



# in our own backyard

THE HIDDEN PROBLEM OF  
CHILD FARM WORKERS IN AMERICA

<http://www.ourownbackyard.org>

## Part III: What Can Be Done?

### **Motivation, Education and Training**

Description of an organization that provides education and job training to migrant workers in Texas, Louisiana, Minnesota and North Dakota.

*Source: U.S. Department of Labor, summary of the National Skills Summit, [http://www.dol.gov/\\_sec/skills\\_summit/p2s8e.htm](http://www.dol.gov/_sec/skills_summit/p2s8e.htm)*



## **Motivation Education & Training, Inc. (MET) Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Youth Program**

### The Challenge:

To provide migrant and seasonal farmworker youth with the opportunity for stable employment in other industries.

### The Solution:

Develop a one-stop center where MSFW youth can obtain the education, skills training, and supportive services they need to open new doors for themselves.

### The Partners:

**Motivation Education & Training, Inc. (MET)** is a private non-profit organization operating on a state-wide basis in Texas, Louisiana, Minnesota, and North Dakota. MET provides academic and vocational training to migrant and seasonal farmworkers, with a focus on youth.

**U.S. Department of Labor** funds program.

**Edinburg Public School System** works with MET to develop a school-to-work curriculum for graduating students, as well as a summer academic enrichment program and college-prep courses.

### The Story:

Giselda Hernandez, a 20-year-old from Weslaco, Texas, has battled bone cancer since she was 12 years old. Her parents, as migrant farm workers, traveled each year from Texas to the onion fields of Georgia. They instilled in her a strong work ethic, spirit, and determination which allowed her to graduate from high school despite her illness. Yet her compromised health prevented her from doing difficult farm labor, and her limited non-agricultural work experience left her with few other options.

Giselda accessed the occupational training resources she needed through Motivation Education & Training, Inc. She took advantage of MET's most recent initiative - the Coordinated Service Center, a technology-rich one-stop community center in Edinburg, Texas. The center offers young people a variety of computer-based learning experiences, academic tutoring, career exploration opportunities, case management, access to post-secondary educational opportunities, and other services. MET provided the sponsorship and guidance Ms. Hernandez needed to establish and pursue a career development plan. She enrolled in an office-oriented information technology course, which led to her current employment as a court clerk in a nearby city. Giselda is just one of many success stories. The Coordinated Service Centers, open since 1996, has served over 1,100 young people. As a result of shared curriculum development with Edinburg's two public high schools, thousands of additional students have benefited from MET's training programs in their own school-to-work program classrooms.

MET offers numerous other programs for youth, including a head start program for the children of teenage parents, and a summer academic enrichment program that helps young farm workers complete high school and apply to college.

### A Model of Innovation:

MET's one-stop career center model makes it easy for youth to access all of the resources they need in one place. The use of case workers and career counselors ensures that each participant receives individualized attention in developing a comprehensive training and employment program. In meeting the challenges faced by farm worker youth, MET truly addresses the "whole person."