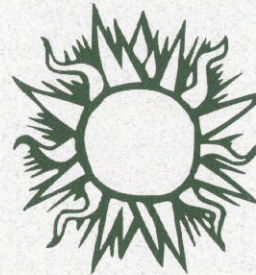


"El Fil"

FALL ISSUE A Newsletter to promote the Rehabilitation Needs of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers 1995



A NEW BEGINNING



Submitted by: Manuel Treviño Director, RCDI

When I was young, my parents would say "Vamos a el Fil" Colloquial for "Let's go to the fields." In 1995, 'Fil' means a level playing field with all things equal. That is the goal of "El Fil." To create equality for Migrant Agricultural Workers.

In 1980, during the sixth annual National Conference of Vocational Rehabilitation Projects for Handicapped Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker, one glaring need was evident; who will speak for the Handicapped Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker projects and the people they serve. In 1995, an organized group still does not exist, project directors work autonomously, and information exchange is minimal.

A new commitment to change this situation was borne out of this dilemma. At the Annual Conference in Boise, Idaho this past April, individuals expressed concern that communication, organization, and a forum for exchange did not exist. For over a decade, the rehabilitation of migrant agricultural workers has been an area of concern for both the agricultural workers themselves, as well as the many professionals working in the area of vocational rehabilitation.

With this in mind, Mr. Richard Corbridge, Region X RSA and Mr. Thomas Finch, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Washington, D. C., initiated a conference call for late June 1995, to begin to address con-

cerns that were detailed in Idaho. The participants again expressed concern that a forum did not exist and that a mechanism for communication was paramount.

With the needs detailed clearly, Region VIII Rehabilitation Cultural Diversity Initiative Project committed resources for addressing these needs.

With your assistance we will develop a foundation for information and collaboration on rehabilitation for this population. Our goal is to advance and improve rehabilitation for this population through an assortment of means.

The initial step will be the creation and development of a newsletter. This document will include purpose, membership, events, funding opportunities, and information you may want to share with the readership. In an effort to provide a comprehensive membership roster, we will develop a membership directory and mailing list.

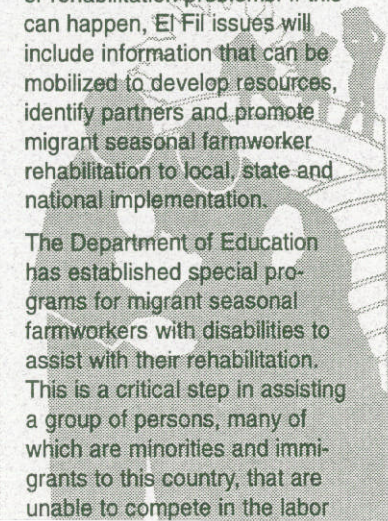
Additionally, on April 26-28 of this year, the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation hosted a conference focused on Migrant Rehabilitation. We will continue with this endeavor and

A Profile of Migrant Farmworkers

submitted by:
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Currently at San Diego
State University
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El Fil is developed with the support of the Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration funding for the Rehabilitation Cultural Diversity Initiative. El Fil is a newsletter to develop the foundation for information and collaboration on rehabilitation for a population at the bottom of the human service system ladder. This issue, and those to follow, will promote the development of a common work plan to address migrant and seasonal farmworker rehabilitation problems. If this can happen, El Fil issues will include information that can be mobilized to develop resources, identify partners and promote migrant seasonal farmworker rehabilitation to local, state and national implementation.

The Department of Education has established special programs for migrant seasonal farmworkers with disabilities to assist with their rehabilitation. This is a critical step in assisting a group of persons, many of which are minorities and immigrants to this country, that are unable to compete in the labor



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National Conference on Migrant and Farmworker Rehabilitation, Boise, Idaho, April 26-28, 1995

Univ. of N Colorado Region VII Rehab. Cultural Div



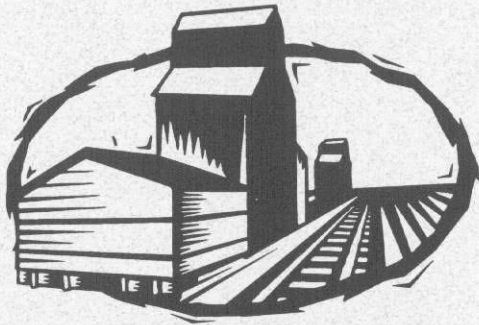
'Profile' continued

market for the higher wages that would permit them to resolve their own problems or ameliorate the bleak reality of their existence. America's farmworkers are ill-housed, ill-clothed, ill-fed, undernourished, underemployed, undereducated, underpaid, and facing enormous health hazards. We have learned from the lessons of César Chavez, the farm labor organizer, that these persons are also politically powerless, socially isolated, and excluded from much of the work protective legislation other workers take for granted.

Growers and producers of labor intensive crops throughout the country's fertile and abundant land, are totally dependent on the availability of a specific number and kind of farmworker at the right time and place. Year in and year out the dependence on migrant farmworkers spells the difference between profit or loss. This would appear a tremendous and logical avenue for rehabilitation to pursue because of the nature of the employment cycle and the prospects of increasing participation from a traditionally underserved population.

A screening of 1,717 minority migrant farmworkers children, conducted in lower Central Valley of California by the States Department of Health Services in 1989, identified 71% in need of followup care, and revealed 24% with anemia, 40% with vision problems and 36% needing dental care. Regular health and rehabilitation for laborers in the agricultural industry, which has the highest incidence of occupational injury and work related illness, are beyond the economic reach of the farmworker community. This is compounded by the findings that 80% are educationally disadvantaged in the context of Adult Educations Act's definition, that is having a fifth grade literacy level or less. Adult Education, Vocational Education and English as a Second Language programs serve less than 10% of the national predominantly Spanish-speaking adult farmworker community. Seventy percent are 25-44

years old and average 5.5 years of prior schooling, very little of it in American schools. Farmworkers contribute much of themselves to our society with their intensive hard work and intelligence, their spirit, modest pride and optimism,



their rich language, music and dance, their love of family, children and community. The migrant seasonal farmworkers in my community, take very little from society and contribute to employment and consumer taxes. They have higher employment levels when work is available, seldom utilize publicly subsidized social services and, unfortunately, fail to take maximum advantage of educational and restorative services available via the vocational rehabilitation system.

This newsletter is an effort to begin a process for interaction between the migrant seasonal farmworker population with disabilities and the rehabilitation system. The migrant farmworker cultural values militate against public confrontation with recognized figures or institutions. I have also since learned that the word "demand" is alien to their nature. This first issue and the following volumes will be a vehicle for rehabilitation professionals to rethink purpose and direct energies toward helping the disabled farmworker community attain empowerment.

"El Fil"

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The "EL FIL" Newsletter is published through federal grant funding by The University of Northern Colorado Region VIII Rehabilitation Cultural Diversity Initiative (RCDI).

Agencies, programs and individuals are encouraged to submit information to highlight activities in their area.

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National Conference on Migrant and Farmworker Rehabilitation Boise, Idaho April 26-28, 1995

NOTES FROM THE WRAP-UP SESSION

BY RICHARD CORBRIDGE, RSA REPRESENTATIVE

There were approximately 100 persons attending the conference from various states across the country. From Florida to Alaska and Washington D.C. to California. Fredric K. Schroeder, RSA Commissioner gave the keynote address, the Boise city mayor led many other dignitaries who welcomed the group to Boise and to Idaho. Staff persons from offices of Idaho's Congressional delegation attended and participated in part of the conference. Media coverage was provided by the local TV channel.

I. Issue Clarification:

Representatives from each of the Section 312 grantees gave reports on strategies that worked and those that didn't when serving disabled farmworkers. During those presentations, a few issues surfaced that needed response during the RSA wrap-up. Those issues and clarifying comments are presented:

- 1. Is RSA promoting that 75 percent of employment outcomes from the Section 312 projects be in non-farmwork employment? No. Section 102(b)(1)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended (the Act), requires that each IWRP shall be designed to achieve the employment objective of the individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and

'Notes' continued on page 3



capabilities of the individual. The Act clearly underscores that each client actively participate in making rehabilitation decisions through the exercise of **informed choices**.

For those individuals who chose to remain in farm labor, we should help them achieve that goal. If such a choice is contra-indicated because of their disability, we should counsel them about the choice and then determine whether it is professionally prudent for the system to support that choice or to suggest alternatives that are more appropriate to the individual's needs, including those related to their disability and welfare.



- ② Does the "order of selection" impact clients selected for services in a 312 grant?

No. "Order of selection" is a provision of Title I. Section 312 projects are authorized under Title III. However, since many state supplement their Section 312 migrant program with Section 110 funds, clients funded under Title I would be subject to the "order of selection." A possible strategy would be to fund those persons who are severely disabled with 110 funds and those who are not severely disabled with Section 312 funds.

- ③ Should all migrant farmworkers be classified severely disabled since their language and culture substantially contributes to the severity of their disability?

No, and certainly not automatically as was suggested. The definition of severely disabled is appropriately tied to:
the serious impact that physical or mental impairments have on such functional capacities as mobility, communications, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills in terms of and employment outcome; and require multiple services over an extended period of time.

The analysis of each client's physical and mental disabilities and functional abilities should be measured against the criteria for "individuals with severe disabilities."

- ④ Can the same case be served by more than one agency?

Yes. Often in the case of disabled migrant farmworkers the home base state may have an active VR case and there are plenty of reasons for the transitory state(s) to also have active VR cases open. The VR services and IWRPs of the multiple states should be coordinated where possible.

- ⑤ Can the same case be opened concurrently by more than one agency?

Yes. It makes no sense to close the case just because the person has temporarily left the state for employment or to be with family but fully intends to return within a few months.

- ⑥ Can a successful closure be claimed by more than one agency?

Yes. If each agency provides and documents a substantial service that significantly contributed to the successful outcome. The total VR system should be driven by the needs of disabled individuals and the availability of VR services when and where needed rather than by a need for pristine data. The few cases where more than one VR agency would report a successful outcome would not do excessive damage to the national database.

- ⑦ Can forestry and/or fisheries be included in the definition of agricultural work?

Not at this time. We have recently submitted a formal request for the definition. The attorneys for Education and Labor have it on their schedule to resolve. RSA will widely distribute the definition when it is available.

- ⑧ Can we extend the funding cycle for projects beyond three years? Yes. The Department has already begun streamlining the system in that direction. For existing projects, the three year period will not be extended. For this year's competition, 1995, grants will again be made for three years. There is a fair chance that grants made after this year will be for five years. Grantees awarded this year may be asked to submit work plans and budget estimates for years two and three. We are streamlining the grant awarding system by requiring three or five year projections of goals, objectives, and estimated budgets in the initial proposal, eliminating yearly continuation proposals and requiring yearly progress reports, new goals and objectives and refined budgets. Grants will then be continued based on their performance as judged by written reports and on-site reviews.

- ⑨ Why do we have to submit innovative ideas in each competition proposal? We have been in the business for several years and we know what works with this population. The nature of the discretionary grant program is to help new programs get started through a project format. It is not to expect continued funding, cycle after cycle. Competition engenders new ideas and techniques.



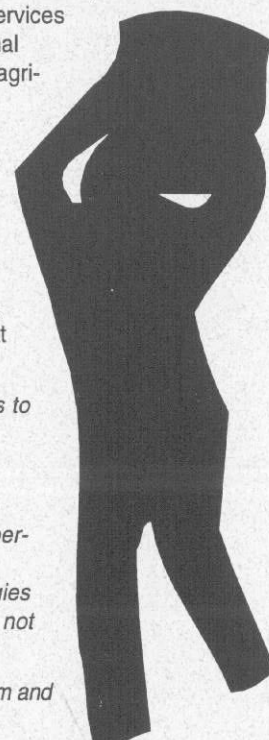
II. Special Arrangements for Providing VR Services:

The regulations at 34 CFR 375.10 in describing those activities that can be supported with project funds also describes the basic purpose for the Section 312 projects:

"the development and implementation of special arrangements for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities who are migratory agricultural workers or seasonal farmworkers and to members of their families (whether or not disabled) who are with them, if these services are necessary to the vocational rehabilitation of the migratory agricultural worker or seasonal

farmworker with disabilities." (the terms disabled and disabilities replaces the old term handicapped and handicaps respectively). The conferees described some of these "special arrangements" they are using in their existing projects. Some are listed below, with subsets identified offering a somewhat different slant on the basic idea:

- *Providing stipends for leaving the fields to receive VR services.*
Subsidies for lost wages.
- *Providing single medical services.*
Providing medical services to let a person go back to work.
Note: RSA assumes in these strategies we are dealing with disability issues not just treatment of acute conditions.
- *Coordination of services between in-stream and home base counselors.*



'Special Arrangements' continued on page 4

'Special Arrangements' continued

- Allowing VR counselors to work flextime hours to be available after working hours in the fields.
- Developing local Latino service centers in sequential locations.
- Providing cellular phones to VR counselors enabling constant contact with their offices for expediting VR services coordination.
- Providing 1-800 numbers with bi-lingual reception.
- Recognition of cowboys as seasonal farmworkers.
- Use of AmeriCorps representatives. For example, for pesticide education.
- Use of radio and TV talk shows for outreach and awareness.
- Influencing Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs to train Rehabilitation Professionals to work with farmworkers.
- Using the Section 312 budget to leverage other resources.
- Developing self-employment options relating to the farmwork with which the individual is acquainted.
- Use of job coaches.
Use of mentors to help transition into unfamiliar employment.
- Develop regional and statewide coordinating committees and campaign groups.
Hold statewide summit meetings every few years focusing on issues related to migrant rehabilitation.
- Providing English as the second language (ESL) survival training.
- Installing a computer network for coordination of multiple teams providing migrant rehabilitation.
- Utilizing centers for "learning in context," where training occurs in a real work environment and a paycheck is received for completion.
- The state VR agency provides entry salary premiums for bi-lingual counselors.

III. The Conferees Promoted an Information Network System:

The RCEP-RCDI coordinators of Regions VIII and X have agreed to begin an information network for programs serving the rehabilitation needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers with disabilities. A newsletter is planned and participants in the conference will be added to the mailing list.

IV. Things the Conferees Would Like the Commissioner to Do:

Since its beginning in the early 1970's, Section 312 of the Act has not changed much and Part 375 of the regulations have not changed at all. The only excitement in the program has been at the service level.

The conferees hope that, with the Commissioner's interest, we have an opportunity to make a difference but we must communicate our needs to the Commissioner. The following are some of the ideas developed at the Boise conference.

- 1 Request the Commissioner identify the resources to support annual conferences on farmworker rehabilitation beginning with Boise 1995.
- 2 Request the Commissioner to continue a flow of resources to the RCEPs to help support the annual conference and a system for

information dissemination to the network of rehabilitation programs serving migrant farmworkers with disabilities.

- 3 Request the Commissioner to find the resources necessary to fund all proposals for Section 312 funding that are determined by RSA and the peer review process to be fundable.
- 4 Request the Commissioner to require every Rehabilitation Counselor Training Program to include in their recruitment for potential students, contact with the counselors and service network related to Section 312 programs.
- 5 Request the Commissioner to encourage Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor training programs to develop internships with programs/counselors/teams serving farmworkers.
- 6 Request the Commissioner to work with the U.S. Department of Education and promote the development and availability to GED materials in Spanish.
- 7 Request the Commissioner to communicate to the state VR agencies a policy that enables more than one agency to serve an individual case and allows each agency to report a successful rehabilitation if they delivered a substantial VR service that contributed to the successful outcome. As an alternative some conferees suggested a policy that would enable a determination of eligibility to be accepted across state borders. The group suggesting this alternative bordered on emphasizing a mandate that states must accept rehabilitation determinations from other states.
- 8 Request the Commissioner to work with NIDRR and promote research and development that would produce vocational assessments and audiology assessments that are appropriate for those whose primary language is Spanish.
- 9 Request the Commissioner to encourage his regional staff to seek out and collaborate with migrant stream coordinators focusing on health, education, and labor. Interagency meetings are held periodically to deal with common issues and the vocational rehabilitation people are seldom at the table.
- 10 While some conferees understand there are limits to the influence of the Commissioner, they sure wished someone could influence the medical profession to understand and accommodate the working lifestyle of the farmworkers and ensure that pharmacology language would be provided in Spanish on prescriptions.





'A New Beginning' continued

timeframes, committees, etc., for continuation of a national conference agenda. The conference would highlight areas such as vocational testing, migrant culture and education, self advocacy and a variety of other topics.

My hope is that through the formation of this organization we continue to play a pivotal role in the rehabilitation of migrant agricultural workers throughout America. If you have suggestions for the newsletter, people to add to the mailing list, phone numbers, or changes, please contact me, or Lydia Nava at 970/351-6956. Please feel free to E-mail us with any of your information at: mtevin@rrecp.univnorthco.edu.



FARMWORKER HEALTH
THE CHALLENGE CONTINUES

1995

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1995 COMMEMORATIVE ARTWORK

James Bagley lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the California Institute of The Arts / Chouinard, Los Angeles, California. He has held positions as Art Director, Illustrator, Designer and Creative Director in the western United States. Bagley says, "Rather than introducing elements to a composition, I try to define and express the significance of what is there in such a way as to allow the viewer to bring to it their own notions, intelligence or spiritual experiences which will complete the expression, and give it relevance beyond pure aesthetics. For me to paint otherwise is to somehow insult the integrity of the subject itself or deny my relationship with the land."

Proceeds from all sales of Commemorative Artwork go to fund the Migrant Health Scholarship Program.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Midwest Migrant Stream Forum
El Paso, TX.
November 17-19
Contact: National Migrant Resource Program
(800) 531-6441

Western Migrant Stream Forum
San Jose, CA.
December 1-3
Contact Allen Apodaca,
Conference Coordinator
Northwest Regional Primary Care Association
(206) 932-2133

1996 Third Annual National Native American Conference
Albuquerque, NM.
Tentatively Scheduled: April 28-30
Contact: Manny Treviño
(970) 351-6956
Sherry Curley
(520) 621-5035



c/o Region VIII RCEP/RCDI
University of Northern Colorado
Greeley, CO 80639

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