COMMUNIDAD:
Building Relationships with Migrant Workers

Mercedes Naber-Fisher, EdD.
Lakota Migrant Program, Director

Julie George, MA
Global Connections, Executive Director
Learning Outcomes

• To grow in understanding about the following:
  – Who migrant workers are
  – Their work
  – Their living conditions
  – Their health concerns
  – Their values
• To learn more about how a local non-profit organization has been building community with migrant workers in the BG area
• To collaborate with others on ways to build community with migrant workers in your respective areas
• To become aware of available resources
Connection Point

- What do you already know about migrant workers?
- What experiences have you had connecting with/befriending/serving migrant workers and their families?
- What are some challenges to building community?
UNDERSTANDING WHO MIGRANT WORKERS ARE
Who is a migrant?

“A migrant agricultural worker means an individual who is employed in agricultural employment of a seasonal or other temporary nature, and who is required to be absent from his/her permanent place of residence.”

– http://ohioline.ag.ohio-state.edu
Two Types

• Follow-the-crops migrants
• Shuttle migrants
Current Migrant Stream
Current Migrant Stream

GAO Analysis of data from Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Migrant Education, Harrisburg, Pa., 1989
Migrants in Ohio

• An estimated 10,000 migrant workers travel to Ohio each year to harvest crops such as pickle cucumbers, tomatoes, apples, and nursery products.

• 12,516 in 2011, a 9% drop from 2010, and a 14% drop from 2009. The numbers have declined since 2007.
Demographics of Hispanic Migrants in the US

• More than 3 million live in the US.
• 72% were foreign born.
  – The majority come from Mexico.
• 6 out of 10 are undocumented.
• 78% are male while 22% are female.
• 59% are married.
• 52% are parents.
• 35% do not speak English “at all.”
  – Spanish and/or an indigenous language
Facts About Hispanic Migrants

• Migrants have a day-to-day survival mentality.
• Many migrants would like to break the migrant cycle but do not know how.
• Many do not have a high school diploma.
  – 40% had completed grades 1 – 6.
  – 28% had completed grades 10 – 12.
  – 9% had attained some form of higher education.
UNDERSTANDING THEIR WORK
Work in the Fields
Work in the Fields
What they pick . . .
... is what we eat.
Work Days & Wages

• Migrants work 6-7 days a week for more than 10 hours a day.
• Many make below minimum wage.
  – Median income for a migrant family is $16,000 a year.
  – Median income for an individual is $11,000.
  • Other studies show higher or lower.
Mexican Economic Infrastructure

• Migrants work very hard not only for themselves, but for their families back home.
  – They send their money back to their country.
  – This is called “Las Remesas.”

• Towns where families have migrant workers in the “north” benefit also.
Their Contributions to the American Economy

• Migrants PAY taxes.
  – They pay the same taxes that all Americans pay.
  – Depending on their legal status, they may or may not be able to benefit from these taxes.
• Undocumented migrant workers actually help social security.
Their Contributions to the American Economy

- Migrants play an important role in the American economy, particularly to the food supply.
  - They do the work that most people in the US would not do for little money.
  - They also increase the overall economic output in the regions that they work.
UNDERSTANDING THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS
The Ohio Department of Health

“Migrant camps can be . . .

– One or more buildings
– trailers
– tents or vehicles
– any land appertaining thereto, established, operated or used as temporary living quarters for two or more families or five or more persons.”
“These rules were created to establish minimum standards, applicable throughout Ohio, for the design, installation, operation, and maintenance of these facilities in order to protect the occupants of the agricultural labor camp from injury, minimize the potential for disease transmission, and provide a safe and healthy environment.”
Migrant Camps in Ohio
Camps are located in the country. Therefore, most Americans have never seen a migrant camp before.
Migrant Camps in Ohio
Inside a Migrant Camp
Inside a Migrant Camp
Showers in a Camp
Bathroom Facilities
Children & Childcare
UNDERSTANDING THEIR HEALTH CONCERNS
Health Insurance

- The majority of migrants do not have health care.
  - 8% reported having insurance covered by employer but 5% for those who were employed seasonally and not year round.
Health Issues

- Respiratory issues
- Diabetes
- Infectious diseases
- Dental Care
- Mental Illness
- Domestic Violence
- Human trafficking
Hispanic Values

• Familismo
• Fatalismo
• Spiritualismo
• Three R’s
A CASE STUDY IN BUILDING COMMUNITY
Who is the International Community in Bowling Green?

• International Students at BGSU
• International Faculty
• International Students at The Language Company – BG
• Migrant workers & their families
• International residents & immigrants & their families
• International business people & family members
Global Connections

• Global Connections exists to:
  – **Connect** with the International community by serving them and providing cultural events for them to participate in
  – **Make friends** by inviting them into our homes
  – **Learn** about their culture while sharing aspects of ours
  – **Invite** them to observe or participate in our spiritual communities, if they choose to
What GC Offers

EVENTS
• New International Student Activities
• Free Food & Furniture
• Barn Dance
• Welcome Picnic
• Family Fun Nights
• World Food & Fun Nights
• International Thanksgiving Dinner
• “Community Resources for Internationals & Their Families” Seminar

SERVICES
• Transportation to Toledo transportation centers & Detroit Metro Airport
• Shopping trips: BG, International markets in Toledo, Franklin Park Mall
• Free English Class/TOEFL-prep Class
How GC Began Connecting With Migrant Workers
Evolution

- Who is in our immediate area?
- What can we do to welcome and serve?
- How can we build community?
- How can we make helpful resources available?
- How can we collaborate?
- What can we do to educate volunteers?
Welcome Picnic
Welcome Picnic
Welcome Bags
Household Items Give-Away
Weekly Connections
Family Fun Nights
Family Fun Nights
Family Fun Nights
Family Fun Nights
Ways to Serve

• Welcoming event
• Welcome Bags for adults/teens
• Backpacks for kids
• Weekly connections/visits with adults & kids
• Clothes/diapers/baby clothes & household items
• Family Fun Nights/Games for kids
• Resource Information
• Rides
• Translation help
• Reading to kids
Ways to Identify

• Learn how to make their food

• Eat with them
Ways to Identify

• Play with them

• Read to their kids
Ways to Identify

- Pick in the fields with them
- Conversation
Ways to Identify

• Be there – developing history
Ways to Collaborate

- Dr. Mercedes Naber-Fisher – Lakota Migrant Program

- Interns from MACIE Program/BGSU
Ways to Collaborate

• Wood County District Public Library

• Local churches
Ways to Collaborate

• Stimmels Market
Ways to Educate

Soy un/a Voluntario/a de Conexiones globales
Ways to Celebrate

• Welcome Picnic
• Birthday parties
• Dancing
• End-of-Season Party
“Global Connections”
“Global Connections”
“Global Connections”
Connection Point

• Where are the migrant workers in your area?
• How can you connect with them and build community?
• How can you serve, identify, and celebrate with them?
• With whom can you collaborate?
• What steps will you need to take to build community?
RESOURCES
Resources in BG

- Lakota Migrant Program
  - (419) 986-6650
- Global Connections
  - www.globalconnectionsbg.org
- La Conexión de Wood County
  - http://laconexionwc.wordpress.com/
- Wood County Health Department
  - http://www.co.wood.oh.us/healthdepartment/
- Free Legal Clinic
- Wood County Jobs & Family Services
  - http://www.woodcountyjfs.com/
Resources in Ohio

• Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)
  – [http://www.supportfloc.org/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.supportfloc.org/Pages/default.aspx)

• Migrant Health Clinic (Fremont)
  – 410 Birchard Avenue, Fremont, OH, 43420
  – (419) 334-3869

• UTMC Clinic at Cedar Creek Church Clinic/Dr. Richard Paat (South Toledo Campus)
  – 2150 South Byrne Road, Toledo, Ohio 43614
  – (419) 661-8661

• Teaching Mentoring Communities (TMC)
Resources in Ohio

• Ohio Migrant Education Center (OMEC)
  – http://omec.nwoesc.org/home/Site/Welcome.html

• Pathstone
  – http://www.pathstone.org/
CONTACT INFORMATION
Contact Us

• Dr. Mercedes Naber-Fisher, Director
  – Lakota Migrant Program
  – mercedesnaber@juno.com
  – (419) 654-4336

• Julie George, Executive Director
  – Global Connections
  – jgeorge@globalconnectionsbg.org
  – (419) 494-3077
• Background art provided by Richard Haynes, titled “Migrant Workers” from http://seacoastnh.com/artists/haynes/migrantworkers.html


• Green, P.E. (Spring, 2003). The Undocumented: Educating the Children of Migrant Workers in America. (27), 51 – 71.


• Velasquez, L.C. (Summer, 1996). *Voices from the fields: Community based migrant education.* (70), 27-35.