

Donated clothing will protect local farmers

The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs is partnering with HELP New Mexico to celebrate National Farmworker Awareness Week by participating in its annual National Long Sleeve Shirt Drive. HELP New Mexico will be collecting shirts from March 25-31 on behalf of AFOP, a national organization with the goal of improving the quality of life for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families.

HELP New Mexico, a nonprofit dedicated to creating self-sufficiency and promoting economic opportunities to strengthen families throughout the state, will be working directly with communities to spread awareness about AFOP's drive and about National Farmworker Awareness Week, also taking place from March 25-31. The dates coincide with the birthday of activist Cesar Chavez, who fought for better working conditions for America's farmworkers.

"We are looking for lightly-worn, light-colored, long-sleeve shirts," Said Vashti Kelly, AFOP's health and safety programs manager. "These shirts will be donated to farmworkers across the nation so they can protect themselves from pesticide exposure and heat-related illnesses. Our country's 2.5 million farmworkers face long hours of arduous work putting their health and safety at risk due to exposure to dangerous pesticides and heat stress."

A gently used long-sleeve shirt can help prevent exposure to pesticides by covering the skin, which is the most common route of pesticide poisoning due to its exposure.

"A lot of New Mexicans support their families with farm work, so it's very important for our organization to get involved," said HELP New Mexico's regional manager, Evangeline Touchine. "Their contributions to our communities are invaluable."

HELP New Mexico supports the state's migrant and seasonal farmworkers by providing job training and job development so that they can secure employment with higher wages and achieve greater self-sufficiency.

HELP New Mexico hosting shirt drive

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For more information on where to donate shirts in your area, visit helpnm.org. For a list of locations, and for additional details on NFAW and the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, visit <http://afop.org/nfaw>.

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