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**For Immediate Release**

**Former Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Shares her Success Story**

*Farmworker earning $6/hour built her own half million dollar business*

February 26, 2015 Washington, D.C. — Mrs. Anita Clinesmith was only making $6.00 per hour as a seasonal farmworker in Oklahoma. One life-changing day she met Gene Burden, owner of a trucking company, who told her that if she would earn a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL), he would give her a job. That is when she redirected her life and traded farmwork for truck driving.

She located a truck driving school that told her about the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), funded through the Department of Labor, it helps farmworkers develop marketable skills that lead to fulltime employment with benefits. On September 15, 2010, Mrs. Clinesmith called the Clinton, OK office of ORO Development Corporation and inquired about services she might be qualified to receive. When asked about her skills, she hesitantly replied, “farmwork is all I can do.”

On October 25, 2010, she was accepted into the CDL training program. Later, while driving to Ft. Cobb for school, she was in an accident, rushed to the hospital, had surgery, and had to put further training on hold. Clinesmith’s case manager, Olivia Tovar, stayed in touch with her and the school while she was incapacitated. When asked if she planned on completing her schooling, Mrs. Clinesmith adamantly stated, “I am getting better, and I am finishing my training so I can take care of my children.”

True to his word, upon Clinesmith’s graduation in 2011, she went to work for Mr. Burden where she remained for 1.5 years. Clinesmith stated, “I am extremely happy someone told me about NFJP. Thanks to ORO, I went from making $6.00 per hour to earning $25.00 driving a big truck.”

Some say success can be measured by how high a person has risen. Others measure success by how hard a person worked, and how far they have come. Mrs. Clinesmith rose from $6 per hour to owning her own trucking business with an annual income that exceeds half a million dollars. She and her husband own two trucks and two trailers, one specialized for hauling frac sand (crush-resistant sand of a specific particle size that is used by the petroleum industry in the hydraulic fracturing process), and have a full-time employee.

Clinesmith said, “I am so thankful for the National Farmworker Jobs Program, it forever changed my life and the future of my family!”

NFJP, executed by the 52 member agencies of the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP), strives to reach the hardest to serve among a population with multiple barriers to traditional employment, and to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farmworkers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor performed across the country.

Participants receive intensive case management to develop individualized employment training plans for improved skills and success. Many receive help with their communications abilities, basic and specific occupational skills training, on-the-job experience, training in occupational safety, and other needs as identified.

The National Farmworker Jobs Program is one of the best performing job skills training programs funded through the Department of Labor (DOL) and was created under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The most recent report of people who exited NFJP’s Employment and Training Programs reveals:

 **8,735** Migrant or seasonal farmworkers or their dependents impacted

 **3,707** Women

 **1,388** Single heads of households with children

 **71.5%** Did not have a high school diploma or equivalent

 **26.5%** Spoke limited English

 **15.4%** Lacked transportation

 **34.7%** Lacked basic literacy skills

 **1.5%** Were homeless

 **46.7%** Attained a certificate, credential, diploma, or degree

 **87.3%** Entered unsubsidized employment; that’s more than **7,600** people placed upon exit.

“The NFJP continues to improve lives of migrant and seasonal farmworkers across the country amidst great challenges and with great success” states Daniel Sheehan, Executive Director, AFOP.

*The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs’ (AFOP) mission is to improve the quality of life for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families by providing advocacy for the member organizations that serve them. That means securing the same rights and benefits for farmworkers that the rest of the American people enjoy. For additional comment or an interview with an AFOP expert, please contact Robert Crumley at (202) 828-6006 x140 or* crumley@AFOP.org.

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