

Becoming an Active Agent for Social Change

By Hanna Kim

I think that we can “teach” or demonstrate with the immigrant workers our solidarity with the cause against injustice. We, as UCLA students, can show them that we are not apathetic, inert, or complacent, but with their support and consent, we can be their voices for the voiceless. We can participate in boycotts, picket lines, rallies, and educational forums to increase awareness among students and community members. It is vital and critically important to educate, organize, mobilize, and arouse the passions of others into purposeful, meaningful action. I am positive that we can all become active agents of change in our communities if we tried and united with everyone.

Specifically, we can share our experiences and knowledge with Asian American history and culture with the workers. We can engage in dynamic dialogue to inform and argue in a safe environment about what matters to all involved. We can have political tours with the workers, showing how the garment and restaurant boycott campaigns relate to the market conflicts. We can tailor a message or demand the owners of Assi market to listen so that we are heard. We can call the press to attention and have them tell the workers’ stories. We can essentially move people out of their comfort zone to become more active in our communities, to unite with different peoples and cultures, and to respect our uniqueness in worth, value and dignity. We can acknowledge the “full humanity” in each one of us because we are in the process of righting a wrong, because we are interacting

with interethnic alliances, and because we are seeing each other not as an ends to a means but as distinct individuals coalescing into a larger, more global village.

We are bringing Asian American Studies back to the community by mobilizing the students into forums that speak about social justice. That was at the core of the origins of Asian American Studies during the 1960's and 1970's. We are making signs, setting a date to have a "work party" where students can make hanging badges/passes like the ones Tony Osumi made, scheduled Thursday Feb 26 from 6-7 pm at 3221 Campbell Hall. We are having a live exhibit of theatre at the rally as shown by Alison Delacruz. We are having speakers from various nationalities and statuses speak, from students to organizers to Latinos and Koreans, from males to females. We are having an educational forum to inform the public of their need to support the Assi Market boycott campaign. We are active agents of change.

To share the knowledge from this class to others, we are going to general meetings from different organizations on campus and giving presentations (10-15 minutes) about what happened and the consequences for the Assi worker since they were fired. They have been successful thus far, with many students signing their names and contact info for more news in the future. On Weeks 7 and 8, we are planning to go to all Asian American Studies classes and bring up to date the picket line, rally, and educational forum. We will also ask the respective professors to give extra credit as an incentive to go to the direct actions. Ultimately, we wish to give a fair and accurate representation of the workers'

struggles. In some way, I hope that we will be able to give voice to our silent communities and affect positive changes in their as well as our lives.