

MWO recognized as a 'Community Star' on 10th Annual National Rural Health Day

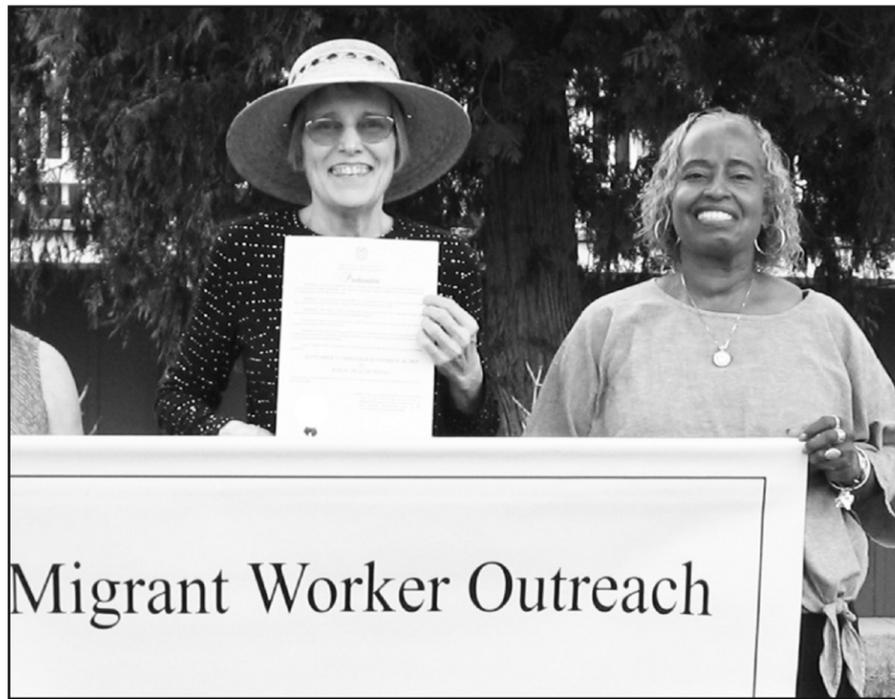
The National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) leads the celebration of National Rural Health Day every year on the third Thursday of November. The celebration shines a light on those serving the vital health needs of an estimated 57 million people living in rural communities throughout the United States.

In 2015, NOSORH put out a nationwide call to nominate individuals, organizations and coalitions making a positive impact in rural communities. Soon the stories started coming in and the Community Stars recognition program was born. This year, nominations came in from 48 states, setting a new record.

Migrant Worker Outreach (MWO), representing New Jersey, appears in the 2020 edition of the book of Community Stars, published on the National Rural Health Day website, powerofrural.org.

"MWO was founded in 2010 with the mission of welcoming migrant workers to New Jersey. Usually about 6,000 migrant workers arrive for the harvest. We try to reach out to as many of them as we can," said Dory Dickson, MWO co-founder and director. "As a modest size organization consisting solely of volunteers, we were surprised to be nominated and very pleased to receive this singular honor."

Roslyn Council, Rural Health Project Officer with the New Jersey Office of Rural Health nominated MWO for the recognition. "Thanks to Migrant Worker Outreach, those workers



Left: Volunteer Dory Dickson, MWO director (left) with Rural Health Project Officer, Roslyn Council in 2019. Right: Volunteer Copelia Morales, MWO assistant director, graduate of Buena Regional High School.



Courtesy Photos

who put food on America's tables are not alone," noted Council.

State Offices of Rural Health are anchors of information and support for rural communities, health professionals, hospitals and clinics across the nation. They are dedicated to collaboration, education, communication and innovation to improve health in small towns around the country. "We go to the New Jersey Office of Rural Health for support and to get answers for our questions," said Dickson. "They are always there for us, to help troubleshoot and to find resources or connections that enable us to better serve farm

workers."

Although the blueberry harvest is finished, and most of the migrant workers have departed, MWO volunteers continue organizing outreach to local farm workers and other immigrants. They collaborate with area civic groups, charities, schools and businesses.

Transitioning from on-site to remote services: During the blueberry harvest this past summer, a few MWO volunteers visited migrant camps to distribute donated food, clothing and other items. However, English classes, field trips and most other activities were canceled. Instead, local volunteers signed up to serve as

pen pals, telephone reading partners and telephone English tutors. Volunteers were matched with children in the new Farm & Community Youth Clubs of South Jersey, which were organized by MWO. Even though they worked remotely, volunteers enjoyed making a connection with their partners from the youth clubs.

The Combined Farm Worker Journals: MWO publishes the journals, which are distributed free at migrant camps. There are dual language sections for Latinos and Haitians, plus a section for Jamaicans. This past summer, with fewer workers arriving for the harvest, MWO ended

up with extra copies of the journals. *To request free classroom or group copies, see the contact information below.

To learn more about MWO, visit their website: www.MigrantWorkerOutreach.Org, email info@MigrantWorkerOutreach.Org, send a Facebook message to Migrant Worker Outreach of South Jersey, or write to P.O. Box 123, Medford, NJ 08055.

Dickson, who is adult-onset deaf, does not use a phone. She is pleased to respond to questions in writing. Copelia Morales can be reached by phone to arrange year-round donations of food: (609) 705-4407.

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- *We read stories to young children & serve as pen pals.
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- *We publish the Migrant Worker Journals.
- *We teach English as a Second Language.

www.MigrantWorkerOutreach.Org
Email: info@MigrantWorkerOutreach.Org
Or call (609) 705-4407

Hammonton volunteers share their experiences helping migrant workers & their families

• Charley Harrison is a ninth grader at Hammonton High School. She volunteered with the Farm & Community Youth Clubs serving as a pen pal to a 5-year-old girl, Anuel.

“I loved the pen pal program, I especially enjoyed writing in Spanish. I plan to be a pen pal next harvest as well. I thoroughly enjoyed it,” she said.

• Victoria Martinez volunteers with Migrant Worker Outreach both as an on-site camp visitor and as a year-round supporter of farm workers. In addition to her work with MWO, Victoria is the founder and director of La Casita de Esperanza. She has ties to several Hammonton area civic organizations.

“Serving migrant workers and immigrants has brought me great joy. This past summer I helped administer interest surveys to Spanish speaking teens in the Farm & Community Youth Clubs. I also served as a pen pal for a 13-year-old club member, Jessica. With vaccines available, I’m hopeful that it will be easier to visit the migrant camps next summer,” she said.

• Corina Mendoza volunteers with Migrant Worker Outreach (MWO) as Chief Editor and Translator for the Latino pages of *The Combined Farm Worker Journals*. She also supports the



Volunteers Charley Harrison (left) and Corina Mendoza (right).

Farm & Community Youth Clubs of South Jersey and many other MWO projects by providing translations for fliers, brochures and volunteer applications.

“Welcoming migrant workers

and their families to New Jersey is dear to my heart because my dad worked on various farms when I was a young girl. My dad holds a bachelor’s degree in engineering and he still had to work really hard under the sun

when we first arrived. He worked long hours for very little money. He often felt judged and looked down on for being a farm worker. Migrant workers are marginalized for their looks or for the type of work they do.

Everyone deserves recognition for their hard work. Everyone deserves to feel welcomed.

“My advice for people who are interested or intrigued about volunteering is to go for it. You might change someone’s life. It will give you a big feeling of satisfaction and a different perspective on life,” she said.

Additional Hammonton residents who supported the work of MWO in 2020:

• Chris Bunn served as a pen pal and as a telephone reading partner to children in the Farm & Community Youth Clubs.

• D.J. Haslett contributed art work for the front and back covers of the Jamaican section of *The Combined Farm Worker Journals*.

• Rosemary Hill served as liaison between MWO and donor organizations including South Jersey Democratic Women’s Forum and Hammonton Democratic Club.

• An anonymous donor sewed 47 cooling neck ties, filled with water absorbent beads. The fabric ties are soaked in water, then worn loosely around the neck. As the water evaporates, it helps bring the person’s body temperature down. Workers who received the cooling ties were eager to try them out.

Courtesy Photos

Office Locations

- Hammonton
- Barnegat
- Cape May Court Hs.
- Cinnaminson
- Linwood
- Manahawkin
- Toms River
- Turnersville
- Vineland
- Voorhees
- Wall
- Whiting

CONNOLLY

DERMATOLOGY

Winter is a great season to sit by a blazing fire or enjoy your favorite cold weather activities. However cold temperatures, low humidity and dry air from heating systems often lead to dry, itchy, flaky skin. Here are some helpful winter skin care tips:

Moisturize: This is the most crucial step in treating dry, flaky skin. Fragrance-free creams such as CeraVe Moisturizing Cream can be very effective in the winter months.

Protect: Regular sunscreen use helps prevent premature aging, skin cancer and changes in pigmentation. If your moisturizer does not contain an SPF, be sure to include one. A mineral-based SPF cream such as Elta MD can be used on all skin types.

Humidifiers: A humidifier in the bedroom can help reduce dry skin. If your system does not have a built-in humidifier, a simple portable unit will work well.

Hot Showers: Long, hot showers can cause dry skin and irritation. Limit yours to ten minutes at a comfortably warm temperature, pat dry and apply moisturizer immediately.

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Connolly Dermatology is now accepting new patients in the Hammonton office at AtlantiCare Health Park. A yearly visit to the dermatologist is important for the purpose of detecting skin cancer in its earliest, most curable form. You can visit us at www.connollydermatology.com or call:

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