



# in our own backyard

THE HIDDEN PROBLEM OF  
CHILD FARMWORKERS IN AMERICA  
<http://www.ourownbackyard.org>

## Part III: What Can Be Done?

### **Student Farmworker Alliance**

This activist organization encourages student action to change conditions among migrant farmworkers.

*Source: Student Farmworker Alliance,  
<http://www.sfalliance.org/about.html>*



Student/Farmworker Alliance is a national network of students and youth organizing in direct partnership and solidarity with farmworkers to eliminate sweatshop conditions and modern-day slavery in the fields. We understand our work – which formally began in 2000 – as part of a worldwide "movement of movements" for economic, social and ecological justice. We organize closely with the [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#) (CIW), a membership-led community organization in southwest Florida comprised largely of Latino, Haitian, and Mayan Indian immigrants working in agricultural and other low-wage jobs throughout the state.



In March 2005, after four years of intense campaigning, farmworkers from the CIW and their allies scored a decisive victory in their national [Taco Bell boycott](#). Yielding to growing pressure from the CIW, students, and other allies, Taco Bell and its parent company Yum! Brands – the world’s largest restaurant corporation – conceded to all of the boycott’s demands, agreeing to work with the CIW to improve the sub-poverty wages and working conditions of farmworkers in its tomato supply chain.

Students and youth were crucial in the grassroots coalition that won this incredible victory. As Taco Bell’s target market (18-24 year-olds), we instead put a target on Taco Bell, making the boycott one of the fastest-growing campaigns for economic justice on campuses and communities throughout the country. Between 2002 and 2005, twenty-two high schools and universities removed or prevented Taco Bell restaurants and sponsorships as part of SFA’s “Boot the Bell” campaign. By the boycott’s end, dozens of additional campaigns were underway, and Taco Bell was unable to secure new campus contracts without fear of vocal student opposition.

Through tireless organizing grounded in a program of **education, action, and leadership development** we were part of winning one of the largest victories against corporate greed and exploitation that our generation has ever seen, and we’re just getting started. Our work shows that a better world is not only possible, it’s already under construction.

- **education – raising awareness about farmworkers’ struggles**  
Organizers facilitate educational activities through which students and farmworkers have the opportunity to come together in an exchange of knowledge and experience, cultivating a critical analysis that guides our work as students and youth. This includes worker- and student-led workshops, speaking tours, conferences, alternative spring breaks, and internships.
- **action – uniting with worker-led campaigns**  
We are committed to building a base of members whose understanding of social change and injustice in the fields leads them to act in solidarity with farmworkers. This includes supporting worker-led campaigns for better wages and working conditions and organizing with workers towards the democratization of agricultural labor relations and, more broadly, the global economy.
- **leadership development – building a larger movement**  
In all aspects of our work, SFA focuses heavily on developing the skills and confidence

of students and youth so they can go on to organize for progressive social change around a broad array of issues in their communities.