The Migrant Voice

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

JANUARY 2016

Who is the Migrant Child?

By Anna León and Shantall Porchia, Program Managers

Most migrant workers toil long hours and earn low wages that frequently place them below the U. S. poverty line. Migrant children often face the challenges of having parents who work long and unpredictable working hours, make frequent moves, lack transportation, and live in oppressive, sub-standard housing conditions. Although migrant families may qualify for social services or financial aid, Migrant Education Program (MEP) staff report that they may not seek assistance. In spite of these conditions, children of migrant workers come to school with many assets upon which their academic education can be built.

Despite considerable progress since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, substantial gaps persist between the achievements of different groups of California students. Similarly, a substantial gap exists between the academic performance of migrant and non-migrant students in California. As districts were bracing for the results of the CAASPP, so was the Migrant Education Program. The results of the CAASPP in English Language Arts/Literacy, showed that only 24% of the migrant students met or exceeded the standard, leaving 75% that did not. Migrant students did not fare well in Mathematics either with only 16% meeting or exceeding the standard, which left 84% who did not.

One purpose of the MEP is to design programs to help migrant children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit their ability to do well in school, and to prepare them to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment.

To advance the goals of the MEP, Charlene Stringham, assistant superintendent, Instructional Services, shared an innovative project for preventing long-term English Learners. Given that approximately 58% of migrant children are English learners, Migrant Education sought the support of Jim Vidak, Tulare County superintendent of schools, Dr. Guadalupe Solis, deputy superintendent, and Celina Torres, Migrant Education State Director to implement the project. Migrant began the project by working with directors of the Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) at Loyola Marymount University in 2014-2015. Migrant staff had face-to-face meetings and phone conferences with three knowledgeable and passionate professors, Dr. Magaly Lavadenz, Dr. Elvira G. Armas, and Dr. Gisela O'Brien to develop a plan to address the needs of long-term English Learners. The plan included the introduction of the Journalism Project. This consisted of a Project-Based Differentiated English Language Development Program. The professors provided every person involved in the project with the Journalism for English Learners Curriculum Guide especially designed for 3rd-5th grade EL students. Districts were identified for the Journalism Project Pilot, including Earlimart, Pixley, Tipton, and Tulare City. Teachers were also hired and received two days of training in June of 2015. The program started in August 2015 and in October 2015, Dr. Armas, CEEL associate director, and Dr. O' Brien, CEEL assistant director conducted observations. The last training was held in November of 2015. Dr. Armas and Dr. O'Brien conducted the last training on concepts that, based on their experience, could be revisited and clarified.

There are four designed outcomes to the Journalism Project: 1. Experience the role of a journalist by gathering information, interviewing people, and writing articles. 2. Practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English. 3. Learn about the language features of journalism as an expository genre, and 4. Increase ownership and self-awareness of learning skills and strategies.

And so, this newspaper is a testament of the great work that teachers and coaches did in developing the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a meaningful way. Earlimart: Marianne Austin and Minervo Ramirez. Pixley: Fidel Garcia, Amy Kongkeo, Elena Vawter, Xochitl Cristal Montelon. Tipton: Gina Manfredi and Evangelina Beason. Tulare City: Anthony Calvillo, Gloria Davalos, Jeff Johnstone, Janice Pearson, Helen Richardson, Leah Sanchez, Vicki Stewart and Maria Villarreal.

Journalism; impacting communities and lives of young writers

By Mr. Velasquez, Administrator

Discontinuity of instruction is the major challenge in Migrant Education. Frequent moves and economic hardship create numerous educational challenges for the children of migrant farmworkers in the United States. Even the most conservative estimates project that more than half a million school children move each year with their families to follow seasonal crops. Research tells us that if a student moves once in 12 years, he/she is less likely to graduate from high school. Imagine the life of a migrant child. Every time he/she moves, the child loses something.

This is alarming when you see statistics that effect young children. This is especially true in the era of the 21st century skills. What are the 21st century skills? The term "21st century skills" is generally used to refer to certain core competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that advocates believe schools need to teach to help students thrive in today's world.

In order for our students to strive in this ever-changing world they will need to think deeply about issues, solve problems creatively, work in teams, communicate clearly in many media, learn ever-changing technologies, and deal with a flood of information. The rapid changes in our world require students to be flexible, to take the initiative and lead when necessary, and to produce something new and useful.

Many of our migrant students struggle with language. For many, English is not their primary language. As I immerse myself on what is being asked of our students, I asked, what can the Migrant Education Program produce that is useful so our students become striving individuals in this rapidly-changing world of the 21st century.

The vision that we had was to introduce journalism as a pathway for our students. We wanted our students to be able to see the world and to have the opportunities in exploring it through print. We wanted our students to be able to live outside of the normal world. The experiences each student would gain in researching information, people, and other news would be invaluable. Our students would have to refine their skills in order to communicate the information of the changing events, issues, and characters in the outside world. Through this media, we wanted them to empower the informed, transform communities and the lives of their people, and most of all to convey a fair and reliable account of their meaning.

In collaboration with County Superintendent Jim Vidak, Charlene Stringham and Dr. Guadalupe Solis from Tulare County Office of Education, we were introduced to this Journalism Project. The Journalism Project is in partnership with Loyola Marymount University – School of Education. The program is based on research principles; active participation, social integration with peers and language models, affirming environment that consider the students' linguistic and cultural identities and connects learning to the wider communities and their social realities. The programs' outcome was to advance the students skills and abilities by learning how journalism impacts communities and by providing information that can affect people's lives

The students focused on unit topics that introduced them to Journalism, explored the role of a Journalist, explored informational texts, research and questioning skills, interviewing and note-taking skills, field work/interviews, and drafting and editing the article. Of course, we need to celebrate the final product by introducing the newspaper that will be created by the students. Each article in the newspaper will be developed by each student who is participating in the project.

Eric Hoffer states, "In times of profound change, the learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

Let us provide our students the resources and opportunities so they learn and inherit the earth no matter what the change is.

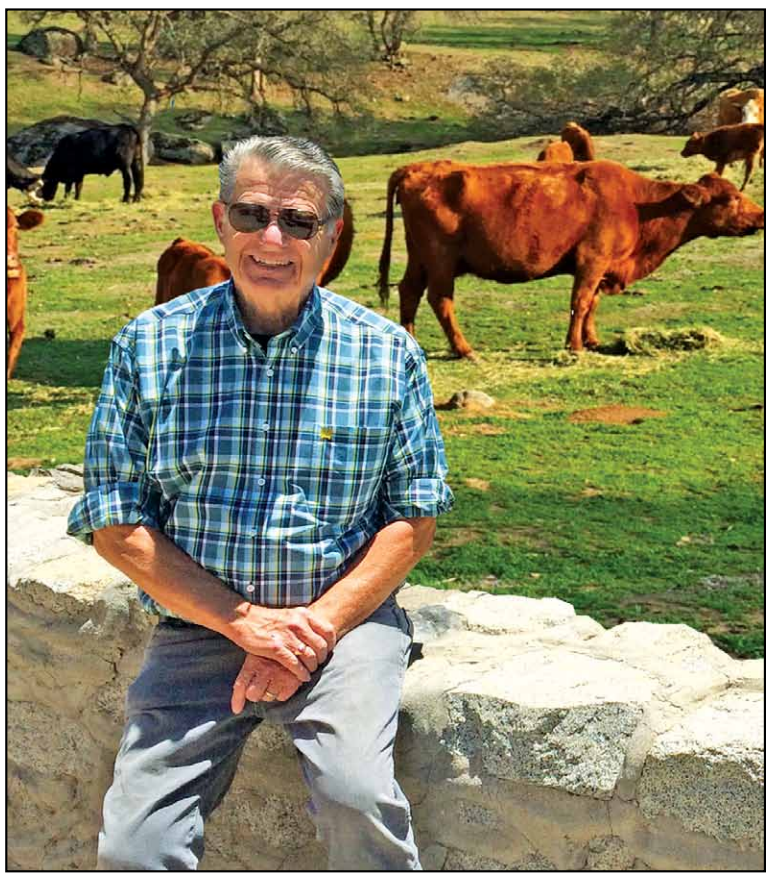
Tulare County superintendent of schools

Mr. Jim Vidak, Tulare County superintendent of schools is supportive of all of the Tulare County Office of Education programs and this includes Migrant Education. He expects excellence from his staff and is a proponent of innovative programs and support services. Migrant Education's Journalism Project is such a program. Its innovation lies in the way it delivers quality Language Arts instruction to migrant students, grades 3-5, who are learning English. The program is designed to reduce the number of long-term English Learners by encouraging migrant students to experience the purpose for listening, speaking, reading and writing well.

In addition to his passion for education, Jim Vidak has a passion for agriculture. A Tulare County native and third generation farmer/rancher, Mr. Vidak has worked in agriculture since his first job harvesting tomatoes and table grapes as a seventh-grader. In college, he pursued his goal to become a teacher. He later became a principal, an administrator and, in 1991, Tulare County's superintendent of schools. Despite having a 50-plus year career in education, Mr. Vidak never lost his connection to agriculture.

Mr. Vidak applauds the students in the Migrant Education Program for their Journalism Project and its focus on the drought. He knows firsthand the effect it has had on farmers, ranchers and Tulare County school districts. On his own ranch, he has had to replace a pump while reducing the size of his own herd because of the lack of grass. "The saddest effect of the drought has been the decline in enrollment some of our rural school districts have faced as quality families move outside Tulare County for employment," said Mr. Vidak.

To read more about the effects of the drought on Tulare County school districts and farmers, see the stories beginning on this page.



Mr. Jim Vidak, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools

The Incubator
Water and Energy Technology Incubator

By Regina Toscano & Marco Torrez

Saving water now can help us in the future. Did you know that there is a water institute located on the Fresno State campus that can help you with your water issues? The water institute is an organization that gets their ideas from the community and helps people with their water issues by supporting with discovering water solving solutions. The web site on the Water Institute states that "Through applied technology, our goal is to provide efficient first use and effective reuse of water supplies worldwide." After interviewing Laura Ramos, who is a Program Coordinator for the Water Institute and a Water Management specialist by the name of Sarge Green, we discovered that his job is to assist other agencies and cities in the San Joaquin Valley on how to best use their water. In addition, the Water Institute helps with designing solutions to their water issues. The company gained a lot of knowledge regarding what to do and not to do for water efficiency by observing the water practices of Australia.

Photos/Marco Torrez
Regina and Marco visit the Water and Energy Technology Incubator at Fresno State.

The valley is currently enduring a historic drought which is one of the biggest that we know about through research. The San Joaquin valley has been affected the most. Green stated that 2014 and 2015 were the driest two years. We are withstanding a D4 drought which is the biggest and worst drought possible. The water in the valley is very important because we grow food for the entire country. We also need water for our trees because by losing landscape, we lose needed oxygen, and more dust is created. Furthermore, without landscape more heat is generated and we are not kept as cool. A drought can cause trees to become dry and explode easily which also affects our environment. In order to help save water at home, we can let the water run less time while brushing our teeth, use washing machines and dish washers with full loads, and water our lawns and plants less. So next time you are looking for answers to your water concerns, you might want to call the Water and Energy Technology Incubator otherwise known as the Water Institute located on the Fresno State Campus.

How are we saving water in Tulare schools?

By Yadira Santiago

Photos/Vicki Stewart
Dr. Claire Gist of the Tulare City School District discussing ways to conserve water.

Who could we call to find out how we were saving water at our schools? We decided to call Dr. Claire Gist, the superintendent of the Tulare City School District. We asked her if we could interview her, and she agreed.

There are several ways the school district is conserving water. Dr. Gist said one way is to reduce our irrigation water. That is water used for our grass. Our schools uses a lot of water for grass, she said. The schools don't use as much water for our grass anymore. Doing this turns our grass brown, but that is one way to save a lot of water.

Dr. Gist said another way to conserve water concerns our soil. If you treat our soil with amendments, it will accept water better. One way is called aeration. This means the grass has holes poked into it. That helps the grass use less water, because the water goes in easier.

Putting in concrete instead of plants or grass is another good way to conserve water. If we have concrete, it will not use any water at all! Concrete may not look as good as landscaping, but we do save water. We can also use river rock.

The Tulare City School District is changing the sprinkler systems to make them modern. Not all the schools have sprinklers systems that are up to date. Dr. Gist said doing this helps to conserve water.

We asked Dr. Gist if the cost of our school's food was affected by the drought. She said the school district has to pay more now because of this. Water is very important when all of our food and produce is processed. So the costs go up, when there is less water.

Now I know how the Tulare City School District is saving water. They are doing it in many different ways. I hope the drought doesn't last much longer, but I know the school district is trying to help in it's own way.

Mrs. Muller's well went dry

By Danna Ramirez, Natalia Gomez, and Alexander Aguilar

What happens when a well goes dry? Mrs. Muller is a second grade teacher at Maple School in Tulare where we go to school. She lives in Tulare, out in the country. Her well dried up.

In the summer of 2015, Mrs. Muller's well went dry. Before it dried up she noticed the water pressure was low. Only a little water was coming out of the faucet. She had to drive into town to her sister's house to do laundry and to take a shower. To flush the toilet her family brought in buckets of pool water. Since they could not water their lawns and plants they turned brown and died.

A well dries up when the ground water level is lower than the pipe. The pump cannot pull water up the pipe. The ground water is so low because we haven't had enough rain or snow.

The machine dug deeper and deeper, until they found water. When the Muller family first saw the water they were excited!

Mrs. Muller and her family were out of water for 3 days. Even though it was taking some people months and months to get a well dug, Mrs. Muller's husband had a friend who came out sooner to do the well. Large machines were brought in and dug deep into the ground. It took 2 days of drilling before they hit water. The new well is 400 feet deep. Digging the well and putting in new equipment cost Mrs. Muller a lot of money. This was very hard and a sad time for her family.

When Mrs. Muller's well went dry it was a difficult time for her family. It took a lot of time and money. The drought affected them in a big way. The Muller family tries to be careful with the water they have.

A Fresno State experience

Photos/Vicki Stewart
Dr. Claire Gist of the Tulare City School District discussing ways to conserve water.

By Dalia Cortez Garcia

The first time I went to college, I went to California State University Fresno. I went with my Migrant Journalism class to learn about the drought from a water expert. I was so excited! It was my first time to college!!

Water experts help people create water saving products. When we use these products, we will save a lot of water!! I want to try to save water so that I conserve as much as I can.

Another reason we went to the college, is to gather information for our journalism article. We took notes so that we could write about the ways that the water expert gave us. He was a very smart person!

He said that Fresno State was a leader in saving water. This college uses many different ways to conserve water. They are a model for other schools and colleges to save water.

After I left Fresno State, I learned new ways to save water in this time of drought. I enjoyed going to the college to learn new things. I hope I can come back one day.

My dad

By Jaime Padilla

On November 15, 2015 I interviewed my dad about his job and how the drought has affected his job.

My dad, Jose Alfredo Padilla is a pomegranate transporter that works for a company called Legacy which is in Dinuba. He takes the pomegranates from the orchard and takes them to the packing house. He mentioned the drought affects the pomegranates because less water means less production and smaller size. He also said that it means that they have to plant less in order to conserve water. He told me that he noticed the drought started affecting the pomegranates in 2013, because the trees were drying up and there were not as many pomegranates and they were smaller than the year before. Hopefully, next year there is not as worse case of a drought as this year.

Photos/Isidro Gonzalez
Jaime Padilla and his dad Jose

Saving money and water

By Regina Toscano & Marco Torrez

Do you want to lower your water bill? Mr. Reagan, who is the Bilingual Coordinator for Tulare City School District, and his wife decided to save water and money by water harvesting. Water harvesting is a process where rain water is collected and stored for landscape irrigation and other uses. Mr. Reagan decided to go green after reading a book by a man who lived in Africa. The book explained how water harvesting works.

Mr. Reagan

Mr. Reagan exchanged his grass for a xeriscape design which is defined as "quality landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment." His xeriscape front yard will consist of Palo Verde trees, small shrubs, a Pine tree, and a river of rocks through the middle. In order to store water, he plans to put in a gutter that travels to a hole full of gravel where water will be stored under the Pine tree. The water will then be stored so the Pine tree will have water to survive during the summer months.

Mr. Reagan began his water saving project in his backyard as a trial in order to decide if he would like it. Also, since he was doing the project by himself, he was not sure how it would look. He decided to conserve water by putting in synlawn or artificial grass. Although the project in his backyard turned out great and allowed him to conserve water, he didn't like the fact that it got too hot to walk on in the summer and he was afraid that gophers would eat through it and damage his work. Mr. Reagan stated that it cost him 1,000 dollars for the synlawn, but it has saved him a lot of money on his water bill. Because of Mr. Reagan's concerns about synlawn in his back yard, he decided to try the xeriscape design in his front yard. Although Mr. Reagan is just in the planning stages of his xeriscape front lawn project, his research has assured him that he will continue to save water as well as a lot of money on his water bill in the future. If you want to lower your water bill, you might give xeriscape a try.

Photos/Marco Torrez
Mr. Reagan's sketch on what his front yard will look like after the xeriscape remodel.

How the drought effects grapevines

By Isidro Gonzalez

On November 30, 2015, I interviewed my mom, Maria Torres. She works in Delano cutting off leaves from grapevines. She works for eight hours a day doing this. I interviewed her so I can know how the drought affected her job since I have been researching the drought in my after school program. She mentioned that it needs to rain because we don't have water. I wondered if there is something she or her bosses do to save water. She stated that her boss never told her to do anything to conserve water, but she did say that her boss is taking down the vines and replacing them with other crops. My Mom also said there is less jobs since the drought.

From research, I learned that California is in its fourth year in a drought. Most of California's water is in the northern part of the state. In the Central Valley, farmers have to buy their water. Miss Carrie Crane from Tulare County Farm Bureau told me this when she visited our class and also told us that farmers plan well for their water needs and they are good managers. I hope the rain keeps coming so we won't be in a drought.

How the drought affects regular workers

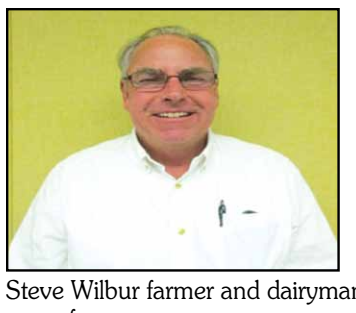
Photos/Jaime Padilla

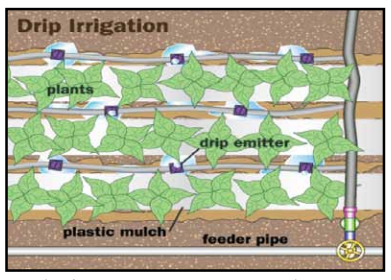
Dr. Karen Roque and her mom Lucina.

By Karen Roque

I interviewed my mom Lucina Roque on November 13, 2015. I wanted to know how the drought affected her job.

My mom Lucina Roque works at Harris Ranch. It is in Selma. She sanitizes meat. If meat is not sanitized it makes people sick. My mom does not clean the meat with water, just with a knife. If water gets on the meat it will contaminate the meat. So, workers use a broom to remove skin from the meat. Lucina told me that she wears a big, long apron to protect her clothes. Workers at Harris Ranch used to use a lot of water to clean off the blood and small pieces of meat off their aprons. Since we are in a drought, the company now uses thinner hoses to conserve water. It is harder to clean off her apron and she brings extra clothes. My mom now gets shorter hours at work because of the drought. Even though my mom gets shorter hours at work it doesn't affect me, I still get shoes and clothes, But I don't always get fun toys that I really want. That is how the drought affects my family.





Steve Wilbur farmer and dairyman with drip irrigation system that some farmers use.

California drought: farmer thinks smarter about water

By Isidro Gonzales, Jaime Padilla and Karen Roque

What must farmers do in a drought? Think smarter of course! Steve Wilbur a local farmer and dairyman found ways to use his water more efficiently.

Nature gives our valley rain and snow for water, but we are using a lot more than nature is giving us. A lot of wells have gone dry. The government gave farmers only 20 percent of their share of water last year and this year they did not get any. Mr. Wilbur says that's why it is important for farmers to "Get more crop per drop." He shared that he uses a more efficient irrigation system to water his farm. The old way of getting water to crops was flooding fields. Now he uses drip irrigation. Mr. Wilbur stated that it costs about 1000 dollars an acre for a drip system. "It is costly, but worth it," he said. Because, you "Get more crop per drop," he tells us again.

Mr. Wilbur also saves water at his dairy by reusing and recycling his water. He uses water to keep his milk cool, and then he will wash the cows with the water. Next, he said he uses the water to flush the lanes, many times. Finally, the water is used to irrigate his fields. That is how farmers use water more often and efficiently. You can see that farmers do not waste water! When a farmer thinks smarter, he will "Get more crop per drop!"

How Tulare schools are dealing with the drought

By Danna Ramirez, Natalia Gomez, and Alexander Aguilar

We interviewed Dr. Gist the Superintendent of Tulare City School District and asked her questions about how the schools are dealing with the drought.

Schools are learning more than about reading and writing, they are learning about the drought. On November 19th, 2015 we interviewed Dr. Gist the Superintendent of Tulare City School District. We asked her how the drought is affecting the 15 schools in our district. Our interview took place at Maple School where we go to school. Learning about how the schools are handling the drought will help us to save water and teach us how to help here when we can.

Alexander started off by asking Dr. Gist in what ways are Tulare Schools trying to use less water. Dr. Gist said that she was meeting with an irrigation specialist to look at how they take care of the grass and the soil under the grass. One thing they are thinking about is aerating the soil, which means to poke holes in it so that the water can go inside the holes right to the soil. Dr. Gist stated that they are going to put the irrigation on timers so that it is automatic and will not run too long or when it is not needed. When asked about using plants that need less water Dr. Gist talked about using concrete and rocks for landscaping since they do not use any water at all. Tulare City School District has been using less water since the city of Tulare put limits on the amount of water that can be used.

Dr. Gist and her husband are farmers. Her family has been farming for a long time. Dr. Gist has personally been affected by the drought. She and her husband have had to replace 2 wells in the past year. She talked about how people have to wait a long time to get someone to come out and drill the well. Farming is always hard, farmers have to spend a lot of money and do not know if they will get the money back after selling what they grew or raised. When asked if the food in the cafeteria costs the school more to buy, Dr. Gist said yes everything is costing more because of the drought. Dr. Gist asked us if we knew how much water it took to get the stuff together to make a hamburger. We did not know so she said that we should find out. After doing some research on the internet we found out that it takes about 1, 300 gallons of water to make everything you need for one hamburger!

Drought increases the dust in the air. This is bad for your lungs and also it can bother your eyes. Your eyes can get red and watery. Some students have asthma so the dust in the air makes it hard for them to breath. When asked if Tulare City School District has "Dust Days" Dr. Gist said that there is a flag and announcement system. A flag is put up on the flagpole each day in a color that tells you how the air is. Level 1 is the color green and means the air is good, Level 2 is the color yellow and means the air is moderate (just ok), Level 3 is the color orange and means the air is unhealthy for sensitive groups (students that have asthma should not run around) and Level 4 is the color red and means the air is unhealthy. Level 5 is the color purple and the worst, it means the air is very unhealthy. (From the TCSD website we found this air quality information) If the air gets too bad during the day, Mrs. Brown our Principal at Maple School will be told and she will send emails to the teachers. If we are not able to go outside we have PE inside doing stuff like Adventure Fitness or Just Dance!

From Dr. Gist we learned how Tulare City Schools are dealing with the drought. There may be more concrete and rocks being used to decorate the landscape instead of plants because they are not alive. Everyone is affected by the drought including the 15 schools in Tulare City School District.

Going to Fresno State to learn about the drought

By Alexander Aguilar, Danna Ramirez, and Natalia Gomez

Would you like to learn how to save water? Well you should go to Fresno State! We visited The Water and Energy Technology Incubator. Mr. Sarge Green answered our questions about the drought in California.

On November 3rd, 2015 we took a bus trip to Fresno and met with Mr. Green. He told us that at their building they test products to see if they waste water. They make sure that new products do not waste water. If someone has an idea they can bring it to the building and try it out. The people there can educate or teach others about water conservation.

The day before we went to Fresno State there had been a lot of rain. When Mr. Green was asked how many days of big rain would it take to help this year he said that it would take 10 storms to help us have a wet year, but even if it rained every day for the rest of the year we would not be out of the drought.

Mr. Green said that this is the worst drought in recorded history. It is a D4 level and historically bad drought. A D4 drought is an exceptional drought. Crop and plants die, streams, lakes and wells are low or dry up. It is a water emergency.(http://drought-monitor.unl.edu/) 2014 and 2015 were the driest 2 years in a row.

When asked what were some ways we can use less water Mr. Green said that we should turn the water off when we brush our teeth and when we help with the laundry to wash with full loads only. One thing that is different from what some people are doing is to keep plants and trees alive because they help clean the air. With less trees there is less shade and things are hot. We need to be careful to not over water and waste water.

Using our reporter notebooks to ask questions and write down notes. We also used a voice recorder to tape the interview and later listen to what was said.

Mr. Sarge Green told us about the drought. He teaches people and students from Fresno State how to conserve water in different ways. We asked him questions and he told us information that we can learn from and share in our article to help other people.

How the drought is affecting one of Tulare's principals

By Juan Olivares Victor Luis

Mr. Anthony Felix is a principal at Roosevelt Elementary School in Tulare, California. He owns farmland in Lindsay California. Mr. Felix is in the business of growing olives.

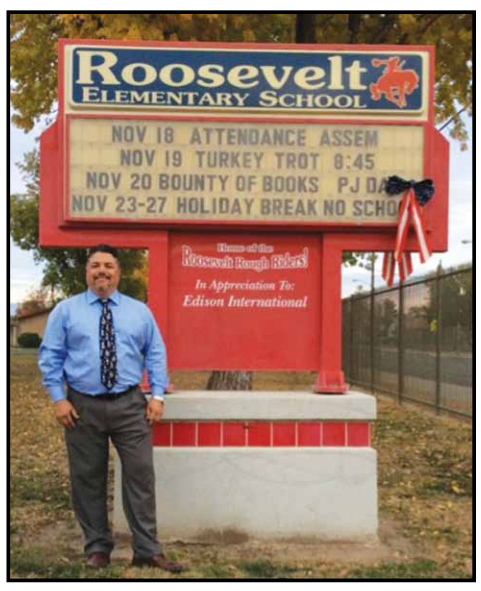
The drought has not only affected Mr. Felix's farms, but also the packing house he sells his olives to.

Mr. Felix's farm has no well on it, so he depends on a direct water delivery. He receives his water from the Friant-Kern Canal through the Lindsay Strathmore Irrigation District. The effect of the drought has caused the water district to cut his allowed allotment about fifty to sixty percent. Without enough water to provide what trees need, it has caused them to stop providing olives.

Mr. Felix has lost the income that the olives provide, yet still has all the bills to pay. Without fruit to deliver to the packing house, along with the other farmers in the same situation, workers at the packing house are being laid off due to the lack of fruit to process. This has caused a problem for a lot of people involved. This is known as the trickle-down effect because it affects everyone involved from the person growing olives to the person buying the olives.

Mr. Felix is hoping that the forecast of the oncoming El Niño proves to be correct.

In a quote from Mr. Felix, "El Nino won't solve the drought problem for one year, but it will be a great start!"



Photos/Juan Olivares Victor Luis

Mr. Anthony Felix poses in front of Roosevelt School.

Developing a college-going culture

In conjunction with the rigorous migrant academic extended day services, the Tulare County Migrant Education Program in Region VIII is intentional in giving students hands-on college awareness experiences and highly supports partnerships with universities. Migrant Staff work hard at developing a college-going culture. The goal is for every migrant student to know that they can and will be college bound.

It was important to include the following article depicting 3rd-5th grade Tipton Journalism Migrant Students highlighting a role model that benefited as they began their day at Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo.

The woman who believed in herself

By Monserrat Langerica, Maria Valentina Hernandez, Adolfo Becerra, Jonathon Flores, Jessica Flores and Gustavo Santa Cruz

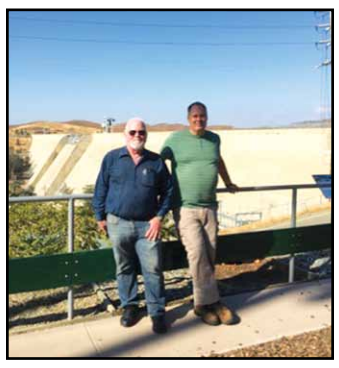
If you get good grades you can accomplish anything. Dr. Elsa Medina is a strong person who always believed in herself and believed she could do anything. She was born in America, but raised in Zacatecas, Mexico. When she lived in Mexico she lived in a very small town. She was 17 years old when she came to California. She worked in the fields and went to school. She did not know any English, but she made friends by helping other students in math. She said, "I love math and helping others."

She works at Cal Poly as a mathematics Professor. She said you have to work and try, if you struggle in math that doesn't mean you can't do it, but you need to try. Successful people try over and over again. Enjoy what you are doing. College is a lot of fun, because you meet a lot of people from all different places, different backgrounds, and learn a lot of different things. It is nice to meet people from another place, because you get to learn from their experience and they get to learn from yours. When you go to college you learn a lot of amazing things.

Her parents did not have money to pay for college. Her parents worked in the fields and she worked in the fields during the summers. She was able to pay for college by getting a lot of scholarships and by having good grades. "If you have good grades people will pay you to go to college, isn't that amazing!" exclaimed Dr. Medina. People told her that she had potential and that she could go to college. If you study and work hard, you can go to college too. We learned from her that you need to try and believe in yourself, don't give up and always do your best.

Dr. Medina, dressed in the pretty flowery dress, wrote on the chalkboard: We love math! ¡Amamos las Matemáticas!

The Friant Dam: A massive wall for good



We spoke with Mr. Stephen Ottemoeller and Mr. Michael Wolfe.

Friant Dam is triangle shaped and about a mile long at the top.

The Friant Dam blocks the San Joaquin River for good. Friant Dam creates Millerton Lake and helps create many uses for the water stored behind it. It gives water to farmers as far as Bakersfield and to cities along the Friant-Kern Canal. Because of the drought, less acres have received water.

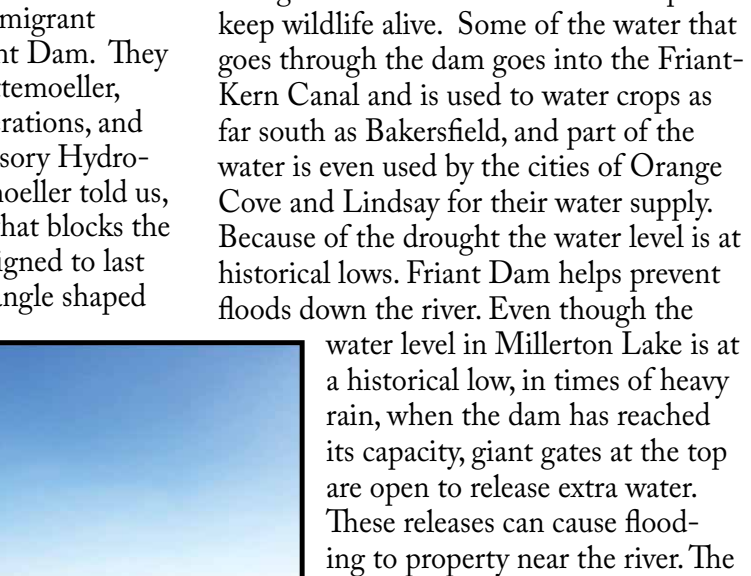
On October 20, 2015 the migrant journalism class visited Friant Dam. They spoke with Mr. Stephen Ottemoeller, engineer and director of operations, and Mr. Michael Wolfe, Supervisory Hydrologic Technician. Mr. Ottemoeller told us, "The dam is a massive wall that blocks the San Joaquin River." It is designed to last a long time. "The dam is triangle shaped and about a mile long at the top," said Mr. Ottemoeller. Although the dam is medium sized, about 330 feet high, it is made from millions of tons of concrete. It was built between 1937 and 1942. It was part of the Central Valley Project and funded by the United States Bureau of Reclamation. The government gave 20 million dollars to build Friant Dam, but it eventually cost a whole lot more.

Millerton Lake is big, but it doesn't have much water.

Mr. Ottemoeller also said the dam creates many uses for the water collected in Millerton Lake. Not only can people boat, fish, and water ski on the lake where the water is stored, the lake water is sent to many places for many uses. Huge gates weighing twelve tons allow some of the water to travel into huge tubes through the dam. As the water exits the dam, it helps power turbines that create electricity for Fresno. Once it comes out of the hydroelectric station it flows into either the Friant-Kern Canal for crops and cities, or it goes down the river where it helps keep wildlife alive. Some of the water that goes through the dam goes into the Friant-Kern Canal and is used to water crops as far south as Bakersfield, and part of the water is even used by the cities of Orange Cove and Lindsay for their water supply. Because of the drought the water level is at historical lows. Friant Dam helps prevent floods down the river. Even though the water level in Millerton Lake is at a historical low, in times of heavy rain, when the dam has reached its capacity, giant gates at the top are open to release extra water. These releases can cause flooding to property near the river. The last time the river flooded was in 1993, and the highest water levels recently have been in 2011.

In order to prevent the Friant Dam from blocking the San Joaquin River forever, the water needs to pass through some big tubes and go down the San Joaquin River.

The Friant Dam also creates a lake behind it and some of this stored water goes down the Friant-Kern Canal as far as Bakersfield. Normally Friant Dam provides water for about 800,000 acres of crops, but because of the drought this number is greatly reduced.



The Friant-Kern Canal sends water to farmers as far as Bakersfield.

Expensive water

By Edwin Garcia

How would you like to wake up one day with no water coming from your shower? Well, Mrs. Muller, a 2nd grade teacher at Maple School, had her water supply go dry. Mr. Calvillo's Migrant Journalism class decided to interview Mrs. Muller to find out why this happened.

Mrs. Mulller's well went dry because her water level went too low. This happened because of the drought. We had not received enough rain. So, she had to buy a new well. When she found out she had to pay $25,000 dollars for a new well, she and her husband were not very happy! I wouldn't be either! Then, she did not get her well for a long time. She had to wait the whole summer for a new well! Poor Mrs. Muller!!

She had to use her pool water to take showers. She had to take her laundry out to her sister's house, and she had to save water so she could cook. Even flushing her toilet was a problem. And, she couldn't swim in her pool, because she was using the pool water for the inside of the house!

Mr. Muller lives outside the city limits of Tulare. That's why she had to buy her own well. If she had lived inside the city limits, she wouldn't have to worry about buying a new well. The city of Tulare would have taken care of it.

Now you know why conserving water is very important. We do not have very much water left underground, because of not having enough rain. From now on, I will use less water at home and wherever I go. I wouldn't want my water to run out. I guess I'm lucky I live inside the city limits!

Photos/Rochelle Muller

Mrs. Muller's expensive well being dug.

Is the Friant Dam really important?

By Aileen Alba, Ashanti Paz, Andrew Zamudio, Ariana Zepeda

On Tuesday, October 20, 2015 Engineer Stephen H. Ottemoeller of the Friant Dam, in Fresno, told the migrant students of Pixley Elementary that the Friant Canal begins in Fresno and ends in Bakersfield. The Friant Canal is used by many Central Valley Farmers.

The Friant Dam, which is located in Fresno, is where the Friant Canal begins. The Canal delivers Central Valley farmers with water to use on their farms. The problem is the water supply is low.

Stephen H. Ottemoeller is an Engineer for the Fresno Friant Dam. He is in charge of keeping everything at the dam running smoothly. Mr. Ottemoeller says that farmers are getting water, but not the same amount as they used to. The low amount of water means that farmers are not growing the same amount of crops as they once were.

The Friant Dam is not getting enough water because it has not rained that much. The rain from El Niño has not come to California yet. California farmers are struggling to keep their farms in operation and their animals fed. More farmers are having to fire employees because they don't have crops to pick or money to pay their workers. The California drought is affecting the farmers because they have less water due to no rain and all of the things cost a lot of money. The Central Valley has a small amount of water because of the California drought. We don't get enough water to do the things that we need or are used to. These are things you can do to save water: Don't take long in the shower and wash your car in the car wash. The drought affects the Friant Dam because it is not raining and the Friant Dam cannot work because it needs rain to allow water to pass through so farmers can continue with agriculture and it can continue to give the Valley water.

The Friant Dam is an important part of the Central Valley water system because it holds the rainwater that is part of our agriculture. The dam is important because it is used by the farmers in the Valley. With this drought we are seeing how important dams, like the Friant Dam, really are to everyone.

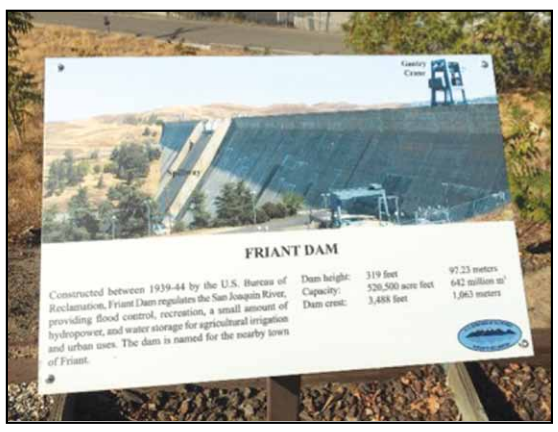


Photo Courtesy of Shantall Porchia

Photo Courtesy of Shantall Porchia

Don't throw water away, save it for another day!

By Jessica Flores, Jonathon Flores, Adolfo Becerra, Maria Valentina Hernandez, Gustavo Santa Cruz, and Monserrat Langerica

The drought is getting worse and worse as we waste water. Dr. Francis Villablanca and Dr. Villablanca. This is something we learned that we can do to help with the drought.

This is us with Ms. Manfredi, Mrs. Porchia and Dr. Lola Berber-Jimenez, after lunch and talking about the drought.

Here we are getting answers and asking questions about the drought

A drought is a place that's dry and does not get a lot of rain. This drought started in 2011. We are having a drought because we have had less rain and we wasted water, instead of storing it and saving it.

The drought affects crops and people are losing their jobs. Two winters ago the crops were affected because of the lack of water and now the food cost more. People used the water and did not save or store enough away. The drought affects people with less money the most because now food cost more. Small communities like Tipton have less water; they have a smaller water source. Los Angeles is being affected less because they get their water from the San Joaquin River and the Rocky Mountains. Another effect according to Dr. Villablanca is that there are 70% less animals in his area now, all because of the drought. He has been tracking them with his students. The drought is affecting every living thing!

Here are some solutions to help us save water. One solution Dr. Villablanca had was to use his washing machine water to water his plants. He takes 9 buckets and fills them with the water and then carries them to his plants. A second solution is a desalinization plant that could take away the salt from the ocean and make it drinkable. This is expensive, but Dr. Lola Berber-Jimenez said they are working on new technology. The new technology will help reduce the cost just like solar energy is reducing the cost of electricity. Another thing we can do is recycle, this will help to keep the earth clean and help with energy costs too. One last thing that Dr. Villablanca said to us was, "Think about it, recognize that you are using water and ask yourself, what can I do to use less?"

Dr. Villablanca in his classroom at Cal Poly where we learned about the drought.

Dr. Villablanca is answering our questions and knows all about the effects of the drought.

Dr. Lola Berber-Jimenez from Cal Poly talked to us about the drought that started four years ago. "If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down," is a new saying we learned from

Do you think Paramount could go out of business?

By Ernesto Vazquez, Juan M. Vazquez, Francisco Lara Beltran, Luis Navarro, Marco Sanchez, Ulises Morales, Nayeli Marron and Jose Carranza

On Thursday, October 22, 2015, we visited Mr. Mike Carlisle, Director of Farming for Paramount Farms in Delano, California, who stated that there is less water available for the Halos and other citrus. Paramount is the largest grower of mandarins, which are marketed as Halos. They are a sweet, seedless, easy peel citrus sold in 3 to 5 pound bags and boxes.

Because of the current drought in the Central Valley, Paramount no longer gets water from the Friant-Kern Canal. Now all the water used to irrigate the citrus comes from underground wells. Mr. Carlisle informed us, " Now last year and this year there has been no water available out of the canal for agricultural purposes…"

Mr. Carlisle revealed that Paramount irrigates their citrus with drippers and micro sprinklers. The drippers let out 1 gallon per hour, and micro sprinklers let out 16-20 gallons per hour, but the micro sprinklers are used once a week and drippers are used 5-7 days a week, which are better for the citrus trees. Baby trees use 4-6 inches of water per week, and old trees use 10 times more than the baby trees, or about 40 inches of water per week.

The drought affected the people that work at Paramount in a positive way. Employees are given more hours to work, which means they can make more money. Additional hours are for workers to water citrus crops on Fridays and Sundays.

Our trip to Paramount included a movie and a presentation about the Halo packing facility. We learned that this

plant is the largest packing house in the world, covering more area than three football fields. Because we were not old enough, we could not visit the plant. Not only did Mr. Carlisle give us many facts about his company and the drought, he also gave us backpacks filled with promotional gifts. After visiting the Delano facility, we understand more about how the drought affects our families in the Central Valley.

All the leaves are brown

By Alejandro Sanchez Ortiz

I did an interview with a business owner named Seth Brown. We discussed how the drought is affecting his family's business California Turf and Equipment. He told us that the business is divided into three sections. 1. Landscape and maintenance 2. Equipment sales 3. Retail Nursery. Mr. Brown said that all three parts are being affected differently.

The landscape and maintenance division has been affected by losing new landscape installation. The maintenance has been cut because of people watering less or not watering at all. Some clients have lawns dying and even plants and trees. "There is no money in taking care of dirt," said Mr. Brown

The equipment division is losing money because other lawn – maintenance companies and private homeowners are not buying as much new equipment or choosing to replace used equipment. They are counting on just getting it being repaired. There is much more money in new sales than in repairs.

The gardens have many different types of plants for your home.

The third part of the business is the nursery. It has also felt the effect of the drought. Other lawn companies in private home owners have really cut back on buying plants and other related materials.

Mr. Brown said, "We are hoping to hang on until this whole drought thing is behind us. The little rain we have received so far is a real good sign."

Left: California Turf and Equipment still has its doors open.

Pixley Migrant students visit Friant Dam

Do you know how people can help save water to reduce our water problems?

By Meleena Navarro, Alvaro Rodriguez, Alondra Samona, Cristal Sanchez, Stephany Zapien, Jocelyn Orpineda, Leslie Santiago and Anahi Vera

On October 20, 2015, Pixley Migrant Students interviewed Stephen Ottemoeller, Water Resources Manager, of the Friant Water Authority Resources, near Millerton Lake, Fresno, CA.

The third grade students of Mrs. Vawter's Migrant class joined the fourth grade Migrant class of Mr. Garcia and fifth grade Migrant class of Mrs. Montelon at Friant Dam near Millerton Lake.

Mr. Ottemoeller said, "Take short showers and use buckets to wash cars if you cannot go to commercial car washing areas!"

We get all the water we use from only two places: on the ground and under the ground. Water on the ground are called lakes, rivers, streams and oceans. We get the water from rain, snow, sleet and hail. Only about 1/3 of the water ends up in rivers, lakes and streams. They are used up by trees, plants and animals, or soak into the ground and evaporate. We get the water out through wells drilled into the ground. Electric pumps push the water up to the surface. In California we use all the water that is available. We use it for agriculture, crops, people, and animals. We also use water for homes, business industry, and public services. We use it for plants, fish, and other animals.

California has always had drought because of long dry periods without much rain or snow. The longest drought in California lasted for 60 years. People had to use less water. We now have water meters. If we use more than our share of water, we pay more money. If we waste water, we have water police who write up a fine ticket. We pay more money when we don't follow the water rules.

Experts suggest that the best way is to not waste water and use water correctly. Save water in homes, farms, and other places. Use energy saving faucets, showerheads, and toilets that use less water for every flush. Use recycling systems in car washes, energy efficient washing machines with short cycles, and fill them up with full loads of clothes. Use drip irrigation systems in our homes and farms. Turn off water when brushing teeth, or when washing dishes. Take short showers and don't fill up the bathtub. Plant low cactus plants and turn off sprinklers when it's raining. Use long brooms instead of using water hoses to clean our driveway. Fix all water leaks and use water buckets when cleaning cars, or wipe off outdoor furniture with a rag instead of hosing them. Do not leave the water hose open for animals to drink from it. At school, make sure students are not playing at the water fountains or throwing and spitting water on the ground. Don't put water on the play waterslide or on the trampoline to play with water.

Pixley Elementary School Migrant Students and Teachers visited the Friant Dam on Oct. 20, 2015 together with Stephen Ottemoeller, Water Resources Manager, and his assistant, Michael Wolfe.

Meet Our Journalists

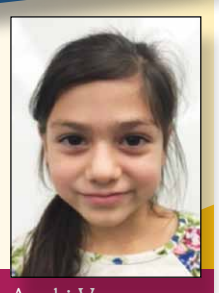
ARTICLES: Pixley Elementary School

Pixley Migrant students visit Friant Dam

By Grade 3 students


Alondra Samano – Grade 3


Alvaro Rodriguez – Grade 3

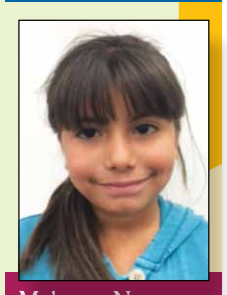

Anahi Vera – Grade 3


Cristal Sanchez – Grade 3


Jocelyn Orpineda – Grade 3


Leslie Santiago – Grade 3


Stephany Zapien – Grade 3


Meleena Navarro – Grade 3

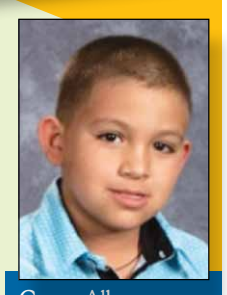
ARTICLES: Pixley Elementary School

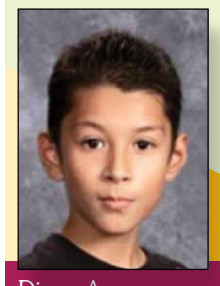
The Friant Dam: A massive wall for good

By Grade 4 students

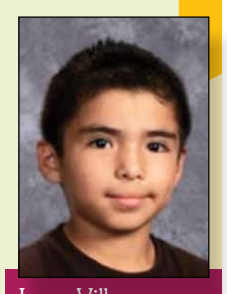

Kevin Pasillas – Grade 4


Arlissa Zapien – Grade 4


Cesar Alba – Grade 4


Diego Anaya – Grade 4

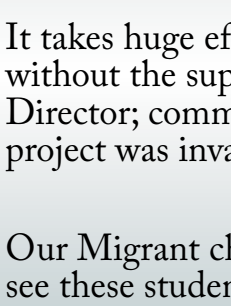

Eduardo Zepeda – Grade 4

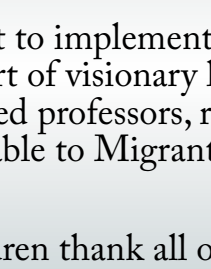

Isaac Villa – Grade 4

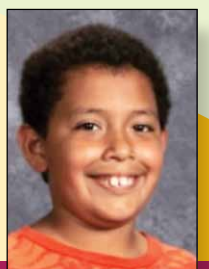
ARTICLES: Pixley Elementary School

Is the Friant Dam really important?

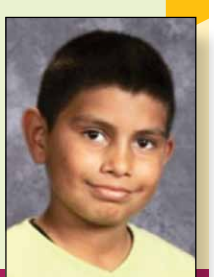
By Grade 5 students

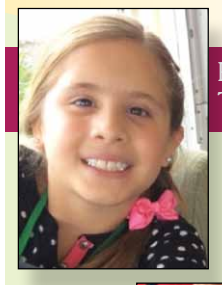

Aileen Alba – Grade 5


Ariana Zepeda – Grade 5


Andrew Zamudio – Grade 5


Ashanti Paz – Grade 5


Ramon Canedo – Grade 5


Regina Toscano


Marco Torrez

ARTICLES:

Saving money and water

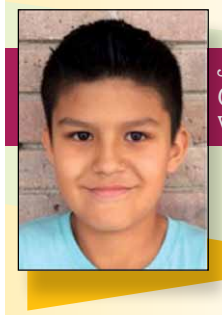
The Incubator
Water and Energy Technology Incubator


Yadira Santiago

ARTICLES:

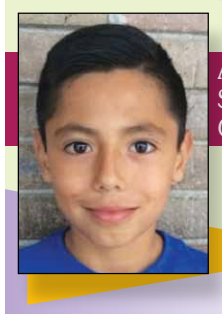
How are we saving water in Tulare schools?

How the drought effects grapevines


Juan Olivares Victor Luis

ARTICLES:

How the drought is effecting one of Tulare's principals


Alejandro Sanchez Ortiz

ARTICLES:

All the leaves are brown


Edwin Garcia

ARTICLES:

Expensive water


Jaime Padilla


Isidro Gonzalez


Karen Roque

ARTICLES:

California drought: farmer thinks smarter about water

By Isidro Gonzales, Jaime Padilla and Karen Roque

How the drought effects grapevines

By Isidro Gonzalez

My dad

By Jaime Padilla

How the drought affects regular workers

By Karen Roque

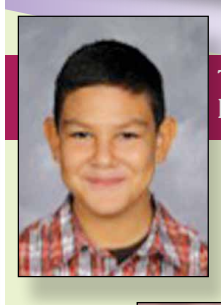

Dalia Cortez Garcia

ARTICLES:

A Fresno State experience

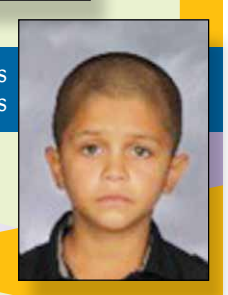
ARTICLES:

Do you think Paramount could go out of business?


Toribio Esparza


Alfredo Perez

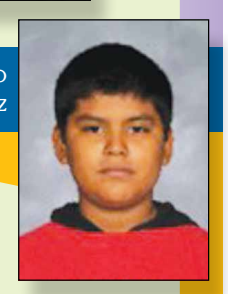

Francisco Lara Beltran


Ulises Morales

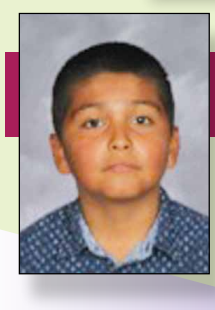

Luis Navarro


Ernesto Vazquez


Juan Vasquez


Marco Sanchez


Nayeli Marron


Jose Carranza

ARTICLES:

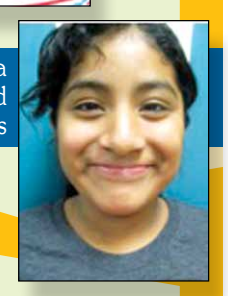
The woman who believed in herself

Don't throw water away, save it for another day!


Monserrat Langerica


Jonathon Flores


Maria Valentina Hernandez


Jessica Soledad Flores


Adolfo Becerra


Gustavo Santa Cruz

Acknowledgments

It takes huge effort to implement new educational projects such as the Migrant Education Journalism Project. We couldn't have done it without the support of visionary leaders: Jim Vidak, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools; Celina Torres, Migrant Education State Director; committed professors, resilient teachers, patient and understanding interviewees, parents and other dynamic support staff. This project was invaluable to Migrant children and we believe that it was a success.

Our Migrant children thank all of you and appreciate you taking the time to lend a helping hand. As a result of everyone's efforts, we may see these students as future journalists.