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**For Immediate Release**

**Art and Essay Contest for Migrant or Seasonal Farmworker Children**

*Helping farmworker children express their experiences and thoughts*

July 21, 2014 Washington, D.C.—**Open only to children between the ages of 10-18 and who come from migrant or seasonal farmworker families, this contest is truly unique. Entries must be received no later than Friday, August 15th.**

Based on federal data, AFOP estimates as many as 500,000 children work in U.S. farm fields.

Experiences of youth who work on farms are often kept silent. This contest invites youth to express themselves through graphics or the written word. The goal is to provide a safe venue for children to voice themselves and to receive recognition not just for their artistic or writing ability, but also for their unique life experiences.

The theme for 2014 is “From Our Hands to Your Table” and can be expressed on an 8 ½ x 11 poster or 250 words (age 10-13), or 500-700 (age 14-18.) Essays can be submitted in Spanish or English, cash prizes and a trip to talk about their submission at the AFOP National Conference in San Diego, CA may be awarded.

Some ideas to get started:

* What kinds of crops does their family work?
* Does their family move from house to house each year?
* What challenges do farmworker families and children face?
* Describe a typical work day for a farmworker.
* What dreams do they have for their future and how will they get there?

Contest guidelines are attached to the following link: <http://afop.org/children-in-the-fields/connect-with-cif/>

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the legal age to perform most farm work is only 12 if a parent accompanies the working child. Children who are 12 or older can work unlimited hours in the fields before or after school hours. U.S. law also allows children working in agriculture to perform hazardous work at 16 –workers in other industries must wait until they are 18.

*The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs’ (AFOP) Children in the Fields Campaign strives to improve the quality of life of migrant and seasonal farmworker children by advocating for enhanced educational opportunities and the elimination of discriminatory federal child labor laws in agriculture. For additional comment or an interview with an AFOP expert, please contact Robert Crumley, Director of Communications at (202) 828-6006 x140 or* *crumley@afop.org* *or Norma Flores, Director of the Children in the Fields Campaign at(202) 828-6000 x106 or* *Flores@afop.org**.*

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