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Economic Justice Intern

InterReligious Task Force on Central America

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I spent the summer of 2018 working as an economic justice intern with the InterReligious Task Force on Central America (IRTF.) As an intern I had the extremely rewarding opportunity to help the IRTF work towards their mission of educating, advocating, and organizing for peace, justice, and human rights for the people of Central America in a variety of capacities.

My main research project as an economic justice intern focused on the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW,) a human rights organization that has implemented a worker-driven social responsibility model to improve conditions for farm workers in Immokalee, Florida, many of whom are Central American Migrants. I got the opportunity to meet and protest in solidarity with the CIW workers as they came to the Wendy's Headquarters in Dublin, Ohio, for the purpose of attending and protesting the company's shareholder meeting; the model which works to protect the farm workers in Immokalee is dependent upon companies signing onto their Fair Foods Program, and Wendy's is the only major fast food company that has yet to sign on. As an economic justice intern, I also had the opportunity to attend an Equal Exchange conference in Chicago where I learned about sustainable Fair Trade business models and their human impact. At Equal Exchange I had the opportunity to hear Silvia Roblero Torres share the story of her coffee-producing cooperative CESMACH (Cafe Ecológico de la Sierra Madre de Chiapas S.C.). Silvia discussed how their cooperative was treated poorly by Starbucks and how they came to find a partnership with Equal Exchange and how this Fair Trade partnership has been vital to

their success, as producers as all of the other coffee cooperatives that remained in the contract with Starbucks ended up shut down; I learned how people and communities are supported through ethical business practices and conscious consumerism. Lastly, as an intern for IRTF, I collaborated with my colleagues to create a legislative policy packet covering issues pertinent to Central America, such as immigration, the Berta Caceres Human Rights in Honduras Act, and Temporary Protected Status. My colleagues and I presented this policy packet in advocacy meetings with Members of the U.S. Congress Members from Northeast Ohio.

I am incredibly grateful to have received the Wellman Hill Grant so that I could have the opportunity to spend my summer doing such meaningful and impactful work with the InterReligious Task Force on Central America.