The Colorado Health Foundation™

Days of Recognition for El Movimiento: Honoring Collective Power

Recent news about César Chávez has surfaced harm and stirred complicated feelings for many. At The Colorado Health Foundation, we are approaching this moment with care and respect, and we invite you to learn more in our full statement.

As we reflect on this moment, we are also shifting how we observe it. This is not an erasure. Rather than centering any one individual, we are observing Days of Recognition for El Movimiento, honoring the broader farmworker movement and the shared effort and collective power that made lasting change possible.

The Farmworker Movement was multiracial from the start, built by farmworkers, organizers, families, and allies, many of whose labor and leadership have too often gone unnamed. Filipino and Latino farmworkers forged solidarity across difference, strengthening their ability to advance shared goals and build a sense of a shared future.

Across farm fields, communities, and cultures, people organized to demand dignity, safety, fairness, and basic labor protections. Through strikes, boycotts, and collective bargaining, they showed what becomes possible when people come together to shape the conditions that impact their lives.

These efforts did more than improve working conditions; they moved us closer to health equity. Fair wages, safe environments, and labor protections are essential to

well-being. We believe health is shaped by the conditions in which people live and work; it is also influenced by who is heard, whose experiences are valued, and how decisions are made. At its core, the movement expanded who had a role in those decisions, affirming that everyone's needs and contributions matter.

That leadership came from those closest to the challenges—farmworkers themselves. They organized, spoke out, and set the direction, showing that when the people most impacted have real decision-making power, the results are more just, more durable, and more reflective of what communities need to thrive.

The Work Continues

El Movimiento continues today. Many of the protections fought for over decades are being challenged or rolled back. For example, proposed cuts to wages for H-2A workers threaten to lower standards across industries, putting downward pressure on wages, displacing workers, and weakening protections nationwide. In addition to proposed policy changes that affect immigrant and migrant communities, the ongoing tactics of ICE raids themselves exacerbate the agricultural labor crisis and divide families and communities. When conditions worsen in one sector, the effects ripple outward, shaping what is possible far beyond a single workforce.

Yet communities are still organizing. Farmworkers and their allies are raising their voices, building alignment, and working together to influence the policies and systems that affect their lives. This is how progress is defended and expanded over time.

Collective power remains one of the most effective tools for change. It shapes whether people can live with dignity, safety, and opportunity, and whether communities can move toward a future where health is in reach for everyone. The labor of farmworkers nourishes us all, both literally and as a reflection of what mutual care, resilience, and skillful stewardship look like in practice.

As we mark these days of recognition, we honor not a single figure, but the enduring power of people organizing together. When people come together to shape what is possible, we move closer to a future rooted in shared well-being and in the belief that a better future is something we can build together.

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