

Cesar Chavez Day

Who was Cesar Chavez?

- Cesar Chavez was a Mexican American labor leader who fought for workers' rights and civil rights for farm workers.
- He was born on March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona.
- Cesar's father was a farm worker and the family moved a lot. Cesar and his brother attended 37 different schools.
- Cesar's father had an accident and couldn't work, so Cesar dropped out of school after graduating from 8th grade and went to work in the fields.
- In 1944, he was arrested for breaking a "whites only" rule in a movie theater.
- He joined the Navy and fought in World War II.
- Cesar Chavez became a labor leader and co-founded the United Farm Workers with Dolores Huerta.
- The UFW fought for higher wages for grape-pickers. It led a strike that started in 1966 and lasted for five years.
- The organization also led a protest march from Delano to Sacramento, the state capital of California.
- The UFW asked Americans to help the strikers by not buying table grapes.
- Robert Kennedy supported Cesar Chavez, and shortly after a Senate Subcommittee investigation, strikers won a major labor victory.
- The success of the UFW led to other strikes and even more successes.
- Cesar and Huerta worked to prevent farm owners from using new migrants as anti-strike breakers. They felt that such a practice would undermine the success of the farm workers' unions.
- In later years, he turned his attention to the dangers of pesticides used in farming.
- Cesar Chavez died on April 23, 1993, in Arizona.