

FROM THE GROUND UP

a publication of STUDENT ACTION WITH FARMWORKERS

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 3

FEBRUARY 1994

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

ACTION NEEDED TO PROTECT FARMWORKERS' RIGHTS

Since the early 80's farmworkers have had the right to sue their employers for damages if they are injured due to unlawful and dangerous transportation. However, in recent years farmers and Agricultural associations have spent thousands of dollars lobbying for legislation that would change this federal law that was intended to protect farmworker rights.

A bill introduced by Vic Fazio, a Congressman from an agricultural district in California, seeks to overturn a U.S. Supreme Court decision which upheld the right of farmworkers to sue employers for damages from injuries that result from unsafe and illegal transportation to and from the fields. The bill (HR-1999), if passed and signed into law, would completely eliminate the right of farmworkers to sue abusive employers for injury or death on the job as long as the employer is covered by a workers' compensation policy. Nothing in the bill requires the employer to prevent the injury from occurring nor guarantees farmworkers that they will be treated fairly and equitably by the state workers' compensation system. In some (See "Farmworker Rights", page 5)

In celebration of their twentieth anniversary as a volunteer support group, Triangle Friends of the United Farm Workers hosted nationally prominent labor leader Dolores Huerta. Huerta is co-founder and first vice president of the United Farm Workers of America and one of the best known women in the American labor movement. Now the 60-year old mother of eleven and grandmother of ten, she has been an active member of the UFW for more than twenty-eight years and been arrested twenty-two times-usually for disobeying growers' anti-picketing injunctions. She was once described by the late Cesar Chavez as "totally fearless, both mentally and physically."

Huerta began her visit to the Durham area by speaking on Saturday, January 30 at an ACLU dinner where she was honored with an award for her work. The next morning, she addressed a forum at the Pilgrim United Church of Christ. She started her speech by reminding the audience how connected they are to farmworkers. "Each time people sit down to eat, they should give thanks to farmworkers who get up early every morning to pick our food", she said. Huerta spoke on the many problems facing farmworkers, particularly those due to pesticides. She showed the video "No Grapes" and further urged the public to join in the grape boycott. Since the

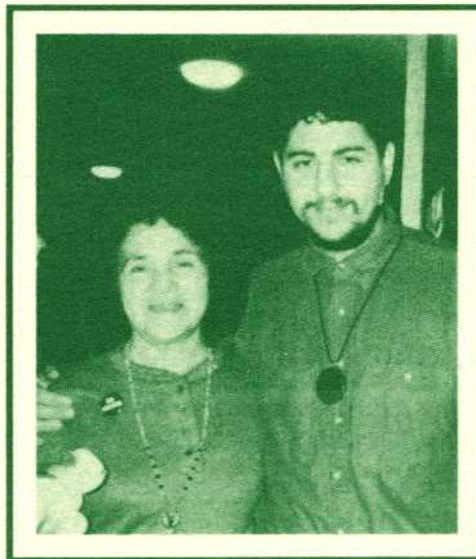


photo by Debbie Rosenstein
Huerta with SAF intern Jackson Allers

(See "The Struggle Continues", page 6)

Also in this issue . . .

FROM THE DIRECTOR: THE NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE TRUST ACT...2

NOTES FROM THE FIELDS

HARVESTING DREAMS.....	3
NVCC HEADS MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM.....	3
STUDENTS AGAINST DRUGS AND AIDS.....	4
SAF VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR.....	6

A word from the director . . .

The SAF Mission:

To bring students and farmworkers together to learn about each other's lives, share resources and skills, improve conditions for farmworkers, and build diverse coalitions working for social change.

SAF Board of Directors

Darnell Arnoult
Susan Brock-Treasurer
Sharon Brown
Sarah Carroll
Pam DiStefano-Chair
Kim Lawson-Secretary
Victoria Martinez
Ted Parrish
David Thomas

SAF Staff

Carolyn Corrie, Executive Director
Debbie Rosenstein, ITF Project
Coordinator
Felice James, Newsletter Editor
K.C. Swanson, Intern Referral
Service Coordinator
Susan Wood, Resource Center
Coordinator

Student Action with Farmworkers is a 501(c)3 non-profit funded in part by: The Corporation for National and Community Service, The Kathleen Price and Joseph M. Bryan Family Foundation, The Melvin R. Lane Charitable Trust, and The Funding Exchange.

FROM THE GROUND UP

is the newsletter of Student Action with Farmworkers. Copyright 1994 by Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF).

Editor: Felice Anaïs James

Note: I would like to take this opportunity to briefly describe the new federal Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs, which promise to have a positive impact on communities throughout America and on people of all ages involved in service.

In October, President Clinton signed into law the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. This legislation created the Corporation for National and Community Service by merging the Commission on National and Community Service and ACTION, the federal agency which oversees VISTA. The bill provides funds to continue programs begun under the Commission, such as its Serve America K-12 programs (promoting service-learning among elementary and secondary school students) and Higher Education Learn and Serve America programs. SAF received a two-year grant last May under this higher education sub-title.

The major new component is the creation of Americorps, the new national service program the President talked about throughout his campaign. Americorps was created with a mission to "get things done" in our nation's troubled communities by engaging participants in community-based service that directly and demonstrably addresses unmet educational, public safety, human and environmental needs. The Corporation plans to have 18,000 Americorps participants working in communities across the nation by the end of 1994. US citizens or permanent residents over the age of 16 are eligible to participate. During each full-time year of service, participants receive a minimum wage stipend and accrue \$4,725 as an educational award, which can be used to pay off educational loans or to pay for school after participation. Full-time participants may serve for one or two years, for 1700 hours of service per year. Part-time participation requires 900 hours of service over 2-3 years, and participants receive an educational award of \$2,363 upon completion of service. In general, the recruitment and selection of participants will take place at the local level, although a state and national clearinghouse of open placements and interested applicants will also be coordinated.

Institutions of higher education, federal, state and local agencies, private non-profits and partnerships among these entities are eligible to apply for Americorps funding. For national programs operating in more than one state, applicants will apply directly to the Corporation by April 15, 1994. For programs operating in only one state, applications will be made to newly created state commissions on community service, which are appointed by each governor.

(See "National Service", page 7)

**For more information or to submit articles, contact us at:
PO Box 90803, Durham, NC 27708. 919/660-3652.**



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

HARVESTING DREAMS:

College Ambassadors at CSU-Fresno

As high school students we plan on getting a college education to achieve all those dreams we have been planning for years. Once we attend a college, the years of hard work in high school pay off. But there are many questions to be answered. "What is college life really like?" "What is the annual cost of tuition and other expenses?" "Are there any other Mexicans in college?" "Can I make it?" These are a few of the questions that I myself confronted while in high school. They are also some of the questions that I and other fellow members of the project College Ambassadors are able to answer and share with students that are in the same position that I was once in.

College Ambassadors is a group of students from California State University-Fresno who volunteer their time and effort while actively involved in clubs such as Colmena Universitaria, Teatro Tortilla, NAK and the Migrant Student Alliance. In 1989, a group of students who had the desire to become role models for future generations started the College Ambassadors project with the support of the MSA club, with the intention of

(See "Harvesting Dreams", page 4)

NVCC HEADS MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Northern Virginia Community College/Migrant Education Program was designed to help meet the educational and social needs of migrant children in Colonial Beach, Virginia. This summer program is a partnership between the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) and the State Department of Migrant Education. Sixteen students from the Northern Virginia Community College worked during the summer of 1993 as tutors and classroom assistants in the Migrant Education Program serving over fifty students ranging in age from three -thirteen.

The students included Latino youth from Texas, Florida, and Mexico, as well as one student from Vietnam and another from the Philippines. Many friendships between the children and the college students developed during the program. There was a lot of individual attention and hugs and during the last week of classes the children put on special programs of songs and gave handmade "Thank you" cards to all of the program participants. One program participant, Kimberly Shelton, fondly recalled a student in her kindergarten class by stating, "He drew hearts on my name tag, and I'll cherish it always. I felt really special when he drew the hearts for me because I knew that I had touched his heart in some way and he took the time to draw me a picture to show me." The program also brought the needs of migrant workers and their children to the attention of the participants. One participant, Cindy Nauer, commented, "My experience with the Migrant Education Program has given me a greater social awareness of the things that go on in my community, that often I don't see. In the future, I would like to work more in my community on projects similar to this one."

(See "Migrant Education", page 6)



photo by Vme Smith
Kimberely Shelton admires the work of her kindergarten students.

Harvesting Dreams

(continued from page 3)

promoting higher education. Some of our main goals are to serve as role models, recruit and encourage students to consider higher education, inform students of the many resources available, and share our own experiences as college students with them. We also give students solid evidence that we as migrant farmworkers can achieve higher goals, and most importantly we let them know that they are not alone; there are many people willing to help them in every way.

Often we do this during assemblies and migrant parent advisory meetings that are conducted on a one-on-one basis. To better assist and inform students, we plan an Annual Leadership Conference. This conference consists mainly of three workshops in which the presenters are members of College Ambassadors. During these workshops, we try to emphasize the importance of establishing goals, working as a team, and finding leadership skills within ourselves. As a result of my involvement, I have gained public speaking skills and most importantly, I have learned that if I want to motivate students to be leaders by gaining more knowledge and using it as power, I have to be a leader myself. Now I can focus more clearly on what I want to obtain from a college education. When I see the faces of the young high school students and their smiles as they daydream about all the things they can achieve and all the good things they will do for their communities, I can almost see myself reflected in them.

by **Juan Pablo Blas**

STUDENTS FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS & AIDS

People are always saying how today's teens don't care about anything let alone making a difference in the world. Well, there are some students who care and are proving that they can make a difference. SADA, Students Against Drugs & AIDS is a peer education group sponsored by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students and the Farmworker Association of Central Florida.

"Well, there are some students who care and are proving that they can make a difference."

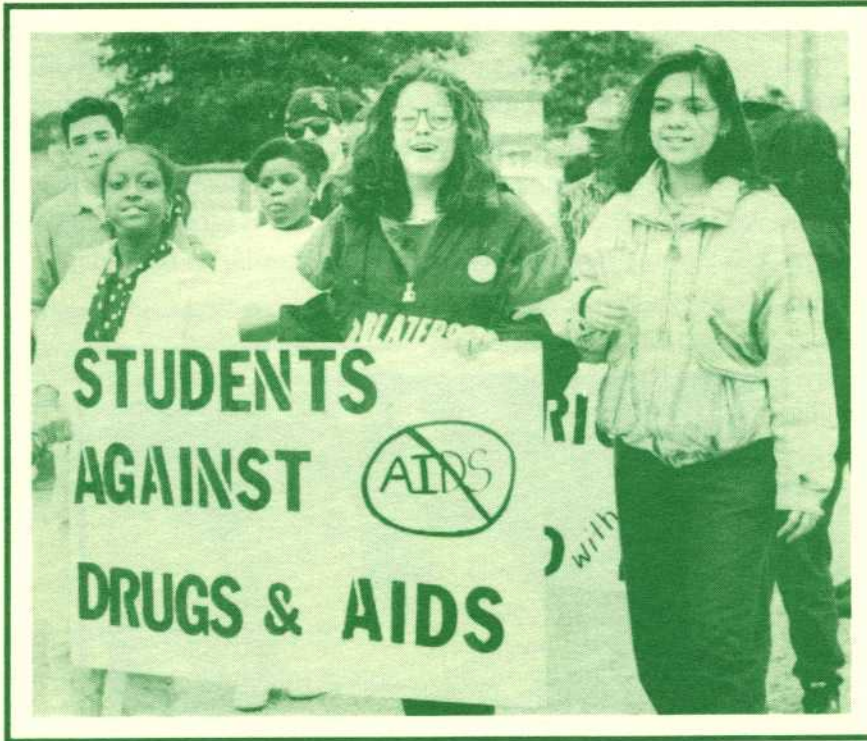


photo by Jean Pascale

SADA students march to raise awareness about the problem of drugs and AIDS.

SADA started five years ago with a group of Hispanic and Haitian students, many from farmworker backgrounds, who wanted to make a difference in their lives.

First, students were given training on AIDS, drugs and sexually transmitted diseases. Then they began going to different churches, schools, migrant camps, and summer institutes giving peer education talks and presentations. These presentations include plays, skits and videos on how AIDS is transmitted as well as how to protect yourself from getting AIDS. The group knows that they can't get through to everyone, but that doesn't keep them from doing their job; for the students

(See "SADA Teens Educate Peers", page 5)

