

Celebrating workers on Labor Day with SOMOS of Gallup

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
Friday, 21 May 2021 04:16



This year's theme: Essential businesses need essential workers

International Workers' Day, also known as Labor Day – a celebration of laborers and the working class, arrives every May 1. Observed all over world, it was also commemorated in Gallup with a free drive-by ice cream social hosted by SOMOS Un Pueblo Unido/Somos Gallup.

SOMOS Un Pueblo Unido/ SOMOS Gallup organizes low wage workers to improve working conditions, informs the community about labor protections, and supports campaigns to promote workers in McKinley County and throughout New Mexico.

The group set up the free ice cream social in the parking lot of St. Francis of Assisi at 214 W. Wilson Ave. and invited several other organizations to pass out goodies and information including New Mexico Legal Aid, Octavia Fellin Public Library, and Battered Families Services. Despite a little wind, the celebration was a hit.

Kathleen Blackgoat, a SOMOS Gallup member for the past four years, gave out sweets and educational materials to the many cars that drove by.

“We are a local organization working with low-wage working families and immigrant families,”

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Blackgoat said. “Since it was International Workers’ Day, we decided to celebrate it with the theme of ‘Essential businesses need essential workers,’ so we’re grateful for our essential workers, and those are essential workers who keep our economy going.”

Blackgoat along with other SOMOS members held bright neon signs advertising “Free ice cream” and urged passersby to cool off. Cars pulled up to receive literature along with other free goodies. The atmosphere was festive thanks to a live deejay playing Spanish music. Local City Councilor Linda Garcia, Dist. 1, who is also a SOMOS member, came out to lend a hand.

“Our group helps with unfair practices with employers. Unemployed people [are] having a hard time getting employed, such like that,” she said. “Every year we do this and we decided this year we would come celebrate and contribute to the community.

“We’re having an ice cream social – drive-by ice cream social from 1 pm to 3 pm. [The] last few years we’ve had it at Ford Canyon Park, with hot dogs and hamburgers, just to bring the people out and educate them about SOMOS,” Garcia said.

Markus Chavez – Octavia Fellin Public Library technology trainer, showed his support by handing out library information along with the ice cream.

“We’ve been helping SOMOS with some of their virtual events this year. We did a virtual workers’ rights forum a couple months ago that we hosted through the library’s social media and Zoom.

“They notified us that they were going to do today’s celebration and we wanted to come out and not only support them, but to promote our virtual Author’s Festival 2021 which starts today,” Chavez said.

Also in attendance were New Mexico Legal Aid workers and a legal advocate with Battered Families Services.

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Other give-aways included children's books, sweet-smelling soaps, and children's masks.

For more information on SOMOS Gallup, visit somosunpueblounido.org, follow on Facebook.com/somosunpueblo, or call (505) 424-7832.

For more information on NM Legal Aid, visit newmexicolegalaid.org or call toll-free (866) 416-1922.

For more information on Octavia Fellin Public Library, visit ofpl.online or call (505) 863-1291.

For more information on Battered Families Services, visit batteredfamilies.com or call (505) 722-6389.

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