Looking Through the Lens of a Former Migrant Student:

My name is Sherry and I am a former migrant student who’s family was helped greatly by this program and am now a certified elementary school teacher. During this presentation you will learn about the program, it’s purpose, how it helps it’s students and families, what teachers should consider when working with migrant children, and be given additional resources to further your knowledge into migrant education. Along the way I will share with you some personal stories of what it was like to be a migrant student and how those experiences can increase our awareness as teachers.
Migrant Education Tutorial and Support Services (METS) Program

- The Migrant Education Tutorial and Support Services (METS) Program began in 1979 to assist school districts in meeting the unmet, unique needs of migrant children.

- METS network links migrant families with necessary academic, health, and social services.

- Authorized by Title I, Part C of No Child Left Behind

- 11 Programs in New York State - Serving 5,000+ students, in over 800 school districts in New York State

- Cortland MEOP is the 4th largest in New York State, serving over 50 school districts and 600+ students
Migrant Farmworker Definition

- Family or individual which has moved from one school district to another and is employed in temporary or seasonal agriculture, dairy farming, food processing, fishing, or logging.
Programs and Services

- The Cortland METS offers a variety of programs and services to students, these are just a few:
  - Academic In-School Services
  - Summer Services
  - Migrant Youth Programs
  - Adolescent Outreach Programs
  - Out-of-School Youth Programs
  - Career Exploration
  - PASS Program
History and Legislation of Migrant Farmworkers in the United States

- 1942-The Bracero Program was created by Executive Order because growers argued World War II would create labor shortages in low-paying agricultural jobs.¹

- 1942-1964-Approximately 4.6 million short-term contracts were signed allowing Mexican men to come to the United States to work in primarily agricultural jobs. Many individuals returning to the US several times on different contracts.¹

- 1965-Congress passes Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I promised special education help for children disadvantaged by poverty. ²

- November 1966-Congress passed amendment to ESEA creating the Migrant Education Program as a component of Title I.²
History and Legislation of Migrant Farmworkers in the United States

- **1968**: Congress passes the Bilingual Education Act- provided funding to local districts and schools for incorporating bilingual education into the classroom. Originally designed to meet the needs of native Spanish speakers. This act was eventually consolidated with 37 other bills that became known as title VII and in the No Child Left Behind Legislation, as Title III.²

- **1974**: Congress passes the Equal Educational Opportunity Act- required that all schools and districts, regardless of funding sources, to take responsibility for helping non-English speaking students learn.²

- **1988**: Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments- the age ranges at which funds could be distributed for migrant students was extended from 5-17 years old to 3-21.²

- **2001**: Congress reauthorizes the ESEA under the No Child Left Behind Act.²
Harvest of Shame Clip

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkV3oVn209s
The Harvest Trailer

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfJUEtdKDsk
Characteristics of Migrant Students

- Very hard-working
- Often isolated from mainstream society
- Accepting of responsibility beyond their years
- Often unaware of career and educational opportunities
- Strong sense of family
- RESILIENT!!!!
Sherry’s Personal Reflections

- Migrant students face challenges, have experiences, responsibilities, and needs that other students simply will never have. They are unique in this way and with the right support and encouragement these students can thrive academically.

- Migrant students grow up watching their parents work extremely hard for very little pay and reward. Like all children, migrant children adopt these traits and accept hard-work as a natural part of life.

- Society has a way of isolating people who are different and those who they do not understand. The life of a migrant family is often very different from mainstream society. That’s why awareness in the education of migrant students is so important as teachers and professors. It’s our responsibility to teach respect, kindness, and acceptance.
Migrant children take on responsibility that non-migrant children normally wouldn’t have too. Because of the long hours migrant parents work (sometimes as much as 18 hour days, older children often have extra family responsibilities such as taking care of dinner, younger siblings, and cleaning the house. Children often work in migrant families as well. As a young teenager I worked in the barn to help my step-father. And during the summer hay season I worked for another local farmer; I helped unload hay off the hay wagons and helped stack it up in the barn’s hayloft to earn extra money for my family. It gave me a sense of pride that I was helping my family with the money I earned.
Sherry’s Personal Reflections

Education wasn’t discussed or stressed in my home. I believe that we as teachers, have a responsibility to encourage and inform students of their potential and possibilities for the future. We need make sure students are aware of their options so they can choose their own futures. As teachers and schools do we a good job at educating all of our students about their options for the future? Do we focus on the college bound and leave out specific populations of students?

Growing up, my family worked very hard for very little money. Because we had very little, you learn that family is really what matters most.

One of the foundations to all migrant students is that they are resilient-being a migrant student a hard life, you make it through by being able to adapt, by being strong, and by having those close family ties.
Advice for Teachers...

- Get to know your student
- Don’t treat migrant students like a temporary student
- Make sure desks are ready, their names are included with other students on all classroom material (e.g. Birthday charts, class lists, lockers).
In several schools I attended, my teachers never put my name on my desk. Each morning, I distinctly remember walking in and looking to see if it would be on my desk that morning. It never showed up. I guess they were right, because I eventually moved to another school, I don’t remember those teachers names, and I’m sure they don’t remember mine. Don’t assume the student will be gone in a few months. Treat the students like it is their last move.
Advice for Teachers...

- Encourage Attendance
  - Make the classroom a positive welcoming place where migrant students feel welcome.

- Moving means- new town, new home, new school, new teacher, new students, new rules
  - Clearly explain all classroom rules, expectations just as you did for every student on the 1st day of school.
  - Consider a mentor for a new migrant student.
Moving never got easier as a child. Each time I moved, everything was new all over again, my house, my town, my school, my teacher, the students, everything. I had to re-learn everything in my new classroom. It was truly a sensory overload. Even a very well organized, and maybe especially a well organized classroom, can be very confusing to students. They are not going to be familiar with centers, your numbering systems, where your math center is with your manipulatives, etc. I was surrounded by students who knew where to go when, knew where to find what they needed, knew the rules of what not to do, knew what it meant when the teacher clapped her hands, knew what it meant when the teacher chimed the bell on her desk. It is very overwhelming for a new student entering a classroom which is established. I recommend when you have a new student entering your room in the middle of the year, you take the time to bring them up to speed with routine practice, and give them a student “buddy” as a mentor.
Advice for Teachers...

- Gaps in curriculum occur
  
  - FACT: Migrant children often function two or more grade levels behind their peers.
  
  - Knowing what your students has and has not covered in another school is essential and can make a huge difference in his or her success.
  
  - Different schools cover material at different times of the year and different rates even if they use the same texts.
  
  - May need to differentiate your lessons

*Fairness, doesn’t mean that everyone gets the same, just that everyone gets what they need.* - Richard Lavoie
Advice for Teachers...

- ESL students
  - Support English language learning, have posters in both English and Spanish, weave language into your classroom.

- Embrace cultural differences
  - Choose literature that celebrates cultural differences, utilizes different holidays, traditions, foods, and music.

- Awareness does not mean lowering expectations
  - Do not disrespect the student by pitying the student, expect excellence, encourage the students best work as you would any student.
Advice for Teachers...

- Communicate with Parents
  - Use take-home folders for written communication.
  - ESL parents can write in Spanish and can be translated into English at school. Keep lines open throughout the year.

- Consider special needs
  - Ex. School supplies, project materials, snacks, access to technology. Consider supplying these items to students, ask for donations, give parents advance notice for projects requiring materials.
  - Projects out of recycled items
  - When planning events at school, consider the families access to transportation.
Some nights it was difficult to find a pencil to do my homework, so often we didn’t have access to many of the materials teachers required us to have for projects. Our family rarely had extra money and there was a long list of things that money needed to go to. As a child, I knew we didn’t have money to buy the supplies I often needed for projects, and I was too proud to tell my teacher. My advice to teachers is to offer project materials to students. Sending a note home to all parents asking for class donations of extra magazines to make posters, extra shoe boxes, clay for projects, cereal boxes, or other recycled materials, will help students who do not have these material at home. Then the students who need the materials can take what they need.
Becoming Better Teachers

- **Awareness is the first step**
  - Having background knowledge of the migrant farmworker lifestyle enables you to be sensitive to the challenges a migrant student may face in your classroom.

- **Applying your knowledge is the second**
  - Take the practical steps needed to meet the needs of not only migrant students in your classroom, but any student who may have a similar background and/or experiences.
How can you help...

- Become Aware - educate yourself and others. Use your awareness to make a difference in your classroom and in our school.
- Utilize children’s migrant literature in your classroom
- Continue learning about migrant education using professional literature and online resources
If you are interested in organizing a targeted donation drive (i.e., for items like toiletries), please contact Claire Soules (607.753.4706;) or via e-mail at claire.soules@cortland.edu
Children’s Literature

- Migrant by Maxine Trottier
- A Day’s Work by Eve Bunting
- Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez by Kathleen Krull
- Amelia’s Road by Linda Jacobs Altman
- Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan
- Radio Man by Arthur Dorros
- Working Cotton by Sherley Anne Williams
- Migrant Worker: A Boy from the Rio Grande Valley by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith
- The Upside Down Boy by Juan Felipe Herrera
- Calling the Doves by Juan Felipe Herrera
Professional Literature

- “Where Do I Go From Here?”: Meeting The Unique Educational Needs Of Migrant Students by Karen S. Vocke
- Scholars in the Field: The Challenges of Migrant Education Edited by Cinthia Salinas and Maria E. Franquiz
- Reading Out: Best Practices For Educating Mexican-Origin Children And Youth by Harriett D. Romo
- With These Hands: The Hidden World Of Migrant Farmworkers Today by Daniel Rothenberg
- Teaching With Poverty In Mind by Eric Jensen
- See Poverty...Be The Difference by Dr. Donna M. Beegle
- Voices From The Fields: Children Of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories by S. Beth Atkin (Could use in the classroom)
- Growing Season: The Life Of A Migrant Community by David Hassler
- The Fight In The Fields: Cesar Chavez And The Farmworkers Movement by Susan Ferriss and Ricardo Sandoval
Online Resources

- The Geneseo Migrant Center
  http://migrant.net/

- The U.S. Department of Education
  http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/ome/index.html
Goals to leave you with

- Expect great things from every child
- Know that your actions make a difference
- Seek resources, tools, experiences and professional development to enhance learning for yourself and your students
- Participate in efforts to bring about access, equity, and excellence
- Challenge, inspire, and teach every student

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association
References

1. Bracero History Archive [http://braceroarchive.org/about](http://braceroarchive.org/about)
2. *Scholars in the Field: The Challenges of Migrant Education*  
   Edited by Cinthia Salinas and Maria E. Franquiz