

FROM THE GROUND UP

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Focus on Migrant Students

AIM Retreat Encourages Young Leaders

by Ramiro Arceo

Nineteen migrant students from seven counties in North Carolina are taking leadership by beginning Action, Inspiration, Motivation (AIM) clubs at their schools. These students participated in SAF's AIM Leadership Retreat held at Camp Oak Hill in Oxford, NC, the weekend of October 27–29. The retreat focused on building the students' leadership abilities and encouraged them to support one another in school for the betterment of themselves, their schools and their communities. The students made commitments to learn as much as they could over the intense two-day period so they could return to their schools and create an AIM Club.

The activities at the retreat included workshops about dispute and conflict resolution, youth empowerment and starting AIM Clubs. A recruiter from the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, Georgia, spoke to the students about CAMP and how to apply to college. All activities were aimed at motivating students to become peer leaders at their schools and to take action to improve their education.

Starting an AIM Club involves students recruiting members and selecting activities for the club's first year. Activities are intended to enhance students' educational experiences and might include: taking field trips to area colleges, participating in art and theater events and organizing community service events.

SAF staff and school advisors will participate actively in the development of these clubs. By the end of the academic year, each club will be self-sustainable and able to provide assistance to other counties that wish to start AIM Clubs.



Students at the AIM Retreat in Oxford, NC

Photo by: Ramiro Arceo

Facts about Migrant Children

- Of farmworker parents (both foreign-born and US-born workers), 50% are accompanied by their children as they migrate.¹
- In 1994, a study showed that 60% of migrant students drop out of school (down from 90% in the 1970s).²
- By the time a migrant child is 12, he/she may be working in the fields between 16-18 hours per week.²
- The average migrant child may attend 3 different schools in one year. For many children it takes roughly 3 years to advance one grade level.³

Sources: 1 ERIC; http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed423097.html; 2 David Bell, "The Nation's Invisible Families Living in the Stream," MEMO; 3 National Center for Farmworker Health

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