



August 2014

Washington Newsline

Law of the Land—Congress Passes, President Signs WIA Reauthorization Bill

By Daniel Sheehan, Executive Director, AFOP

President Barack Obama signed into law July 22 a compromise Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization bill preserving the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) as a national program. The bipartisan bill, called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), or “wee-O-ah” for short, includes the nation’s primary programs and investments in employment services, workforce development, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation activities. The Act takes the place of WIA and is now the law of the land for

workforce systems in states and local areas, Job Corps, national programs (like NFJP), and adult education and literacy.



President Obama signs the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in July

States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration issued its Training and Employment Notice 5-14 communicating WIOA’s enactment and implementation plans, sharing key statutorily required deadlines, and providing informational resources on the new law.

AFOP also moved quickly, writing the department to offer the experience and expertise of its members to help Labor in its drafting of new WIOA rules and regulations. AFOP believes its engagement in such an advisory role will greatly improve the likelihood of a far more positive response from the workforce development community as the department moves forward with WIOA implementation.

On the same day President Obama signed WIOA into law, the White House also released a report, titled “Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity,” produced by Vice President Joe Biden at the request of the president. The report is generally not critical of the existing workforce development system, and does not recommend changes to NFJP. In fact, farm work is only mentioned once, in the context

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In addition to reauthorizing NFJP, the bill also changes NFJP competition to once every four years, reserves funding for migrant and seasonal farmworker youth activities when appropriations for overall youth workforce investment activities exceed a set amount, and makes fish farming labor a program-eligible activity.

Congress earlier approved the measure in overwhelming bipartisan fashion with the Senate voting 95-3 on June 25, and the House 415-6 two weeks later.

On the same day the president signed the Act, the United

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DARI's 23rd Annual Training Conference

The Delta Association for Rural Initiatives (DARI) met in Biloxi, Mississippi July 28-31 for its 23rd annual training conference.



Photo by: Richard Roe of Kentucky Farmworkers Programs Inc.

Well attended, the conference provided participants with valuable instruction on how to better serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers and the employers seeking to hire them for must-fill positions.

The AFOP Executive Committee also attended the conference, meeting to discuss strategies and plans to help make the Association the very best it can be for its members and the farmworkers they serve.

AFOP wishes to thank Don Green, executive director of the Mississippi Delta Council for Farmworker Opportunities, for hosting such a worthwhile event, and Clewon Young, executive director of the Arkansas Human Development Corporation and DARI president, and his DARI members for inviting the Executive Committee to participate in the conference. ♦



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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"NFJP at 50: Bringing Change and Securing Futures for America's Farmworkers"

Please join AFOP this September 23-25, 2014 in sunny San Diego, California at the Wyndham San Diego Bayside for our annual National Conference.

This year's conference will feature an exciting array of workshops, plenary speakers, the conclusion of 2013's credentialing program with Mary Ann Lawrence, as well a brand new credentialing series from the AFOP Training Institute.

Breakout sessions will include topics related to Employment & Training, Management, Health & Safety, Immigration, and a special track for Agency Board Members.

Field Trip to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start

By Robert Crumley, Director of Communications, AFOP

As we go about our daily lives, it is easy to become inwardly focused and to forget the true breadth of the American experience.

In late July, I joined the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) on an excursion to North Carolina, where we visited farmworkers and a Migrant and Seasonal Head Start facility.

Although the sights were familiar, the real fuel for our passion comes from knowing the individuals and the community we serve.



Farmworker housing. AFOP

The day began with our viewing a cinderblock "dorm" where only farmworker men lived. It had no windows and, at first assumption, looked like a secured storage shed with metal doors. We then drove in to the middle of a tobacco field and stopped at a co-op housing unit where an extended family of 11 lived. This concrete structure had a common



Farmworker housing. AFOP

space about 20' x 20' for cooking, eating, and gathering. Sleeping quarters consisted of two rows of single rooms with each including a twin bed and dresser.

Our third stop brought us to a house where we parked near a goat and poultry. A set of young twin boys greeted us, followed quickly by their younger sister and parents. Although the house was sparsely filled with toys for the

young children, it was clearly overflowing with love, laughter and a commitment to making a better future for their children.

We learned about families who move five times per year among states as far apart as North Carolina and Florida. They shared the daily fear, due to their lack of documentation, of going to work or the grocery store and the potential of being separated from their children.

We also learned that they desperately want all their children to attend American schools. To that end, their children attend Migrant and Seasonal Head Start where they receive early childhood education to help send children to public school ready to learn.

On day two we visited one of the NMSHSA centers and listened to staff discuss ways they help children and families to succeed. A child learning dual languages may appear delayed in comparison to monolingual children, while actually performing on par with other bilingual learners. Others may have under-developed social skills due to the repetitive moving and lack of consistent home environments. Still others may have physical issues such as hearing or sight impairment. These, and more, are issues a migrant and seasonal Head Start program is prepared to address.

Parental involvement is key to a child's success, so parents are encouraged to be actively engaged in their children's education. They are also connected with additional resources such as English classes or the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP).

Denise Cruz, summer intern for the NMSHSA, but placed with AFOP's Health & Safety Programs, wrapped up the day by performing a well-received pesticide safety training that she helped develop during her time with AFOP. ♦



Denise Cruz with students. AFOP

New Eligibility Guidance from Department of Labor Increases Access to NFJP

By Kathleen Nelson, Director of Workforce Development, AFOP

Earlier this summer, the United States Department of Labor issued guidance expanding eligibility for Workforce Investment Act programs, including the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP). AFOP members warmly welcomed these changes and have embraced the opportunity to offer life-changing job training and education to even more farmworkers and their families.

The first expansion came in June when the Department of Labor (DOL) released Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 26-13, titled *Impact of the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in United States v. Windsor on Eligibility and Services Provided Under Workforce Grants Administered by the Employment and Training Administration*.

The Supreme Court's landmark decision led to federal recognition of same-sex unions performed in states where the marriages were legal. The TEGL outlines the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) policy of equal treatment and acceptance that echoes DOL and the Obama Administration's policy goals:

"Consistent with the policy of the Department of Labor, ETA's policy is to recognize all marriages (including same-sex marriages) that are lawfully entered in the state of celebration. ETA will recognize the marriage even if the marriage is not recognized in the state where the married individual resides."

The guidance advises all grantees to "recognize same-sex marriages as broadly as legally possible..." and "to develop policies recognizing such marriages as valid as soon as possible..."

The TEGL goes on to spell out definitions for spouses, husbands, wives, and other familial relationships to be used in qualifying farmworkers and their families for enrollment in programs like NFJP. Now, families of farmworkers with

same-sex spouses are ensured equal treatment and access to life-changing opportunities afforded to all qualified NFJP participants.

A second eligibility-related TEGL, number 2-14, was released July 14, 2014, titled *Eligibility of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Participants for Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act Programs*. The TEGL advises all WIA grant recipients that they should consider any DACA participant with work authorization officially eligible who meets the other qualifications for NFJP services.

The TEGL states:

"Individuals with employment authorization qualify under this provision as 'immigrants authorized by the Attorney General to work in the United States.' Therefore, DACA participants with employment authorization may access any WIA services for which they otherwise would qualify."

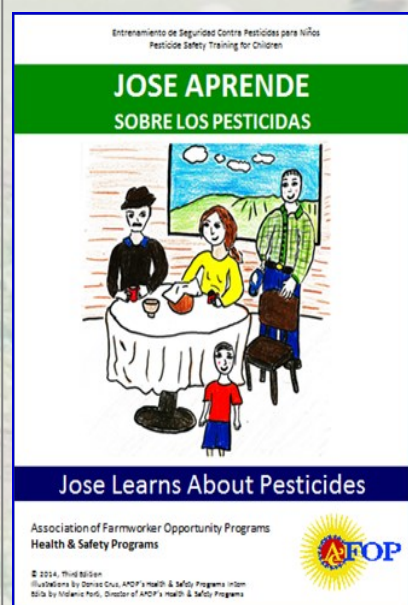
This is especially good news for potential NFJP participants. There are many hard-working young people who are deferred action participants doing farmwork for very low wages and living in extremely unstable conditions. Many feel it is their only option both because of lack of opportunity and fear of deportation.

The opportunity afforded by NFJP and other workforce system and WIA programs to improve their skills and continue education will lead to better jobs for farmworkers and help stabilize entire families, communities, and the economy. ♦

Launching José Aprende Sobre los Pesticidas (Jose Learns About Pesticides)

By Vashti Kelly, Program Manager, Health & Safety Programs, AFOP

This summer, AFOP's Health & Safety Programs partnered with the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) to have one of its migrant farmworker college interns work on a special project for seven weeks. Denise Cruz, the NMSHSA intern, was in charge of updating and revitalizing Health & Safety's *José Aprende Sobre los Pesticidas*/Jose Learns About Pesticides pesticide safety training curriculum for children.



ECMHSP was established to connect Head Start services to children of migrant farmworkers on the East Coast. AFOP chose to partner with ECMHSP to provide the *José Aprende* training because the project serves the very young children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers while advocating for the needs of the entire family.

The storytelling-based curriculum is intended for children ages 4-12, and, like all of Health & Safety's curricula, is interactive. Denise spent the latter part of June and most of July sketching out new drawings of "José" and his family, working on the script, and adding some much-needed color to the *José Aprende* flipchart. All of this culminated in Denise providing the *José Aprende* training to a group of farmworker children during a site visit to an East Coast Migrant Head Start Project (ECMHSP) in Bailey, North Carolina.

AFOP's *José Aprende* curriculum educates children about pesticide safety. This storytelling curriculum is age-appropriate and about a boy called José, whose family works in

the fields. Through this partnership, AFOP's Health & Safety Programs is educating children on how to protect themselves from pesticides to avoid immediate or future health hazards. It is important to remember that children are not mini-adults, and therefore are at greater health risk from pesticide exposure than adults.

From birth through the teen years, all the major body systems go through growth spurts. During these critical periods of growth, exposure to toxic chemicals such as pesticides can result in serious problems with health and development. For years after birth, children's bodily systems are still developing, so it is more difficult for their bodies to process and break down toxins. The central nervous system undergoes its period of most rapid development from the fetal stage through the first six years of life, so young children are especially vulnerable to pesticides that act as neurotoxins. Early education is vital to making sure children and their parents alike know that prevention is the key.



Denise Cruz teaching the *José Aprende Sobre los Pesticidas* curriculum to children at a Migrant and Seasonal Head Start

For more information about how to receive or provide this training, please contact Melanie Forti, Director of Health & Safety Programs, AFOP. ♦

Unaccompanied Children May End up in Our Fields

By Eleazar Gutierrez, First Focus, and Norma Flores López, Director, *Children in the Fields Campaign*

Thousands of unaccompanied minors are fleeing their home countries of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador for the United States. After making the dangerous journey to our southern border, they intentionally turn themselves in to U.S. Border Patrol agents and claim asylum. They report escaping violent situations such as gang violence, rape, kidnapping, and murder. Like most American children, they dream of safely leaving their homes and playing outside without fear of rape or murder.

Since October 2013, more than 57,000 child refugees have crossed the southern border without a parent or guardian. According to the Pew Research Center, between fiscal year 2013 and the first eight months of fiscal year 2014, there was a 117 percent increase in arrests of unaccompanied children under age 12, and a 12 percent increase among teenagers.

According to recent media reports, children held in the United States are subject to: frigid holding rooms; sleep deprivation; verbal, sexual, and psychological abuse; inadequate food and water; and denial of medical care. Despite advocates asking the Obama Administration to increase federal funding for services to provide appropriate housing and care, much assistance is coming from average citizens. They bring clothing, food, personal hygiene solutions, etc. to children and the few accompanying adults.

In addition to concerns about the treatment of children in custody, farmworker advocates are also fearful that many child refugees may end up harvesting our fruits and vegetables. Current federal child labor laws set 12 years as the age that children are legally allowed to work, with few exceptions to work hours, in agricultural jobs. Regulations also allow 16-year-old children to perform "hazardous" farmwork; in any other industry, the minimum age is 18. Because agricultural work is performed in rural areas, it is difficult to monitor. This allows child laborers to remain undetected for years. The need to earn money for survival drives many

young and unaccompanied children toward back-breaking work that is dangerous to their health, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

In the past, AFOP's *Children in the Fields*



Photo by: U. Roberto Romano

Campaign encountered unaccompanied minors hiding in migrant camps and working on American farms for very low pay. Gabriel crossed into the United States at the age of 12 in hopes of reuniting with his extended family. He connected with his uncle and turned to field work to survive. After a few months, his uncle left him behind and alone. Then 14, he worked in North Carolina's sweet potato fields and sent his earnings home to his mother and siblings. He described hard living conditions, wage theft from employers, sexual assault, and getting robbed. When asked when he would see his family again, he wiped away tears and said he did not know. He also said that he knew there was no future for him back home and that his family's survival depended on his working the farms.

President Obama earlier asked Congress to approve \$3.7 billion in emergency funding to address the border crisis. But unable to overcome a deep partisan gridlock on Capitol Hill, lawmakers left Washington for their month-long August congressional recess without sending the president legislation to deal with the crisis. A \$2.7 billion funding measure backed by Senate Democrats was blocked in a procedural vote. The Republican-led House passed H.R. 5230, a \$659 million funding

measure that prompted a veto threat from the White House. Not only does the bill provide only a fraction of the president's requested amount, the House measure, called the "Secure the Southwest Border Supplemental Appropriations Act and Secure the Southwest Border Act of 2014," would weaken screening mechanisms and due process rights for children from non-contiguous countries.

This bill would also require children to stay in detention longer, expedites removal proceedings, and confines children's access to legal counsel. Advocates are concerned that H.R. 5230 will not protect the unaccompanied minors who are forced to return home and face the dangers of violence caused by drug traffickers and gangs in the region. Although

this bill passed the House floor 223-189, the Senate is expected to reject it in favor of its own approach.

The pressure on Congress to find a compromise on the president's funding request will likely increase once lawmakers return from recess. Further delay will only make matters worse for these unaccompanied minors. The one fact that lawmakers cannot argue is that these children are in our country's care, and we, as a nation, cannot shirk in its responsibility to treat them humanely and with respect. As a world leader in human rights, the United States will be closely scrutinized on how it treats the most vulnerable among us. In this case, it is children, who need us the most. ♦

Law of the Land—Continued from page 1

of DACA eligibility. In advance of the report's drafting, AFOP met with the White House staff writing it to stress to them the importance and success of NFJP, and is pleased with these results.

Turning to the yearly appropriations process, Congress is bogged down in intractable problems that will, once again, necessitate a so-called "continuing resolution," or "CR," to keep the government funded past September 30. You will recall that a stand-off over spending and the Affordable Care Act prevented an agreement on a CR last fall, causing a partial federal government shutdown in October. While no one expects that to happen this year – it is an election year, after all – House and Senate appropriators are already at odds as to the length of the CR. Senate Democrats would prefer a short-term CR to allow a post-election "lame duck" legislative session to pass a catch-all omnibus spending bill for the balance of the year. Republicans, on the other hand, sensing a victory in their bid to take control of the Senate next year, want to see a longer CR to allow new Republican senators to take their seats. It is too early to tell if Republican hopes are likely to be held up or dashed, so we probably will not see a resolution to the CR matter until immediately prior to September 30.

The good news out of the Senate is that its version of the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations bill, the measure that funds the Labor Department, includes \$1 million more than the president requested for NFJP. The president in his budget proposal, sent to Congress this past spring, sought \$81,896,000 for NFJP. The Senate bill includes \$82,896,000. While AFOP appreciates that this bill is just one step in the legislative process, it is extremely pleased with these developments and thanks Senate Labor-HHS-Education Chairman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and his subcommittee for this crucial support.

In closing, I would be remiss if I did not mention the bad news out of Washington. For reasons that frankly escape me, Congress failed to agree to an emergency supplemental spending bill prior to leaving for its August recess that would have, among other things, provided critical funding to help address the tragedy of large numbers of unaccompanied minors crossing the nation's southern border. The funds would have been used for housing and basic needs and services for the children, increased border enforcement, more judges and legal teams to process cases, and to transfer children to more appropriate family settings. Further consideration of this necessary funding must now wait until Congress returns to session after Labor Day. ♦

Children and Pesticide Exposure

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

Estimates are that 2.5 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers are in the United States, with an additional 400,000 to 500,000 children working in the fields alongside their parents.

In 2006, the Childhood Agricultural Injury Survey found 307,000 youth under the age of 20 are legally employed in the agricultural industry. No studies have been done on the number of child farmworkers under age 12; however, AFOP's Health & Safety Programs staff has documented children as young as six exposed to pesticides while working in the fields.

Pesticides include a large group of products designed to kill or harm living organisms including insects, rodents, plants, and animals, making the products inherently toxic.

Beyond obviously acute poisoning, the influences of consistent, low-level exposures on child health are poorly documented and of increasing concern to health professionals.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines pesticides as "any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest." Though often misunderstood to refer only to insecticides, the term pesticide also applies to herbicides, fungicides, and various other substances used to control unwanted organisms such as rats or even deer.

Agricultural chemicals are used heavily in farming to control pests. While all pesticides can harm humans, insecticides and herbicides are the cause of most human poisonings.

There are critical periods in human development when exposure to a toxin can permanently alter the way an individual's biological system operates. This is relevant for children who may be exposed more to certain pesticides because they often eat foods that are different than adults.

Several factors contribute to the vulnerability of children to pesticides. We may think of them as "mini-adults," but in fact their bodies are not as prepared as a more mature body to process toxic chemicals. Because their glands, pancreas, liver, and kidneys are still developing, children's metabolic and immune systems cannot completely detoxify and eliminate toxins.

Absorption through the skin is the most common route of pesticide exposure among both adults and children. The dermal area of an infant per unit of body weight is greater than that of an adult, placing infants at increased damage from pesticide exposure. Also, due to the fact that children's skin is still growing and expanding, blood flow through the skin is greater, and that makes the skin absorb chemicals faster and move them throughout the body more efficiently. Additionally, their internal organs are still developing and their enzymatic, metabolic, and immune systems may provide less natural protection than those of an adult.

Children encounter pesticides in their daily activities through air, food, soil or dust, and on surfaces from home and public lawn or garden applications, household insecticide use, application to pets, and agricultural product residues on fruits and vegetables.



Children learning about pesticide safety.

Consumption is the most common source of pesticide exposure for the majority of American children. However, in agricultural settings, the main source of pesticide exposure is through

Children and Pesticide Exposure—continued on page 10

2014 AFOP NATIONAL CONFERENCE September 23-25

**"NFJP at 50: Bringing Change and Securing Futures
for America's Farmworkers"**

- DOL-sponsored training for NFJP staff
- Learn about important changes to WIA 167 performance measures
- Training and certifications by Mary Ann Lawrence
- Attend conference plenary sessions with special guest speakers
- Explore the San Diego area
- Best Practices visit to C.E.T. on Friday, Sept. 26

\$495
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(After Aug. 25, 2014)

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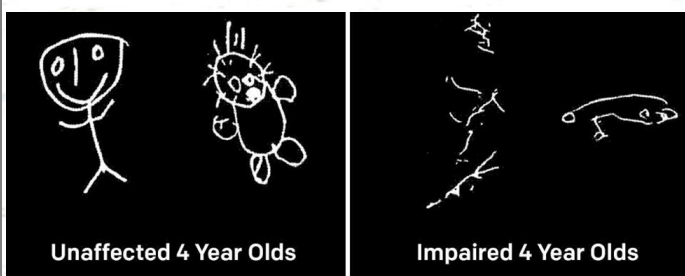
pesticide spray and/or water drift, as well as by take-home exposure on the clothing and footwear of agricultural workers.

In urban settings, heavy use of pesticides for pest control may affect the health of children and teens. Many pesticides are hormone blockers, yet others mimic hormones, which can have serious effects on children's development from birth through adolescence.

Also, many adolescent workers may have occupational exposures on the farm, where 12 years is the legal age to perform most farm work, or when suburban youth earn a few extra dollars mowing lawns or doing yard work.

Americans use more than one billion pounds of pesticides each year to combat pests on farm crops and in homes, places of business, schools, parks, hospitals, and other public places. According to the EPA and the American Association of Poison Control Centers, "Annually, more than 10,000 kids are poisoned by rodenticides. Rat poisons are by far the leading cause of visits to health care facilities in children under the age of six years, and the second leading cause of hospitalization."

This graphic was part of a study done by an anthropologist who was looking at two groups of young children of the Yaqui Tribe in Mexico. The children live in an agricultural area, but whereas in the foothills pesticides are rarely used, the valley is inundated by pesticides. A group of four-year-olds were asked to draw a stick figure of a person. There is a dramatic



EFFECTS OF PESTICIDES ON CHILDREN

Artwork created by children in a control group, verses children exposed to pesticides. Study was conducted on two groups of children from the Mexican tribe of Yaqui.

difference between the motor abilities of the children growing up in the foothills as opposed to the valley.

Adverse effects of pesticide exposure range from mild symptoms of dizziness and nausea to serious, long-term neurological, developmental, and reproductive disorders.

At AFOP Health & Safety Programs, we believe that prevention is an important key to helping maintain a healthier and safer life. We developed several curricula to prevent pesticide exposure among children and adults. Our take-home exposure curriculum, *Limiting Exposure Around Families (LEAF)*, educates farmworker parents about the dangers of "take-home" exposure, urging them to consider precautions to prevent the transfer of agricultural pesticide residues from their work environments into their homes. The curriculum seeks to identify, increase awareness of, and mitigate take-home exposure risks to families through training and other educational materials. As an extension to the *LEAF* curriculum, we also created a *Pesticide Exposure & Pregnancy (PEP)* curriculum that is focused on educating women who are pregnant, or may become pregnant, on the effects of pesticide exposure while working/living in agricultural settings.

AFOP's Health & Safety Programs also developed a storytelling curriculum, *José Learns About Pesticides*, for children ages 4 to 12 years. The curriculum teaches children how to protect themselves from pesticides at home or while in the field.

Prevention is the key to helping reduce pesticide exposure and subsequent health concerns. Benjamin Franklin said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." At AFOP's Health & Safety Programs, we are committed to the farmworker community by continuing to educate and provide adequate and effective tools needed for a healthier and happier life. ♦

Success Stories

Husband and Wife Team Benefit from NFJP

Story by: HELP New Mexico, Inc.

Mocerrat Gonzales, a migrant farmworker, traveled with his wife from Colorado to Roswell, New Mexico based on a promise from a friend who



Mocerrat and Irma. Photo by: HELP New Mexico, Inc.

offered to find them work. When he and his wife Irma arrived in New Mexico, they received bad news. The friend who was going to connect him with a job had passed away.

Mocerrat and Irma were not able to find work and ended up in a homeless

shelter. Irma was very uncomfortable staying there and chose to return to Mexico to be with her family while Mocerrat stayed in Roswell. It is there that he learned about HELP-New Mexico (HELP-NM) and began seeking assistance with finding a job. His eligibility and situation were assessed and it was determined that he qualified for the NFJP program and was placed in a Work Experience at the Roswell Convention Center.

Knowing that this was not a permanent position, he became anxious and concerned that he would soon need to return to Colorado to his farm work. HELP-NM staff assured him that once his training program ended staff would assist him with finding employment in the Roswell area. Mocerrat trusted the staff and stayed to complete his training.

During this time, HELP-NM staff also assisted him with securing safe lodging, helped him

apply for food stamps and Medicaid safety nets, and most importantly, helped him reunite with his wife.

Irma attempted to find work, but found that her limited English skills were an insurmountable barrier. As they had done with her husband, HELP-NM staff met with Irma and determined she was also eligible for NFJP services. During assessment, it was discovered that Irma had a passion for baking and cake decorating. Staff approached local grocers and bakeries on Irma's behalf and was able to secure a Work Experience training site for her.

Currently, Mocerrat has maintained his full-time job with the City of Roswell -- a job HELP-NM staff helped him obtain once he completed his Work Experience program. Irma was hired by the local bakery where she completed her Work Experience, and was thrilled to be able to buy the skinny plasma television she always wanted.

Mocerrat is happy to be living a lifestyle where his wife feels safe and that offers stability for them both. Their next goal is to begin the process of getting Irma's family into the United States to join them in Roswell. HELP-NM staff have promised to assist them with this task, as well. ♦



Success Stories

Fortitude Wins over Adversity

Story by: Leecia Walker, Case Manager, Tennessee Opportunity Programs

Most students attending classes together meet for lunch or drinks to talk about their grades, classroom work, and social life, but not in Samantha Cribs' world.

Samantha's days had been the same for the past several years, one no different than the one before. She would wake up and prepare meals for her children, her grandparents, and most days her sister's family, as well. She would bathe her children, help grandparents with their needs



Samantha Cribs second from left.
Photo by Tennessee Opportunity Programs.

for the day, and then eventually leave for classroom training.

Her time in class was different than the other students'. When they talked about lunch plans and what new stores were opening, Samantha thought of how she must absorb all the day's information because she had to complete all training and attach an LPN licensure to her name.

Samantha wanted her children to experience a life different from the one they were currently living - that is why she had to complete her training.

Her children's father was a drug addict who was in and out of rehab, absent for long periods at a time, and did unspeakable things to her before she ended the marriage. On top of that, her grandparents, who had been the only ones to help when she had nothing, were sick and now needed her to survive.

Samantha doubled down and focused on the task before her. She knew that working part-time in a nursing care facility, part-time on the farm, and simultaneously attending school would be hard, but it had to be done. Regardless of the obstacles in her way, she was determined to improve her situation and provide for herself and family. She never felt sorry for herself and always kept a smile, despite living on three hours of sleep a night.

Samantha quietly struggled until the last few months of training. Between the pressure of farm work and daily care for all those that depended on her, she was on the verge of giving up. That is when the Tennessee Opportunity Program came to her rescue by offering a stipend. Through TOPS funding, she was able to buy clothing for her kids, gas for her car and extra groceries for her family. This infusion of funds relieved some pressure allowing her to breathe a little easier. It also allowed her the luxury of eating out at a diner for the first time in several years. She felt like bricks had been removed from between her shoulders and the emotional and financial load became a lot lighter. She knew that with the TOPS funding, she was going to make it. She would reach her dream and be the best LPN by caring for others and paying forward some of the goodness given to her through TOPS.

Samantha completed training and passed her boards with flying colors. She is now employed at NHC of Dunlap, Tennessee, has benefits, and great pay that started at \$22.00 per hour.

She now smiles and greets her patients, and their families, with the knowledge that life can change for the better if you keep your faith and push forward through your obstacles one step at a time. ♦

Success Stories

Single Father Raises His Employment Future

Story by: Sylvia Atilano, Proteus, Inc.

In March 2014, Mr. Fausto Guzman came to the Proteus Service Center in Dinuba, California in search of employment and training services that would lead him to employment stability.

At the time of his Proteus registration, Fausto was a high school graduate, enrolled in the Army National Guard, a single parent supporting his one-year-old daughter, and his employment history consisted of seasonal farmwork.



Fausto Guzman.
Photo by: Proteus, Inc.

He reported that his mother encouraged him to request assistance from Proteus and that he was very reluctant to seek a new career. With intensive counseling and completion of a comprehensive assessment, he decided to take a risk and decided to enroll in the La

Cooperativa EDD Solar Dislocated Worker program, the La Cooperativa Title 1 Dislocated Agriculture Worker Program, and the Department of Labor's WIA National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP).

At Proteus, Fausto received the following services: career counseling, job search assistance, supportive services, case management services, interview skills counseling, occupational skills training and job placement assistance.

In May 2014, he successfully completed the weatherization program, earning a vocational skills certificate, and in the following month successfully completed the Photovoltaic Solar

Design and Installation program, earning him his second training skills certificate.

After completing his vocational trainings, and due to his stellar attendance, Fausto was submitted as a candidate to join Local Laborers 294 Union's Pre-Apprenticeship program. He was granted enrollment and is now on a solid path of career growth.

With the help of Proteus, Fausto received the quality training he needed and was hired as a construction worker with Local Laborers 294 Union. In his full-time position, he now earns \$17.32 an hour and will be eligible to receive health and retirement benefits after he completes his six-month probation period.

Fausto is extremely grateful for all the services that Proteus afforded him and is appreciative that he no longer has to depend on seasonal agriculture work to support his family. Most important to him is the reality that his daughter will never experience the first-hand challenges of being a migrant or seasonal farmworker. ♦



Success Stories

Helping his Parents

Story by: Nanci Mora, Central Valley Opportunity Center



Rafael Antonio, welder.
Photo by: Central Valley Opportunity Center

Rafael Antonio was a recent high school graduate whose parents were seasonal farm workers. His parents worked the many fields in the area harvesting figs, almonds, tomatoes, peppers and cotton.

Rafael didn't want to start college because he needed to help his parents with the house expenses, but he also knew working seasonal farm jobs wouldn't provide as much financial assistance as he wanted for his parents.

Rafael's family of four earned \$15,000 the previous year, and it was Rafael's goal to help them earn more in the future. Referred by his sister, he reviewed California EDD information on job opportunities in welding and salary, then decided to enter training with CVOC.

Rafael and his parents put together all of the required documentation and began the process for enrollment under the NFJP program. He fully committed to the program and was always on time and learned as much as he could in order to be prepared for the workforce.

Upon completing his certification, Rafael began working for a corporation in Fresno, California. After proving himself for ten months, they hired him permanently for \$12.50 per hour, plus health benefits.

Rafael is very satisfied because he can now help his parents financially. Thanks to the services he received from CVOC and the NFJP, he has crossed this goal off his list. ♦

Road to Success

Story by: Olga Campos, Pathstone Corporation



Julian Bedoya with his truck. Photo by: Pathstone

Julian Bedoya is a young man who came to PathStone Corporation unemployed, lacking marketable skills, and didn't know what career he wanted to pursue. Julian worked at a local onion and vegetable farm in Orange County as a seasonal farm worker making \$8.50 per hour. He felt this was not enough to support his family and wanted a better career.

Based upon assessments given by PathStone, Julian decided to become a truck driver. Julian received Job Readiness Training where he learned appropriate skills he needed to succeed in the work force. In July 2013, he was referred to and enrolled in a commercial driver class at Atlantic Coast Driver Training for Occupational Skills Training.

He successfully completed training, passed the road test, and received his Commercial Driver License. Job Development was provided to Julian through several truck driver companies who saw his potential. However, since he was not working much while going through training, he could not afford to pay for the physical that he needed for employment; so again PathStone assisted. December 16, 2013, he received an early Christmas present and was hired by Mondelez Global LLC, earning \$20.17 per hour, plus ten hours of overtime every week, and medical benefits.

Because of help he received from PathStone, Julian enjoys going to work knowing that he is providing a better life for his family. ♦



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.

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