

HEP (High School Equivalency Program) (PR#S141A090025) and CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program) (PR#S149A090027) are federally funded grants through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Migrant Education. They are administered through the Center for Migrant Education in the Department of Special Education at USF. They are designed to assist eligible participants from migrant and seasonal farmworker backgrounds.

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## USF College of Education Awarded \$4 Million in Grants To Assist Students from Migrant Farmworker Backgrounds

Students from migrant farmworker backgrounds will have an opportunity to continue their education thanks to two grants from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). Ann Cranston-Gingras, Ph.D., Professor of Special Education and Director of the Center for Migrant Education, has been awarded funding from the USDOE in excess of four million dollars over the next five years to assist students from migrant farmworker backgrounds. The funding is from two competitively awarded programs - The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). "The awarding of these grants is a testament to the dedication of our Center's staff and the respect they have gained nationally," said Cranston-Gingras.

The CAMP program focuses on supporting students from migrant backgrounds during their first year at USF and transitioning them to complete their bachelor's degrees.

Students will be provided intensive, ongoing academic support and necessary financial assistance while immersed in a culturally rich and stimulating higher education environment. HEP assists students from migrant backgrounds who have dropped out of school. Students also receive vocational evaluation, work adjustment, vocational counseling, life skills instruction and post-secondary placement services to ensure successful transition.

"These projects are a tremendous opportunity to develop and study effective educational practices for a very deserving and hard working group of students," said Cranston-Gingras. In addition to the HEP and CAMP projects, the College of Education has worked extensively to pair agribusiness support with the Center's federally funded activities. The Sunripe Family of Companies and their Sunripe Golf Classic and Wishnatzki Farms and their Wishnatzki Strawberry Ten-



*Dr. Ann Cranston-Gingras*

nis Pro Am have significantly contributed to students from migrant backgrounds and to their success by providing teacher education scholarships.

"Dr. Cranston-Gingras' and her team's work is having a direct impact on students from migrant communities, while providing a national model for similar programs in other states to emulate," said Colleen S. Kennedy, Ph.D., Dean, USF College of Education. "It is setting the pace and the standards for excellence for these programs nationally."

## Time to Celebrate

On December 11, the HEP program celebrated the end of the session with a festive holiday luncheon featuring good food and special awards. The students, their families, and the HEP staff enjoyed a wonderful afternoon culminating with an awards presentation.

Soledad Bautista earned the "Student of the Session" award while Nicandro Garcia, Chelsea Garcia, and Alejandra Leon were also honored for their invaluable contributions to the program.



*HEP Staff, Students and Families*

# New CAMP Students!



## CAMP STUDENTS:

Jessica Baltazar  
Jose Chavez  
Jonathan DeLaRosa  
Isidro Francisco  
Ana Franco  
Amy Lemus  
Silvia Monroy  
Rachelle Sincere  
Xavier Vega  
Lili Yang

## DISTRICTS:

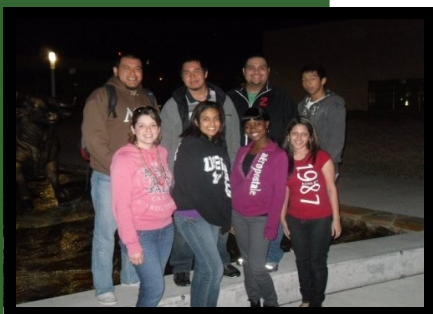
Palm Beach  
Hillsborough  
Hardee  
Polk  
Collier  
Hillsborough  
Highlands  
Palm Beach  
Hillsborough  
Hillsborough

## MAJORS:

Civil Engineer  
Computer Engineer  
Architecture  
Biomedical Science  
Pre-Medical Science  
Nursing  
International Business  
Computer Engineer  
Creative Writing  
Nursing

*“It really helped to make friends and get involved with the different activities at school”*

Mentor/Mentee Social



Emanuel, Jose C., Jose B., Jonathon, Cynthia, Jessica, Rachell, and Maria

## My College Experience by Amy Lemus

My first day here at the University of South Florida was a day filled of mixed emotions. I was excited to be starting a new chapter in my life. I was the first to go to college and even though I was only moving thirty minutes away, it was still a very big deal to my family and me. It was a bitter sweet experience packing up my belongings and taking them to my dorm. The first couple nights it felt really weird not seeing my huge

overprotective family everyday but eventually it began to get easier. It really helped to make friends and get involved with the different activities at school. Living on campus and away from home has made me grow up a lot. I have had to learn to clean, do my own laundry, and manage my own time and money. Basically just to be much more independent then I had ever been. At the same time it made me appreciate my family

much more and all the things my family did for me.

It has not always been easy; things always seem to come up that challenge me and try to break me down. But I just get myself up and keep moving forward because I know my family is counting on me and I just cannot let them down.

## Mentoring Program by Maria Reynoso

*The purpose of the Mentoring Program is to provide an effective support system for the CAMP students that maximizes their academic achievements and assists them in adjusting to the university community.*

The Mentor Program is an integral part of the CAMP students' transition into the university. Several candidates were interviewed and an outstanding, diverse groups of students were selected to serve as CAMP mentors. These individuals are upperclassmen who are extremely involved

within the university community; multicultural and academic organizations, sororities, residential life, and philanthropic organizations.

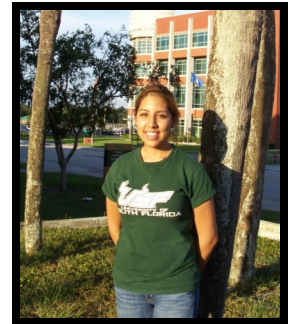
Selected candidates went through an intensive training designed to develop skills needed to be a successful mentor.

## My Freshman Summer Institute (FSI) Experience by Silvia Monroy

I have the privilege to be a member of University of South Florida's Freshman Summer Institute. FSI is a six-week program that takes place during the summer before the student's first fall semester at USF. Students admitted into this program must be first generation college students, demonstrate financial need, and a desire to succeed. My experience as an FSI student has been remarkable and has prepared me for the demanding transition from high school to college life. During the six weeks of this summer program, I created long

lasting relationships with students and USF staff. This program allowed me to become familiarized with the campus beforehand and become accustomed to a college class schedule. I have made more friends during my summer semester than any other semester here at USF. I cannot stress how life changing this program is for me. I strongly encourage students given this opportunity to take it and experience for themselves all the rewards this program has to offer.

*Silvia is majoring in International Business. She is currently the Governor of the USF Cypress Hall Building Council and a member of the Phi Sigma Theta Honor Society.*



Silvia Monroy

## USF's 38th Annual Engineering Expo by Ruby Luis



Jose Chavez

*"The Engineering Expo was a fun and interesting event. I'm glad I had the opportunity to volunteer. I enjoyed working with the young students from neighboring schools who visited the expo."*

The Annual Engineering EXPO is in celebration of National Engineering Week. The EXPO was held on February 19 and 20 at the University of

South Florida Engineering Building.

The Engineering EXPO demonstrates the fun of learning through hands on activities. Students from elementary, middle and high schools were invited to discover how math, science and technology are an integral part of our lives.

Activities included:

- Laser Light Show

- Robot demonstrations
- Tours of laboratories
- Assembly and launching of rockets.

The exhibits included student engineering societies, organizations and local companies. Freshman Jose Chavez, 2009-2010 CAMP student, volunteered in the EXPO. He has an interest in Computer Engineering.

## A Life Changing Experience by Ana Franco



Ana Franco

I am a 19 year old freshman who had never had a job until this past December. My parents have always given me everything I

want and need, as long as I deserve it of course. But during Christmas vacation I decided I was old enough to make some money on my own to pay for my textbooks, so I got a job at a packing house with my mother. I always knew my parents worked hard to give me and my sisters everything we needed, but being there and working along with my mom com-

pletely changed my perspective of things. I worked from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on my first day and I wasn't tired, I was dead! I told my mom I wasn't going to come back the next day, but she encouraged me to take it as a challenge and be strong. I worked for a month, at least 8 hours a day, sometimes even twelve. I remember one day, at about 10 p.m., I was exhausted and I looked at my mom working as hard as if we had just started, so I asked her, mom aren't you tired? She replied with a smile and said "Very, I cannot wait to get out." I stood quiet and simply admired her strength and realized how lucky I am to have such amazing parents who are willing to go through the hardest jobs to put food on our table. Just after the first week I felt a change within me. I began to

appreciate things I have so much more, especially the opportunity of being able to obtain an education. Before working at the packing house I used to say "I want to go to medical school," but now I say "I am going to go to medical school" because I know there is no reason for me not to be able to do so. My parents have worked their entire lives at excruciating jobs and have managed to stay strong for us, so now it is my time to be strong and show them that all of their hard work has, and will continue to pay off. Just like my parents, I am a hard worker who is dedicated in bring home nothing but good grades.

*"Working along with my mom completely changed my perspective of things"*



## From HEP to “Tech” by Maria Diaz-Vega



Nick Garcia attending class at Erwin Technical Center.

Part of the High School Equivalency Program involves preparing the students to take the next step: choosing a career. Our visits to Erwin Technical Center present the fantastic opportunity to enter real classrooms and observe ongoing classes. Eager to learn about different professions, the HEP students witness student-teacher interaction and learn important information about employment salaries, outlook and placement. “It was a good experience,” “Interesting” and

“Helpful,” say the HEP students after learning about the many programs that this public technical school offers for anyone ready to take the next step.

During our visits, the HEP students are able to ask questions to helpful Erwin teachers and apprentices. Last November, HEP student Nick Garcia took full advantage of this incredible chance. He spoke with the instructor and with a future computer drafter about the training and support Erwin provides.

After that visit, Nick set his new goal.

We are proud to report that Nick Garcia is now enrolled in Erwin’s Computer Aided Drafting program. With a great smile on his face, Nick greeted and welcomed the new group of HEP students during their turn to visit the school. It was Nick’s turn to answer their questions.

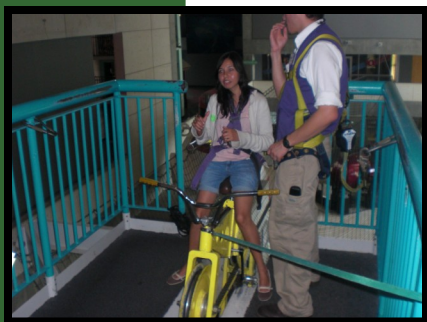
*“Afterwards, one of the students even commented that he now wanted to join the Air Force after viewing the fascinating feature.”*

## Science Can Be Fun by Rebecca Sandy

On December 9, the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) took all of its students to the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) for an educational day filled with excitement and challenges. First, the eager Heppers participated in the special “Mindbender” exhibit which included 50 brain puzzles. Rigoberto Rangel and Nicandro Garcia, in particular, rose to the occasion by attempting to master every single puzzle. Later, the students were mesmerized by “Fighter Pilot: Operation Red Flag,” an intriguing IMAX movie. Afterwards, one of the students even commented that he now wanted to join the Air Force after viewing the fascinating feature. Several of the students braved the high wire bicycle, and almost everyone experienced the thrilling “Hurricane.”

Special thanks to Alejandra Leon who tirelessly snapped picture after picture of the adventurous day.

All in all, it was an action-packed day for the HEP students and staff; it was truly an adventure that will not soon be forgotten.

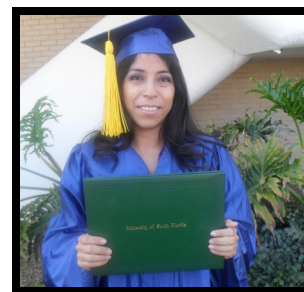


Alejandra Leon on the high wire bicycle at MOSI

## Hard Work Pays Off For Dedicated HEP Student

Ma Herlinda (Maria) Alarcon, mother of three, was enthusiastically chosen as “HEP Student of the Session” for our third session of Year 23. Maria, a resident of Hillsborough County,

was cheered by her classmates at the awards presentation during the last week of classes. Maria, affectionately dubbed “Mother Goose” by everyone, accepted the award with grace and appreciation by thanking the teachers and, in particular, classmate Alma Feregrino, who selflessly tutored her in math. She has already signed up for CNA classes in Dover, Florida, and she hopes to continue with her education with the ultimate goal of becoming a medical assistant. Ms. Rebecca, who presented the award, stated, “Maria came a long way during the eight weeks. I truly admire her for everything that she has accomplished. I’m excited to see what Maria will do next.”



Maria Alarcon

## Expert Advice

In November, Dr. Rick Temple, an experienced USF counselor, presented on "Time Management" to the HEP and CAMP students. It was an engaging presentation in which everyone learned more about organization, goal setting, and successful learning strategies. This was the first HEP/CAMP event of the year, some students gathered together at the end for a photograph.



## A Memorable Experience by Jessica Macedo



*Rosario, Alma, and Jessica at the Wisnatzki Strawberry Fundraising event.*

I have had many great experiences in my life. I have to say that one of the greatest experiences was when I came to HEP at USF. I had so much fun here, and I learned a good amount of stuff in only six weeks, which seems like a lot, but the time here at HEP flew by, and I am taking with me great memories.

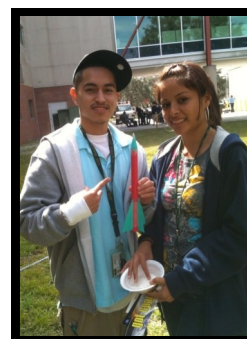
One of the things I really enjoyed was staying at the dorms with James, Victor, Edgar, Julio, Audrey, Rosario, and my awesome roommate Alma. They made my time here at HEP unforgettable. In class with Ms. Rebecca, I loved the games Ms. Rebecca had us play; for example, the snatching card game or the equation battles against the boys. The way she taught us was in a fun, but helpful way and I really admire her for helping me during my time here. Also, Mrs. Maria was very wonderful in the way she taught us. She made sure we understood what she was talking about. Her classroom was very stimulating and relaxing. I always enjoyed being in both of their classrooms, which is weird because I never really liked to be in class. I guess that just

shows how awesome they both are!

Another thing I loved about my time at HEP was when we all went to the Marshall Center to get some deliciously, sweet strawberries. Also, the fieldtrip to Erwin Technical School was very pleasant. It honestly did help me to figure out what it is that I want to do when I leave HEP. It was a wonderful experience to be at a university surrounded with college students. I met a few people at the dorms and around campus. Everyone here was very friendly and there is a lot of diversity in ethnicity too. Students would come up to us and offer to go to events happening around campus whether it was on the weekend or during school days. Of course, there were some we couldn't attend but we always appreciated the invites. I can remember being interviewed for the University Newspaper *The Oracle* at a meeting about gangs. The meeting was cool because it was presented by an expert on youth gangs in El Salvador. That was a great experience for me. I am really going to miss everything about this place.

I have to say that I had beautiful moments over here. Whether it was at the dorms, in class, the basketball game, or the trail, I loved every bit of it. I got extremely close with the other students and I won't ever forget it. The teachers, the office staff, and of course, my awesome classmates all made my time at HEP truly amazing and memorable. If I had the chance to do this all over again, I would only do it with these same people. It was a great opportunity and I thank everyone who helped me throughout my time here.

## Students Soar to Success at Engineering Expo



*Edgar and Nicole with their rocket!*

On February 19, 2010, Ms. Rebecca and the HEP students embarked on an awesome adventure at the 38<sup>th</sup> annual USF Engineering Expo on campus. The day started off with an incredible display of fascinating experiments presented by the physics department. After the presentation, much to their delight, the students had the opportunity to try out some of the various scientific gadgets.

In the photograph, you can see several Heppers sticking their hands in the cornstarch and water. After lunch, everyone enjoyed the entertaining laser show, and the day ended with the chemical magic show which featured explosive experiments dealing with liquid nitrogen and other appropriate elements. For the first time since the HEP program has attended the Expo, the HEP students participated in the rocket building contest. The amateur engineers even surprised themselves as they watched their homemade rockets soar to the rooftops of the nearby buildings. All in all, the students proclaimed it to be an educational and fun day!



*Jaime, Rosario, Sergio, and Nicole touching the cornstarch and water mixture.*

## Simon Silva by Rosario Ramirez and Alma Feregrino (HEP Students)



Simon Silva with HEP students and Dorm Counselor

*"We thank Silva for coming to share his history and beliefs with us. We learned so much in just two hours. We also thank him for giving us books for the HEP students and signing them for us."*

While attending HEP at the University of South Florida we were able to go to an interesting presentation held by Simon Silva. Mr. Silva was born in Mexicali, Mexico and currently lives in California; he is a well known

drawer/writer. Silva is one of our most important Mexican artists who immigrated in 1962 to a small town called Holtville, California. He has a wife and three kids.

Before the presentation we were able to meet Mr. Silva and take a group picture with him. While meeting with him he shared some of his experiences as a guest speaker and asked us questions about how it was for us living on campus. What really captured our attention was the fact that he was so outgoing and easy to talk to. He reminded us of George Lopez in how he made jokes and connected with the people. During the conversation and the presentation we learned so many

things about him on a personal and professional level.

As he was giving his presentation we were able to connect to what he was saying about his life. For example, that he is from a large family of eleven and worked most of his young life as a migrant farmworker picking berries. Also, even though his father mistreated and abused his mother, his father inspired him to draw because whenever his father abused his mother he would go to a room and start drawing. It is in those moments where he learned to love drawing. He also told us his most embarrassing moments; like when in high school he would hide his hands in his pockets because they would be colored from picking the berries. During these times he didn't want to tell people what he did for a living. Another embarrassing moment for him was when his mother painted their house yellow. It was the only yellow house in the barrio, so to avoid this he would get off at a different house. We understand how he feels because if you go to our neighborhood you would see all these colorful houses.

Besides sharing his personal stories he also told us of his professional experiences. His first presentation was given to some kindergartners and he asked them if anybody wanted to learn to draw and a little kid told him that they already knew how to draw. We thought that was very funny, but you know little kids always think they know everything. From this incident, he changed his presentation and never asked that question again.

The message that impacted us the most was when we had time to talk to him after the presentation and ask him questions as well as share our personal life experiences with him. He told us that with hard work and dedication we can always accomplish anything. To tell you the truth we do believe he is right because with our hard work and commitment we plan to finish the HEP program and continue with our education by enrolling in college.

We thank Silva for coming to share his history and beliefs with us. We learned so much in just two hours. We also thank him for giving us books for the HEP students and signing them for us.



**"Amor de Padre"**  
(A Father's Love)  
art by Simon Silva

## Simon Silva by Ana Franco (CAMP Student)

On February 25th many students at the University of South Florida had the opportunity to attend a presentation by a Mexican artist: Simon Silva. Simon Silva was born in Mexico but like many of us, moved to the United States with hopes of finding a better future. Silva's parents were migrant farmer workers and when Silva was not attending school he had to follow his parents and work with them in the fields. Despite the fact that his

father did not want him to continue his education after high school, Silva managed to get his mom and aunt to help him with the necessary documents to enroll in college where he studied art. Silva stated that he found inspiration for his paintings every time he witnessed domestic violence in his home; thus portraying a strong individual who turned negativity into something that helped him become successful.

I believe Simon Silva's presentation had an impact on the entire audience, but especially in some of the CAMP students present at the event. Just like Silva, many of us face struggles and encounter barriers that make our goals harder to reach. Nevertheless, Silva is a clear example that even when all odds are against you, one still can succeed.



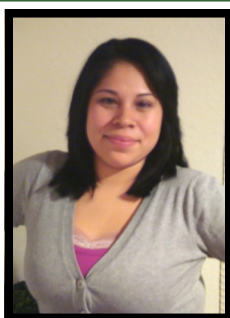
# Welcome Newest Staff!



**Ruby Luis** was a 2001 CAMP student at the University of South Florida. As a freshman, she was drawn to leadership roles and participated in the Residence Hall Association (RHA) as a Senator for her building council. As a sophomore, she was a Residential Assistant for HEP and the Secretary for RHA. In her final two years at USF, she helped to develop and implement the CAMP Mentor program.

She graduated in the summer of 2005 with a Bachelors degree in Bio-Medical Science, from the University of South Florida. Her work experience includes Outpatient Case Management for Mental Health Care, Inc. Mental Health Care Inc. is a non-profit Tampa agency that provides treatment for the underserved residents of the County. Ruby continued on to PRI Asphalt Technologies as an Asphalt laboratory technician. Ruby joined the staff of the College Assistance Migrant Program in September 2009, as the Recruiter.

*"The first discussions of college started with my Migrant Advocate, Ms. Berry. Her insight opened up a world of learning that has enriched my life. I am thankful to all the educators who have made a difference in my life. As an Admission Recruiter, I hope to influence and empower high school students to pursue higher education."*



**Virginia Flores** has an extensive history working with migrant programs: Florida Migrant Interstate Program (FMIP), Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) Migrant Summer Institute, BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center, and now USF HEP/CAMP program.

As a high school student she joined the FMIP staff in 2001 as a Clerical Assistant. Upon graduating from high school, Virginia attended the University of Central Florida (UCF) and obtained a double major in Hospitality and Event Management. During summer breaks, she continued to work with FMIP and taking on new challenges by working as a Residential Assistant in the Migrant Summer Institute at FGCU in 2003. In 2004, Virginia was promoted to the Residential Assistant Director position and worked for two consecutive summers (2004 & 2005).

In 2006, Virginia joined the BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center as an Even Start Family Educator. She was the only Florida representative serving migrant families from multiple counties who traveled from New York to Florida. Virginia was concurrently enrolled as a full-time student and held part-time employment. Upon graduating from college, Virginia continued to work for the FMIP program as an Administrative Assistant at USF until the summer of '09.

Currently, Virginia has two roles within the USF Center for Migrant Education. She is the Residential Counselor for HEP and the Grant Assistant for CAMP. As a Residential Counselor, Virginia oversees HEP students residing in the dormitory and facilitates their involvement within the University community. Her role as the Grant Assistant is to oversee the freshmen academic and social development at USF. Virginia plans on continuing her education and obtain a M.B.A.



**Maria Reynoso** first joined CAMP as a student in 2004. She was the first in her family to go to a University. She earned her Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration in Fall 2009.

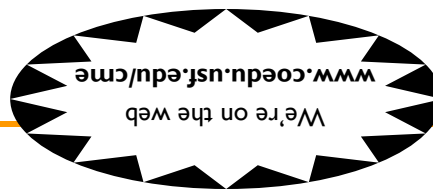
In the early years, her family traveled between Ohio and Florida to work. It wasn't until Maria's two oldest sisters were struggling to catch up in school that her parents decided they needed to stay in one place.

After graduating from Durant High School, Maria went on to college at the University of South Florida. She was very involved with the CAMP student organization Members Empowering True Awareness (META), who's focus was on farmworker rights.

Maria has been our secretary for HEP since 2007. In 2008, she took on an additional task of becoming the HEP Dorm Counselor. This year, apart from being the HEP Secretary, she currently works as the CAMP Secretary and Mentor Facilitator.

*"CAMP has played an important role in my transition from home to College. I am blessed to be surrounded by people whose primary interest is my success."*

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## HEP: Where Are They Now?

Nicole Sedillo – Year 18; University of South Florida

Naivi Arreola – Year 23; State College of Florida

Luis Carbajal – Year 22; Valencia Community College

Hector Bravo – Year 22; Traviss Career Center

Alejandro Flores – Year 22; Hillsborough Community College

Richy Camera – Year 22; Manatee Technical Institute

Nicandro Garcia – Year 23; Erwin Technical Center

Mirta Garcia – Year 22; Hillsborough Community College

