CAMP celebrates three decades of success

Sacramento State’s College Assistance Migrant Program, which has helped more than a thousand students from migrant and seasonal farmworker backgrounds succeed in college, is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

CAMP students must be U.S. citizens or legal residents of California. The program is primarily funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Students whose parents are migrant and seasonal farmworkers are one of the most underrepresented groups in higher education. The program is designed to provide students with outreach, admission, academic and personal support services.

Created in 1981, CAMP admits 80 freshmen every year and provides follow-up services to approximately 300 continuing students. CAMP offers pre-college transition and first-year support services to help students develop the necessary skills to stay in school and earn a diploma. The program also provides eligible students with supplemental financial assistance for books, supplies and transportation.

CAMP’s goal is to help students become leaders and active participants in the community. Its network includes more than 90 high schools located in all of the state’s major agricultural regions. CAMP also coordinates with community service organizations, and educational agencies statewide.

To promote the importance of higher education, hundreds of parents and students are brought to Sacramento State yearly for special presentations and campus tours. This exposure to the university environment encourages them to prepare and plan early to attend college. The field trips are also designed to inform migrant parents of the educational opportunities available for them and their children.
CAMP’s success is illustrated by its graduates who have made the most of their potential.

CHP officer Nelda Romero is “so glad CAMP was there for me. I knew I wanted more. CAMP provided me with positive direction, and the tutors were so important. There was no excuse not to do your best.” She majored in Criminal Justice, graduated in 2001, worked for the Sacramento County Probation Department then applied to the CHP Academy, and graduated six months later.

Omar Gonzalez, whose migrant parents worked in the fields, was prompted by CAMP to enroll at Sac State, inspired by the late Professor and former Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna, and earned a law degree at UCLA. He returned to Sacramento to work at a large law firm and eventually started his own firm. “I thought college was only for the elite and wealthy. CAMP gave me the bridge I needed for my future,” he says.

CAMP encouraged Jorge Iniguez to attend college. After landing a cooperative education paid internship at Intel in 1990, the computer engineer never looked back. After graduating from Sac State in 1994, Jorge has spent most of his career at Intel. His assignments have taken him to Europe and South America. He is now a senior technical marketing engineer at Intel’s Folsom campus. “Without CAMP, I would not have had a chance to go to college,” he says.

For Olga Arellano, the principal of Ethel Baker Elementary, CAMP was her ticket to college. “CAMP counselors were my social and emotional saviors,” she says. Having worked alongside her mother at an industrial chroming plant, she had added incentive to get her degree. After teaching several years she took charge at Baker, where more than eight languages are spoken and some 60 percent of the students are English-language learners.

For more information, call (916) 278-7241 or contact CAMP Director Viridiana Diaz at viridiaz@csus.edu. For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156

– Alan Miller
amiller@csus.edu

Sacramento State is making a difference in California’s Capital Region and beyond. We offer a life-changing opportunity for our 28,000 students, preparing them to be leaders in their professions and communities. Our
professors are known for their dedication to great teaching. And our location in the capital of the nation's most populous state allows students to pursue unique internships and research.