

# History – Annual Highlights



## History of Migrant Worker Outreach

### 2010 Highlights

Migrant Worker Outreach (MWO), originally known as Haitian Migrant Worker Outreach, was founded in 2010, by Dory Dickson and Mandaly Louis-Charles. Dickson conducted an English as a Second Language (ESL) class at a migrant camp in Hammonton. Louis-Charles served as a consultant for the ESL class. Two local churches donated clothing and non-perishable food for MWO to distribute.

### 2011 Highlights

Five migrant camps were visited by Migrant Worker Outreach. Several area churches donated clothing and non-perishable food. We distributed baskets of books for adults and children.

We published our first journal in separate Haitian Creole and English editions: *The Summer 2011 Haitian Migrant Worker Journal*. A feature story on page three was titled, “Young Haitian experiences camp life, an interview with a former migrant worker.” We published our first dual language *Directory for Haitian Migrant Workers*. The directory included entries for area agencies, businesses, the local hospital and health clinic, plus public transportation schedules and information about local parks. \*Both the journals and the directory were distributed free at migrant camps and were available to read at Hammonton Library.

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### 2012 Highlights

Our outreach expanded to a total of twelve migrant camps.

Volunteer Hannah Ehlenfeldt, a then recent graduate of St. Olaf College, taught English as a Second Language (ESL) to both Haitian and Hispanic students at Variety Farms, Inc.

We published the second edition of *Haitian Migrant Worker Journal* and the first edition of *Latino Migrant Worker Journal*. Both journals included a pull-out section of Children's Pages with a story, "The Migrant Camp Twins and the Visitor," illustrated by Claude Charles of Miami, FL. Co-founder, Mandaly Louis-Charles translated the Haitian journal and the Children's Pages. Carmen Rodriguez and Hannah Ehlenfeldt translated the Latino journal, and the Children's Pages, with final Spanish editing of the Children's pages done by Raynaldo Munoz and Ruben Rivera.

In June, co-founder Mandaly Charles-Louis and her brother Claude Charles brought their families up from Florida to visit several migrant camps in the Hammonton area.

Hammonton Art Center hosted an Art Night for migrant workers. Participants received gift bags of art supplies. Following an oil painting lesson conducted by Clifford Maddox, refreshments were served. Migrant Worker Outreach provided transportation.

Women at a migrant camp in Burlington County participated in a Story-telling Night led by Suzanne Gili-Post. Light refreshments were served. A bilingual migrant worker interpreted Gili-Post's story into Haitian Creole for the women at the camp. She then translated stories shared by the migrant workers into English, for the visitors.



## 2013 Highlights

Our outreach doubled to 24 migrant camps.

Our English as a Second Language (ESL) program moved to Glossy Fruit farms, where the class for Haitians was taught by volunteer Nicholas Faubert and the class for Hispanics was taught by volunteer Copelia Morales, current board member. Hammonton Rotary initiated an annual tradition of purchasing Haitian Creole/English dictionaries for the Haitian class. Migrant Worker Outreach provided Spanish/English dictionaries for the Hispanic class.

We published the journals for Haitian migrant workers and for Hispanic migrant workers. Translations for the Haitian journal were done by Mandaly Louis-Charles. Translations for the Hispanic journal were done by Copelia Morales, Kim Patrizio, and Erica Higgman.

Hammonton Art Center sponsored their second Art Night for migrant workers. Again, refreshments were served following a painting activity introduced by Clifford Maddox. Migrant Worker Outreach provided transportation.

MWO organized art activities for children at two camps. Older youth at the camps helped set up the art activity and assisted younger children.

Suzanne Gili-Post conducted the second Women's Story-telling Night at a migrant camp. Refreshments were provided by Migrant Worker Outreach. Volunteer Nicholas Faubert interpreted for both participants and visitors.

A free book give-away was held at Hammonton Walmart parking lot on a very hot afternoon.

Migrant youth participated in a field trip to visit Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, to attend an African-Caribbean Dance Program produced by the Chester Children's Chorus. Migrant Worker Outreach provided transportation and refreshments.

Red Lion Faith Chapel began a toiletry gift bag project, supplying gift bags for over forty migrant workers. The gift bags were distributed at one camp.

In the fall of 2013, Migrant Worker Outreach became a Community Partner with Stockton College, now Stockton University.



### 2014 Highlights

Our outreach stabilized at 25-30 camps, the largest number of camps we had time to visit during the six to seven week harvest.

Kathy Vermeeren, (St. Augustine Preparatory School faculty member) taught an English as a Second Language (ESL) class for both Haitian and Hispanic students at Variety Farms, Inc. Once again, Hammonton Rotary provided Haitian Creole/English dictionaries and MWO provided Spanish-English dictionaries.

We published three journals, one for Haitian adults and one for Hispanic adults, plus the premiere edition of *Migrant Teen Journal*, for Haitian and Haitian American youth. Translations for the Haitian journals were done by Mandaly Louis-Charles. Translations for the Hispanic journal were done by Copelia Morales and Yubi Peña (both current Board Members.)

In July, board member Dr. Supreme Dorvil, whose interview was featured in the premiere edition of *Migrant Teen Journal*, came up from Florida to visit our ESL class.

Migrant youth were guests of Simeone Automotive Museum in Philadelphia. MWO provided transportation. Refreshments were provided by Hammonton Primo Hoagie shop.

MWO organized trips to Hammonton Library, for older youth who wanted to use the computers there. Younger children attended an entertaining science program at the library.

A story-telling activity for children was conducted at one camp. Children made paper bag costumes and acted out a skit. Refreshments were served. Picture books and toys were distributed. \*Baskets of books were distributed later at several camps.

Haitian Baptist Church of Willingboro, women's group joined our toiletry gift bag project, adding to the gift bags assembled by Red Lion Faith Chapel. The gift bags were distributed at several camps.



## 2015 Highlights

At Glossy Fruit Farms, our ESL class was taught by returning volunteer Kathy Vermeeren. Hammonton Rotary provided Haitian Creole/English dictionaries for Haitian students.

We published the Migrant Teen Journal (for Haitian youth) which was distributed to migrant workers of all ages. Mandaly Louis-Charles provided translations.



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Mandaly Louis-Charles, co-founder of Migrant Worker Outreach, came up from Florida for her second summer in a row, to visit during the blueberry harvest. She brought her daughter, Kinou, who took photographs for our journals. Mandaly also brought her bongo drum and complimentary cd's of *Chante Alfabèt Kreyòl La (Haitian Creole Alphabet Song)* which she created in collaboration with MIT Linguistics Professor, Michel DeGraff.

Children from one camp participated in a field trip to visit the playground at Hammonton Lake Park.

Two groups of older youth were guests of Simeone Automotive Museum. MWO provided transportation. Refreshments were provided compliments of Hammonton ShopRite.

Two groups of youth were guests of Hammonton Family Success Center for a tour of the new facility where they tried out various games and activities. Afterward, they visited Hammonton Lake Park.

Red Lion Faith Chapel and Haitian Baptist Church of Willingboro continued the toiletry gift bag project, preparing over 100 gift bags.

We co-sponsored our first **Migrant Teen Conference** with Stockton University, Kramer Hall. Mandaly Louis-Charles, our co-founder, gave an interactive presentation by Skype, about our Migrant Teen Journal. Stockton University provided cold drinks and lots of pizza. MWO provided transportation.

We started posting on our first FaceBook pages: (1) Migrant Worker Outreach of South Jersey, and (2) Migrant Teen Journal.

## 2016 Highlights

In April we held our inaugural board meeting at Hammonton Library.



Returning for her third summer, volunteer Kathy Vermeeren taught our English as a Second Language (ESL) class for Haitians at Gossy Fruit Farms. The ESL class for Hispanics was taught by volunteers Alexis Hickey-Perna and Mandy Lin. A third ESL class (for Haitian women) was taught at a separate location by volunteer Kathy Coulibaly. Once again, Hammonton Rotary provided Haitian Creole/English dictionaries for Haitian students and Migrant Worker Outreach provided Spanish/English dictionaries for Hispanic students.

Musician Dave Stever, from Pennsylvania, visited the Glossy Fruit ESL classes with a program of songs including a traditional Haitian number, *Haiti Chérie (My Beloved Haiti.)* On another class night, teacher Kathy Vermeeren treated the students to home made blueberry ice-cream from Royal Crown.

We published Migrant Teen Journal (for Haitians) and the premiere edition of Latino Migrant Teen Journal. Emmanuelle Johnson and Mandaly Louis-Charles provided translations for the Haitian journal. Board member Corina Mendoza provided translations for the Latino journal.

Students in the Hammonton High School Art Club outdid themselves preparing 66 art kits for migrant youth. Students, staff, and faculty donated art supplies for the kits. Club members decorated heavy-duty cardboard boxes with artistic collages and packed the boxes with art supplies. The art kits were distributed to children at several camps. Migrant youth and teen volunteers were guests of the Simeone Automotive Museum. MWO provided transportation. ShopRite of Hammonton provided refreshments.

Red Lion Faith Chapel continued the toiletry gift bag project. MWO volunteers also assembled gift bags, with items donated by individuals and by Wyndham Skyline Tower, of Atlantic City.

We started posting on an additional FaceBook page: Latino Migrant Teen Journal.

## 2017 Highlights

Returning for a fourth summer, volunteer Kathy Vermeeren taught our English as a Second Language (ESL) class for Haitians at Glossy Fruit Farms. The ESL class for Hispanics was taught by Jessica Stewart, Kathy Ori, Jean Nicholson, and Michelle Martin, with occasional assistance from Mary Beth Melton, Euletta Gordon and Kirenia Moreira Campbell.



We rolled out a modest nutrition program for pregnant migrant workers. Fresh produce was donated by Faith Presbyterian Church's Community Garden of Medford. Bread and other bakery products were donated by Panera Bread of Cherry Hill. First United Methodist Church of Hammonton provided bags of rice and beans. Individual donors provided occasional treats including peanut butter crackers and peanut brittle. Baby pajamas and other donated nursery items were distributed along with the weekly deliveries of food. Each mother-to-be was given enough bread and produce to share with a few friends.

Groups of youth enjoyed visiting Hammonton Airport, Rita's Water Ice, Hammonton Lake Park, and Hammonton Library.

An art night was enjoyed by young children at one camp. Older youth at the camp assisted. Children received bags of donated art supplies. Cold drinks were donated by CommUNITY of South Jersey Philadelphia.

CommUNITY SJP donated very generously to our toiletry and laundry gift bag project, as did Wyndham Skyline Tower of Atlantic City, and Red Lion Faith Chapel. Over 2,000 gift bags were distributed at numerous camps. Three hundred Zika prevention kits were assembled with items provided by NJ Department of Health, Office of Primary Care and Rural Health. The Zika prevention kits were distributed to workers traveling back and forth from areas where Zika was reported.

We continue to visit 25-30 migrant camps each summer, including one camp in Camden County, six camps in Burlington County, and two dozen or more camps in Atlantic County. Some of the Atlantic County camps do not receive a visit from us every year. We rotate which camps get the first visits and towards the end of the season we arrive at some camps only to find workers have already departed for jobs in Maine and Michigan where the blueberries ripen later than in South Jersey.

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\*In 2018

We continue striving to provide the small comforts that welcome farmworkers.

We welcome you to New Jersey!

Nou akeyi nou nan Nouvo Jersey!

¡Te damos la bienvenida a Nueva Jersey!

