

Learning English as a Second Language

Migrant Worker Outreach, with the support of Hammonton Rotary Club and other area organizations, has offered ESL classes at migrant camps since 2010. Volunteers come out to help teach English two or three nights a week during the blueberry harvest in June and July. Our classes rotate among different migrant camps in the Hammonton NJ area.

On the following pages, find photos and articles, most of which are reprinted from our journals.



Volunteer Kathy Coulibaly teaching in yard of local motel (Summer 2016)
Photo by Will Coulibaly



Volunteer Copelia Morales (Summer 2013) Photo by Gary Moore



Volunteer Hannah Ehlenfeldt leads an English class at a migrant camp in NJ.

English as a Second Language (ESL) class to be offered again

Excerpted from our Summer 2013 Migrant Worker Journal

During the 2012 blueberry harvest, both Haitian students and Hispanic students participated in an ESL class taught by volunteer, Hannah Ehlenfeldt. When Hannah arrived at the camp three nights a week, she unpacked folding chairs and teaching materials from the trunk of her car. Additional seating was available at a picnic table under a shady tree. Some adult students were accompanied by their children.

Learning activities focused on life skills communication. Students practiced what to say in imaginary scenes such as a visit to the post office or grocery store, or when asking directions.

This summer Haitian Migrant Worker Outreach (HMWO) will once again offer ESL classes at one or more migrant camps in southern New Jersey. At the conclusion of the blueberry harvest, ESL students who have completed a certain number of class hours will receive dictionaries. Hammonton Rotary will provide Haitian Creole-English dictionaries, for Haitian students. HMWO has been collecting Spanish-English dictionaries, for Hispanic students.



Volunteer Nicholas Faubert (standing) Summer 2013



Reubenson Charles, 17, FL (2015)



English as a Second Language Class (Summer 2014)

Teen migrant worker helps teach ESL at farm labor camp

Articles on this page and the following page are excerpted from our Summer 2015 Migrant Teen Journal

Migrant Worker Outreach volunteer, Reubenson Charles, pictured above, worked long hours in the field before coming on duty to assist with an English as a Second Language (ESL) class. Like the adult students, he had to scramble to have time to shower, change and eat before class. He helped with set up and tear down of folding chairs and tables. During class, he assisted with demonstrating actions and dialogues, and with distributing materials.

When asked about his experience assisting with the ESL class, Reubenson said, “The class was really interested in learning; they were eager to learn as much as they could. If someone was reading aloud and pronounced something wrong, the students would correct each other and everyone would laugh.”

Reubenson's courteous manner and conscientious efforts helped put the adult students at ease. His ability to interpret both during class, and in conversations outside class, was a great help. Reubenson's involvement in the ESL night class was appreciated by the teacher, Kathy Vermeeren, and by the students. Reubenson lives in Florida, where he will begin his senior year of high school in the fall.



Volunteers Alexis Hickey Perna (center) and Mandy Lin (right), Summer 2016

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Kathy Vermeeren



Brittany Lare and Karl Pietrzak



Jean and Ken Hoffner

Kathy Vermeeren returns this summer to teach English at NJ farm labor camp

Migrant Worker Outreach volunteer, Kathy Vermeeren, (above, left) taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in the summer of 2014, and is returning this year to teach again. Kathy is now also serving as Assistant Director for MWO, and as Coordinator of Youth Volunteers.

Last summer Kathy arrived early for every class, to touch base with her adult students. As she unpacked teaching supplies from her car, other volunteers set up folding chairs and tables and easels. When class started, students were on their feet much of the time, enthusiastically acting out scenes with practice dialogues and sometimes with props.

Kathy told the Migrant Teen Journal, “I enjoyed picking up some Haitian Creole while teaching the ESL class, and I had as much fun as the students. They made me feel so welcome! I always looked forward to making my way through the fields, driving up to the migrant camp.”

Because of her extensive experience as a French teacher, and as a continuing student of French, Kathy was able to converse fluently with those students in the ESL class who were also French speakers. Volunteer Reubenson Charles served as a teaching assistant and Haitian Creole interpreter.

Instruction and activities continued after sunset, often with the use of flashlights to see by. After class, when the tables, chairs, and supplies had been packed up, Kathy was surrounded by students. During this after-class time, late into the evening, she answered their questions about English, and discussed topics including immigration and family needs. Kathy's heartfelt concern for her students was appreciated by all. We are very pleased to have her returning in an increased capacity.



Volunteers Brendan Honick (standing, center) and Kathy Vermeeren (right)
Summer 2016

English Classes, Summer 2017



Volunteers Jessica Stewart (standing) and Jean Nicholson (sitting, left) are getting acquainted with their students.



Volunteer Kathy Vermeeren gets the early bird students started.