



National Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker Children **ESSAY & ART CONTEST**

2021 Winners Booklet





Winners 2021

WE ARE THE HARVEST OF HOPE:

We will change the world.

ART WINNERS:

AGES 10 – 13

1st Place: Sergio Flores
2nd Place: Kenia Salinas
3rd Place: Janelly Caballero

AGES 14-18

1st Place: Julieta Cruz
2nd Place: Alejandra Núñez
3rd Place: Aaron Cruz

ESSAY WINNERS:

AGES 10 – 13

1st Place: Emily Camacho
2nd Place: Jessica Gonzalez
3rd Place: Evelyn Lopez

AGES 14-18

1st Place: Kevin Aguilar





DEAR READER:

As many as **500,000 children work in agriculture in the United States**, yet their voices are rarely heard, and their struggles poorly understood. The Association of Farmworker Opportunity Program (AFOP) annual Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker Children Essay & Art Contests are a concerted effort by the AFOP's Children in the Fields Campaign to help farmworker children share their stories and document what it is like for young people to labor in the fields.

This booklet features the first, second, and third place winning submissions for the 2021 contest. This year's theme was **"WE ARE THE HARVEST OF HOPE: WE WILL CHANGE THE WORLD."**

The images and words submitted highlight the struggles and hopes of our nation's most marginalized population and demonstrate the potential that exists for young people who are given the opportunity to work hard in the classroom rather than in the fields. None of the descriptions or essays were altered only translated.

You can find more information, including all of our winning entries, by visiting our website: **www.afop.org/cif**.

Sincerely,

Melanie Forti

Health & Safety Programs Director

Children In the Fields Campaign Director

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Program





Sergio Flores
Age 12,
1ST Place
Bakersfield, CA

That man represents our parents putting their work in the fields, and when they look at their children, they see their children graduating from school.





Kenia Salinas
Age 10
2nd Place
Bakersfield, CA

My parents crossed the border and left their beautiful land of the EAGLE to USE THEIR HANDS to pick onions which represents the stars, and the red lines of the US flag represent the strawberries, watermelons, tomatoes, and cherries, they have picked for HOPE, BETTER PAY and EDUCATION for their KIDS, and the AMERICAN DREAM!





Janelly Caballero

Age 11

3rd Place

Oxnard, CA

This art represents the fruit of hard labor and the hope that fruit brings with it. Farmworker children sometimes must work as hard as adults in the fields.





Julieta Cruz
Age 17
1st Place
Bakersfield, CA

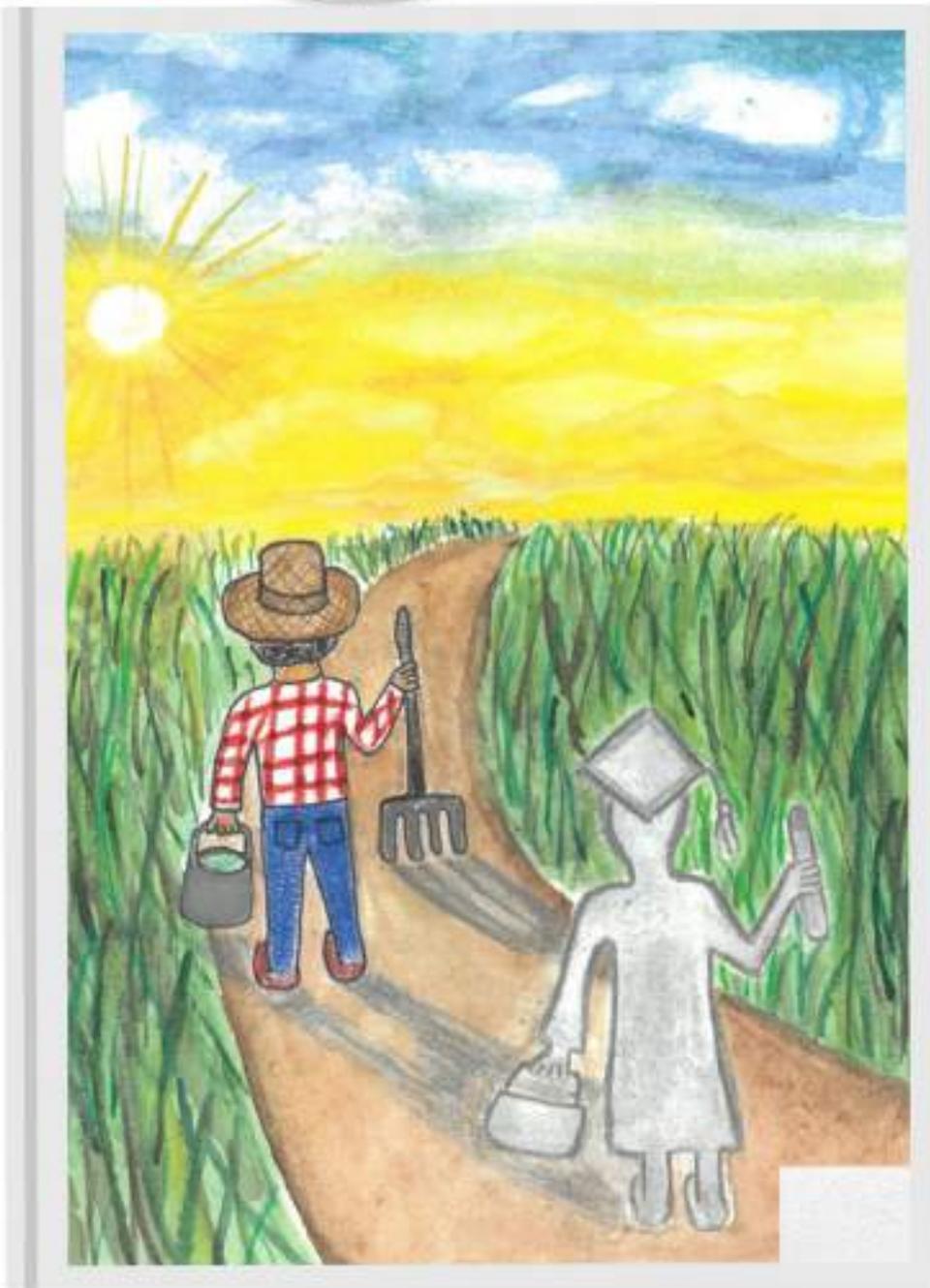


I drew the world as a clock because it represents time moving forward and the world changing.

The children above are fieldworkers, and the two graduates are guiding and showing the younger ones that it's possible to accomplish their goals and that better things await to come.



Alejandra Núñez ,
Age 16
2nd Place
Yuma, CO



A path that is difficult but that in the end has its rewards. I believe that all children who work in the fields have the capacity to be even more incredible in this world.

In this drawing, the boy is working but his shadow is who he wants to become: a school graduate.

The effort we make today will be the harvest of the good things that



Aaron Cruz
Age 17
3rd Place
Bakersfield, CA

The flags on the arms represent from where each kid comes from around the world. On the left is a bookshelf and on the right there is a classroom with children to represent their education. Bottom left it shows two parents and a child in front of a house, those represent my family to show where I come from.





Emily Camacho

Age 13

1st Place

Quincy, WA

When a farmer begins planting his harvest he has set hopes that it will flourish, that his hard work, early mornings and late nights will pay off. At the same time from a different perspective our parents live also hoping the same; an abundant apple harvest means more apple bins for que "las líneas van a estar buenas" (the lines are going to be good) and it goes on with cherries, blueberries, asparagus, peaches etc. each harvest both farmer and migrants hoping the same. Each year however, unknowingly our parents are farmers of their own. From birth they plant a seed of hope, perseverance, handwork, sacrifice, ambition and yearn to succeed in us because for them "we are the harvest of hope: we will change the world"

Over the years as I have worked with my parents harvest after harvest, at times in crisp cold weather and others in over 100 degrees, in different towns and states with varying harvest outcomes what always remains consistent is my wish to succeed. As I work alongside my parents and as we travel over state lines my parents never fail to remind me that I like my two older sisters has also learned the value of hard work and sacrifice by example, that I need to work hard in my academics, go to college and earn a degree so that I am not out in the sun all day climbing up and down a ladder with a 30 lbs bag to my front for the rest of my life. There are many days where my blistered hands and aching back feel like they can not cut one more bushel of asparagus or onion seed but I look up to see my parents one 58 and the other 54 and realize they have sacrificed so much and take so much pride in the work they do and the employees they are that at the age of 13 it is really only the beginning for me.

I am one of three daughters and like my two older sisters I have also had the privilege of working in the fields with my parents. I have learned to find beauty in the life we have lived and can say I have admired the sunrise almost every day of my life, our lunch time a picnic under the trees each enjoying a burrito wrapped in tin foil and kept warm in a thermos made with handmade tortillas my mom woke up at 1 am to make. On occasions my mother speaks of how badly she wanted to be a nurse growing up, she reminisces and shares how hard she worked in school and the good student she was and in her tired eyes and rough hands from the work she has done over the years I can see the excitement as her eyes become glassy and she reminds me of the hope she has in me to continue my education, be successful and help others around me. I daydream of the day I wear my white coat and can offer services to people like myself and my parents; hardworking humble and unable to take the credit they deserve for being the essential and phenomenal farmworkers they are.

I am the one of three daughters, my parents like many others have sacrificed leaving their countries and loved ones behind in hopes of a better future for their children. As we move, begin new harvests and finish others our parents are farmers of their own sacrificing, investing, and hoping their time, love and effort will grow into successful and hardworking adults because "we are the harvest of hope: we will change the world"



Jessica Gonzalez

Age 12

2nd Place

Immokalee, FL

One of the most beautiful feelings in the world is when you achieve the goal you've always wanted. Many of us want to be successful and even though people out there have it easier than most of us, I am forever grateful for my family supporting me throughout my life. When my parents were young, they had limited resources which made it difficult to go on in life. Economic status was the main problem but knowing my parents, they were strong and kept going. This is the reason why I am trying my best in everything.

My family is my number one motivation in many different ways. Working in the fields does not change who I am because what is really important is how far you get in life later on. I am the first one to graduate and the one who is setting up an example for my siblings including my young cousins. When I work packing and picking tomatoes, I look around and see how hard my parents work. It goes up to 100 degrees in the plantation during Florida while in North Carolina it goes down to 30 degrees. We are blessed to have a job because many people in the world are desperate to find a place to work. Our work routine may also be undelightful considering we wake up at 4am, but throughout the years, we have settled ourselves to keep going and going for the good of our family. School is the number one thing on my mind everyday too. Being the first one to go off to college gives me more motivation to try harder everyday. Migrating to schools every year is rough and difficult. Besides social problems, moving schools will have me behind in school lessons because I arrive late in the year.

This has never stopped me from getting my work done though, I catch up on all my work as much as I can and at the end of the day, I know it was worth it. Nothing makes me happier. My parents never had the opportunity to finish high school and go to college. For these reasons, I'm not giving up my education even if times get tough due to our lifestyle. I have learned to accommodate and I don't plan on changing how I am anytime.

How will we change the world? We will change the world by showing everyone around me that it is possible to achieve our dreams and goals despite our circumstances. We will fight to earn the life we deserve. We will speak and not only by speeches, by writing, or by protesting but by actions. By our achievements. Those speak louder than anything else. We are all one whole together. We understand how difficult it is to work every day, hours and hours but by having family support, being healthy physically and mentally healthy, we can do it no matter what comes in our way. As the harvest of hope, we do anything we put our minds to.



Evelyn Lopez
Age 13
3rd Place
Bakersfield, CA



We are a harvest of hope, we will change the world. My family works in the grape fields. We don't hate our work, work is something to be proud of. Some things that we like about working in the field are that we learn to do new jobs and we meet more people who are in the same situation as us. We hope that others see the value in our work as much as we do.

We are a harvest of hope, we will change the world. There are things to dislike about the fields, and not every day is fun out there. For example, we have to wake up early at 3 am, our parents take the kids to the babysitter and leave for a very long day of work. We don't arrive back home until very late, and we rarely spend much family time together. But, we have hope in our hearts that one day that will all change.

We are a harvest of hope, we will change the world. My parents are motivated to work hard to give us the things that we do have and provide us with food and a home. While I am at school, that thought of them working hard motivates me to do better, to think better thoughts about my future, and to pay attention. I hope to make them proud one day.

We are a harvest of hope, we will change the world. In the future, I want to have a career as a professional counselor. I want to help single mothers and children who are in desperate situations get the help they need. Another dream I have is to become a fashion designer because I want to design my own clothes with flair! I hope to achieve great things one day.

We are a harvest of hope, we will change the world. In the future, I plan on helping young people finish their studies so that they can have a better quality of life that they can pass on to their children. Better pay and better opportunities and equality for all. That is what I hope for our future.



Kevin Aguilar
Age 17
1st Place
Elizabeth Town, NC



WE ARE THE HARVEST OF HOPE: WE WILL CHANGE THE WORLD, a very interesting topic. Farmworker Families are people dedicated to agriculture and livestock, to harvest crops whether corn, wheat and others. Most farmworker families live in rented houses rather than labor camps, and many are homeowners. They have to work all day to keep their crops well, also have to go through storms, tornadoes or when days are very hot. This can make you lose part of the crop or lose everything. My grandparents are agricultural workers, they grow corn, their work begins when it is the month of January. In the tradition of Mexico, the month of January means a new beginning for the harvest and the prosperity that this year will give. The harvest of corn takes six months, when it rinishes they begin to collect the corn and sell it. What I like about working in the fields is growing seeds and learning more about it, what I don't like is the working day is very long and there are no fixed hours.

What motivates me to move forward is my big dream, my goal, or my purpose in this life. I want to make it come true and see the achievement of my life. I have so many projects and plans I want to do. I know there will be difficult moments, bad things and mistakes in which I am going to make, but I know that will not stop me because I do not want to lose myseH. There are times when I will fail, but I must learn and come back to do something much better. I have to persevere to achieve what I want and focus so as not to lose my vision. Life is not easy, you have to start with something smaller, but when you learn and realize what you want in the future, that makes you have a true vision. It is the dream of your goal that makes you influence people.

My dream is to become a professor of History, Geography and Philosophy. I am very passionate about learning and investigating new things, because I really like discovering everything about the world. I want to have a doctorate and have more careers in my life. I want to try and take risks because everything is possible.

I see the future as amazing and spectacular. I imagine how I can change in the future and change the world. I want to change some things that make the world better and safe. I want to inspire others and motivate people to do incredible things. New things to innovate that show children and young people to make good decisions. You have to see the positive things always, that the future always shines for everyone and that everything in this life is possible.

"Walk into the future, opening new doors and trying new things, be curious ... because our curiosity always leads us down new paths."



YOU CAN SUPPORT AFOP'S EFFORTS

To fight for farmworker children's rights, for a safe and healthy life, for education, and for a better quality of life overall by making a generous contribution to AFOP's Children In the Fields Campaign.

YES! I would like to make a contribution for the Children In the Fields Campaign efforts to fight for farmworker children.



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Please make check to: AFOP and write in Memo: CIFIC
1150 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 315
Washington, D.C. 20036



Thanks for your generosity!

**FOR MORE
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