Since its inception in 1981, the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at California State University, Sacramento has fostered a family-like environment for students from migrant and seasonal farm worker backgrounds and an array of support services including pre-college and first-year assistance. Most importantly, CAMP has helped turn the dreams of hundreds of students into reality. Hundreds of students from common, humble beginnings are now enjoying continuing personal and professional success due to the opportunity that CAMP offers at Sacramento State.

CAMP has grown tremendously over the years and continues to provide migrant college students the same unique opportunities, a family-like environment and a place they can call their home away from home. Today, CAMP participants achieve a significantly higher rate of retention than non-participants, in spite of the fact that they have lower GPA's and SAT scores upon arrival at the university. CAMP participants also have higher good standing continuation rates than non-CAMP students.

But this milestone would not be possible without the many individuals who pioneered and originated the CAMP model; this includes years of advocacy, dedicated staff and a strong commitment and support on behalf of the university.

In addition, CAMP students benefit from participating in multiple equity programs including the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), MESA Engineering Program (MEP), Science Educational Equity Program (SEE), Faculty Student Mentor Program (FSMP) among others. CAMP and our students are fortunate to be part of a campus that places priority in promoting access, retention and graduation of migrant and seasonal farmworker students.

The CAMP program at Sacramento State is among the oldest in the nation. Celebrating 30 years is a momentous occasion not only for the university, but for the Sacramento region as a whole for the lives of many community members in the region and beyond are now positively impacted on a daily basis by working professionals that began their college education through CAMP. This newsletter issue highlights CAMP’s anniversary celebrations and partnerships through the success and accomplishments of our current students and graduates. We look forward to many more years to come.
This year marked the 30th anniversary of the CAMP program at Sacramento State University. The program consistently ranks in the top ten highest performing programs in the nation with a ninety-five percent of freshmen in the program successfully completing their first year of college. CAMP celebrated its anniversary with a series of events including a speaker series, an art scholarship contest and a closing culminating event. The closing event welcomed more than 80 alumni and hundreds of current CAMP and Sacramento State students as well as staff, faculty and members of the community. The closing event highlighted important aspects of the program and honored alumni in roles of leadership in the Sacramento area.

CAMP works alongside sixty high schools a year to recruit students into the program by engaging parents, visiting over 60 rural high schools and hosting campus field trips to potential students. CAMP also reaches middle school students by introducing college life and promoting college readiness.

The CAMP Summer Youth Leadership Program hosts 150 middle school students each summer. The students stay in the dorms for two weeks, eat in the dinning commons and learn how to better prepare themselves for high school, college and beyond. In addition, CAMP helps graduating high school students navigate the college admission process and provides intensive retention and graduation services during the first year and continuing college years. In addition to helping students transition from high school to college, the program also offers academic and personal counseling, career placement and tutoring. Most importantly, CAMP works with students to develop a support system within the program and provide a home away from home.

At the closing culminating event, CAMP honored three alumni: Artemio Pimentel, former Mayor of Woodland, Dr. Lorena Marquez, a Historian and Dr. Rafael Lupercio, MD. The CAMP program helped all three of the honorees accomplish their academic goals and all three attributed much of their success to Sacramento State and the program. The honorees are just a few of the hundreds of success stories of migrant alumni who began their career at the CAMP program at Sacramento State.
In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the College Assistance Migrant Program at Sacramento State a series of guest speakers were invited to share their stories to current CAMP students and the campus community. Speakers inspired and reminded students why a college education is important for a better future. The Honorable Judge Emily Vasquez honored the campus with her presence and shared her empowering story growing up as a migrant student, her academic journey and professional legacy. Judge Vasquez is the first Latina judge to serve on the Sacramento Superior Court. Her educational career began at the University of California Davis where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and later a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of California Berkeley. She openly shared her humble beginnings as the daughter of migrant farmworkers. Despite the fact that her parents had very little, her family was always fed, clothed, and sheltered. Judge Vasquez parents motivated her to pursue a higher education as a way to escape the backbreaking conditions of working in the fields. Over the years, Judge Vasquez has received numerous honors and awards within the Sacramento community including the “Outstanding Latina of the Year Award,” by the Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the “Women Who Means Business Award,” by the Sacramento Business Journal. She is also a member of The California Latino Judges Association and the National Association of Women Judges.

Judge Emily Vasquez is certainly an exemplary role-model who has never forgotten her roots and gives back to her community by inspiring others through her life story.
CAMP students and the campus community welcomed five male CAMP Sacramento State alumni, who through their experiences as migrant and seasonal farmworkers, their academic trajectory at Sacramento State and career journey serve as a guiding example for other male students. The focus on a “male” panel was essential to address the current declining statistics of Chicano/Latino males in higher education but also to present clear examples of successful male leaders who overcame and have persevered similar challenges.

Panelists included: Eric Guerra, Capitol Director for Assembly member Warren Furutani, Miguel Calderon, Manager at Liberty Mutual, Jesus Trejo, Police Officer for the Sacramento Police Department, Oscar Mendoza, Educational Talent Search/MESA Counselor at Chico State, and Jorge Iniguez, Technical Marketing Engineer at Intel. Through this opportunity, current students were able to learn the coping mechanisms and strategies utilized by the panelists to overcome personal struggles while in college as well as in their respective professions.

Throughout its 30 years of existence, CAMP has always fostered an environment of giving back in order to continue to lay the foundation for future generations of migrant students to follow and be equally successful.
The mission of the CAMP Scholars Internship Program (CSIP) is to promote and foster the development of CAMP students through training, professional development, and relationship building. The Scholars Internship Program places second-year Sacramento State students in various offices and organizations and prepares them to become the next generation of leaders. The program is designed for students with an excellent academic record and interest in pursuing a career in public service. Most of the students are placed in the legislature at the State Capitol and have the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills and learn more about public policy and service. CAMP Scholars also intern in non-profit organizations and agencies in the Sacramento area such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Mexican Consulate and California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) Foundation.

The academic component, a monthly daylong seminar, promotes leadership development while the professional internship provides practical experience, a professional network and valuable employment skills. Along with placing students in an office, the program promotes civic engagement by introducing participants to immediate issues impacting the community at a local and national level. Participants are placed in their designated offices for one academic year and receive up to three academic units. Approximately 20 continuing CAMP students participate in the program each year.

By pursuing a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering and being a first generation college student, Marco Antonio Ledesma believes that this is the best way to acknowledge his parents’ hard work and sacrifices. Seeing his parents leave to work before sunrise and return home after sunset has motivated Marco Antonio to accomplish his goal of attending college and someday working at Intel. He knows that by obtaining a college degree he will be better positioned to help his family in the future.

Marco Antonio feels that his diverse background could bring about new ideas to make technology more accessible to underserved communities. By reaching his academic and professional goals, he hopes to serve as a role model to future generations of CAMP students planning to pursue degrees in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Thanks to the Chevron Scholarship, Marco Antonio was able to prioritize his studies and focus on improving his GPA in what he considers a very competitive but promising major.

Gladis Quintana, a young woman who states she will never let fear stop her from reaching her goals is one of two Chevron Scholarship recipients. After migrating to the United States at the age of sixteen and learning English as a second language, Gladis was afraid of leaving her home in Riverbank, CA to attend Sacramento State University. However she realized that this was her opportunity to not only fulfill her dreams of having a college education but to repay her parents for working long hours in the agricultural fields to allow her and her siblings enjoy a better future.

She is currently a fourth year student and consistently maintains a 3.4 GPA while majoring in math. She plans to become a math teacher and hopes to one day pass on to her students her love and passion for the subject. The Chevron Scholarship eased her financial hardships and allowed her to stay focused on her academics by working fewer hours.
On a daily basis, Gabriela Lopez, a counselor at Riverbank High School in Riverbank, California goes beyond the call of duty to help migrant and seasonal farmworker students graduate from high school and pursue a college education. Her commitment to transform the lives of migrant youth is evident through the stories shared by the many students she has influenced who are now CAMP and Sacramento State current students or alumni. Her high level of dedication was acknowledged at the CAMP Higher Education Migrant Conference as she became the 2011 CAMP Award of Excellence honoree. The purpose of this acknowledgement is to celebrate high school counselors who serve as institutional agents of empowerment for migrant students by promoting their advancement into higher education. Gabriela was born and raised in Guanajuato, Mexico and grew up as a migrant student herself moving throughout the state of California to pick agricultural crops alongside her family. She is a native of Riverbank and attended Sacramento State as part of CAMP. In 2001, she graduated with a B.A. in Liberal Studies and is now a high school counselor with a clear mission: getting migrant students to graduate from high school ready to pursue a college degree. Her success as a counselor comes from the strong relationships and connections she builds with students and their families during work and on her own time. “The success of my students is my priority,” concludes Lopez.

In commemoration of the program’s 30th anniversary celebration at Sacramento State, an art competition was set forward to invite students to introduce an image representative of the 30 year legacy of the CAMP program. Applicants submitted their designs and highlighted their artistic abilities, and certainly represented the mission and goals of the program within their creations. Yet, standing out among his fellow classmates, Juan Gamez (class of 2010) with his extraordinary design captured the attention of the judging panel and won the competition. A $500 scholarship was presented to him during the 30th anniversary culminating closing event. Juan, a first generation college student who grew up in French Camp, California began to use art at an early age as a way to explore his identity and potential. Through art, he has found confidence to pursue a college education and major in biology. Today, Juan is a third-year biology student with aspiration of becoming a veterinarian. As for the winning design, Juan wanted to commemorate the hard work and struggles that previous generation have endured by working in agriculture. The hard work of ancestors have left new generations with valuable lessons of perseverance, strong work ethic and resistance that is now being applied to academics and professional goals.
Dr. David Hayes-Bautista, an influential social scientist and professor of medicine, visited Sacramento State to present his most recent book, El Cinco de Mayo: An American Tradition.

In honor of the Cinco de Mayo holiday, Dr. Hayes-Bautista spoke at the Alumni Center to an audience of students, community members, campus faculty and staff. Dr. Hayes-Bautista presented and answered the question: Why is Cinco De Mayo celebrated in the United States but not in Mexico?

In his answer, the author presented historical data discovered through years of research which documents the existence of Cinco de Mayo celebrations in California since the Civil War by native Latinos residing in the area. The findings proved to be significant because the Mexican victory over the French at the battle of Puebla is not commemorated in Mexico. There are few community gatherings or parades on May 5 in Mexico that are similar to those found in San Jose or Los Angeles. These celebrations, regardless of the era, Dr. Hayes-Bautista writes: “reflect the aspirations of a community that is engaged, empowered, and expanding.” The event concluded with a book signing session and reception.
This summer, CAMP hosted its yearly CAMP Summer Youth Leadership Institute (CSYLI). Migrant students entering 7th, 8th, and 9th grades from various areas within Region 23 participated in the 12 day program. This summer program is designed to expose the students to the college life experience by housing them in American River Courtyard, a residential hall at Sacramento State. CSYLI focuses on English Language Arts and mathematics and helps students gain the necessary skills to successfully pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and become college ready by the time they graduate from high school. In addition, the following topics are embedded throughout the curriculum: College Preparedness Series, Self Advocacy and Leadership Series, Cultural and Historical Series, In the Arts Creative Series, Recreation and Sports Series and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Series. Most importantly, presenters and panelists share their personal stories of success and motivate students to pursue their dreams by attaining a college education. CSYLI promotes the concept that with determination and perseverance a college education is reachable among migrant and seasonal farmworkers students.

The 2012 CAMP Out of School Youth (OSY) Empowerment Conference motivated students who did not graduate from high school to improve their current conditions by introducing them to the opportunities that only come with a college education. During the two-day conference, the students stayed at the American River Courtyard dormitories and ate their meals in the Dinning Commons. A series of panels and workshops shared essential information on topics including admission to different educational systems of higher learning, financial aid, and career prospects.

Speakers shared their personal stories, emphasizing how they used obstacles to find the necessary strength to persevere through life’s challenges. Students participated in various workshops in the areas of public speaking, argumentation and debate, business writing and transformational leadership. Most importantly, students built a support system of individuals willing to assist them in navigating higher education in the future.
Born in Guanajuato, Mexico in a small town called Boquillas, Ismael Garcia has not had it easy. His family migrated to the United States in 1999 and since then he has lived in the city of Stockton, California. When he started school in the third grade he found it very difficult to assimilate because he did not know the language. It took Ismael three years to adapt to the culture and language of the new country which was now his home. When he almost did not pass his fifth grade class, he realized that his teachers had low expectations of him. This was an eye opening experience and it gave him the courage and motivation to do well in school and pursue a college degree. Ismael decided to attend Sacramento State to be part of the CAMP program. Once CAMP informed him of the outstanding reputation of the engineering program at Sacramento State he knew this was the best choice for him. Ismael decided to become a civil engineering major at an early age after spending much of his time fixing the family home. He also worked in the fields and learned that he did not want to do labor intensive work for the rest of his life. Ismael read about the Mexican Cultural Center Scholarship through an e-mail sent by Dr. Viridiana Diaz, the CAMP program director and decided to apply. For the application he had to answer five general questions about culture and background, include a resume, transcript and two letters of recommendation. Overall he had to explain the importance of maintaining his culture while living in the United States. Ismael “...just wants to be successful in life.” He acknowledges the sacrifices his family has made and wants to set a good example for his younger siblings. He wants to have a better job than his parents as a way of saying thank you and letting them know that all their hard work was not in vain.
Purchasing frames can be an expensive endeavor for many students. Nonetheless, it is indispensable to learning and college success. CAMP students had an opportunity to take advantage of the services provided by Vision Service Plan (VSP) Global Mobile Clinic. During VSP’s visit to Sacramento State, students received free eye examinations and prescribed frames. The mobile clinic is just one of many VSP charitable programs, in which VSP educates others on the value of regular eye care and overall health while giving back to those in need of an essential service. In addition to seeing over fifty CAMP students, VSP also provided vouchers to be used at participating optometry practices in surrounding areas. An additional thirty students scheduled individual appointments and received the same benefits and services.
Natividad Chavez

Before joining the BLM CA workforce, Natividad Chavez interned in the office of Assemblyman Joe Coto in the California State Capitol. More recently, she interned with the Student Association for Farmworkers (SAF), a non-profit organization in North Carolina whose mission is to improve the living and working conditions of farmworkers across the country. Since Natividad has a passion for public service and helping others, working for BLM was a perfect fit. According to Natividad, an added bonus of working in the Minerals Office is the friendly atmosphere. “I am a geology major and this is a great place to learn, in part, because I am surrounded by geologists who are always willing to teach me something new. They are also very patient and it feels like they really want me to succeed. I love my job!” In addition to working at the BLM CA State Office, Natividad had the opportunity to do field work with the BLM Field Office in El Dorado Hills and to work at Camp Smokey during the California State Fair. “It’s been an amazing experience working at the BLM and it only seems to get better and better,” concluded Chavez.

Veronica Ramirez-Guerrero

An endless learning experience in a helpful and supportive work environment is how Veronica Ramirez-Guerrero describes her work experience in the Human Resources Department at BLM. Researching and analyzing data (for the Workforce Relations staff) and helping the Staffing and Classification Section with the various stages of a vacancy announcement are just some of the tasks Veronica has performed in HR. When asked to provide feedback on her time spent with BLM, Veronica shares that working at BLM has helped her grow as a person and as a student – and she believes she is more confident because of the interactions she has with staff on a day to day basis (interacting with hundreds of children and their parents at Camp Smokey has probably helped too).
Vanessa Mendez
Duccini/Pasquini/Traversa Scholarship Recipient

Having a mother diagnosed with breast cancer and a father that suffers from daily back pain due to the strenuous labor from working in the fields have significantly impacted Vanessa Mendez’s life. The struggles that her family faces are what motivate Vanessa to obtain a higher education and with it help others less fortunate improve their own lives. Being the first one in her family to attend college she knows the importance of always doing her best at whatever she does. Vanessa knew that attending college would be hard which is why she involved herself in sports and clubs all throughout high school. While attending high school she also worked to save money for college. Her senior year was challenging but as Vanessa said she “had to sacrifice in order to gain” and was able to graduate in the top ten percent of her class. Her parents gave her everything they could and taught her that strong work ethic will help her achieve the most impossible dreams. Vanessa had to quit her job to move to Sacramento to attend school. With the help of financial aid and scholarships like the Duccini/Pasquini/Traversa, Vanessa believes she will be the first in her family to graduate from college.

ZOOT SUIT

On April 19th, 2012 CAMP Sacramento State students enjoyed the theatrical performance of Zoot Suit, a play inspired by the Sleepy Lagoon murder trial of 1942 in Los Angeles, California and written and directed by Chicano playwright Luis Valdez, founder of Teatro Campesino. At our own Sacramento State theatre, Professor Manuel Pickett brought the play to life. For over 37 years, Professor Pickett has directed hundreds of plays surrounding the themes of Chicano/a culture, history and traditions on and off campus. In addition to an extraordinary performance, the students enjoyed a special lecture by playwright Luis Valdez. During the play students sat on the edge of their seats either dancing to the music, laughing away or in suspense as to what was going to happen next. The highlight of the evening was to witness performances by two continuing CAMP students Sergio Garibay and Angel Perez as supporting actors. It was a true honor to see past CAMP students’ remarkable talent on stage. For many of the students in attendance, Zoot Suit became the first theatrical production they have ever seen but certainly not the last.

Left to Right: CAMP students Marco Antonio Ledesma and Gerardo Aceves.