



2011 MARIO SAVIO STUDENT ACTIVIST AWARD HONOREE: MARJORIE "MAGGIE" COSHNEAR



When Marjorie "Maggie" Coshnear was still a student at Santa Rosa High School she gave such a moving, fiery speech at the Petaluma Progressive Festival. that the audience was yelling in approval as she spoke. Now a freshman at Santa Rosa Junior College, she already has achieved a long record of activism.

But high school was not the beginning of activism for Maggie. As a child she accompanied her parents on picket lines for the workers of the Sonoma County Industrial Union, sitting through meetings of Pueblos Unidos, playing with the kids of immigrant workers during these meetings and actions. When she was in middle school, she urged her parents to revive the now dormant Pueblos Unidos to defend immigrants' rights again. In 2006 she co-lead a student walkout from Cali Calmeac Charter School in Windsor in reaction to the Sensenbrenner legislation, as immigrants came together in the largest demonstrations in county history. She participated in street theater and "theater of the oppressed" with the *Instituto Sanchez Mendoza*, a local non-profit advocating for popular education methods to organize the immigrant community.

At Santa Rosa High School, Maggie co-founded an activist club which challenged the military recruiters. She worked with the Gay-Straight Alliance, the Amnesty International club, and the Latino organizations which planned walkouts and other immigrant-rights-related actions. In her third year, she began to train with Santa Rosa Copwatch, then organized off-campus with "O22", part of a national movement against police abuse, which organized marches each October 22nd.

Maggie also helped organize student/youth responses to the Israeli bombing of Gaza in December 2008-January 2009. She helped sustain the organization FreeMind Media, organizing teach-ins on Tasers and other subjects.

In the summer after graduating high school, Maggie went away to the Quaker *Woolman Semester* in Nevada City, where she agitated for active responses to injustices. The group took a trip to the Mexican border near Douglas, AZ and Las Prietas, Mexico, where they participated in a vigil for those who died crossing the desert. She produced a film with another student, for their Peace Studies program, on women saying "no" and men's responses in dating relationships.

Maggie then traveled to Bolivia to work in a Quaker *Internado*, a boarding school, for a month. She has studied socialism and anarchism with different groups in Santa Rosa and San Francisco. Maggie took the Philosophy of Peace course at Santa Rosa Junior College, was inspired by the writings of Barbara Deming, and is now taking the Catalyst Project's *Ann Braden* semester-long program in learning to be a white ally in anti-racist work. She worked with Racial Justice Allies in Sonoma County, and has co-facilitated a meeting and led exercises. She works with the Committee for Immigrant Rights of Sonoma County, and represented it in the recent Issues Assembly of the North Bay Organizing Project, standing before a crowd of 400 people to advocate, with Rosa Azucena Becerra, for the organization to prioritize the struggle against impounding of immigrant cars by local police agencies.

While attending SRJC and the Ann Braden program, Maggie works part-time in her father's law office, assisting immigrant women in filing applications for legalization based on the Violence Against Women Act and related legislation. Maggie is fluent in Spanish.