shared their personal experiences with their peers and in the community, they set a shining example of fearlessness and hope.

## **We promoted Safe Zones for Dreamers in schools.**

Dreamers organizing morphed into pushing for resources for undocumented students, especially in high schools and colleges. The youth and their allies promoted a state proposal to require school districts to meet the unique and unaddressed needs of undocumented students and their families, and when AB 699 was finally passed, CLUE volunteer teams worked to engage school district leadership toward full compliance with the law.

## **Our Dreamers instigated the creation of the DREAM Center at California State University, Channel Islands.**

CLUE-VC staff and volunteers were engaged on the campus of CSUCI, beginning in 2008, when we began organizing CSU students around the issue of farm workers and their housing challenges. For many years we worked with the Center for Community Engagement to expose students, including student interns, to these local issues. Hundreds of students participated in our unique Farm Worker Housing Immersion Experience, a day long tour in which students heard from farm workers in the fields and in their homes.

Our Dreamers Without Borders began engaging the CSUCI student body, faculty and staff in 2010 around the needs of undocumented students. CSUCI students instigated the earliest discussions with faculty and staff that led ultimately to the development of the CSUCI Multicultural Dream Center. CLUE Dreamers trained faculty and staff about the laws that support undocumented students. The Multicultural Dream Center is a huge achievement for our county and for CLUE Dreamers!

CLUE Dreamers and its statewide coalition members in the California Dream Network brought forward the idea of having Undocumented Student Safe Zones in all public high schools, colleges and universities. One result was a state bill mandating such Dream Centers at all California State Universities.

## We helped develop Swap Meet Justice immigrant legal advocacy and social justice fairs.

Our role as fiscal sponsor for these events has been critical to their expansion. Since September 2019, Swap Meet Justice has served Oxnard and Ventura County with monthly events that now include more than 25 public and private organizations and 80-90 volunteers each month, and that provide many of the same services delivered onsite that the organizations deliver during the work week. Extreme access! More on Swap Meet Justice [here](#).

## We worked to keep “ICE Out of Ventura County.”

We’ve been part of the leadership of the local coalition working to stop the Ventura County Sheriff from voluntarily assisting ICE. This assistance threatens our immigrant families and endangers our entire community.

## We expanded our Antiracism/Racial Justice work.

We are proud of our long history of educating on and working for Immigrant Rights and Comprehensive Immigration Reform, work that was firmly grounded in Antiracist principles of equity and inclusion. Beginning in 2020, with the reckoning demanded by the murder of George Floyd, we embraced Antiracism more broadly. We held three Zoom gatherings 2020-2021 to begin the process of raising awareness and mobilizing more congregants and other people of

good will into pushing for the structural, systemic changes required for racial equity. Learn more about these efforts [here](#)!

And most recently.....

**In 2022, we made the commitment to educate and mobilize around Affordable Housing, an issue central to racial equity.**

The long systemic failure to produce needed low- and middle-income housing has resulted in renters too often paying an unsustainable 50% of their incomes to keep a roof over their heads (vs the 30% affordable standard). Homeownership, traditionally the source of intergenerational wealth, is out of reach for many, and the Sub-Prime meltdown of 2008-09 forced many newer homeowners out of their homes. Ventura County is repeatedly cited as one of the most expensive areas of the nation for finding affordable housing. CLUE leadership concluded it was up to us to challenge our cities, the county, and the state to fulfill their stated commitments to affordable housing – and to challenge ourselves and our CLUE community to become advocates for housing justice. Through Summer and Fall 2022 we conducted interviews with housing experts and experienced advocates in preparation for bringing concise key information on a complex subject to our CLUE community in early 2023.

**In 2023, we are training and mobilizing our network to become effective advocates for Affordable Housing in our Ventura County communities.**

We've held four gatherings to educate and organize so far this year. Join us! More [here](#).