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Washington Newslines

Historical Perspective on Farmworkers in the U.S.

By Richard Joanis

Dick Joanis, AFOP's Board president from 1979 to 1984 and long-time CEO of Telamon Corporation, will retire in early 2014. In this article, he shares with us some social history, his take on our mission's importance, and why winning the day doesn't guarantee tomorrow.

As I prepare for the next stage of my life, I find that I am unable to look ahead without remembering many of the twists and turns on the way to today. My colleagues who lived the causes and events of the past four decades will recognize some of these memories, and I am proud to have been among them on this journey. My personal interest in history and its intriguing penchant to be repeated is how I will

begin...preaching to the choir.

In the evolution of American industry and its labor movements, agriculture has been recognized and treated differently from the others. Although indentured

populations: the descendants of "freed" slaves, Chinese coolies, Irish immigrants, displaced middle Americans, and most recently, immigrants from the Americas and Asia.

Unlike the struggles of labor in other industries that have brought the legislative protections of a minimum wage, safety oversight, a National Labor Relations Act, Fair Labor Standards, etc., agriculture has lagged far behind in the guise of an agrarian ideal – the rapidly disappearing family farm. An organized farm labor movement emerged nearly 130 years after other sectors saw the potential from workers demanding their due. Still, today, labor contracts for field, orchard and grove production are negotiated in fewer than ten states as employers step up their efforts to hire H-2A workers who bring with them no bargaining power.



Dick Joanis, CEO of Telamon Corporation
Photo courtesy of Dick Joanis

servitude was common in the early days of domestic life, agriculture set itself apart with the institution of slavery that economized the transition from mere family farms to the vast plantations east of the Mississippi River. From the post-emancipation days of the late 1800s through the "dust bowl" days of the 1930s and still today, hand labor in agriculture has drawn poor, often desperate,

You can read about these workers in books and court records, or watch what have become legendary documentaries. However, one visit to a migrant family living in a labor camp brings, like the clap of thunder, a searing perspective.

As we learn more about them, we find that they are so like us, yet so different, in fundamental ways. They do not aspire for lives of stoop labor or substandard housing or the exploitation that

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fills their world. Rather, like the rest of us, they hold the same values and want the same things that make life a tolerable journey: productive work, a safe place to live, the freedom to be ourselves, hope and opportunity for our children. But, unlike us they have been born into, or fallen into, circumstances that put them far behind where they might hope to be otherwise. They lack the education, societal acceptance, upward mobility and support that we all need to succeed. And, therein lies the basis of our mission.

When I entered this arena in 1970, I believed that my generation would, in short order, win the War on Poverty, and the world would become the better place envisioned by the likes of Dr. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. But society moves slowly and governmental systems are not endowed with good memories. We soon found that positive institutional change is always opposed and only effected through advocacy, organization and persistence. After 43 years that span eight presidential administrations, I've learned about the ebb and flow of the nation's interest in noble causes, about the ideological reverses and redirections that follow changes in political leadership and, thereby, for us. I believe that communicating the needs of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) to policy makers is an ongoing imperative.

Political winds have brought employment related services for MSFWs to the brink of extinction three times since their inception, and no one should doubt the probability that we will face further challenges of this nature. In such an environment, the influence we bring to bear on decisions affecting the future of our work with farmworker families comes from our local program performance, our national visibility, and our personal commitments. In that regard, I am confident that the Association and its members will continue to do what is necessary to defend and promote this cause. ♦

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The AFOP Washington *Newsline* (ISSN# 1056-8565) is produced by the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP), a national federation of agencies serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers. AFOP's 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.

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When is a Workplace Hazard a Risk at Home?

By Levy Schroeder, Director of Health & Safety Programs, AFOP

Occupational hazards are generally confined to the workplace: we go to work, do our job, and go home without ever thinking about safety. Some workers occasionally choose to take home a report or computer related task to complete, but it rarely poses a risk to health or safety. Farmworkers also take work home, but in a completely different context—one that is much more hazardous.

Pesticide residues are ever-present in the life of a farmworker and pose severe health concerns. They appear as a liquid, powdery film, or in most cases, cannot be seen at all. They can be absorbed into the human body via consumption, eyes, respiration, or skin. For example, someone who works in tobacco fields may directly absorb through their skin the equivalent of more than 20 cigarettes worth of nicotine in the course of one typical work day.

As farmworkers toil through the day harvesting fruit, detasseling corn, or hoeing sugar beets, etc, they constantly come in contact with pesticide residues. These residues are easily transferred from the crops to clothing, boots, skin, hair, and to anything else such as lunch coolers, water jugs, tools, and automobiles. According to the recently updated *Recognition and Management of Pesticide Poisonings* released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "Farmworkers are the working population often affected by pesticide overexposure, especially Latino farmworkers."

When a farmworker returns to his/her home at the end of the day, their clothing and bodies are covered in chemicals such as pyrethroids, organophosphates, organochlorines and glyphosate. All pesticides pose inherent risks to health; depending upon the toxicity of the individual chemical, the duration, and amount of exposure, farmworkers are at risk for acute to chronic health issues. For example, pyrethroids are known to cause dermal injuries and respiratory distress, while others are linked to myriad health problems including cancers, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimers, and hormonal disruptions. According to the EPA, the most widely used insecticides are

organophosphates, which have been implicated in harmful effects to fetal development resulting in birth defects, low birth weights, developmental delays, and miscarriage. Although transplacental absorption is the main route from mother to fetus, some studies indicate that these problems may even occur before conception if either the mother or father has been exposed.

Just as it is easy for the worker to become unintentionally covered in chemicals, it is also easy to transfer those same chemicals from their work clothes and body to their floors, furniture, bedding, and family members. If the farmworker hugs his or her children or spouse upon arriving home from work, the residues transfer directly between them. This spreading of chemicals is called take-home exposure and is of grave concern to EPA, AFOP, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, among many.

A significant body of research points to very serious health problems for children who are exposed to these toxins, including developmental difficulties, learning disabilities such as ADHD, asthma, brain tumors, leukemia, and birth defects. AFOP's publication, *The Fields: Children and Pesticides* identifies a large body of peer-reviewed research that demonstrates a disturbing weight of evidence linking parental occupational and para-occupational exposure to health problems.

AFOP's Health & Safety team, along with support and guidance from EPA, works to address take-home exposure through Project Limiting Exposures Around Families (LEAF). The Health & Safety team developed the Project LEAF curriculum and accompanying educational materials for farmworkers, and now offers a Project LEAF trainer certification program for farmworker health advocates around the country. Many AFOP member organizations now have qualified staff using the Project LEAF curriculum in their outreach efforts, and as of July 2013 these trainers have trained 1,791 farmworker parents on take-home exposure.

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Delta Association's 22nd Annual Conference

By: Mayra Gonzalez

The Delta Association for Rural Initiatives (DARI) recently held its 22nd annual conference in St. Louis, Missouri. DARI is a regional association of nonprofit organizations that operate job-training programs targeting migrant and seasonal farmworkers. These programs are funded under Section 167 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and includes 11 members from the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. DARI's annual conference provides information about farmworker issues and other matters that relate to rural poverty.

This year's conference was a success with more than 90 attendees coming together to increase their agency's capacity to provide valuable resources and training. The three-day conference was in two parts: first two days consisting of targeted learning sessions, and the last day was left a little more fluid for open discussions.

Wednesday, July 17 presented attendees with a variety of session options including: Crop Forecast for Delta Area, Working with the

Department of Corrections, Working with At-Risk Participants, "Rent Smart" Leads to Improved Credit, Ethics for Non-Profits in Service Delivery, Human Trafficking, USDA New Project-Funding Opportunities/Partnership, and Best & New Practices in the National Farmworker Jobs Program.



Attendees on Thursday enjoyed the following sessions: Discrimination and its Process, Farm Labor Housing and Overcoming Challenges, Seasonal Needs for Farmworker Housing, and Immigration Reform Update.

Of special value to participants was the reception/silent auction which provided the opportunity to socialize and exchange information between staff of member agencies.

On the final day of the conference was an open session which provided opportunity for non-planned discussion. Utmost on people's minds were budget cuts and how everyone must work together to brainstorm, share what works, and create win-win partnerships in order to continue serving clients not to the best of our funding, but to the best of our abilities. ♦

At-Home Risk continued from page 3

The AFOP Health & Safety team recently entered into a partnership with the National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association to provide a train-the-trainer course to parents and staff at their 2013 Parent Conference in San Antonio, Texas. Melanie Forti, AFOP Health & Safety Program Manager, conducted a two-day train-the-trainer course for 17 Head Start parents and staff.

Each trainer is required to train a minimum of 100 farmworkers on the Project LEAF curriculum in order to attain the AFOP certification. A similar course is scheduled in September for a Migrant & Seasonal Head Start health conference in Oregon.

EPA strongly supports AFOP's efforts on take-home exposure training and is providing additional funding through an EPA regional

grant to further develop Project LEAF to include a training unit on the hazards of pesticides to pregnant farmworkers. This training will describe the dangers of pesticide exposure to pregnant women and outline steps to reduce risk to the fetus and mother. This project opens doors for future partnerships in farmworker health and safety with AFOP member organizations and other advocates such as Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs.

Occupational pesticide exposure is a serious health concern because of the line between work and home being so thin. These risks can be reduced, however, and the partnerships among AFOP member organizations, the EPA, AFOP Health & Safety Programs, and other stakeholders are critical to protecting farmworkers and their families from pesticide exposure. ♦

Highlighting NFJP Results

By Jeanna Vaughn, Director of Workforce Development, AFOP

Each quarter the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) publishes a Workforce System Results report. The most recent one states that over the previous four quarters, 32.4 million people were served by ETA programs. This figure is about 3.8 million less than the previous four quarters and this is primarily attributed to reduced numbers in the Wagner-Peysner and Unemployment Insurance Programs. Overall, maintaining high numbers of participation among all programs shows the continued need for education, training, income support, and employment services.

The National Farmworkers Jobs Program (NFJP) is a federal job training program, serving about 19,000, of the estimated 3.5 million, migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents annually. The NFJP is a necessary program to change the lives of farmworkers averaging less than \$10,000 annually. One of the most successful ETA programs, the NFJP proves quarter after quarter that it is accomplishing this change by exceeding the agency's performance goals. The ETA Workforce System Results report featured NFJP in its quarterly spotlight, and highlighted the exceptional outcomes grantees earn nationally.

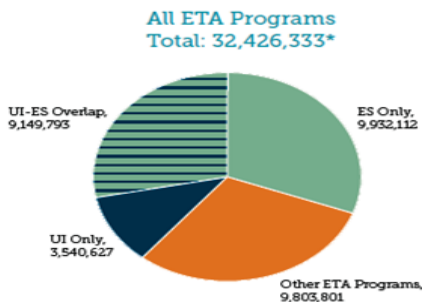
Performance goals for the NFJP include entered employment rate (how many participants are employed in the first quarter after exit), employment retention rate (number of participants still employed in the

second and third quarters after exit), and average earnings (total amount of earnings in second and third quarters after exit). Results show that as ETA has raised performance goals nearly annually, the NFJP keeps meeting these higher demands and outperforming them. In the most recent quarter with reported data, the fourth quarter of Program Year 2012, the NFJP achieved 106% of Entered Employment Rate goal, 108% of Employment Retention goal, and 104% of Average Earnings goal!

Beyond these numbers are the real stories of migrant and seasonal farmworkers who have moved themselves and their families out of poverty and into careers in which a stable and livable income, promotion potential, health benefits, and paid sick days are the norm - something most have never had before.

The Workforce System Results report profiled the story of José Realzola, a former farmworker who enrolled in the NFJP operated by ORO Development Corporation in Oklahoma, which shows a hardworking man who needed some guidance and training in order to transform his life, moving from the cotton fields of Oklahoma to becoming a transmission repairman, to owning his own repair shop. The NFJP continues to work to achieve these goals for participants and outreach to new ones every day. ♦

In the 12 month period ending December 31, 2012, ETA programs served over 32.4 million people. The Wagner-Peysner Employment Service (ES) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) served 69.8 percent of this total, and 72 percent of those receiving Unemployment Insurance also received Wagner-Peysner funded Employment Services. ETA's other programs provided more comprehensive services to over 9.8 million people.*



* Due to the lack of available current data, the total people served through the Wagner-Peysner Employment Service for the cumulative four quarters ending December 31, 2012, is based on the people served in the cumulative four quarters ending June 30, 2012.

People Served By Program

Other ETA Programs	
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adults	7,071,710
WIA Dislocated Workers	1,079,921
Registered Apprenticeship ¹	388,928
Community Based Job Training Grants ²	256,383
WIA Youth	228,278
ARRA High Growth and Emerging Industries Grants ²	181,125
Trade Adjustment Assistance	124,312
High Growth Job Training Initiative ²	109,261
Job Corps ³	99,434
Senior Community Service Employment Program	66,591
National Emergency Grants	56,061
Indian and Native American Adult Program ⁴	35,362
Reintegration of Ex-Offenders - Adult ⁵	34,410
YouthBuild ²	26,631
National Farmworker Jobs Program	21,736
Youthful Offender Initiative	15,720
Indian and Native American Youth ⁶	4,399
Green Jobs Innovation Fund Grants ²	3,539
Total	9,805,801

¹ Source: Count includes all active, completed, and cancelled apprentices tracked by Apprenticeship, US Military Apprentices Program, and State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) States.

² Data reflect program-to-date performance.

³ Number includes the number of students active on the start date, number of students enrolled during the timeframe, number of graduates separated prior to start date and in the placement service window during the timeframe, and number of former enrollees separated prior to the start date and in the placement service window during the timeframe.

⁴ Number includes self-service individuals.

⁵ Program-to-date as of program inception in Spring 2006.

⁶ Data reflective of the period from April 1, 2012, through September 30, 2012.

Live Auction

National Conference, Hilton Mark Center

Wednesday, September 25th, 6:00pm

All proceeds are used to help maintain our commitments to USA farmworkers!

Items may be shipped to hotel between Sep 16th — Sep 25th

Please send items to The Hilton Mark Center Hotel, c/o Yesenia Ramos-Torres
5000 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22311

Yesenia Ramos-Torres at yesenia.d.ramos@gmail.com or 585-690-3573

AFOP's 2013 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Children's Essay & Art Contest



2013 Contest Theme:

CULTIVATING BRIGHTER FUTURES

Make sure to visit our Contest Winners display at AFOP's 2013 National Conference, located at the Lower Lobby Foyer of the Hilton Mark Center in Alexandria, VA

Contest merchandise will be for sale at AFOP's National Conference!

(Also available online)

All sales proceeds go to next year's children's essay and contest

See our winning entries:
[http://afop.org/children-in-the-fields/
connect-with-cif/](http://afop.org/children-in-the-fields/connect-with-cif/)



Presented by:

AFOP's
Children in the Fields
Campaign

Farmworker Youth Essay & Art Contest

By: Norma Flores López, Director of *Children in the Fields Campaign*, AFOP

Twelve migrant and seasonal farmworker children, ages 10-18, are recognized for expressions of their lives spent working the agricultural fields of America.

Children across our nation submitted descriptive essays and powerful posters about how working in the fields, and migrating with the seasons, affected their future goals. The theme, *Cultivating Brighter Futures*, encourages youth to look at the world through a lens of endless possibilities. Instead of focusing on hoeing sugar beets, or handpicking strawberries, we want youth to focus on themselves - to help plant thought-seeds for their own success, and cultivate them toward victory.

Top winners in each of the four categories will be flown to Washington DC for our national conference. All winning submissions for each category will be printed on a calendar, and appear in AFOP's September issue of the Washington Newsline which is distributed to each of our 52 member agencies. Additionally, each winner will receive a cash prize to be used for school. Winning essays and artwork will also be compiled into a booklet and presented to key members of Congress.

The goal of the booklet is to raise awareness of the discriminatory agricultural exemption in the current federal child labor law. As the law currently allows, children as young as 12 are legally allowed to work for an unlimited number of hours outside of school in our nation's fields and orchards. Despite agriculture being consistently ranked the most dangerous occupation in America for children, there are an estimated 300,000-500,000 children working to harvest the fruits and vegetables that end up on our tables.

Burdened with balancing school and work responsibilities, experiencing health injuries related to pesticide exposure, musculoskeletal problems from working too hard while bones are still forming, and the prevalence of accidents with farm machinery, their futures are too frequently no different from their present. ♦

Contest Winners—Ages 10-13

Keep on Going

Maria Enerida Patiño, 13, Homestead, FL
1st Prize-Essay

The blistering rays of the scorching sun are penetrating through a thin coat of clothing burning my back. Sweat is running down my face, back, neck, arms, and legs. I can feel the heat-buildup on my hair and slowly sinking its way into my head. My stomach growls, and roars with pain from not having eaten since last night's supper. I've been working since five o'clock in the morning- at least at that time it was cool.

Through the bright sun, I squint my eyes looking for my dad. My father worked in the fields all his life. He was exposed to the

chemicals that were sprayed on the plants to make them grow and produce fruit faster. When he would sweat, the chemicals would slide down into his eyes causing them to turn red. Due to irreversible damage to his eyes they stayed that way for the rest of his life.

My mother and father were working in the fields when they had their first baby. By the time she had her second child she had to stay home and take care of them, this left my father alone working in the fields. His work days started from four o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night.

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Request for Nominations: Effective Workforce Practices for Farmworkers

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is compiling a collection of effective workforce practices in serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers. This collection will be published on ETA's forthcoming on-line resource page, *The Agricultural Connection*, for the benefit of practitioners that work to promote economic opportunities for farmworkers.

In collaboration with Social Policy Research Associates (SPRA), ETA is requesting nominations for "Innovations in Action," which are noteworthy and promising workforce practices for serving farmworkers.

While workforce practices on all topics are welcome, ETA is particularly interested in:

- Models for collaborative partnerships, such as with community colleges, American Job Centers (One-Stop Career Centers), or other federal/state-funded migrant programs.
- Effective approaches to serving specific target populations, such as farmworkers with criminal backgrounds.
- Unique service strategies, such as providing integrated ESL/occupational training to farmworkers or effective outreach strategies.

Please follow the instructions below and submit nominations to Jeanna Vaughn at Vaughn@afop.org. To ensure that practitioners in the field will be able to access the optimum resources available, we ask that your submissions represent the very best practices that you are implementing or have encountered.

Questions? Contact Jeanna Vaughn at Vaughn@afop.org or (202) 828-6006 ext. 109.

Submitting Nominations for "Innovations in Action"

Innovations in Action nominations must be:

- ⇒ Practices designed to promote employment opportunities for migrant and seasonal farmworkers;
- ⇒ Practices currently being implemented that demonstrate potential for continued success and impact; and
- ⇒ Practices that can be implemented at the local or state level.

To submit an Innovation in Action, email a word document that contains the following information:

- ⇒ Your name, organization, e-mail address, and phone number;
- ⇒ The name or title of the workforce practice being nominated;
- ⇒ The organization implementing the workforce practice;
- ⇒ The location (city/state) of the workforce practice;
- ⇒ A complete description of the workforce practice; and
- ⇒ An explanation of how the practice demonstrates potential for continued success and impact.

Submissions of nominations for Innovations in Actions should not be longer than two pages. Individuals submitting practices may be contacted with follow-up.

Advocating for Brighter Futures

By Robert Crumley, Director of Communications, AFOP

The 2013 remembrances of the 1963 March on Washington provided an opportunity to acknowledge the changes we as a nation have gone through these past 50 years. Change is slow with what individuals may interpret as either forward steps or backwards slips, but our nation's beliefs and laws do morph over time. To say "things have not changed" is to dishonor the people who have fought, all too often with their livelihoods or even lives.

including the Hispanic community. Alan Van Capelle, of the Jewish community's Bend the Arch, stated "We are far from justice when we have 11 million immigrants working every single day without protections or a path to citizenship." Representative Donna Edwards, an influential member of the Congressional Black Caucus, echoed Ms. Huerta when she said that "Today's struggle for civil rights, social justice, and economic opportunity demand our engagement and our voices."



Photograph: AP

The diversity of speakers at the march was expansive. From the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Dolores Huerta reminded us that the Civil Rights Movement did not advocate for just one group of Americans, it advocated for all,

To realize fully the Dream, we must both raise our voices and take action." ♦

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March on Washington 2013

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However, AFOP member agencies understand the reality of those words. On a daily basis we facilitate economically depressed individuals through the National Farmworker Jobs Program. We educate armworkers on the hazards of pesticide exposures, we work to equalize the laws for children working in the fields, and we all too often see the personal implications of a broken immigration system on the fabric of families we serve.

Congressman John Lewis reminded us at both the 1963 and 2013 marches that we have work to do on equality of opportunity in this country. He also used part of his speech to call out the need to pass an immigration reform measure, to "bring [immigrants] out into the light and set them on a path to citizenship." Doing so would greatly expand the need for, and participation in, the National Farmworker Jobs Program says Daniel Sheehan, Executive Director, AFOP.

President Obama stated, "The measure of progress...is whether this country is willing to admit all people who are willing to work hard, regardless of race, into the ranks of the middle class...it is whether our economic system provides a fair shot for the many." And "to answer that call for equality, this remains our greatest unfinished business." These are the words that speak to our families, and to

AFOP member agencies as we continue working to positively impact the lives and safety of our clients.

The work we do to improve the quality of life for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families is part of a larger mission to execute the true meaning of our creed as one nation, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Attendee Gonzalo Del Mar Mahino stated, "The value of looking back is that it inspires us for the road ahead, and reminds us to honor the sacrifices of those who paved the way to where we are today, and where we will be tomorrow." This is a powerful sentiment that many of our families and NFJP graduates relate to.

The overwhelming message of that day was that we must continue coming together to help one another, that change is inevitable, and how we choose to affect that change is up to the individual. At the end of Dolores's time at the podium, she led the crowd in a call-and-response: "Who's got the power?" "We've got the power!" "What kind of power?" "People power!" "Si Se Puede!" ♦



Photo from Google.

Winners continued from page 7

By the time my brothers and sisters grew up we were all working in the field. Usually there wasn't enough for school supplies. I could see and hear the student staring at my torn up book bag during the school year. I didn't get embarrassed; I knew that every obstacle that I would face would only make me stronger and help motivate me to make my dreams a reality.

School is not a place to show off things or pick on students, but to learn and increase one's knowledge. That's exactly what I am doing. I know that in the end no one can ever take a way my education and knowledge.

In life I will face difficult obstacles, but I will keep in my mind all the difficult work we had to do, all the sacrifices my parents have made for my family. I will give one-hundred percent of my heart, mind, and soul to it. I am Maria Patiño, a farmworker who will one day be addressed as Dr. Patiño. ♦



Jaqueline Vargas, age 13, San Luis, AZ
1st Prize-Art

Contest Winners — Ages 14-18

Our Daily Struggle

Maribel Corona, Age 15, Homestead, FL
1st Prize-Essay

I couldn't take the heat anymore. My head was pounding from the massive headache that I had. My face was boiling; it felt as if my cheeks were going to explode. My back was aching. My legs were sore. My fingers were even numb. Every bone in my body was in pain. I'm surprised I didn't faint and end up having to be rushed to the hospital. I can never seem to forget that day... It was the summer of my sixth grade year. My mother had the brilliant idea of taking me to work with her and test me to see if I was farm work material. As you can see, it was an epic fail. I was so embarrassed and ashamed because it was just the first day. That's when I realized, that if I don't get an education, I will starve to death.

What surprises me the most is the mere fact that my parents have worked in the fields for 17 years now, and they always wake up the next morning, following the same routine as the day before. That's how I know how harsh their reality is. No human being enjoys working under the sun's harsh ultraviolet rays for \$7.00 an hour. Judging from my first experience, I would have never chosen to go back there. Of course I received an earful from Mami in the car, on our way home. "Por eso es importante la educación. Para que no tengas que trabajar como yo y tu papa." She likes to say.

In April of 1996, my parents first migrated illegally into the U.S. Luckily, they were able to find refuge in a small mobile trailer in Orangeville, South Carolina. Working from sunrise to sunset, earning \$4.75 an hour, they picked all kinds of fruits and vegetables there. Green beans, green peppers, corn, tomatoes, strawberries, watermelons. You name it, they picked it. Once the crops began to die off, my parents had no other alternative but to migrate to South Florida. Thankfully, my family doesn't have to physically migrate to a different state every season. Nevertheless, my parents do have to migrate from field to field, depending on the season of the year.

Growing up, I always felt like I was different compared to other kids. My family is not able to go to the Florida Keys or to Mexico or to the Bahamas every summer, like other families. As a matter of fact, my family has never been on vacation. I have always wanted to go to Disney World and take a picture with Princess Jasmine and Cinderella... In elementary school, I used to always get picked on because I was the only one who brought Quesadillas and Tacos de Frijoles (bean tacos) for lunch every day. There were days I wouldn't eat because I didn't want the other kids to laugh at me. A major challenge that my family has to face every day is fear itself. The fear of my parents getting caught and being deported back to Mexico. Although my mom does not want me to worry about it, I can't help myself. My entire life would turn upside down if my parents were to be taken away from me like that. It's bad enough I have had to witness my uncle get handcuffed and forced into an "Ice" can. I can't even deal with the thought of being sent to an orphanage and moving to Mexico isn't an option for me. No child should have to live through that.

The typical work day for my mom starts at 5:00 a.m. every morning. She is out of the house before 7:00 am. My mom currently works at a plant industry. Planting, packing, and shipping all types of plants. She works outdoors under all types of weather, heat or heavy rain. Because she works with plants, she is constantly being exposed to all kinds of pesticides, which are later going to affect her health. She also has to put up with rude supervisors that think they're superior compared to everyone else. Not only that, there are days when my mom has to work late and on weekends. And no, she does not get paid overtime. I must admit, working in the fields is an honest labor, but you don't ever progress. It's like being stuck in quick sand-you're there and it's so hard to get out.

Making my parents proud of me has become my mission in life. Every day I see how sweaty and beat up they are when they get home from work. They have become my inspiration and my motivation to go to school and perform the best that I possibly can. It is the least that I can do. I dream of working in the food industry, managing my own business. On the other hand, I also want to pursue a career in the medical field working the labor and delivery room. I go to school every day, I earn honor roll every semester, and I have been volunteering every

day since summer vacation began. I plan on becoming president of my class and graduating in the top 10%, graduating from college and pursuing my dream careers. In the future, I want to be able to provide for myself and thrive in my career so that I can not only make an honest living like my parents do, but be able to work in something that I truly love. Most importantly I want to make my parents proud. because they deserve that and so much more!



Javier Alejandro Soto-Gonzalez, age 15, San Bakersfield, CA
1st Prize – Art

Success Stories

Keeping Ocean-Going Ships in Sea-Worthy Condition

Losing his job six weeks earlier, Pedro brought dreams and high hopes when he entered PathStone's office in Añasco, Puerto Rico.



Photo from Google

Although Pedro had been working part-time on a plantain farm earning just \$4 per hour, his real interest was in welding. After a series of lengthy discussions about his options, Pedro enrolled in the Training & Employment program where we helped him develop new life skills and attitudes for the workplace through the Job Readiness Training with PX2 education.

Pedro was an enthusiastic student and eagerly participated in every activity. When finally provided the opportunity to enroll in an Industrial Welding Occupational Skills Training program, he jumped at the chance to get started on his new career.

Right from the start, Pedro was a focused and dedicated student. He knew the value in fully understanding this new skills set and the Long-term impact this training was having on his life.

Upon completion of his training, Pedro earned certification from the nationally recognized professional credentialing organization for welders—the American Welding Society.

With a new résumé, Pedro received interviews with many employers and was soon hired by a marine maintenance company in Louisiana.

In stark contrast to his earlier paychecks, he now earns \$20 an hour, works year-round, and continues to build his professional skills and confidence as a recognized craftsman.

Pedro is extremely thankful for the investment PathStone made in him and for the people who supported him on his journey.

Through PathStone, Pedro's spark for welding was ignited and fanned into a flame of success. He continues working hard to ensure the investment others made in him, and the time he invested in his own future, was well spent. ♦



Pedro enjoys his new career as a welder.
Story submitted by: Jeffrey Lewis of Pathstone

Success Stories

Talented Family Advances Through NFJP

The Gause family thanks Arkansas Human Development Corporation and the National Farmworker Jobs Program. This family proves that hard work pays off. I

n 2009 and 2010, Eugene planted soybeans, wheat and drove tractor in Helena, Arkansas, but being a barber had always been his dream. Attending barber college was a challenge, but he was determined to finish school to provide a better life for his family.

He enrolled in Barber College of North Little Rock, AR, in July 2010. While he attended school, he commuted from West Helena, AR; daily at times, and other times, he lived with in-laws in Little Rock, AR. Soon after starting school, Mr. Gause was introduced to the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), which is administered in Arkansas by Arkansas Human Development Corporation (AHDC).

Enrolling in the NFJP allowed Mr. Gause to receive a stipend while attending school. He no longer had to use his family's limited finances for gas and food. NFJP Financial assistance allowed him to focus more on his studies and less on finances. The program also purchased



Owner of Black & White in West Helena, Arkansas

the equipment he needed for school.

Dedication and commitment led Mr. Gause to graduate early from the 12-month Arkansas

Barbering course. August 2011, he passed the State Board test and received his barber license. Today, he is a licensed entrepreneur, and co-owner of the Black & White Barber and Beauty Shop in West Helena, AR.



Aller and Eugene Gause in front of their new home.

Mr. Gause is especially thankful to AHDC Employment Specialist Linda Scott for working with him as well as encouraging his wife, Aller Gause, to enroll in the NFJP. Ms. Scott counseled Ms. Gause about the opportunities that the program could create. After considering nursing school, Ms. Gause decided that she wanted to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). The rest is history.

AHDC Employment Specialist Greg Davis processed Ms. Gause's NFJP application. After her application was approved, Ms. Gause commuted from West Helena, AR, to Forrest City, AR, for two and one-half weeks to attend CNA training. She achieved her CNA license on June 30, 2011. She is employed as a CNA with East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging.

After completing the NFJP, finishing school and becoming gainfully employed, Eugene and Aller enrolled in the Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation housing program through which they purchased their first home in November 2011.

Story submitted by: Karen Pace, AHDC ◆

AFOP Washington Newsline

Once social change begins,
it cannot be reversed.
You cannot uneducate the person
who has learned to read,
humiliate the person who feels pride,
and you cannot oppress people
who are not afraid anymore.

—César Chávez