

Special Edition: THE 1994 ITF INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1994 ITF SUMMER PROGRAM

With sleeping bags in hand and excited smiles on their faces, the fifty-two 1994 Into the Fields (ITF) interns arrived for an intensive orientation at the Franklinton Center in Enfield, NC on May 28th.

Ranging in age from 18 to 52, hailing from schools in California, Texas, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado and North and South Carolina, and representing urban and rural Latino, African American, Asian American and white communities, the 1994 intern group surpassed SAF's diversity goals immediately. The students' motivations for applying to the program were equally varied; some wanted to see what farmworkers' lives were like in another part of the country (many of the students from farmworker families themselves mentioned this) and others simply wanted to avoid their usual summer jobs as retail cashiers and test out community service work.

Highlights of the orientation included a tour of a local black-owned small family

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SAF interns, farmworkers and other supporters gathered outside the NC Department of Motor Vehicles in Raleigh on July 12th to protest the ongoing discrimination faced by farmworkers, immigrants and people of color at DMV offices statewide. The protest was organized by the NC Farmworkers' Project (NCFP), one of SAF's sponsoring organizations. Protest coordinators pictured (from L to R) are: NCFP Organizer Antonia Ventura, NCFP Director and SAF board member Victoria Martinez, and SAF intern Oglá Rojas.

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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.

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Margaret Horn, Executive Director
Melinda Wiggins, Program Director
Debbie Rosenstein, ITF Project Coordinator (until 9/30)

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FROM THE GROUND UP

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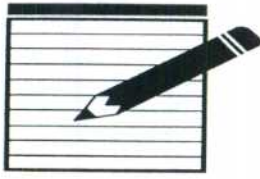
Editor: Carolyn Corrie

As many of you may already know, I am leaving my position as Executive Director as of September 2, 1994. It was a difficult decision for me, but I feel that my goal of establishing an organization to help meet the needs of college students, farmworkers and community agencies has been achieved. I believe that my efforts over the past two years have helped SAF develop a firm base from which to expand and improve programs for the future. We celebrated our "official" second anniversary from the date we incorporated as a non-profit on August 20, 1992. It was a great feeling on August 20, 1994, to be able to sit down and read through evaluations from 52 interns who had worked at 29 organizations in North and South Carolina. It was also great to hear an intern introduce SAF at a conference this summer as "a group of college students from all over the U.S. working to improve conditions for farmworkers." Too often I describe us as a "non-profit" or a "Durham-based organization". It's important for me to remember that it's not the logo or the office or the letterhead that makes us who we are, but the *people*: farmworkers and interns in SAF t-shirts protesting discrimination outside the DMV office, interns acting in a play for audiences of migrant children and parents, interns and farmworkers learning to be pesticide safety trainers, sponsors helping interns improve their teaching techniques.

Where will SAF be two years from now? I am looking forward to seeing the many ways SAF will benefit from the infusion of energy and creativity from our new staff members. Margaret Horn, the new Executive Director, is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and UNC-Chapel Hill, and has prior experience directing the Appalachian Student Health Coalition in Tennessee. Melinda Wiggins, the new Program Director, will provide important continuity for the organization, since she participated in the SAF 1993 internship program and worked as the Special Projects Coordinator for SAF this summer. She attended Millsaps College as an undergraduate and Duke Divinity School. Melinda will replace Debbie Rosenstein, who unfortunately will also be leaving SAF at the end of September to move to Asheville, NC. A third new staff member is Juanita Chenault, a Public Ally placed at SAF for the year to coordinate the Intern Referral Service and Project LEVANTE. More about these folks in the next issue!

Once again, thank you all for your support over the past two and a half years. I have learned a great deal and have been enriched by meeting so many committed and interesting people who are involved with farmworkers, non-profits, and campus-based community service. Thank you for being a part of SAF.





NOTES FROM THE FIELD

CAMPUS CLOSE-UP: THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO'S BUENO CENTER

The Bueno Center for Multicultural Education is a University of Colorado-Boulder recognized Center within the School of Education that promotes educational equity for Latinos and others. The Center's programs emphasize the value of bilingualism and work for educational opportunities for diverse populations through research, education and service projects.

The Bueno Center came to SAF's attention when Olga Rojas, a University of Colorado-Boulder student, applied to the Into the Fields program. From a farmworker family, Olga was recruited to attend UC-Boulder through the Bueno Center's College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). Unlike CAMP programs at other schools, the Bueno Center's CAMP program is privately funded. Because of their commitment to making higher education accessible to young adults from migrant families, the staff at the Bueno Center refused to drop their CAMP program when federal support ran dry. Each fall the Bueno Center provides tuition scholarships, career counseling and overall academic support to approximately ten first year students.

Along with administering the school's CAMP program the Bueno Center also maintains a permanent collection of materials related to equal education and race, ethnicity, national origin, disability and gender. In addition, the Center represents issues and concerns of predominately Hispanic Colleges and Universities for the University of New Mexico's Alliance 2000 Project, facilitates trainings for paraprofessionals employed in Colorado schools, coordinates five commuter HEP (High School Equivalency Program) satellite centers, provides LEP (Limited English Proficient) adults and out of school youth with English language literacy instruction, operates a four-year Student Literacy Corps Program matching undergraduate student tutors with Chapter 1 services at their school, and oversees a pilot project involving the restructuring of two middle schools in Colorado to improve self-esteem and reduce the achievement gap between majority and minority students.

The Bueno Center, in conjunction with the School of Education, also offers M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Social Multicultural Foundations/ Bilingual Education and M.A. programs in Bilingual Special Education and certifies teachers for the linguistically different endorsement at the elementary and secondary levels.

For more information about the Center and their innovative programing, contact Director Leonard Baca, Program Director Lorenzo Aragon or Program Coordinator Tammy Molinar at:

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ITF Highlights

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farm and a visit by Maria Elena Lucas, a long-time farmworker activist who came all the way from Texas to share her thoughts and writings with the ITF interns. After hearing from twenty guest speakers, reading pages of related articles and discussing their hopes and fears for the summer, the students departed one week later for their internship sites.

The interns were placed with 29 different sponsoring organizations: legal services offices, health clinics, Migrant Head-Start centers, public school migrant education summer programs, community organizing projects and faith based social services agencies. Each student volunteered thirty-five hours (or more!) per week at their agency and participated in additional service and advocacy 'site projects' with other interns in their geographic area. Their day-to-day work varied widely, and included organizing community health fairs, planning meetings between farmworker women, educating migrant and seasonal farmworkers about the dangers of pesticide exposure, teaching English as a Second Language to farmworkers and Spanish to agency staff, mentoring migrant teens, creating and consolidating maps of migrant camps in various counties, distributing emergency clothes and food, translating in health and legal settings, protesting discrimination, informing farmworkers of their legal rights, planning educational activities for children and conducting health screenings and other medical services.

A reception was held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Newton Grove on July 23 for interns, sponsors, board members, farmworkers, donors and other friends. Everyone enjoyed great refreshments, a slide show and hearing about the interns' varied experiences.

In addition to the orientation at the beginning of the summer, SAF held a mid-way and final retreat for the interns to come back together as a group and reflect on the summer. The students shared their successes as well as some frustrations. Many of the students related stories of farmworkers expressing appreciation for their efforts. Their frustrations included wishing there was more they could do. In addition, the interns spoke of how much they had learned from farmworkers and how much the summer had affected their overall perspective regarding poverty and injustice.

The final retreat, which included white-water rafting and an awards ceremony, came to a close on August 7th; ten weeks from the first day of orientation. With tears in their eyes, the same sleeping bags, and journals full of memories, the 1994 ITF interns said their good-byes and left SAF with some final words.

INTERNS' FINAL WORDS

"I feel satisfied now that I've completed the internship because I see myself as somebody who is and will be involved in their/my community. This internship has really inspired me to continue struggling to make a change in society." -Gerardo Martinez

"The ITF internship program has been one of the most enlightening and rewarding experiences in my life. This is one of the largest and most diverse groups I have ever been a member of. The interaction with young adults from all over the US from various backgrounds and experiences has given me a renewed commitment to multicultural issues and social justice initiatives." -Brian Johnson

"I've been thrust out of my comfort zone and in the face of conflict. I came face to face with farmworkers and farmers. Stories I've heard in the class and faces I've seen in documentaries are now real to me and are part of my experiences." -Mitzi Carter

"I learned a lot about migrant farmworkers and also about the Sea Islands. I have decided that I want to teach in this area and be active with bringing about change in the Sea Islands."

-Keri Barrineau

