

The Texas Migrant Council demonstrates the partnership that the Affiliates of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) form with Latino families. Nationally, nearly 300 of these organizations provide community and workforce development, education, social services, immigration, citizenship and other services. Collectively, the Affiliates serve millions of Hispanic Americans and immigrant families. “Day in and day out, our Affiliates work to strengthen families and communities,” says Janet Murguía, President and CEO of NCLR. “Together, we are creating more opportunities for Latino parents to build a better future for themselves and their children.”



TEXAS

MIGRANT COUNCIL

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Award-winning Program:

Migrant/Seasonal Head Start Family Literacy Program

Mary Capello, CEO

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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2005 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

PARENTS ARE THE FIRST TEACHERS

It's not the constant transfers from school to school, sometimes five or six a year, that hold back the children of migrant and seasonal farm workers. According to Mary Capello, CEO of the Texas Migrant Council (TMC), it often stems from their inability to imagine their own academic success. "Each child needs an environment that can support learning," says Capello. "And that's where family literacy comes in. We teach reading, writing and English language skills to a child's first teachers, their parents."

TMC's Migrant/Seasonal Head Start Family Literacy Program reaches out to parents so that they can, in turn, help their own children learn. According to Capello, "Parents are their children's primary teachers. Literacy is a tool they can use to improve their own lives and inspire their children to succeed."

"If we did not offer the Family Literacy Program," Capello says, "most migrant families would not have opportunities to improve their literacy skills."



WE LISTEN TO FAMILIES. THEN WE
WORK WITH PARENTS TO ACHIEVE
THEIR GOALS FOR THEMSELVES AND
THEIR CHILDREN.

—Mary Capello, CEO, Texas Migrant Council

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

The Texas Migrant Council works to strengthen thousands of migrant families across the Southwest and Midwest, by providing primary health care, early childhood and adult education and employment services and job training. "We understand the obstacles farm workers face, their grueling schedules," says Capello. "That understanding is the key to our success and to the success of the families we serve."

TMC organized its Family Literacy Program around the basic facts of migrant families' lives: 90 percent of the parents enrolled in the program do not have a high school diploma or GED; half of them left school after the sixth grade or earlier; and one in 30 parents has no schooling whatsoever. Still, these migrant parents want a better education for both themselves and their children. "But to reach these parents and their children, we must offer literacy instruction in the fields, in the home or anywhere we can," Capello says.

The Family Literacy Program includes English as a Second Language (ESL), parent/child reading activities, specialized materials, weekly meetings with literacy teachers and financial support to take the GED. Family Literacy Days bring books alive for kids through storytelling, plays and singing. Parents and children can take classes at TMC's 69 centers in five states. Every center can access each person's progress report, helping to keep entire migrant families on track academically no matter where the parents are working.

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize NCLR Affiliates with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.