

Date: 5/17/18

To: Dean Lisa Kirtman, Chair Kim Norman (EDEL)

Fr: Pablo Jasis, Associate Professor

Re: Emma Holmes Award, Final Report

## **Introduction**

This project, supported by the 2017-2018 Emma Holmes Award, is the expansion of my 19-year old commitment to strengthen educational outcomes among migrant families and the K-12 schools their children attend. I have provided pedagogical and technical support to involved educators of migrant children, designed and implemented successful educational programs, while I have also dedicated a significant part of my scholarship to learning from the strengths and challenges of agricultural families in the Southwest. This particular project involved the observation and interactions with farm worker families and their children schools in the areas of Vallecitos, Rainbow, Fallbrook, Ontario and the Coachella Valley, in Southern California. It included meaningful conversations with migrant parents, as well as with their children's teachers, many of whom are connected to the Migrant Education Program (MEP).

## **Strengthening School-Family Partnerships**

In my conversations with migrant families, they conveyed their need to strengthen their connections to teachers and administrators to achieve a stronger, mutual understanding of their family's strengths and challenges. They also shared their high appreciation of the advocacy and activities initiated by MEP on their children's behalf, and their need to be seen as motivated and committed parents who value education. These parents believe that many school districts need to become more flexible to allow for meaningful family engagement, by being more understanding of their need to travel for work, their low income status, and, often their challenges with transportation and support needs. They also shared their support for additional educational services for their children, such as tutoring, individual counseling, second/third language learning, as well as nutritional and health support.

This project also involved an active array of interactions with teachers of young migrant students, who shared their successes and challenges in educating migrant children and involving their families. They believe that a stronger connection between MEP and schools is necessary, specifically towards an earlier identification of migrant children to better address their particular educational, emotional, and nutritional/health needs. They committed themselves to promoting more meaningful engagements with the families, which often means the need to take the services directly to them in their own neighborhoods, and to avoid

depending on the parents attending logistically-challenged school events. They understand many of the needs and challenges of migrant families, and are becoming increasingly aware of their strengths and opportunities to collaborate with the schools.

### **Specific Results**

Thanks to the opportunities supported by the **Emma Holmes Award**, I was able to spend more time observing and interacting with migrant children, their families, and their teachers. This process was also facilitated by a stronger time commitment to the CSUF-HEP (High School Equivalency Program), a community-based instructional effort providing remedial education and support services to farm worker adults through a federal grant I led. This program is housed at our Elementary and Bilingual Education Department, and through its implementation I have been able to more effectively reach out to migrant families, having rich opportunities to learn from them, and to envision effective pedagogies for their children. As a result, I am writing a scholarly article of sole authorship about this experience, probably titled: *Latino Immigrant Parents and Schools: Learning from their Journeys of Empowerment*. I plan to submit the manuscript within the next few weeks to **The School-Community Journal**, a leading publication on school and community relations, with a large and qualified readership among educators, advocacy organizations, and parent groups.

The **Emma Holmes Award** has also allowed me opportunities to disseminate the preliminary findings of my research. On February 26-27, 2018, I presented some of the most salient features of my observations and interactions with migrant families and their children's teachers at the CARE Conference (Conference on Academic Research in Education), hosted by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to a full room audience of educators.