



Strategies • Opportunities • Services for Out-of-School Youth

SOSOSY Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

SOSOSY Consortium Incentive Grant

Participating States

Alabama
Colorado
Florida
Idaho
Illinois
Kansas
Kentucky
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Mississippi
Nebraska
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New York
North Carolina
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
Tennessee
Vermont
Wisconsin

Partner States

Alaska
Arkansas
Georgia
Maryland
Missouri
Montana
Washington

Director's Message

Welcome to the Spring SOSOSY Newsletter. It was a pleasure to see so many of you at the recent NASDME conference in Seattle. I hope you found the general meetings and breakout sessions as productive as I did. Inside this issue we are excited to share with you some of our SOSOSY successes. Check out the State Spotlight on South Carolina, heart-warming stories from OSY in Arizona and Nebraska OSY, and news from the Technical Support Team. Remember that we always welcome submissions for the newsletter. Don't hesitate to send an idea to me at tkalic@embarqmail.com.

Thank you for all that you do!

Tracie Kalic, Director, SOSOSY

NASDME Brightens Up Seattle with 2015 National Migrant Education Conference

Thousands of migrant education professionals gathered in Seattle last month for NASDME's annual conference. This year offered four general sessions and 175 workshops for professional development that covered every topic from human trafficking to immigrant legislation to educational resources.

SOSOSY was proud to offer workshops including *How to Reach and Teach OSY* and *Helping OSY Discover Their Dreams*.

SOSOSY Technical Support Team Meeting News

After very productive meetings in October and April, the Technical Support Team is pursuing some exciting changes and updates for SOSOSY. The team is working on:

- redesigning the SOSOSY website
- developing new training opportunities
- building capacity according to the Consortium's Fidelity Implementation Index
- planning for 2016 and beyond

A Diploma at Last: A Story of Persistence and Compassion



Tucker Keiser dropped out of school the second semester of his senior year and was working cows in Gordon, AZ. Thanks to an alert and compassionate school counselor, Sherry Retzlaff, Tucker was offered books and assignments to facilitate his ability to earn a diploma. The AZ MEP staff became involved when Tucker had a qualifying move and was signed up for the Migrant Education Program. However, once his COE had been approved and staff member Rhonda Case attempted to contact him, she was told that Tucker had moved “somewhere down south of Harrison.” He had left his books behind.

Rhonda obtained the schoolbooks and began to search for Tucker. Anyone familiar with Sioux County knows that looking for a student south of Harrison is a tall task. It is a 2,067 square mile grassland laced with gravel roads and cattle, but no towns south of Harrison. Fortunately, it also has a small population (1,311 in the entire county). Rhonda reached out to the County Extension agent, who gave her a name of a

farmer who hired temporary workers. Tucker did not work for him, but that farmer referred her to another farmer, and so the story went until someone told her that she could leave the books at the veterinarian’s office because he knew Tucker.

Throughout this time, Rhonda had been calling and texting Tucker. The next time Rhonda called, he had the books. She set up a visit, but when she went out to the farm, he had already moved again. The farmer said he had moved to Gordon. A personal friend of Rhonda’s in Gordon helped her find where Tucker lived. After that, Tucker’s mother joined Rhonda in her efforts to encourage him to finish his final high school semester work. Rhonda checked in with him three times a month with the same questions, “How’s work going?” “How is school going?”

As time progressed and work took priority in Tucker’s life, it became apparent that it would be very difficult for Tucker to finish by the May 22nd deadline for graduation. Rhonda and Mrs. Lori Liggett, the principal of Gordon High School, met to re-evaluate Tucker’s plan. Mrs. Liggett graciously moved the deadline for completing his high school work until he turned 22, rather than by the May graduation deadline. The school also approved granting some credit for the work he was doing with his employer. Mrs. Liggett ordered a high school diploma for Tucker, and told Rhonda to let him know that it was there waiting for him when he finished his work. Rhonda told him and added “I know you can do it before you turn 22.” Tucker was amazed and asked if the diploma was signed. Rhonda said, “Yes, all you have to do is get the work done.”

Little by little over the summer and fall, Tucker did the work on his own, with the support of his mother. Rhonda continued calling every 10 days or so. Tucker was very good about returning calls and texts. Rhonda also kept in contact with Tucker’s mom. She told her, “We’ve gotta have a celebration for him when he finishes.” On October 2, Mrs. Liggett reported that all of Tucker’s required work was completed, and that he has earned his high school diploma that has been waiting for him.

Thank you Rhonda, Mrs. Liggett, and Mrs. Retzlaff for believing in Tucker!

Those who work closely with out-of-school youth recognize the role that negative experiences and overwhelming challenges play in a student's life. Academic success depends upon overcoming obstacles often generated not by the students themselves but by families, economics, and policies.

Advocating for OSY means identifying those Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), addressing solutions for individual obstacles, and exhorting students to succeed with as many tools and resources available.

Now general awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is gaining traction.

A 2015 report from Washington State University focuses on the effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on student success across communities. Author Christopher Blodgett, PhD, states, "Several hundred peer-reviewed research studies consistently support the role of ACEs as arguably the most powerful single predictor of health and well-being in adulthood. However, equivalent results in childhood emerged only in the past few years."

Blodgett's research showed that in the 10% of children known to have experienced three or more ACEs, academic failure was four times more likely, serious attendance problems were

five times more likely, and serious school behavior problems were six times more likely.

The author points out the need for local communities to assist school districts in dealing with ACEs by stating, "Addressing community risks of ACEs in adults and children through community education, coordinated community responses, early intervention, and strengthening remedial efforts, offers strategies that are supported by research but require careful investment and disciplined implementation."

Awareness about ACEs and how they affect all ages and school testing in particular is an important topic of discussion for community leaders. As the study indicates, working in collaboration with school district professionals and other community leaders is the best way to begin helping those affected by ACEs to overcome and succeed.

What is Trauma?

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma - The Three "E's" of Trauma:

- Event(s)
- Experience of Event(s)
- Effect

Individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Cori Canty - CO

State Spotlight: South Carolina

Jennifer Almeda, PhD

Migrant Education Program, State Coordinator



DEMOGRAPHICS

The South Carolina Department of Education has served migratory children through the Migrant Education Program since 1971. The program ran for years in the summers only, but piloted its first regular school year program for the school year 2013-2014. The OSY population is divided by H2A and non-H2A workers. Non-H2A workers usually are present for no more than three weeks for the watermelon, tomato, melon, berries, and squash harvest. Many non-H2A workers are Native American with origins from southern Mexico and Guatemala and many speak a Native American language in addition to Spanish. H2A workers generally work in peaches, nurseries, and planting trees, and can be present for several months; they generally have had more years of formal education, tend to be primarily Spanish speaking, and usually come from Northern Mexico.

UNIQUENESS

The majority of OSY is present in South Carolina in the summer months. Still, there are some students who migrate within South Carolina. South Carolina, considered a small state, receives a little more than half a million dollars annually to serve migrant children and youth. The amount of eligible migrant students averages 1,196 for the past four years. While there is wide variety of produce in South Carolina, most of the families and student youth work in the preparation, planting, and harvesting of peaches, tomatoes, and watermelons. However, many growers have been planting a second crop of tomatoes resulting in a fall harvest, which means migrant students are present for the beginning months of the regular school year. In 2013-14, 851 eligible migrant students from birth to age 21 were identified by SC MEP.

Although 50 percent of these children attended grades K-12, only 38 percent were present for state standardized assessment. Of the identified eligible migrant population for SY2013-14, 24 percent, or 208 students were OSY.

ID&R

State level recruiters usually work from mid-March to mid-November and are divided regionally to cover the entire state. State recruiters wear several hats including service provider and advocate. They work with the students and families, school districts, local Adult Education offices, growers, and local services. State recruiters also provide mini-lessons in situ for OSY, pre-K students and parents, and reinforce and assist with schoolwork for K-12 students. LEAs/LOAs are responsible for recruitment activities during the course of their program; however, state recruiters provide much support and training to local staff. SC MEP has also benefited from the use of student volunteers from Student Action with Farm-workers (SAF) during the intense summer months. SAF volunteers have been of invaluable assistance to state recruiters and in providing assistance to local programs.

STATE SUPPORT

SC MEP recognized early the changing demographic of the migrant student population and thus has formed part of the original SOSOSY consortium. By its unwavering commitment to consortium membership and participation, SC MEP demonstrates its commitment to OSY. Furthermore, SC MEP also includes the goal serving OSY in its State Service Delivery Plan by having specific measurable program outcomes and key strategies specially geared towards providing services to OSY.



State Spotlight: South Carolina (Continued)

STRENGTHS

SC MEP's greatest strength is its state recruiters, and local recruiters, services providers and staff. It is only through the passion, dedication, and fastidiousness of the state recruiters and local staff that OSY and their needs are identified and OSY are empowered. The state recruiters and local staff have an amazing capacity to go above and beyond recruitment, teaching mini-lessons and coordinating services, by looking at each OSY as an individual and interacting with the student in a compassionate way to empower and to demonstrate that they are valued.

IMPROVEMENTS

Due to lack of resources and program limitations, SC MEP struggles with providing impacting educational resources and lessons to OSY. While the OSY consortia have been invaluable in providing tools and strategies, it can be difficult to find the most apropos methods for a diverse OSY population who are present between one week and several months with a limited number of service providers.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Annual training is provided to local staff once a year at the annual meetings and on site by the state coordinator and state recruiters. Material and strategies from the OSY consortia are heavily used for trainings. State-level staff engages in ongoing professional development throughout the season by participation in consortium events and national conferences and meetings such as Florida's ID&R forum, North Carolina MEP's training and conferences, and NASDME. State recruiters also attend and participate in trainings at the state and local level for other federal programs such as Adult Education, Title III/ESOL, McKinney-Vento/Homeless, Migrant Health, East Coast Migrant Head Start, Department of Labor's Wage and Hourly Division, and other agricultural labor and farm labor coordinating committees.

COLLABORATION

SC MEP participates in the SC Migrant Health Advisory Council, SC AG Labor Coordinating Committee, SC Farmworker Institute, has MOUs with Adult Education, and Migrant Head Start. Furthermore, state-level MEP staff work closely with Adult Education, Title III/ESOL, and McKinney-Vento Homeless programs. State recruiters also work closely with growers, crew leaders, local education staff members, school officials, and service providers. Local level collaboration includes MEP participation in the East Coast Migrant Head Start 'mobile classrooms' in which a variety of local organizations provide services in a round of scheduled visits to camps during the peak season.

SUCCESS STORY

Program level - SC MEP has been struggling to adequately serve OSY H2A peach workers. After lengthy collaboration and dialogue with Adult Education at the state level, the Adult Education created an ESL Migrant Pilot Project which would allow both OSY and non-OSY migrants to receive a short-term learning course (at least 12 hours but no more than 30) designed to teach specific work-based English listening and speaking skills in documented agreement with an employer offering temporary or seasonal employment in agriculture or fishing work. *Individual Level* - In 2014 a 16-year-old OSY arrived from Guatemala. He was eager to enroll in high school but ended up in Adult Education. He was so eager to learn that, although the Adult Education classes were repeated twice a day to allow students the most convenient time, he attended both classes daily as he struggled to work. Coordination between the recruiter, local teachers, and the state level Title III and MEP staff resulted in the student's enrollment in high school.



SOSOSY Success Story - Jose Castano

This January, Jose Castaño, who is 18 years old, returned to school. For Jose, it wasn't just another return from Christmas break. It was a decision to return to school after leaving school. Jose finished last year as a junior at Bridgeport High School in Nebraska. He had turned 18, and felt that he had worked hard both at school and at his summer job. He wanted to see more of the world, and see what life outside of school was like. He traveled to Mexico to see family, and enjoyed his time there. After a while, he started thinking of school. He realized how lucky he had been in the United States, and at Bridgeport High School. He started to think about his future.

He decided to come back home to see his parents in Bridgeport and work for a little while. As soon as he returned, he went to work for a local farmer. Hard work has always been part of Jose's character. He has worked after school and every summer for farms and ranches, but this time work took the place of education.

Jose's migrant education recruiter, Rosie Cobos, called or texted periodically to see how he was doing. In December, Rosie and Kiowa Rogers, the migrant program director, met with Jose to talk about his future. They connected via Skype with two out-of-school youth in Ogallala whom the migrant program had helped send to the High School Equivalency Program (HEP). One of those youth had gotten his GED through the HEP program, and the other is still working on it. They talked with Jose about how the opportunity to earn their GEDs has improved their lives. Jose, his mother, Rosie, and Kiowa discussed the options: attending the HEP program, working on a GED locally, re-enrolling in high school, work, college, the future. Jose thought deeply.

A few days later, Kiowa and Jose met with Mr. Matt Asche and Mrs. Kathy Baxter at Bridgeport High School, and also visited Mr. George Schlo-

thauer at the Valley Alternative Learning School (VALTS) to look at all of the options before making a decision.

Jose carefully considered each option, and decided that he wanted the challenge of returning to Bridgeport High to graduate with his class. In order to do this, he is taking a full load of classes, plus online credit recovery through A+. Mr. Asche provided a laptop with internet access so Jose can work on his credit recovery both at school and at home. Mrs. Baxter reports that Jose is completing his A+ assignments "like a trooper every day." Jose and Mrs. Baxter are also working on college planning. Jose told us that Mrs. Baxter is a wonderful school counselor who is encouraging him each step of the way. Jose's decision to return to school has changed his future. He is thriving in school and his future looks very bright.



SOSOSY Success Story - Jose Castano (Continued)

Here are some questions and answers from Jose on life as a newly recovered high school student:

Q: How is school going?

A: Pretty good. I've been doing all my work and getting good grades. Starting back in the middle of the year, I missed some things, which is kind of sad but I'm working hard and determined to graduate.

Q: What's the most rewarding part of returning to school?

A: I'm appreciating school more, and my teachers, and how important school is.

Q: What's the most challenging part?

A: Getting used to all the work again. It's been a long time. Things are not easy when you come back because you've forgotten a lot of things and aren't used to it.

Q: How do you feel about your decision to return to school?

A: Glad. I'm 100% sure I made the right decision. I saw my diploma today. Mrs. Baxter shows it to me quite often and says that if I finish, it will be mine.

Q: How do you feel about your future?

A: I'm really undecided. I'm having a hard time figuring out what I want to do. Time is running out. I want to do a lot of things in my life. I don't want to be a failure. I want to be somebody, to make something of my life.

Q: What advice would you give to other students who have dropped out of high school?

A: I would tell them to think about their family and the people around them. Try to be someone in life. Don't just get a minimum wage job when you could be successful and rich and have everything you want. There are a lot of opportunities out there, and you just have to take them. Later on it'll be too late. What's the point of having a job you don't like for the rest of your life, and moving from job to job? Study what you like and work on that to become the best.

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