



April 2014

Washington Newsline

Budget and Issues Round-up

By Daniel Sheehan, Executive Director, AFOP

The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP) was pleased to see President Obama ask Congress in his fiscal year 2015 federal budget proposal to preserve funding for the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) at the current-year level. While its members could do so much more for farmworkers with additional resources, the proposal is welcomed news given that the December budget agreement provides much less relief from sequestration in fiscal year 2015 than it did for fiscal year 2014.

The president also called for an additional \$56 billion in

discretionary spending that would be split between defense and non-defense programs. It is unclear what mechanism the budget would employ to add spending while adhering to the budget agreement's spending caps. The White House said the spending would be offset with revenue generated by closing tax loopholes and making various other spending cuts. The House Budget Committee is expected to reject much of what the president has proposed, while the Senate Budget Committee, arguing that last year's budget agreement set in place a budget framework for fiscal year 2015, may not write a budget resolution this year.

Turning to appropriations, Congress, with the guidance of the December budget agreement, is beginning its work on fiscal year 2015 spending, figuring out the amount for each of the 12 yearly appropriations bills, and what each bill's priorities will be. To help ensure that congressional appropriators are well informed of the importance and success of anti-poverty programs like NFJP, AFOP joined with over a thousand groups in explaining how adequate funding helps lift people up and gives them a shot at leading more stable, productive lives.

Concerning reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, the Senate has still not scheduled the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee-reported bill for floor time (S. 1356). While we have heard encouraging news that Senate staff are working hard in bipartisan fashion to ready the bill for full Senate consideration, we still do not know when that might occur. Proponents were originally hoping to see the bill come up last month. Meanwhile, the House passed its workforce development consolidation bill – SKILLS Act (H.R. 803) – last year and awaits Senate action to go to conference, hopefully later this spring.

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In specific, the NFJP proposal is identical to the language included in the fiscal year 2014 omnibus appropriations bill: \$81,896,000 for migrant and seasonal farmworker programs under WIA section 167, consisting of \$75,885,000 for formula grants (of which not less than 70 percent shall be for employment and training services); \$5,517,000 for migrant and seasonal housing (of which not less than 70 percent shall be for permanent housing); and \$494,000 for other discretionary purposes. If appropriated, these funds would be for program year July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

With respect to the issue of comprehensive immigration reform, the White House and lawmakers supporting the Senate-passed bipartisan reform measure (S. 744) adopted a different strategy late last year giving House Republicans “space” to find a way to move reform legislation, rather than continuing to pressure them politically. Proponents saw early promising signs, with the House leadership mentioning immigration reform on its priorities list for 2014. More recently, though, the House has seemed to back away from that progress, approving instead two measures criticizing the president for his 2012 executive order allowing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. While the Senate is unlikely to consider either piece of legislation, it does appear to show the House is moving in the opposite direction of what is needed to reform our immigration system.

Lastly, AFOP encourages all readers to review the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) recently published proposed revisions to the Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides, and to express views on the matter for the agency to consider.

Comments must be submitted to <http://www.regulations.gov> and be identified by docket number EPA-HQ-OPP-2011-0184. The deadline for comments is June 17, 2014.

According to EPA, the agency is proposing these updates and revisions in response to extensive stakeholder review of the regulation and its implementation since 1992, and to reflect current research on how to mitigate occupational pesticide exposure to agricultural workers and pesticide handlers. EPA is proposing to strengthen the protections provided to agricultural workers and handlers under the Worker Protection Standard by improving elements of the existing regulation, such as training, notification, communication materials, use of personal protective equipment, and decontamination supplies. EPA expects the final revisions will prevent unwarranted adverse effects from exposure to pesticides among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers; vulnerable groups such as minority and low-income populations, child farmworkers, and farmworker families; and the general public. Please take the time to make your views known. ♦

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Staff Changes at AFOP

By Robert Crumley, Director of Communications, AFOP



Francesca Laursen,
Office Administrator/
Program Manager

Francesca Laursen is the Office Administrator/Program Manager at AFOP. She works with the executive director and finance manager, supporting the needs of AFOP's office and staff. Francesca is also responsible for the planning of two annual conferences.

Prior to joining AFOP, Francesca worked as an attorney at the World Bank and recently moved back to Washington, DC after an eight year assignment in Warsaw, Poland. Francesca is an experienced organizer of conferences, workshops and meetings, managing international development projects and performing policy advocacy work for both the World Bank and the United Nations. Francesca has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science/International Relations, a Masters degree in International Business Management and a Juris Doctor degree in law with a focus on Corporate Finance. She brings a lighthearted infusion of energy and professional insight to her position. ♦



Program Administrative
Coordinator for AFOP's
Health & Safety Programs

Miguel Vélez is the Program Administrative Coordinator for AFOP's Health & Safety Programs. He is responsible for coordinating education projects and assisting in the development of limited-literacy, bilingual curricula and training materials related to pesticide safety and other topics for farmworkers. He also organizes the Health & Safety Programs' social media and contributes to the Sazón para la Salud monthly newsletter.

Miguel obtained his master's degree from San Diego State University in Latin American Studies and Public Health where he researched pesticide risk exposure with farmworkers and the Mixteco language and culture. He also brings to AFOP over ten years of experience working with national public health non-profit organizations. Miguel's dedication to quality is mixed with a warm sense of humor that naturally invites people to him. ♦

Small Effort, Big Impact: Long-sleeve Shirt Drive

By: Melanie Forti, Health & Safety Programs Director, AFOP



Telamon Maryland Team

Pesticides are used in excess of one billion pounds per year in the United States according to data from the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Despite potentially serious hazards to health, chemicals are used in nearly all fields where crops are harvested, placing farmworkers at the greatest risk for health issues related to pesticide exposure.

Farmworkers are exposed to pesticides mainly through their skin (**dermal** exposure). They are also exposed via **inhalation** when a farmworker breathes the air containing pesticide as a vapor, an aerosol, or on small particles like dust. **Oral** exposure occurs when someone eats food or drinks water containing pesticides. (This is why washing produce or hands before and after eating or drinking is vital). **Ocular** exposure is the result of pesticide transmission to the eyes.

Symptoms of pesticide poisoning can be described as a functional change in normal condition, or ability, that can be described by the victim. Symptoms of pesticide exposure are

broad and may include vomiting, sweating, pin-point pupils, and irritation or burns. Symptoms may also include nausea, headache, weakness, dizziness, and others. To prevent serious injury and prompt treatment, anyone working with pesticides should know these symptoms. Early studies suggest that acute health risks due to pesticide exposure include lymph and pancreatic cancers, Parkinsons, birth defects, reproductive cancers, and others.

To help prevent exposures, AFOP's Health & Safety Programs facilitated the first annual National Long-sleeve Shirt Drive during Farmworker Awareness Week. Wearing long sleeved shirts reduces the risk of pesticide exposure as well as heat-related illnesses.



Roberto Quintero raised 2,941 shirts

AFOP's Health & Safety Programs estimated to collect 1,000 shirts among the 10 participating member agencies. To our surprise, we collected **6,044 long sleeve-shirts to help farmworkers stay healthy!**

About the success of the drive, Roberto Quintero, Pesticide and Workplace Safety Trainer at Telamon, Corporation in Virginia says, "...the common denominator was a passion to assist people. We understand the importance of pesticide safety and how long sleeve-shirts help to protect farmworkers."

We had 66 drop-off locations in 12 states and Puerto Rico. Over 100 volunteers, professionals and organizations coordinated local logistics. Proteus, Inc. in Nebraska, and PathStone Corp. in Puerto Rico used the drive as a media opportunity to promote their work and to mobilize their communities to support regional farmworkers.

Susan Billups, Regional Director at Proteus, Inc. says, "...it was a win-win proposition all the way around. We raised awareness of what we do, engaged staff, and ultimately assisted the great people who help feed our nation!"

Seeing the value and the ease with which individuals could participate, a former SAFE AmeriCorps member from Arizona, Bertha A. Luna, took it upon herself to orchestrate a community-wide campaign on her own. She educated and motivated her friends, local organizations, and community to donate long-sleeve shirts to the drive.

For 2015, we plan on increased participation in this national effort to create awareness of the health risks farmworkers endure while collecting our nation's food.

Sometimes a gift as simple as a shirt, when combined with others, can have a big impact.

Will you join us next year? ♦



Care About Good Food? Care About Farmworker Kids

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

Over the past decade, we have seen high obesity rates and an increase in food-related diseases. These alarming rates spurred increased efforts by food activists on the increasing awareness of the importance of providing our families with nutritious and fresh foods to keep them healthy. Nowadays, in most parts of the country, it's not uncommon to walk into restaurants and grocery stores and see local, organic, and healthier options. Unfortunately, what continue to be left off the shelf or menu are options that are guaranteed to be child-labor-free.

Today in America, as many as 500,000 children work in America's fields, providing us with the fruits and vegetables we eat each day. Federal labor laws allow children as young as 12 years old to work with few protections in one of the most dangerous industries: agriculture. On a



Farmworking family with children

farm, a child as young as 16 can perform work that is deemed hazardous to their health – work strictly prohibited for anyone under 18 in any other industry. Despite the high levels of child labor in our American food system, there is no mechanism in place to warn consumers of the abuses in their food supply chain. Even if American consumers wanted to avoid supporting child labor with their dollars, it is practically impossible without going out and personally inspecting the harvest of each fruit or vegetable they eat.

During the last week of March, we celebrated National Farmworker Awareness Week, with organizations across the country creating events and spurring action to increase awareness of the issues U.S. farmworker families face today and to celebrate their contributions. These celebrations and events are not reserved only to those working in the farmworker community. The issue of food justice should matter to everyone that eats.

Abusive working conditions have been prevalent in agricultural work for centuries. The chemicals farmworkers are sprayed with, and their families are exposed to, will eventually end up on our plates. The farmworkers denied benefits guaranteed to other workers will end up needing more of our tax dollars, and the generosity of others to make ends meet. And what about the most vulnerable of the farmworker community – the farmworker children?

Many of the issues plaguing vulnerable children across America are found in high concentrations in the farmworker community. Farmworker children live in deep, generational poverty and face hunger each day. Oftentimes, their parents cannot afford the very fruits and vegetables they are harvesting. Farmworker children face discrimination, isolation, and all of the detrimental effects of a broken immigration system. Many of these children live in fear of their families being ripped apart, despite the fact that the majority of farmworker children are U.S.-born. For farmworker children looking to break the cycle of poverty, they face high dropout rates and lack of access to quality education. Many face language barriers and live a migratory lifestyle, attending up to four different schools each year.

President of South Africa and human rights leader Nelson Mandela once said, "There can be *no keener* revelation of a *society's* soul than the way in which it treats its children." If that is true, America's soul is languishing. We must work together to fix the broken food system if we really want to create a brighter future for our children, and to do so, we must remember the farmworker children.

To learn how you can be involved, visit the *Children in the Fields Campaign* website: www.afop.org/children-in-the-fields ♦

The American Dream—Many Paths

By: Evangelina Alvarez, Guest Writer, Washington State University Student

Rogelio, my father and hardworking farmworker, made a decision that impacted my life forever. Following the American dream, he immigrated with our family to the United States. My father and mother's purpose for immigrating was to raise their children in a safe community and provide a better future - one that allowed us to thrive in a nation of opportunities. Their dream of opportunities became a reality for me. Now I have dreams of my own.

Growing up a farmworker child, I never imagined that I was capable of doing work that would impact the lives of thousands of other farm working children. With the help of my parents I learned the value of education, which in turn created opportunities that are continually changing the path of my life.

One of the greatest opportunities came in 2012 when I was selected as an intern by the National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association. This steppingstone allowed me to have a well-grounded understanding of the legislative process in our government. I learned first hand about the work achieved by our elected representatives and how I can affect their actions. I took this opportunity to bring issues such as health and safety, concerns of under-employment, and fair representation of migrant or seasonal farmworkers to our leaders.

One of the most unforgettable events was a trip, sponsored by the Association of Farm Worker Opportunity Programs (AFOP) *Children in the Fields Campaign*.

During our visit with farm working communities in Greenville, North Carolina I witnessed the living conditions that many migrant and seasonal farmworkers endure. I saw the fear in their eyes of being deported, being abused, and working in harsh conditions with no one to turn to for help. Although we shared a similar situation, our experiences were vastly different.

I grew up working potatoes in a seasonal

farmworker family and community in Central Washington. I am grateful for my background and am looking forward to using those experiences as I maximize the opportunities before me.

Two years after the internship in Washington D.C., I am interning for the Washington State House of Representatives helping my representative conduct legislative research, write legislation, attend committee hearings and legislative meetings, and correspond with constituents. We work hard to meet with constituents and listen to people so we can fully understand the needed investment in education for migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and undocumented students. It was both rewarding and humbling to serve my community and witness history being made when the governor signed the Washington Hope Act/Dream Act.

Farmworkers have many concerns including adequate wages, housing, food, working conditions, health care, and quality of life issues for their families. Many farmworkers have no options or hope when it comes to their livelihood. AFOP provides both opportunity and support for farmworkers to learn new job skills, increase their incomes and live a better life. I chose the college path to reach the American Dream; AFOP provides a customized path for migrant and seasonal farmworkers to attain their Dream.

I take great pride in my background and where I come from. Being a farmworker helped me appreciate and be thankful for the opportunities that have come my way. It doesn't matter where you come from, but rather where you finish.



As for me, I no longer dream of being a supervisor in the potato plant; I am now in active pursuit of a political career. ♦

Eva Alvarez with Representatives Judy Warnick and Matt Manweller

Jobs Training for Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers

By: Kathleen Nelson, Director of Workforce Development, AFOP

The stated mission of the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) is to “counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor performed within the United States and Puerto Rico.” The purpose of NFJP is to improve the lives of MSFWs and their families, either through direct assistance or through employment and training services.

What sounds on paper like a simple prospect is in reality anything but. The challenges faced by farmworkers across the country are as varied as the crops they harvest. In the 2011 program year, 13,962 individuals received services from NFJP grantees, and 8,316 of those individuals participated in employment and training programs. Farmworkers have to face significant challenges and overcome many barriers before being ready for placement into full time employment. Lack of basic education, workplace readiness, and English language skill gaps are common among farmworkers, as is a lack of transportation or access to public transportation. Many farmworkers are single parents struggling to support their children financially and in school. In addition to enrolling farmworkers in education and training programs to reach their employment goals, NFJP grantees are also experts in helping farmworkers build life skills like financial literacy, and connecting them with community resources that can help bring stability and support as they strive to achieve independence.

While it’s certainly true that a lot of farmworkers participate in NFJP because they’re ready to move out of the fields, that’s not always the case—there are many people who take a great deal of pride in the work that they do harvesting crops that feed their communities. They love to be outdoors working with their hands and feel connected to the earth. The harsh reality is, most farm work is seasonal and does not pay enough to make a living or support a family. Through NFJP enrollment, farmworkers develop a plan to gain

the skills and tools needed to find stability and full time employment both out of and in agriculture.

When an NFJP grantee enrolls an individual for employment and training, it performs comprehensive assessments to identify everything from educational skill levels to other talents, aptitudes, and interests in order to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and then support him or her to move successfully through that IEP. There are many different types of jobs in agriculture or related industries that are a natural fit for farmworkers who really understand the fields and know what it takes for a successful harvest. From light construction to machine repair and operation, NFJP grantees can give farmworkers the skills and training necessary to become valued year-round employees on farms across the country. Many farmworkers already possess the leadership skills and community network to become a field manager, or farm labor contractor, and NFJP grantees can help fill education and language gaps, or guide individuals through the certification process to open the door to higher achievement and more opportunity.

Giving farmworkers entrepreneurial training and helping them navigate their state licensing rules and regulations is another way that NFJP grantees have helped farmworkers continue in agriculture and to own their own farms! That’s exactly how Telamon-Virginia helped Sergio Izaguirre Jr. who now owns his own business as a produce farmer who sells his wares at farmers markets across the state.

I recognize the passion and dedication of the NFJP grantees who are intensely committed to helping farmworkers. I also honor the value of farmworkers who daily toil to bring food to our tables, and who also take the life-altering risk of improving their futures by actively participating with the National Farmworker Jobs Program. ♦



Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs

Success Story Basics

- Include a clear, high resolution picture (.jpeg). (Be sure to have a signed release form.)
- Describe the length of time and type of farm work your client performed.
- Define his/her earnings/benefits both before and after participating in the NFJP.
- Explain how he/she learned about the NFJP and why they enrolled.
- How has this transformed his/her life and family? What are his/her current goals? How will this training help him/her achieve future goals?
- Be sure to emphasize the role and impact of NFJP.

Additional Tips:

- Clients hired by new employers are more compelling than ones hired by a training organization.
- Use active voice to make your story more dynamic.
- Describe the individual hardships. Details help your reader gain a clear and compelling picture of the great successes achieved through NFJP training.

Maria, a single mother of three, worked for the last six years tying vines in California's vineyards, stooping to fill pails with delicate blueberries, and harvesting asparagus. Despite starting work at 4:00a.m. in the dark and damp mornings; the threat of heat exhaustion during the sweltering summer days; and a sore body when she left the fields after dark; Maria was supporting herself and children on just \$10,000 per year.

- Include a quote:

"Thinking I could ease my parents' financial burden, I dropped out of high school to also work in the fields. I didn't know it at the time, but that was the worst decision I ever made. The best decision I ever made was to participate with NFJP and return to school!"

- Specific dollar amounts are KEY as they speak to the NFJP Common Measures.

"Maria went from \$7/hr. with no benefits to \$14/hr. with insurance, leave, and vacation."

- Remember, most people are blind to the manual labor and human cost involved in getting safe and affordable food to their tables. It is up to you to paint the picture.

Luis Esparza—A Legacy of Service

by Ashley Myres Duggan, MET Inc.



Luis Esparza
Photo by Debbie Esparza

As time marches on, opportunities as well as friends and colleagues come and go. Luis Esparza is one such friend, colleague, and leader who will be greatly missed.

Luis contributed immensely to the farmworker community, the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs (AFOP), and to

the lives of countless people in need from one side of our country to the other.

On September 24, 1973, Luis Esparza was hired as the Job Developer for Motivation Education & Training's (MET) migrant farmworker relocation program in Goodrich, Texas.

After a few years, Luis was promoted to the Director of Field Services where he administered the Department of Labor grants under CEDA, JTPA, and NFJP for Texas; Louisiana; Minnesota; and North Dakota.

In 2005, Luis was promoted to the position of Executive Director of MET, Inc., where he oversaw the NFJP employment and training, NFJP temporary and permanent housing, and Head Start.

While serving farmworkers is the cornerstone of the agency's mission, Luis' visionary qualities enabled MET to broaden the scope to include initiatives that target low-income and disadvantaged populations. Under Luis' guidance, MET became the NFJP grantee for Wyoming, expanded the existing Head Start program, added Early Head Start to the service area, and began serving senior citizens in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

Most recently he volunteered to be a peer to peer consultant to assist another National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee identify and surmount highly specific and challenging opportunities for growth in Puerto Rico.

On February 11th, 2014, friends and family from across the nation gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of Luis Esparza's 40 year work legacy. Surrounded by his entire family, Luis was lauded by the MET Governing Board President, NFJP Coordinators, Head Start and Early Head Start Directors, Deputy Director of Field Services, Finance Director, Communications Director, Director of Field Services, Deputy Director, and his wife, Debbie Esparza.

After personal stories and fun memories were all revealed and retold, the unspoken truth became clear: Luis Esparza was so much more than a boss; he transformed the lives of every person there. For some, they would have been considered a risky hire. For others, he personally helped in ways that well might be considered menial tasks for a boss. His gentle nature and humble spirit positioned him high on the list of highly admired people.

Amongst friends and family, Luis was appreciated for his service and dedication and toasted to good health, long life, safe travels, great friendships, and every happiness that life has to offer.

Afterwards, he offered these words, "It has been one of the great privileges of my life to serve in this capacity and focus on alleviating the cycle of poverty. If MET has helped even one family, I consider my life successful. Carry on this work. Continue the cause. That would be the greatest gift I could ever receive." ♦

Success Stories

Hidden Passion Discovered

Story by: Sonia Reyes-Snyder, Case Manager for Proteus, Iowa



Jason Villarreal

Jason Villarreal is a graduate from the Professional Cosmetology Institute (PCI). Through Proteus Inc. Jason discovered a passion for cosmetology and was able to finance his education at the PCI. Proteus offers many programs, including the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) which assisted Jason with educational expenses including classes, books, training materials, and a stipend for time spent in class.

I discovered Proteus after they helped a friend in Ames, so I called and inquired if they could help me as well. It was the end of 2011 and I had been working in maintenance in Ames, IA. Things were going alright, but I was not where I wanted to be. I needed a career change.

When I contacted Proteus they connected me with Sonia-Reyes Synder. She went to work right away and set up a time to meet with me the following week to fill out paperwork. Sonia met me during my lunch break and we started to get things going. I was looking at attending a local community college. In a short amount of time, I applied for admission, did required testing and ultimately was accepted.

My business management class was about to start and I felt prepared, or so I thought. But

then, I had second thoughts about the program I had chosen. I felt I had just jumped in and tried to beat a deadline of when a class was going to start. I wasn't sure this was the best choice for me.

I spoke with Sonia and told her I wasn't sure if I was following the right path. So I checked out some other options, one of which was PCI. I called PCI and asked if I could apply. I informed Sonia of my decision and she was very supportive and asked me for a school supply list. It was quite lengthy consisting of folders, pen, note cards, all black clothing: pants, shirts and shoes. Sonia got the list approved and we shopped locally in Ames.

Sonia told me that Proteus provides travel expenses, health and legal aid. I asked about the health aid, as I was having tooth pain and needed new prescription for my glasses. Sonia took care of making all my appointments, allowing me to get the medical attention I needed. Having Proteus take care of everything enabled me to better myself and focus on my future.

I enrolled in PCI and made awesome progress once classes started. Sonia was so happy for me; I could see how proud she was of my accomplishments. I was a full-time student and Proteus even paid me for a portion of the time I spent in class. This allowed me to stay and give school 100% of the attention it needed for me to succeed.

By the time I graduated, I was one of the top three students and already had a job lined up in Des Moines at a Premier Salon. I stop in at the Proteus, Des Moines Merle Hay location when I'm in the neighborhood, as I enjoy seeing and talking to the staff. When I see Sonia, I view her as a friend and give her a giant hug.

Thanks, in big part to, Proteus, I was able to achieve my career goals with minimal student loan debt and happier than I have ever been. ♦

Success Stories

Farming to Wildlife Management

Story by: Ben Sanchez, Case Manager for Workforce Development Division, HELP, New Mexico



Angelica Solano

Angelica Solano lives in a rural section of Northern San Miguel County, New Mexico, with her mother and younger sister.

Angelica has been employed seasonally with the Thunder Ranch in Sapello, New Mexico, since the age of thirteen. As a ranch hand she fed and tended to livestock, cut and harvested alfalfa, built and mended fences, and tended to the vegetable garden. Additionally, she was responsible for maintaining chores at the ranch house. Angelica earned approximately \$3,500 seasonally and applied those earnings to her family's household expenses. After her long day of work at the Thunder Ranch, she would return home and do many of those same chores again.

Due to her distance from the school, and transportation issues, Angelica dropped out of public school at the age of sixteen. Not to be deterred for long, she enrolled at LUNA Community College and completed her GED requirements. Upon graduation she enrolled as a full time student at the Community College. While attending school, Angelica learned about HELP – New Mexico's National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) and made an inquiry into the possibility of securing full-time employment while also attending school.

During Angelica's application process with the NFJP and HELP–New Mexico, Inc., Angelica shared her goal of eventually obtaining a four-year degree in biology from New Mexico

Highlands University and becoming a Wildlife Game Warden for the State of New Mexico.

After establishing work experience eligibility for the NFJP program, Angelica was placed as a receptionist and clerk at the information desk. for a local plumbing and heating company named Schillinglaw, Inc. Angelica successfully completed the job training program while earning \$7.50 an hour for forty hours a week.

She continues to remain employed with Schillinglaw, Inc., and is viewed as an outstanding employee and is also fully supported by her employer in her educational pursuit. Angelica is planning on transferring to New Mexico Highlands University in the near future to complete her degree requirements. She remains living with her family in the mountains of Northern New Mexico while tending to ranch and household chores.

Angelica state, "Thanks to the National Farmworker Jobs Program and the assistance I received from HELP–New Mexico, Inc., I am able to continue my education and support myself while building my future in Wildlife Management". ♦



Success Stories

Opening Doors

Story by: Sara Lopez, Workforce Development Specialist, Telamon, Virginia



Alejandro Diaz

Alejandro Diaz walked through the doors at Telamon Corporation one day and began sharing his story. He was out of work, exhausted, had a family of six

to support, and felt as though he had no options left.

As a man coming from a large family of farmworkers, he stated that his parents needed the money and encouraged him to also become a farmworker instead of focusing on his education. Although he did what his parents suggested, he quietly had a different future in mind for himself.

As a young high school student he wasn't involved in any extracurricular activities, nor did he do as well academically as he had hoped. After graduation, Alejandro had few options, and even fewer people encouraging him to explore alternatives, so he began doing farmwork like most of the others he knew.

He became used to the work and settled into the life of a farmworker. Everything seemed fine until the work started ending more and more quickly than in the previous year. Even though his extended family and friends tried to help him out and keep him doing farmwork, it just wasn't enough. He realized that in order to be the husband and father he wanted to be, he had to make drastic changes. His desire and drive to adequately provide his family the support they needed brought him into our offices.

At first Alejandro didn't know where to start. He had only done farmwork except for a very short

time in construction years earlier. He shared that he enjoyed that job and looked back on it with fondness.

After entering the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), completing our assessments and doing career exploration, Alejandro decided that he wanted to learn construction. Alejandro felt proud and was excited about his future. Shortly thereafter he began going through job readiness workshops and training where he excelled. Upon completion of the program, Alejandro's reputation preceded him and he quickly received an opportunity to interview, and was hired the same week!

Alejandro couldn't believe the difficult journey he put himself through and the life now in front of him and his family! He expressed much gratitude and said that by walking through those doors at Telamon, many more doors were opened to incredible opportunities. He is now working at AirTek making \$22.50 an hour!

Alejandro showed commitment to excellence in all areas of his life. He overcame his fears and stepped beyond his self-doubts. Even with all the challenges that life threw his way, Alejandro is living his dream! He now enjoys a successful career and a better future for his family. ♦



Diaz children

Success Stories

Sherriff Assistant

Story by: Telamon, North Carolina



Celso Salazar

Celso Salazar Lopez is a 30-year-old married Hispanic male, and the father of a one year old girl and a two year old boy. Celso was born in Mexico and came to the USA in 1994 when he was 12.

Celso comes from a migrant farm working-family. He worked in the field from the age of 12 with his parents. He had worked in Florida, Michigan, Georgia and North Carolina. All of these jobs were migratory, temporary, and finished at completion of the contracts. Due to his migratory conditions, Celso attended too many different schools to recall before eventually graduating in 2002 from Burlington High School in North Carolina.

At the time of enrollment, Celso's financial resources were critical. He was unemployed and not receiving unemployment insurance benefits. He was looking for a permanent non-farm job because he had decided to settle in North Carolina and wanted to provide a better life for his family.

Celso had a very difficult time finding permanent employment because he lacked stable work history and occupational skills to meet his employment goal. Celso had heard of our program and decided to come to our office for assistance, and enrolled in our program.

Through our assessment process, we identified his barriers to employment and put him in a Work Experience (WEX) placement with the Sampson County Sheriff's Department as an office assistant. Working at the Sheriff's office, Celso was able to gain the occupational skills needed to promote himself as a skilled, qualified and competent office assistant.

Celso's supervisor was so impressed with his job performance, that he hired him as an assistant jailer on a permanent basis making \$10.73 an hour with benefits. Celso continues to work with the Sheriff's Department and is looking forward to going through the training to become a deputy.

Another of Celso's accomplishments was becoming a US citizen. He is very proud of finally becoming a citizen of the country he grew up in and has loved his whole adult life.

Celso expressed his gratitude to Telamon for providing him the assistance he needed reach his employment goal. ♦



Success Stories

Life Changing Program

Story by: Danielle Briggs and Christie Mata, Oregon Human Development Corporation



Carmen Hernandez
Keynote Speaker, MET #30 Graduate

The most important thing in life for Carmen Hernandez is her family. A dedicated wife, mother and daughter, everything Carmen does

is with a primary focus on the long term-stability and success of her family.

As she focused on the daily details of maintaining life, she lost sight of moving forward with her own education and career. Many years had passed since dropping out of high school and she knew she had many obstacles to surmount.

She admits, "I never really knew anything other than farm work. That was my main work experience." She never imagined having the chance to understand the world of business until she entered the MET program.



A Visit From, Mr. Juan M. Regalado, National Monitor Advocate and Ms. Irene Laguna, State Monitor Advocate To MET #33, January 30, 2014

Although it was intimidating and challenging at first, Carmen stayed focused on her family and was determined to take full advantage of the program.

She quickly became an exemplary student, and was fully committed to completing her GED while also attending MET classes. Her school days were sometimes 10 hours long. Carmen eventually fulfilled her goal of graduating from the MET program and earned her GED.

Carmen is currently a full-time employee with The Gap and is a proud college student taking 12 hours!

Carmen realizes that she has become a better role model for her two young daughters, who are both immensely proud of their mother.

Undoubtedly, MET became a life-changing program for Carmen, her children and future generations of the Hernandez family. ♦



Literacy Programs Graduates
January 31, 2014

Success Stories

No Public Assistance

Story by: Celso Marcelo, ORO Development Corp., Oklahoma



Frank J. Espinoza II and family

Frank J. Espinoza II was employed by a peanut company as the shipping supervisor for eight years. The facility closed in 2005

leaving his family of five in dire straits.

Mr. Espinoza heard about NFJP from his friend. ORO, the NFJP grantee, provided financial aid for Mr. Espinoza's classes at the Vo-tech center, where he graduated with his CDL Truck Driving License in September 2008. During his training, Frank also received his Hazardous Material and Tanker licenses.

Mr. Espinoza is now a senior team driver in the chemical division of an international company. He is making \$23.25 an hour and \$34.80 an hour for overtime. Mr. Espinoza also has a 401K plan which he contributes 6% to bi-weekly, with a company match of 6%. He stated that he "cleared \$80,000 last year."

Mr. Espinoza's goals are to continue working and raise his children with no assistance from any state or tribal agency. He knows the value of education and hopes his children will follow his lead by staying focused on their futures.

As a man with only a high school education, Mr. Espinoza states, "I honestly can't thank the people of ORO enough for being there for me and helping get my life back on a positive track! I feel like I have received that elusive second-chance on life." When asked what he thinks about NFJP and ORO, Mr. Espinoza stated, "We are very fortunate to have such programs as these! If I can do it, anyone can!" ♦

Feeling Useful Again

Story by: Sara Maduka, Proteus, Nebraska



Bob Brolhorst

Hi there! My name is Bob Brolhorst, and I'm a recent graduate of Proteus's National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP). Here's my story.

I was introduced to Proteus while taking a CDL driving class at South-east

Community College in Lincoln, Nebraska in June of 2012. Rachel Kreikemeier, a case manager for Proteus, had a booth set up at SECC. After class I was told that Rachel and Proteus might be able to help me finish school by assisting with my tuition payments and making a mortgage payment for me.

I worked for a farmer helping with the corn harvest for three years but needed something reliable and consistent. Rachel came into my life at just the right time. We discovered that I was eligible for Proteus's NFJP assistance. Not only did Rachel help with my financial needs during this extremely difficult period, she was also instrumental in helping me apply for jobs and interview.

In January 2013, I was contacted by Belcan out of St Louis, Missouri. Belcan is in charge of staffing for the Monsanto Corporation. In February 2013, I landed a job as Material Coordinator for an expansion with Monsanto in Waco, Nebraska. Because of Rachel's kindness and caring for me as a person and a job seeker, my life has taken a turn for the better. I feel useful again, thank you. ♦

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