

Telamon—Virginia

November 2014

Empowering Individuals, Improving Communities

Message from the State Director Sharon Saldarriaga

Fall is in the air and our programs are in full swing. Our National Farmworker Jobs Program has far exceeded its first quarter placement goal and many new farmworkers are being enrolled for training and employment services. With funding from The Theodore H. Barth Foundation, Inc., we purchased books to encourage reading, which enabled over seventy youth to make 2-3 selections each. We were awarded funding from the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) to continue to provide services through the REACH Housing Counseling and Education Grant. Our weatherization services have expanded into two additional counties so that now we will serve residents in Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Lunenburg, and Nottoway counties.

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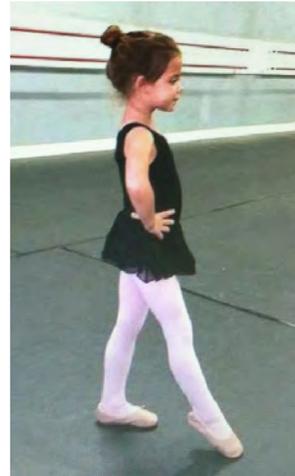
Enriching Rewards

By Sara Lopez
Workforce Development Specialist,
Montross

Today, many kids grow up contending with terrible issues such as poverty, violence, and neglect. Some of these kids live in your community and some of them live in mine, or in my clients' community. We don't always know which kids are having the hardest time, but we do know that all children deserve an opportunity to reach their full potential.



The Theodore H. Barth Foundation, Inc. provides many children the opportunity to see and experience things that will enrich their lives and open their eyes to what is possible. Through cultural enrichment activities, participating children learn new attitudes and skills that enhance their chances for fulfilling, successful lives.



With the grant funds we received this year, we have been able to provide many farmworker children the chance to play sports, take ballet, attend different types of camps, and receive books at their reading level free of charge.

Their families wouldn't have been able to afford these expenses without help.

All of this assists the farmworker youth in our area to discover and develop their talents, interests, preferences and personal voices. This foundation is vital to keeping youth active and engaged in our community.



Quality of Life

By Carolyn Walker
Housing Program Manager, South Hill

Our office located in South Hill, VA has administered several housing grants for Telamon Corporation in Brunswick and Mecklenburg Counties for over thirty-five years. During the course of those thirty-five years, we have provided our clients with safer homes, major roof repair and/or replacement, major repair or new installation of heating systems, new homes, rehabbed homes, indoor plumbing, and new wells and septic systems. We receive our funding from Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Federal Department of Social Services and the State Department of Social Services. The grants include Department of Energy Weatherization, Department of Social Services LIHEAP Weatherization, Emergency Home Repair and Handicap Accessibility, and Department of Social Services Crisis Program.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development had twenty-two weatherization service providers, with one being suspended. During the suspension of the weatherization provider, we were



asked to assist with improving the conditions and challenges of homes that needed emergency improvements funded by the Emergency Home Repair and Accessibility grant for that service area which included six counties. Some of the areas hadn't been served in three years.

In that area, we have provided services for seven families since being contacted by Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to assist families with new roofs, new heating systems and handicapped bathrooms.

Our Weatherization Supervisor/Energy Auditor, Richard Ruffin, and I visited one of the homes and met Mrs. Teresa Sullivan. She had had a massive stroke at the age of 37 which left her paralyzed on one side of her body, and had lost her husband while battling grave health issues. The doctors told her family members that she would not survive the stroke and if she lived, she would be in a vegetative state. Hospice care was made available to assist the family. Miraculously, she survived, but she continues to struggle with severe impairments from

the stroke. She resides in the home of her sister and brother-in-law.

We sat down with Mrs. Sullivan to hear about her daily struggles with her disability. After listening to her and her caregivers, we developed a list of items to address to improve her living conditions and her quality of life. In order for Mrs. Sullivan to have access to the existing bathroom, we made the following changes: roll-



in shower with a fold-down seat and grab bar, extended shower head, wider bathroom door, and handicap commode with grab bar.

We later discovered that despite her disability, Teresa was able to pursue some pretty amazing talents. She made sculptures, wrote novels, and had her own line of perfumes. Richard and I are always proud of improving the quality of life for our clients, and we were especially pleased to work with such a nice family.



Family Fun

By Roberto Quintero
Pesticide and Workplace Safety Trainer

As part of their Migrant Program, Northampton Schools celebrates Annual Family Night by bringing children, parents, and staff together for an evening of food, games, and art. This year, Telamon partnered with the Migrant Program to help them host the event. Our participation was made possible by funds from The Theodore H. Barth Foundation, Inc.

The main theme was *Game Night*, with families and Migrant Program staff playing a number of educational board games with the kids. In addition to providing children and adults a fun and relaxing evening, the venue also gave staff an opportunity to demonstrate what their students have learned since beginning summer classes in June.

The students and staff presented a fiesta style celebration, with each school preparing something different. We enjoyed Mexican songs and dances performed by Kiptopeke Elementary School; *Poetry and Rhymes* performed by Occohannock Elementary School; and a presentation of history, art, and food from five different countries presented by middle school and high school kids.



During the celebration, Telamon was able to interact with the families and kids. The main educational focus of our presentation was the importance of reading to improve academic achievement. Migrant students are capable of achieving as much as other students, but they have a challenge obtaining consistent reading instruction and books. To help migrant youth improve their reading literacy, Telamon distributed a total of 50 books designed to improve skills for specific reading levels.

We had expected to encounter more bilingual children, as we have in the past, but this year we noticed that once the migrant families settle in a particular region, fewer and fewer of the kids continue to speak Spanish, even in their homes. Currently, the Migrant Program has 200 children enrolled with 25 educators plus 4 ESL teachers on staff.



Passion for Food

By Lorena McQueen
Workforce Development
Specialist, Harrisonburg



Yahya Al

Ameen came to the U.S. as a refugee from Iraq in 2013. At first he worked in a greenhouse performing agricultural labor to support himself, his wife, and their four children. When he heard about our farmworker training and employment program during an outreach presentation, Yahya decided to ask us if he could enroll. He needed training to improve his language skills and assistance with nutrition and transportation. He hoped to eventually qualify for better work and higher pay.

Telamon evaluated Yahya's skills and interest, helped connect him with a variety of refugee services, and got him started with language classes. Yahya told us his real passion in life was cooking. He had some culinary experience in Iraq and wanted to find a way to build on those skills. We provided guidance and assistance in getting him an interview with James Madison University (JMU) Dining Services.

Now Yahya is working full time at JMU as a cook's assistance in the student restaurant. He is very happy about this opportunity and hopes it's the first step toward a larger career in the food industry. His dream is to one day own a restaurant where he can serve food from his native land.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Telamon is extremely proud to announce that Virginia’s Pesticide and Workplace Safety Trainer, Roberto Quintero, was singled out for recognition at this year’s AFOP conference due to his outstanding dedication to our health and safety programs. It’s hard to quantify dedication, but it’s easy to see the result of hard work, diligence, and devotion. Roberto has consistently excelled in all aspects of his work. In addition to helping

farmworkers, Roberto leads us all to strive for excellence. During the recognition ceremony, Roberto received a fine statue with inscription, and attendees were told of the amazing success of Roberto’s efforts in terms of the numbers of people he has trained (see below). In addition to his yearly totals, Roberto has frequently gone above and beyond by far exceeding expectations during special events and drives.

Number of People Trained				
YEAR	Pesticide Safety (WPS)	Heat Stress Program	LEAF Program	Total
2012	604	529	-	1133
2013	942	920	943	2805
2014	1154	1150	1147	3451

State Director’s Message

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Homeownership counseling continues to be provided to residents in Danville and surrounding counties through funding from Housing and Community Development (HUD). The Virginia Department of Agriculture renewed our grant to provide Pesticide and Workplace Safety Training to farmworkers. Through the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, our farmworker health and safety training program was expanded to include training on the impact of pesticides on pregnant women and the measures they can take to protect themselves. The year is shaping up to be a very successful one in which our ability to provide much needed services to low-income families continues. During this special month when most of us gather with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving, let us give thanks and appreciation for the hard work and long hours put in by the farmworkers who harvest our food.

Moment of Truth

By Sara Lopez
Workforce Development Specialist, Montross

Before enrolling in the NFJP program in Montross, Alicia worked at a pharmacy making minimum wage. Her husband worked at a local farm. She had taken some college classes, but didn’t think she could continue due to her financial situation. Once she found out what services we were able to provide, she was excited.

After a lot of hard work and dedication, Alicia graduated from

the University of Mary Washington with a GPA of 3.85. Soon after graduation, Westmoreland County Public Schools called her for an interview. A week later, she was hired to teach high school math. She was happy, but nervous too.

We recently spoke to Alicia, following up to see how she was doing. She was pleased because a parent had told her, "It is teachers like you that change kids’ lives. And that's the truth." Alicia told us, "Moments like that make it worth going through all the madness of teaching high school!"

VA01 MOVING

On or about November 15, 2014 our state office will be moving to:

[Telamon Corporation](#)
[808 Moorefield Park Dr Ste 106](#)
[Richmond, VA 23236](#)

All phone, fax, and email contacts will remain the same.