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**From the Fields to the White House**

 Migrant and Seasonal Farm Working Students say Goodbye to DC

Washington D.C. July 30, 2014 – “Growing up as a seasonal farmworker child, I knew I was at a higher risk of failure in school when compared to classmates. My parents didn’t even make it past the second grade, so even at birth I was already at a disadvantage. My parents had no idea how to help me with the challenges that come with school, especially with English being my second language. But with the help of the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association, I continue to show my peers and fellow farm workers that anything is possible, regardless of how big the bump on the road.” states Yonny Castillo, a 21 year old college student who is wrapping up his summer internship in Washington DC.

The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association recognizes the many obstacles of being both a migrant/seasonal farmworker and a college student. “Although the four student interns we brought to Washington DC received the red-carpet treatment, including meeting with their congressional representatives and spending the 4th of July with President Obama at the White House, the real value was in exploring their possible futures and gaining confidence in the value of their backgrounds and what they are capable of accomplishing” states Cleo Rodriguez, Jr., Executive Director of NMSHSA.

Yonny, a junior at Willamette University in Oregon, is planning on one day being referred to as Senator Castillo. “This internship makes sure we continue to succeed in school and life by providing us the proper resources and connections so that we grow as individuals and help bring up those around us once we’ve helped ourselves. This internship has helped make a significant difference in my life and I will never forget it.” Says Castillo.

“Being the first to go to college and breaking the cycle of multi-generational poverty is incredibly difficult” said Denise Cruz, a rising senior at Michigan State University, and one of four interns who will share “lessons learned” at their farewell reception this evening at the National Education Association building.

Rodriguez, a former seasonal farmworker child himself, states “The NMSHSA internship is not typical, I have a personal connection with these interns that come from the same background I do. It took me almost four years to discover my college mentor who put me on the path to where I am today, and I want to help our interns find their mentors too. It is through relationships like these that anything becomes possible. “

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About National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association:

The National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) consists of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Directors, Staff, Parents, and Friends who work on issues unique to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children and their families. By advocating for resources, creating partnerships, and affecting public policy, we help member agencies provide quality comprehensive services.

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