

CHÁVEZ HUERTA

K-12 PREPARATORY ACADEMY

César Chávez (1927—1993)

César Chávez was born on March 31, 1927 and was the second of five children. His father was a small farmer and businessman, and his mother managed a farm, grocery store, garage and pool hall in Arizona near the California-Mexico border. In 1938, the family was evicted from the land they had worked for nearly 50 years and forced to work in terrible conditions for low wages as agricultural workers across the state of California.

As a child, Chávez attended more than 35 schools and dropped out after the eighth grade to work full-time to help support his family. After serving two years in the U.S. Navy, Chávez returned home to work at a lumber company but was encouraged to become a community and labor organizer to improve working conditions and wages for agricultural workers. In 1962, Chávez founded the National Farm Workers Association with Dolores Huerta and joined the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee and in 1965 organized in its first strike against grape growers in California. Both organizations would merge and be renamed the United Farm Workers in 1972.

Chávez's nonviolent approaches to bring national attention to the deplorable poor working conditions, low pay and dangerous exposure to pesticides included boycotts, a 340 mile march, and several hunger strikes. In 1994, President Clinton recognized Chávez with a White House Ceremony as "a remarkable man who, with faith and discipline, soft-spoken humility and amazing inner strength, led a very courageous life" and awarded the Medal of Freedom to his widow, Helen Chavez. César Chávez is considered to be one of the most inspirational labor leaders of the 20th century "who faced formidable, often violent opposition with dignity and nonviolence" (UFW).

César Estrada Chávez. *AFL-CIO America's Union*. Our History. www.alfcio.org/About/Our-History/Key-people-in-Labor-History/Cesar-Estrada-Chavez-1927-1993

The Story of Cesar Chavez: The beginning. *History, United Farm Workers*. Web 26September 2016. http://www.ufw.org/_page.php?inc=history/07.html.



From the depth of need and despair, people can work together, can organize themselves to solve their own problems and fill their own needs with dignity and strength.



¡Sí Se Puede!