The National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) would like to wish you all a very happy new year and to share our mission and the current services available for your use as you start your work in 2004.

Established in 1974 the NCFH is a private, not-for-profit corporation located in Buda, Texas whose mission is “to improve the health status of farmworker families through appropriate application of human, technical, and information resources.” NCFH’s programs and services, in support of our mission, are divided into three broad categories:

- Leadership Development and Training
- Network Development and Expansion
- Network Support

Leadership Development and Training

The Leadership Development and Training Center has been created with the goal of increasing the knowledge, skills and leadership abilities of current and future MHC staff and board members. It offers training programs designed to develop migrant specific expertise in the areas of:

- Health Center Governance
- Health Center Management
- Migrant Health Orientation and Training
- Program Development, including the Cultivando La Salud Series

The Center provides the following services:

- Leadership training seminars
- Conferences and workshops, including the Midwest Farmworker Stream Forum
- On-site consultation and facilitation
- These services are available on a fee-for-service basis. Fee discounts and scholarships are available to Migrant Health Centers on a negotiated basis.

Network Development and Expansion

NCFH actively works with the network of migrant and community health centers and other healthcare providers to increase access to primary and specialty care for farmworkers as they work and travel across the country. The goals of this endeavor are to:

- Develop and sustain collaborative working relationships at the national, state and local levels in order to advocate for implementation of policies and financial and technical resources in support of migrant health, and
- To provide access to a cadre of health professionals who will provide farmworkers with cost effective health care services through NCFH’s Call For Health Program.

Network Support

In support of MHCs, private providers, individuals and organizations serving farmworkers and their families, NCFH provides a comprehensive package of information services to the MHC network and other providers that will enhance their ability to provide primary care services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. NCFH information services include:

- Resource Center
- Library Collection
- Migrant Health Newsline
- Farmworker News
- Technical Assistance

To learn more about NCFH and its services please call us (512) 312-2700 or visit our website at www.ncfh.org.
As medical anthropologists, we focus on describing the logic of how cultures work, especially with respect to health beliefs and practices. The Idaho State University (ISU) Salsa Aerobics program is a good example of how promotora (lay health promoter/educator) programs can be integrated into on-going, effective community-based health education and research projects. The Salsa Aerobics program is an integrated exercise and health education program for the Spanish speaking farmworker communities in South East (SE) Idaho. Through its implementation, we have learned how easily cultural differences can lead to simple misunderstandings that can jeopardize even the most seemingly benign of community interventions. However, it has taught us how these cultural differences can be used to strengthen a program, once they are identified and understood.

Initiated in January 2003, as one of ISU’s Hispanic Health Projects, the health-intervention Salsa Aerobics is a combination of demanding aerobics, salsa dance steps and culturally appropriate health education — all done in Spanish. With the help of one of our ISU students, Deb Mitchell, a certified aerobics instructor and a couple of our promotoras, Patricia Torres and Silvia Hererra, we started providing aerobics classes five days a week at a local school gym.

The initial success was overwhelming; twenty or thirty farmworker women showed up for each class and everyone was having a great time. The only problem was that the women brought their young kids with them. The kids delighted in jumping off the weight machines to the beat of the salsa music and the moms were pleased to be able to participate in the classes. Soon we had the teachers and the school principal calling and complaining that the kids were being disruptive and we’d have to give back the room; they were ready to shut us down. The promotoras told us that the women said that if the kids couldn’t come, neither would they. After much consternation, we found volunteers to work with the kids. Then there were complaints that the classes didn’t start on time and that the women were hanging out long after the classes were over. The promotoras pointed out that the women wait until everyone is there to start as a sign of courtesy and respect — something lacking in the daily lives of many of these women. After class, community women stay to talk to the promotoras about health problems, problems with their adolescent kids and situations of domestic abuse and violence. The classes now go as long as the promotoras want them to and they start when everyone is there. We are all learning together.

We believe that the promotora program at the Hispanic Health Projects, Department of Anthropology of ISU, has enjoyed the success that it has because we started out doing hundreds of interviews that primarily involved listening to the Mexican farmworkers living in the communities where we wanted to do research and improve the quality of medical care available for Spanish speaking individuals. ISU faculty and graduate students working together with the promotoras at the Hispanic Health Projects completed qualitative research projects on such things as perceptions of pesticide dangers, mental health issues, domestic violence, and health care seeking strategies. The studies are important, but so too are the daily interactions between members of the Spanish speaking farmworker community and the faculty and students at our university. It’s through these interactions that we learn the logic of the culture and why people do what they do.

The process of starting our community-based programs with ethnographic research methods allowed us the opportunity to become accepted within the social space of the Hispanic population in these small, rural communities. We came in as listeners and developed the reputation of being a conduit for the community rather than gaining a reputation as being an outside organization that comes in and tells people they need health education. It is the day in and day out in-home health education visits that the promotoras make, and programs like Salsa Aerobics that show the communities that we are dedicated to making a difference through our research. The in-home visits (we now have continued on page 3
over 200 families on our list of regular visits) and the aerobics are tangible evidence for the community that we do our best to walk the walk.

Part of the initial research that established the Hispanic Health Program was based in the rural sending communities of Guanajuato, Mexico. This gave us a good foundation for understanding the conditions that people lived in before coming to the US or while they were traveling between the US and Mexico. It also helped us to establish key contacts within both communities. This would not have happened had we not taken the time to learn about both communities.

The results of being viewed as accepted sources of information are clear. Promotoras are invited into homes to provide health education, with the education sessions lasting approximately two hours. To be invited into a home for this length of time reflects the establishment of trust. Promotoras within our program see the real family dynamics, and are trusted with information about family and community issues of great importance. Participants in our program feel they can call promotoras and ask for assistance and they do, at all hours of the day and night. This is extremely important to this underserved, comparatively isolated community of agricultural workers. The length of follow-up time spent with each participant varies from one to 40 or 50 hours.

Because the promotoras belong to the community, they are culturally accepted and are an integral part of the operating community network. This network provides informal assistance to friends, neighbors and newcomers. It is this network that teaches us so much about how this Mexican migrant culture works, how confianza (trust) and inter-familial networks of obligations and giving are a strength. It also teaches how through respect and the reinforcement of existing inter-personal networks we can move ahead in providing better health care services to these farm-worker communities in SE Idaho.

We would like to thank: Harms Family Medical Clinic, Judy Holmes and everyone at the Southeastern District Health Department, Kris Babb, RN NP Harms Clinic, Nancy Beckham, RN NP PhD and Susan Steiner, RN NP Idaho State University, the promotoras Silvia Hererra, Patricia Torres, Deb Mitchell, Elizabeth Pedroza, Leticia Pedroza, Joseph Stahlman, Peter Davis, Aleida Solis and Heather Schaper. The kid-watchers Melissa Bell and Mary Bingham, Department of Education, ISU. Mimi Hartman, Idaho Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. Beth Stamm and Neill Piland, Institute of Rural Health, ISU. Past ISU faculty involved in the HHP Teri Hall, Ann Oakes and Gesine Hearn and everyone else who has worked at the HHP, mil gracias.

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2004 Migrant Health Scholarship

Need money for college? The National Center for Farmworker Health is currently accepting applications for the 2004 annual Migrant Health Scholarship Award. This award is presented to health center staff in the amount of $500 - $1,000 per individual. Applicants should be clinical or administrative staff members who desire to further their education or student interns working on or entering a curriculum relevant to migrant health.

Did you answer “YES” to any of the above questions? Then contact NCFH at 512.312.2700 for an application. Please encourage all interns and health center staff to apply today and don’t forget the application deadline is March 31, 2004.
The 16th Annual East Coast Migrant Stream Forum, Generaciones: Building a Healthy Future for all Generations, hosted by the North Carolina Primary Health Care Association (NCPHCA), was held October 23-25, 2003 in Tarrytown, New York. Located in the Hudson River Valley, one of New York’s major agricultural regions, there was no better location for this year’s premier gathering of migrant health providers.

The three-day Forum assembled more than 300 professionals from multiple migrant health disciplines for continuing education and networking opportunities aimed at enhancing health care delivery to migrant and seasonal farmworkers on the east coast. Seven intensive and thirty-six interactive workshops were offered by experts including members of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) team, in six key areas. Keeping in stride with the President’s Initiative, many workshops provided skills building and leadership insights to migrant health providers in their expansion efforts. New to the Forum were a fitness component and two bi-national workshops that brought together Mexican national speakers and their US counterparts to describe innovative cross border partnerships to improve farmworkers’ health.

As host to the National Advisory Council on Migrant Health, this year’s Forum also offered participants a unique pre-conference opportunity to attend the Council’s business meeting and public hearing held in conjunction with the Forum. At the public hearing, participants heard testimony from farmworkers, health care providers, and advocates regarding matters affecting farmworkers’ health, including lack of health care coverage, access barriers, continuity of care issues, and the migration experience.

The Forum began on Thursday afternoon with intensive training on: 1) Building Lay Health Promotion Programs: Steps to Success! 2) Coordinating Farmworker Health Outreach Programs and 3) Using Ergonomics in the Prevention and Treatment of Occupational Injuries among Farmworkers. In addition, an excursion to Hudson River Community Health’s Migrant Health Center in New Paltz, NY and Breezy Hill Orchard and Cider Mill in Clinton Corners, NY was also offered, to learn about the area’s agricultural industry, migrant labor force, and available health services.

The second day of the conference began with an early morning Yoga class by Yogafit certified instructor Sonya Bruton. Following the Yoga class, the morning offered four concurrent intensive educational sessions: 1) Current Immigration Policy and Farmworkers 2) Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS Among Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in the Eastern Stream 3) Situational Leadership: A Model for Effective Supervision and Delegation and 4) Arts: Providing a Voice for Farmworkers.

The Forum’s official opening took place that afternoon with a warm conference welcome by NCPHCA’s Executive Director, Sonya J. Bruton and Stephanie A. Triantafillou, Migrant Health Specialist and Planning Committee Chair. An enthusiastic welcome to New York State followed by Shelia Kee, Chief Executive Officer, Community Health Care Association of New York State, along with local Hudson Valley greetings from Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health, Westchester County Department of Health, and Anne Nolon, Chief Executive Officer, Hudson River Community Health. Ms. Nolon along with her staff, played a key role in planning this year’s Forum. The opening plenary also featured Benjamin Flores, Director of the Office of Minority and Special Populations, Bureau of Primary Health Care, who provided an overview and update on the President’s Health Center Initiative. Christina Martinez-Sahagún, Vice Chair of the National Advisory Council on Migrant Health, offered a synopsis of the Council’s current priorities and major activities. Rounding out the plenary, attendees viewed the recently released video “Coming Up on the Season: Migrant Farmworkers in the Northeast,” part of a traveling museum exhibit touring the Northeast. Herbert Engman, Director, Cornell Migrant Program, provided a few words on how the exhibit was researched, designed, and funded, where it is appearing, and why it is important to farmworkers.

Following a series of afternoon workshops, Friday came to a close at an off-site welcome reception, held at Shadowbrook, an historic 19th century estate, sponsored by Hudson River Community Health, Finger Lakes Migrant Health Care Project, and Oak Orchard Community Health Center. Attendees enjoyed edibles prepared by Dan Barber, one of New York City’s finest chefs, whose cuisine features ingredients locally grown and produced in the Hudson Valley.

The Forum’s final day began with a Cardio
Funk class for the early risers followed by breakfast where several groups including researchers and migrant health clinicians met to network. After breakfast, John Ruiz, Assistant Director of Systems Development and Policy Administration, National Association of Community Health Centers, Inc., delivered an informative program and policy update. A full day of training sessions followed exposing participants to cutting-edge research, best practices, the latest migrant health products and services, and engaged colleagues in thoughtful dialogue on a variety of topics relevant to migrant health. Lunch involved a short program to celebrate Migrant Health Promotion’s twentieth anniversary and allowed two lay health promoters a chance to share their stories and experiences being farmworkers, health educators, and advocates in their communities. A closing performance coordinated by workshop presenters José Blanco and Raúl Vásquez-López got everyone’s creative juices flowing through poetry, songs, puppetry, and theater all created and performed by participants of an earlier workshop intensive that demonstrated the use of artistic expression to communicate health information within farmworker communities.

Throughout the Forum, participants also had an opportunity to explore an exhibit hall featuring farmworker health resources, materials, products, and services that support Community/Migrant Health Centers, Migrant Health Programs and other agencies serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Alongside the exhibitors were a series of research posters highlighting current research efforts on the East Coast and across the country that explored different aspects of farmworkers’ health. Also on display was a captivating black and white photography exhibit, *Unseen America*, presented by Hudson River Community Health, Peekskill, NY. The exhibit, part of a bi-national health outreach project, demonstrated the use of photography to document the lives of sending and receiving migrant communities in La Cienega, Oaxaca, Mexico and Poughkeepsie, New York.

The 16th Annual East Coast Migrant Stream Forum came to a close on Saturday evening with an awards dinner and dance where participants joined NCPHCA in celebrating twenty-five years of service to Community and Migrant Health Centers. To recognize its migrant health legacy, NCPHCA featured the legacies of others through the unveiling of the NCPHCA Steve Shore Community Catalyst Award. This annual award, named after NCPHCA’s second Executive Director, under whose leadership NCPHCA initiated several important migrant health activities including the East Coast Migrant Stream Forum, honors an individual or agency from the Forum’s host state whose work has incited positive change in the health and wellness of the farmworker community. It was an honor to have Steve Shore present to bestow this year’s first award upon Hudson River Community Health. Hudson River Community Health chose to honor their own set of local community leaders and programs with the New York Friends of Farmworkers Awards. Recipients were: Richard Witt, Rural and Migrant Ministry; Wilson Augustave, Finger Lakes Migrant Health Care Project, El Centro Independiente de Trabajadores Agrícolas, and the Cornell Migrant Health Program. In keeping with East Coast tradition, Farmworker Health Services, Inc. presented the 2003 Cecilia B. Abhold Award to Linda Flake, President and CEO, who accepted the award on behalf of Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers, Hammonton, New Jersey. The closing celebration concluded with dancing to the Caribbean-Latin rhythms of New York City’s Sonido Costeño.

NCPHCA invites you to attend the 17th Annual East Coast Migrant Stream Forum to take place October 21-23, 2004 in beautiful St. Petersburg, Florida. For more information, please visit [www.ncphca.org](http://www.ncphca.org) or call (919) 469-5701.

The Forum featured a total of thirty-six interactive and educational workshops on a variety of timely topics relevant to the health of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.
Finding up to date information on specific migrant health topics can be very difficult. Research is often limited, very old, or non-existent and gathering this information can be extremely overwhelming and time consuming. Knowing this, the National Center for Farmworker Health has put together two separate resources to assist individuals in accessing the newest and most reliable information on different migrant health issues.

First, NCFH has seven migrant health fact sheets for individuals seeking a quick and easy summary of statistics and facts over different migrant health related issues. Five of the fact sheets are updated versions of existing fact sheets and include the following topics: HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Maternal Child Health, Oral Health, and a summary of general information entitled Facts About Farmworkers. In addition to the five updated fact sheets, NCFH has created two new fact sheets on the subjects of Occupational Health and Demographics. The Occupational Health Fact Sheet is a basic overview of the occupational health status of farmworkers. The Demographic fact sheet summarizes the most current National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) information and contains a chart that gives the number of farmworkers and dependents in each state based on the most current enumeration studies.

When possible, the fact sheets also make comparisons between rates of disease, injury, or illness within the general population to those of farmworkers. In addition, each fact sheet contains a bibliography of resources to facilitate the citation of the information for grant and/or research purposes. The fact sheets are available in hard copy and for viewing on-line at our website at www.ncfh.org. To access them simply click on the “Fact Sheets About Farmworkers” icon on the left hand side of our home page.

The second resource now available through the NCFH Resource Center is the migrant health research packets. Using the resources available in our migrant health library, NCFH has put together a collection of the most up to date and widely requested articles and reports on the following subjects: Mental Health, HIV/AIDS, Occupational Safety, Oral Health, Demographics, Cancer, Diabetes, Children’s Health, and Access to Care. All packets are plastic bound with a table of contents and a brief introduction to each topic. The reports range from studies published in popular journals to educational curriculums to unpublished thesis papers. Each packet contains anywhere from ten to twenty reports, depending on availability of information on that specific topic. New articles and studies are added to the packets as they become available. Many of the articles contained in each packet will also be available electronically either for downloading or by e-mail.

You can obtain a list of the materials available in each packet, including which ones are available electronically by e-mailing Jennifer Grotta at grota@ncfh.org.

Hard copies of both the migrant health fact sheet and the research packets can be obtained free of charge from the NCFH Resource Center. Shipping costs will be added to bulk orders (requests for 10 or more) of the research packets. Orders can be placed either on-line via our Resource Center Order Form or by phone at 512-312-5463. If you have any questions regarding these or any other resources, or would like to submit requests for other migrant health information, please contact Josh Shepherd at the National Center for Farmworker Health at shepherd@ncfh.org.
Stories From Call for Health

The following case is provided by the Call for Health Program in an effort to share with Migrant Health Newsline Readers actual stories of farmworkers who have sought, or are currently seeking, help through the program.

Ruben’s Story

By Moraima Durán, Call for Health Specialist

In June of 2003, Call for Health was contacted by a New Mexico farmworker woman, named Anna, regarding her friend and fellow farmworker Ruben. In February of 2003, Ruben had been diagnosed with prostate cancer, and was informed that he would need surgery. According to Anna, fear in knowing he could not afford the surgery was keeping 55 year-old Ruben from seeking further assistance.

In support of Ruben and understanding his fears, financial as well as emotional, and knowing he would probably not go back to the doctor’s office by himself, she offered to go with him. Her goal in going with him was to attain more information on his condition and ask about fees so that she could help Ruben get the surgery he needed. The cost of the surgery was $2,500.00, but knowing that Ruben could not afford this fee, the doctor offered him a reduced fee of $640.00. The doctor also informed them that Ruben would still have to make financial arrangements with the hospital and the anesthesiologist. Overwhelmed, and wanting to help Ruben secure the health care he needed, Anna contacted Call for Health.

Call For Health was able to provide Ruben with reassurance and support by offering to make all the phone calls and negotiate the fees with the hospital and anesthesiologist for him. Call for Health provided a $300 deposit towards the surgery, and arranged with the doctor for a payment plan to be set up for Ruben; negotiated a Medicaid rate with the anesthesiologist and obtained information from the hospital for him on how to apply for patient assistance for his surgery. Anna took Ruben to the hospital, helped him with the application process and a surgery date was set.

Editor’s note: Ruben was very fortunate to have a friend like Anna who took it upon herself to help him. If it had not been for her, Ruben may not have received the medical attention he required. Much like a friend, the Call for Health Program extends its support to those in greatest need. We invite you to be a “friend” of a farmworker family by donating to the Call for Health Fund. The Call for Health Program receives assistance through generous donations from both individuals and organizations across the country. Its continued success depends greatly on those individuals who read these stories and decide to make a difference. If you would like to learn more about the program, or to provide a contribution please call (512)312-2700 or visit our website at www.ncfh.org.

CALL FOR HEALTH

America’s Voice for Farmworker Health — A Free Phone Call Away.

Information on Health Services for Farmworkers

Una Voz Para la Salud — Con Solo Llamar... y es Gratis

Información de Servicios de Salud para los Trabajadores del Campo

9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Hora del Centro/Central Time

1-800-377-9968
New Pesticide Poisoning Diagnostic Tool Available Online

The Pesticide Action Network of North America (PANNA) recently launched its Pesticide Poisoning Diagnostic Tool, available for free at: www.pesticideinfo.org. This new internet tool is designed to help healthcare professionals and others recognize, diagnose and report pesticide-related illnesses. The database currently provides symptoms, first aid and treatment-related information for about 1900 pesticides. Most importantly, the tool allows users to search for possible pesticide poisoning agents by entering a variety of relevant information that may be available to them. One can search by chemical or product name, pesticide use type, geographic location, and crop or application site. In addition, a health care provider (or other user) can conduct a search by entering observed symptoms. This online resource also provides reporting information (legal requirements, reporting instructions and official reporting contacts) for all 50 states. County-level information is provided for California and Florida. For more information contact Margaret Reeves at mreeves@panna.org.

A workshop on the Pesticide Poisoning Diagnostic Tool will take place at the Western Migrant Stream Forum in Seattle, WA (January 30-February 1). Contact Anne Powell at apowell@nwcpca.org for details, or visit www.nwcpca.org for a registration brochure.