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office at Catholic Charities, their lawyers received a tip the morning of the raid that ICE was making a move on the plant. As agents were rounding up plant workers, Sheridan-Ayala and her colleagues interviewed detainees to determine who might be able to pursue a successful protest of removal. Although the process has been slow, Sheridan-Ayala says that some of these cases may soon be resolved.

In addition to Catholic Charities, Oregon New Sanctuary Movement, the American Friends Service Committee, Witness for Peace, and members of many faith communities had been organizing in case of

Monte; all had been hired by American Staffing Resources, an operation that recruited workers, provided false "legal" documents, and maintained an office right on the premises of the plant. Villatoro didn't know much about the agency; only that people said they could help her find work, and she was desperate.

"When you arrive you are so alone," she says. "No family, you know no one, and no English, so you can't communicate with the people. You don't know how things work."

Still, she must have understood she was being hired illegally. Based on the testimony of the undercover ICE agent who revealed the many abuses at the Del Monte plant — after getting a job despite admitting he had no legal papers, the agent observed working

quetzales — just a little over a dollar — for a long day's work. And a pound of meat cost 23 quetzales. The job cutting fruit for Del Monte was cold, difficult, and dangerous, and the hours were long, but it was so much better than in Huehuetenango.

Villatoro's story is one of many: The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that in March 2008 there were 8.3 million unauthorized immigrant workers in the U.S., making up 5.4 percent of the work force; 70 percent are from Mexico and Central America.

At the beginning, they called themselves "Las Mujeres del Brazalet," Women of the Bracelet, after the tracking devices they were made to wear. They now use the more-dignified name "Comité de Solidaridad y de Apoyo Mutuo," or CSAM: Committee of Solidarity and Mutual Support.

Because they are officially waiting for a day in court — Villatoro's is still not scheduled — they are permitted to stay in the United States. Because they are undocumented, they cannot legally work. Because they have been caught, they remain under scrutiny, frightened. It's hard to pinpoint how many women are actually part of this group. Originally there were about twenty or twenty-five, the current members agree. But many have lost contact or interest; some may have shied away from going public with their painful stories, or been afraid of getting in trouble again. Currently there are "about eight," according to Teresa Rios-Campos of Multnomah County Health Department, who meets regularly with CSAM.

They gather most Fridays at the American Friends Service Committee headquarters in Portland, talking and joking, sharing a small meal, and then getting down to serious business. Through these meetings they have organized fundraising events—sales of tamales for special occasions, a house-cleaning service for members of various congregations, catering for weddings and other events, salsa dancing and cooking lessons, and other group projects that can bring in financial support for CSAM members without violating their legal status. They have spoken to the press and at human-rights conferences, traveling around Oregon and Washington and even to San Diego for the International Women's Day celebration in 2008.

Now they are planning for the second anniversary of La Redada.

On a recent Friday, four CSAM members — Villatoro, Elsa Martinez, Emiliana Aguilar Reynosa and Abdias Cortez — meet with representatives of several agencies that have supported them since the raid.

The women stand in the small kitchen and share bagels and cream cheese and sodas, meanwhile joking about how weird it is to be eating this particular food.

For information on events commemorating the second anniversary of the ICE raid on Fresh Del Monte, on the documentary film "Sueños Congelados," or on a CSAM-produced CD of music and poetry about the immigrant experience by the local band Los Jornaleros del Norte, contact CSAM by e-mail: csamcomite@yahoo.com

Then they gather in the sunny corner of the broad meeting room, set up with an easel bearing a pad of large paper in front of a group of chairs, a coffee table with a vase of plastic flowers and a plate of cut-up fruit. Emiliana Aguilar of CSAM writes up the day's agenda on the easel.

In June, they plan to launch a world premiere of "Sueños Congelados" (Frozen Dreams), a short documentary, subtitled in English, depicting their experiences before, during and after La Redada. ONSM is planning an interfaith service, and the CSAM women will prepare a Mexican/Guatemalan feast.

Sarah Loose of ONSM says, "This anniversary is very powerful. People want to see your film."

But Martinez explains one of CSAM's frustrations: "The truth is that most of the people who will come will be Anglos. The Latino community has more fear, and many don't want to get involved in this. They will say, 'Why do I want to see a movie that will tell me what my life is like?'"

And, Rios-Campos points out, "What importance have human rights, when you have nothing to eat?"

Still, they hope that the event and the film will win support for their cause, that it will boost sales of tamales, unite Anglos and immigrants, educate people about the raids — and someday, stop the raids altogether.

Most of all, they want to tell Portland, "We are still here — organizing, fighting, surviving."

As low-paid workers who had to wear two pairs of pants against the cold, as Women of the Bracelet, as public speakers and activists, they have walked a long road.

Villatoro reflects, "There are some people here who are against us, who say, 'Why are you here? Why do you come here?' They don't understand the reality. I want to say to them, 'If you lived in Guatemala or in Mexico, you would do the same.' Tourists go to Guatemala and they see the beautiful country, but they do not see the poverty, they do not understand."

Pedro Sosa of AFC points out that the mainstream media has lost interest.

"To the media the raid is over," one of the women says. "But for us, it continues."

The images that accompany this piece are original prints by Portland's Adam Arms.



just such an event. There had been rumors, incidents in other cities. These groups had already made plans to support anyone who might be detained, and on the afternoon of June 12, more than 100 people gathered at Saint Andrew Catholic Church in Northeast Portland, ready to step in—to offer housing and transportation to court dates, accurate legal advice, moral support and organizational help. Even if only, as Beth Poteet of the Oregon New Sanctuary Movement said, "Just to walk beside them, to share their stories."

conditions such as extension cords lying in water, filthy employee restrooms, and unsafe use of knives—it was flagrantly obvious that the system, and the workers, were being abused. But many immigrants feel they have little choice if they are to work and support their families. The harsh conditions at the Del Monte plant were not harsher or more hazardous than what they faced back home.

Villatoro is from near the city of Huehuetenango — called Huehue — in the Guatemalan highlands, where she scratched out a living washing clothes by hand. "And in Guatemala," she says, "it is much more difficult. Because the clothes are much dirtier." She would be paid about 10

None of those arrested in the ICE raid were officially employed by Del



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