

Telamon—Virginia

August 2011

Empowering Individuals, Improving Communities

First Edition

Message from the State Director Sharon Saldarriaga

We are pleased to report that our National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor was approved. This year, we have expanded the service delivery area for this program to include migrant and seasonal farmworkers residing in the Tidewater area. We are excited about our August NFJP staff meeting that we are coordinating with Virginia's State Monitor Advocate, Michelle Abraham. Telamon staff, Farm Labor Specialists, and VEC Office Managers will spend one day together discussing better ways to partner for enhanced services to farmworkers.

On the housing front, our On-farm Labor Housing services were warmly received by the agricultural growers we

(Continued on page 3)

In this issue:

Youth Visit Picasso Exhibit.....	1
Open House in Chatham	2
Emergency Home Loan Program	2
Pursuing a Dream	3
Belle Haven Sponsors Campers ..	3
Housing Update	4
Support Higher Education.....	4

Youth Visit Picasso Exhibit



By Sara Lopez
Case Manager, Montross

With funding from the Theodore H. Barth Foundation, Inc., our Montross office provided a wonderful cultural enrichment opportunity for sixteen young adults from two local high schools. We took the kids on a bus to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond to see the exhibit *Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée National Picasso, Paris*. It was a unique opportunity – the exhibit is now showing only in Paris! There were 176 pieces available for viewing that included paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures from all the artist's periods. It was especially exciting because this was the first

time Westmoreland and Richmond County students were able to join together for a trip.

After seeing the fine pieces of art, we went to Emilio's for tapas and paella. This is an authentic Spanish cuisine restaurant. We thoroughly enjoyed *albondigas de*

carne, *patatas Jonny*, *tortillas Españolas* and other tasty items selected by Emilio. The atmosphere and staff were great and Emilio himself spoke to the students about Spanish culture. To finish off the trip, Mrs. Donahue from Essex County High School treated us all for ice cream.

I want to sincerely thank all our great volunteers: Terri Leitem from Westmoreland County, Veronica Donahue from Essex County and Jill Vargas from Richmond County for contributing to the trip's success. Also, a special thanks to our driver, Ms. Atkins. Last but not least, thanks to Westmoreland County Department of Transportation for working with us and allowing us to rent a bus for this special day.

Open House in Chatham, Virginia



Left to right: Lynita Falls, Monica Jefferson, Diane Swift, Tytiana Dennis, Robin Roark.

By Lynita Falls
Housing Counselor, Chatham

After weeks of packing seventeen years of history in boxes, Telamon's Gretna office has relocated to the town of Chatham. Looking back, this housing office has helped tremendously to improve the quality of life for homeowners in the city of Danville, Pittsylvania County and the surrounding areas. This spring we accomplished an awesome milestone as our 500th client achieved homeownership.

As we unpack our history, we start a new chapter. By embracing change and readily adapting, we are meeting the challenges of the current housing market. On July 13th, we hosted an Open House at our newly opened Chatham location at 61 North Main Street. "The new location offers more visibility," said Robin Roark, Homeownership Project Manager. It also allows Telamon to be closer to its construction sites in

Pittsylvania and Danville. Since many of our clientele come from the city of Danville, it also allows us to be closer to the population we serve.

The Open House offered an opportunity for the community to celebrate with us and to learn more about what we have to offer. Our event sponsor, Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), generously contributed funds which allowed us to offer a catered barbeque lunch to the attendees. Many thanks are extended to VHDA for helping to make this day memorable. Reach Team member Monica Jefferson of VHDA presented our office with a resolution in recognition of housing-related accomplishments as Telamon Corporation celebrates 45 years of service.

Telamon will continue to offer pre-purchase, post-purchase, and foreclosure counseling services in our seven-county, two-city service area along Southside.

Our new contact information:

61 North Main Street
PO Box 287
Chatham, Virginia 24531

Tel: 434-688-4640

Fax: 434-432-0126

New Emergency Home Loan Program

By Lynita Falls
Housing Counselor, Chatham

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), NeighborWorks of America, and Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) unveiled a new program to assist homeowners who are behind on their mortgage. The Emergency Home Loan Program (EHLA) was released by a media blast at the beginning of July and all eligible homeowners were required to sign up for the assistance by July 27th, 2011. During the month of August 2011, eligible homeowners will be selected by lottery to receive assistance with their monthly mortgage obligation.

This program has the potential to assist a homeowner for up to two years with mortgage payments. The assistance up to a maximum of \$50,000 comes in the form of a non-interest-bearing forgivable loan. Good luck to all that signed up as we proceed forward through this lottery.

Pursuing a Dream

By Tania Gariepy



My name is Tania Gariepy and I am from Montreal, Canada. I have two kids and have been on the Eastern Shore for seven years. I met Jessica Bonniwell, Case Manager for Telamon Virginia in Exmore, while I was working in Folley Creek Aquafarms. I was frustrated with the job as it was very hard and I really wanted to work in the medical field. Jessica presented the program to me. After thinking about it for a while, I decided to enroll with Telamon.

After enrolling, I started attending Eastern Shore Community College in January 2011. I am studying to be a licensed practical nurse (LPN). This is one of the best decisions I have ever made. I love going to the college. I feel as if I am closer to reaching my career goal. I have received so much motivation from Jessica as well as from the Regional Manager, Dianne Arenas. They have always supported me during my college experience and it makes me feel so good to be a part of this program. I love filling out my weekly attendance forms and turning them in to my case manager because it makes me feel like I am involved not only in college, but also with Telamon as well. The whole education program that Telamon Corporation has is really a big help to me and my

children as it has also motivated my children to think about the importance of education. We do our homework together at the table each night and it makes me feel proud to show my children that no matter how old you are, it is never too late to make it happen! Telamon has given me so much self confidence!

A Big Thank You!

Dan Hess, through Harvesters of Hope, contacted Ed Rossmoore, Executive Director of Rural Family Development, to see how he could help farmworkers on the Eastern Shore. Mr. Rossmoore, whose organization is a delegate agency for Migrant Head Start (MHS), knew there was a need for food. Mr. Hess came up with 1000 lbs. of beans and rice, which he donated to MHS. Mr. Rossmoore then turned to Telamon Corporation whose office on the Shore serves the same farmworker families as MHS and whose Food Bank was sorely depleted, to ask if we could distribute the food. We eagerly said yes and wish to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Hess and Mr. Rossmoore for a great partnership.

State Director's Message

(Continued from page 1)

assisted. This program helps growers improve their on-farm labor housing. For more information on this program, contact:

Mayra Nickerson
804.355.4676
mnickerson@telamon.org

Belle Haven Office Sponsors Campers

In partnership with the Virginia Extension office, Telamon sponsored four farmworker youth through its Theodore H. Barth Foundation, Inc. funding to participate at 4-H Camp in Wakefield, Virginia from July 18th to July 22nd.



Alan Gomez Tinoco, age 9: *I want to... learn new things which I imagine will be unforgettable.*

Osiris Gomez Tinoco, age 11: *I too want to know what camping is about and to experience new things.*

Juan Gonzales Tinoco, age 10: *I also want to learn new things.*

Buster Fitchett, age, 10: *I have never been to camp before and I would like to get the chance to go. Also, my aunt went to 4-H camp... and she tells me some awesome stories. I would like to have stories to tell.*





W.I. Powell Site: Lot 19

Housing Update

By Lynita Falls
Housing Counselor, Chatham

After months in construction, the first phase consisting of three houses is complete in Dry Fork. These beautiful new construction homes are EarthCraft certified and are the first in Pittsylvania County to meet this standard.

EarthCraft houses offer the benefits of much lower utility cost (average of 30 percent), enhanced indoor air quality, increased comfort and reduced home maintenance requirements. Owners consistently agree that EarthCraft provides an excellent living experience.

All the homes feature: half-acre lots; laminate and ceramic flooring; three bedrooms, two baths; and universal design techniques for easier accessibility.

Telamon has broken ground on a new construction in-fill home on Cleveland Street in Danville. The home will be EarthCraft certified and Universal Design.

Rehabilitation has started at 238 Ross Street, Danville. This major renovation job consists of completely remodeling the house to bring it up to code and in-

cludes: replacing old knob-and-tube wiring with new electrical wiring, insulating the walls, repairing/replacing the crumbling plaster, relocating the downstairs bathroom, installing new kitchen cabinets and creating an indoor laundry room.

Rehabilitation also starts at 508 Doe Street, Danville. The job will consist of a complete bathroom and kitchen remodel, a heat/ac unit, and a new roof.

Each of these homes will be available for purchase by eligible buyers. Please contact the housing counselor at 434-688-4640 for additional program details.

I have friends who have not been able to continue their dreams because they are obligated to stay and work in hard-labor jobs - jobs that most Americans do not want. Most people think this is a national concern without realizing it is happening right in their own backyard. And many do not realize it at all until they are directly faced with a situation. Working with Telamon has given me the opportunity to reach out into the community and see what kind of support we have for these students.

I am raising awareness and looking for people who want to help. Many are willing because they have already dealt with this situation and found it frustrating; for example, the guidance counselors at the local high schools see this problem every year.

The cost for an undocumented student to go to community college is around ten thousand dollars every semester, which they have to pay from their own pocket. They do not qualify for financial aid and they have to pay out-of-state tuition. How is a high school senior going to afford tuition when their parents' income is near poverty level? It is not impossible, but it is difficult without a scholarship. We are hopeful that funds can be raised that will provide such scholarships.

I believe the more educated people we have, the more prosperous the United States will be as a nation. This means providing opportunities for all our young people to receive an education.



By Roberto Montalvo Rosales
AmeriCorps Representative, Exmore

As an AmeriCorps worker under the auspices of Telamon Corporation, I am assisting with training farmworkers on Telamon's Pesticide and Workplace Safety programs. Since working with AmeriCorps and Telamon, I have had an opportunity to better understand the plight of undocumented students who wish to pursue an education. For the past month, I have been talking with a non-profit organization called the Dream Project, which focuses on providing funds for undocumented students to go to college. My hope is that a scholarship fund will be established to help these students.