

# SAF

STUDENT ACTION WITH FARMWORKERS

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**Support Changes to the NC Migrant Housing Act!**  
**See Page 3 to find out how.**



Examples of NC farmworker housing conditions. Photos courtesy of the NC Dept. of Labor

## Focus on Farmworker Housing

### Immediate Changes to NC Migrant Housing Act are Necessary

by Ann Warsaw, Intern- Farmworker Advocacy Network

**“In my personal experience,** we have come across one or two houses in Eastern North Carolina that had raw sewage coming out into the yard, and there were children living there,” says Steve Davis, Farmworker Resource Director for Greene County Health Care, Inc. Although the especially atrocious cases of these unregistered migrant labor camps are rare, farmworker advocates believe that the minimum standards for farmworker housing in North Carolina need to be raised. Farmworker advocates in North Carolina frequently see workers living in sub-standard housing, and now they are calling for the legislature to take action and hold housing operators accountable.

Overcrowding, structural problems, poor sanitation, proximity to pesticides and lack of inspection and enforcement are primary concerns for farmworker housing advocates. As Christopher Holden, formerly with the Housing Assistance Council (HAC), writes: “Farmworkers are among the worst-housed groups in the United States. After long hours toiling in the fields, few farmworkers can look forward to a warm shower, clean laundry, or a room to call their own. Even a decent supper is hard to come by if the stove is broken, the refrigerator does not work, or the place lacks a kitchen altogether.”

A HAC survey of farmworker living conditions in the Eastern migrant stream (New England to Florida) published in 2000 found that barrack style dorms and mobile homes are the most common types of housing in farm labor camps. More than eight out of ten of all housing units were overcrowded, and many of those inspected had several exterior structural problems.

#### NC’s Migrant Housing Act should be changed to guarantee the following:

- \* Right of farmworkers to have visitors
- \* At least one working telephone at each camp and a functioning washer and dryer
- \* At least one shower for every five workers and one working toilet for every ten workers
- \* A mattress for each person
- \* Coverage of any farmworker housing that is provided because of employment
- \* Post-occupancy inspections by NC Department of Labor
- \* Accountability for employers whose workers are housed by a crew leader
- \* Procedures to prosecute repeat violators of the law and those who don’t register their camps

**“After long hours toiling in the fields, few farmworkers can look forward to a warm shower, clean laundry, or a room to call their own”**

Sanitary concerns included moldy walls, bathrooms and mattresses, lack of toilet and shower facilities, and vermin-infested eating and cooking areas. These conditions are particularly dangerous when workers are unable to bathe properly or keep food fresh, which can lead to serious health problems. Of the housing surveyed, researchers found 38 percent severely inadequate or unfit for human habitation.

According to the National Advisory Council on Migrant Health, workers living in such substandard housing risk physical harm from lead poisoning, respiratory illnesses, ear infections, and diarrhea. Additionally, the National Center for Farmworker Health reports that farmworkers suffer from the highest rate of toxic chemical injuries of any workers in the U.S. The two most pressing reasons for concern about

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**SAF** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to bring students and farmworkers together to learn about each other's lives, share resources and skills, improve conditions for farmworkers, and build diverse coalitions working for social change.

#### SAF STAFF

**Lyndsey Beutin**, Apprentice 2004-2005

**Laxmi Haynes**, National Student Organizer

**Tony Macias**, Assistant Director

**Andres Potes**, spring intern

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**Ilda Santiago**, Migrant Youth Director

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#### ACTION ALERTS

To receive SAF's weekly Action Alerts about legislation affecting farmworkers, organizing campaigns, campus events, and job opportunities, send an email with the word "subscribe" to <[farmworkers-request@duke.edu](mailto:farmworkers-request@duke.edu)>

**For more information or to submit articles to the newsletter, contact:**

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# SAF

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## Design Corps Offers Affordable, Quality Alternatives to Poor Farmworker Housing

by Kelly Lowry, Design Corps Fellow

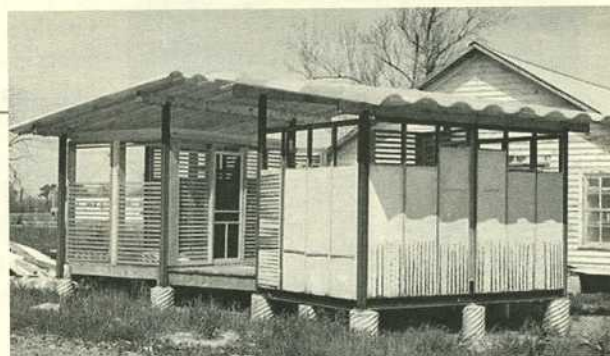
**Fourteen years ago**, architects Bryan Bell and Victoria Ballard Bell founded Design Corps, a nonprofit organization that provides architectural, planning, and design services to low-income individuals and community-based organizations. Design Corps has addressed migrant farmworker living conditions on several levels, including housing, community development, and economic development.

Design Corps is currently working with The Housing Development Corporation (a coalition of farmworker advocacy organizations) to address food security issues in Newton Grove, NC through the development of a worker-run flea market and community garden project. Not only will this initiative address an immediate concern, it will also work to build the backbone of a much larger project – that of a model migrant farmworker community, including housing, community resources, and social services.

### Affordable Innovation

**Bathroom facilities** often present the most pressing environmental health concerns in migrant worker housing. Design Corps' Bath House Project addresses this housing issue by procuring grant funds to finance bath units which are attached to existing worker housing. The new bath houses consist of showers, toilets, and sinks, the numbers of which are coordinated with the number of workers and often exceed the code to make for more comfortable worker living conditions. The grower provides the land, water, and septic system required for the bath house. The result is a win-win situation: workers receive the improved living conditions that they deserve as a basic human right, and the farmer is able to provide this at an affordable cost. Design Corps uses this same model to carry out its worker housing program, which has been successful in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Florida, and is slated to begin in North Carolina next year.

Design Corps' mission is to find ways to offer quality, affordable design service to the many that don't currently have it available. For more information about how to get involved in this work, visit [www.designcorps.org](http://www.designcorps.org). Kelly Lowry can be reached at 919-824-1182 or [kellylowry@gmail.com](mailto:kellylowry@gmail.com).



**Above:** A migrant bath house located in Sampson County, NC- designed and built by North Carolina State University architecture students. Photo by Bryan Bell

### Housing Development Corporation (HDC)

**Member Organizations:** Design Corps, Episcopal Farmworker Ministry, NC Farmworkers Project, Telamon Corporation, and Student Action with Farmworkers

**To get involved with HDC, contact:** Bryan Bell ([bryan@designcorps.org](mailto:bryan@designcorps.org)), or Melinda Wiggins ([mwiggins@duke.edu](mailto:mwiggins@duke.edu))

### Further Reading on Community Design

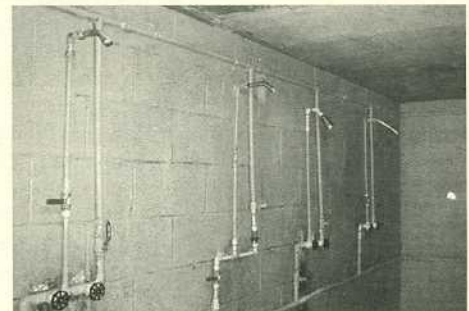
([www.designcorps.org](http://www.designcorps.org))

**Participatory Design-** Henry Sanoff  
**Architecture of the Poor-** Hassan Fathy  
**Redesigning the American Dream-** James Howard Kunstler  
**A Better Place to Live-** Phillip Langdon  
**Defensible Space-** Oscar Newman  
**The Timeless Way of Building-** Christopher Alexander

# NC ACTION ALERT:

## Current Farmworker Housing Conditions in North Carolina are Unacceptable

- \* **Toilet facilities are often few and far between.** North Carolina standards require only one toilet for every 15 people of the same sex and a single urinal for every 25 men.
- \* **Employers are under no obligation to provide mattresses.** As a result, many farmworkers resort to sleeping on wooden bed frames, cardboard boxes or blankets.
- \* **Only one showerhead is required for every 10 workers.** Farm work is of course, one of the dirtiest, most dangerous and physically grueling occupations. Routine exposure to pesticides necessitates that workers have ready access to decent washing facilities.
- \* **Current standards require only one laundry tub for every 30 workers.** Given the regular exposure of farmworker clothing to pesticides, residues and other toxins, this standard all but guarantees that workers have no safe, clean clothing.
- \* **Employers are under no obligation to provide access to a telephone.** Because of the rural isolation of most camps, the lack of a phone can be a grave problem during health-related emergencies.
- \* **Kitchen facilities need only have one stove burner for every 5 people** and one refrigerator for every 27.
- \* **Employers are under no obligation to permit visitors.** Even church ministries, social workers, licensed attorneys, and SAF interns can be (and regularly are) barred from visiting workers.
- \* **As the NC Department of Labor is understaffed, fewer than half of typical farmworker camps are inspected each year.**



**Above:** Examples of poor housing conditions in Western North Carolina farm labor camps. Many workers are forced to live in unsound structures and enjoy little privacy. *Photos courtesy of the NC Dept. of Labor*

## TAKE ACTION TODAY

- \* Please call and email the members of the NC Senate Commerce Committee AND your Senator THIS WEEK to ask that they support SB962.
- \* Send the members of the NC Senate Commerce Committee AND your Senator a migrant housing postcard regarding SB962. Please contact Lori Khamala (lori@nfw.org or 919-489-4485) to receive free postcards.

[www.migranthousing.net](http://www.migranthousing.net)

### WHY NOW?

The deadline for our bill to be heard and pass the Commerce Committee is SOON, so senators need to hear from you ASAP.

Please take time over the next week to call, email and write your Senator!

### WHO TO CONTACT:

To find your Senator, go to the NC General Assembly's webpage:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascrpts/members/memberList.pl?sChamber=Senate>

To send a pre-written email to your Senator go to:

<http://capwiz.com/ncjustice/issues/alert/?alertid=7508466&type=TA>

### The Farmworker Advocacy Network (FAN)

is a coalition of NC organizations that advocates for improvements in farmworkers' living and working conditions. FAN members include: the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Farmworker Unit of Legal Aid\*, National Farm Worker Ministry, NC Community Health Center Association, NC Justice Center's Immigrants Legal Assistance Project, NC Farmworkers' Project, NC Farmworker Health Program\* and Student Action with Farmworkers.

*\*Advisory Members only.*

### FAN CONTACTS:

Lori Fernald Khamala, National Farm Worker Ministry, (919) 491-0039, lori@nfw.org

Melinda Wiggins, Student Action with Farmworkers, (919) 660-3616, mwiggins@duke.edu



## Farmworker Awareness Week 2005 Report

### THE STATS:

During the week of March 28th, students and community members organized events and activities on their campuses for national Farmworker Awareness Week (FAW). For 5 years SAF has called FAW to raise awareness of issues facing farmworkers. This year 36 events took place in 19 different cities across the U.S. and Canada, reaching over 690 people. 14 different colleges/universities planned events as diverse as decorating cars and organizing panel discussions with local farmworkers. Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania screened a film and coordinated a local orchard tour, while students at UNC-Chapel Hill leafleted customers to support Gallo vineyard workers fighting for a union contract. Students at Heritage College in Washington invited speakers to talk about the history of the farmworker movement and how to support farmworkers.

### AWARD WINNING EVENT:

Members Empowering True Awareness (META) at USF-Tampa had their first awareness campaign, STOP THE BULL: Unite for the Fight. META president & SAF alum, Elida Molina, said "Our first year as an organization was fabulous and because of this week, we were able to have the courage to bring up the Taco Bell Boycott Victory and other student organizations were able to represent issues that they feel were underrepresented." META won 3 awards at USF for their involvement in 2005 Farmworker Awareness Week.

### EDUCATING YOUTH:

New York City 6<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher Mariela Tsuboyama taught facts about farmworkers and created brochures with her students. Migrant students at UT-Pan Am taught children about Cesar Chavez in a local elementary school. High school teacher & SAF alum Ramiro Arceo distributed fruit with little farmworker facts attached to them, and held a Cesar Chavez Day civil rights teach-in.

### CO-SPONSORS:

Coalition of Immokalee Workers  
Student Farmworker Alliance  
Student Labor Action Project  
United Farm Workers

### PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

ARC/Pesticide Education Project, Raleigh  
Bea Fuller Rodgers School, NYC, NY  
Carver Vo-Tech High School, Baltimore  
California State University- Long Beach  
Colorado State University, Fort Collins  
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY  
Farmworker Coordinating Council,  
Lake Worth, Florida  
Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania  
Heritage College, Toppenish, Washington  
Madison, Wisconsin: MEChA, SLAC, & others  
Michigan State University, East Lansing  
Ottawa, Canada: Aylwin Lo and  
Justicia 4 Migrant Workers  
St. Edwards University, Austin, TX  
Univ. of Notre Dame, Indiana  
Univ. of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Univ. of Louisville, Kentucky  
Univ. of South Florida, Tampa  
Univ. of Texas Pan-Am

# SAF SALE!

## 1. ITEM: SAF T-SHIRTS

**COLORS:** Red and Black

**AVAILABLE SIZES:** XS, S, M, L, XL

**PRICE:** \$15<sup>00</sup>



## 2. ITEM: The Human Cost of Food

**AN ANTHOLOGY** focusing on farmworkers in the Southeast United States. Topics include: labor organizing, the rise of agribusiness, current health, educational, and legal challenges faced by farmworkers. Includes sample curriculum. (337 pages)

**PRICE:** \$21<sup>95</sup>



## 3. ITEM: SAF Notecards

**FEATURING THE** artwork of Maria Okie Baum, two different designs in green ink on white notecard with white envelope.

**PRICE:** \$10<sup>00</sup> for 5 of each, plus envelopes



## NC Migrant Housing Act

...continued from page 1

pesticides are direct inhalation from pesticide drift and workers' inability to wash themselves or their clothes due to a lack of bathing and laundry facilities. These chemicals can cause immediate health problems such as rashes, dizziness and nausea and long-term effects such as cancer and sterility.

"I wouldn't have wanted my family to live in some of the camps I have seen that passed inspection," says Steve Davis of Greene County. In 2003, Agricultural Employment Services estimated that approximately 107,828 migrant and seasonal farmworkers worked in North Carolina's fields. Of the 1,653 migrant housing camps registered in 2004, only growers who use H-2A temporary visa workers are guaranteed that their housing will be inspected before it is occupied. Currently, post-occupancy inspections of farmworker housing are typically conducted only when a complaint is filed, and the Migrant Housing Act of NC does not cover migrant and seasonal farmworkers who live in commercial housing.

Immediate changes in housing regulations are essential to ensuring that farmworkers in our state do not live in inhumane housing. (See box on page 1) If you believe that safe housing ensures a safe community for all, contact FAN members Melinda Wiggins (919-660-3616; [mwiggins@duke.edu](mailto:mwiggins@duke.edu)) or Lori Khamala (919-489-4485; [lori@nfwm.org](mailto:lori@nfwm.org)) to find out how to support improvements to the NC Migrant Housing Act. 🏠

-- [www.migranthousing.net](http://www.migranthousing.net) --

"The shower has filthy, crumbling concrete walls- the kind that won't come clean. There is a metal sink held by a rotting plywood counter, and the toilet often backs up, so the tiny room reeks of sewage."

*description of dormitory-style farmworker housing by Gina Edwards, Naples Daily News, 1998*

From: *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworkers' Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, Chapter 6 pp. 169-193

## Congratulations 2005 ITF Interns and Sponsors!

### Western North Carolina

Walter Ramirez (CSU Fresno)  
Morgan Gregson (Davidson)  
Jaime Duggan (App. State)  
Ramon Zepeda (UNC Pembroke)  
Nereida Arguije (Johnston Comm.)

Rural Advancement Foundation  
Rural Advancement Foundation  
Wilkes County Health Care  
Morganton Worker Center  
Surry County Health Care

### Central North Carolina

Lupita Lopez (OLLU)  
Julia Finkelstein (App. State)  
Jose Franco (CSU Long Beach)  
Juan Morales (Boise State)  
Maria Singleton (NCCU)  
Guillermo Raya (Lewis-Clark)  
Reynaldo Sosa (U South Florida)  
Noah Raper (Duke)  
Rosie Rangel (St. Edward's)  
Joslyn Wiley (Furman)  
Alicia Marquez (CSU Sacramento)

Rockingham County Migrant Education  
Rockingham County Migrant Education  
Legal Aid of NC  
Immigrants Legal Assistance Project  
Immigrants Legal Assistance Project  
Wake County Health & Human Services  
Wake County Health & Human Services  
National Farm Worker Ministry  
National Farm Worker Ministry  
Piedmont Health  
Piedmont Health

### Eastern North Carolina

Gerardo Granillo (Wake Tech)  
Daniel Tubb (Trent University)  
Ruben Jacobo-Rubio (ABAC)  
Fedelma McKenna (Guilford)  
Ana Gaytan (U of Idaho)  
Angelita Morado (U of Texas Pan Am)  
Lupe Huitron (CWU)  
Orlando de la Cruz (CSU Monterrey Bay)  
Paloma Lira (Lewis-Clark)  
Lori Hall (Duke)

Episcopal Farmworker Ministry  
Episcopal Farmworker Ministry  
Farm Labor Organizing Committee  
Farm Labor Organizing Committee  
Greene County Health Care  
Greene County Health Care  
WFU School of Medicine/NC Farmworkers Proj.  
WFU School of Medicine/NC Farmworkers Proj.  
Carolina Family Health  
Carolina Family Health

### South Carolina

Nakashia Dunner (College of Charleston)  
Adelina Fuente (SUNY Oneonta)  
Laura Bartels (UNC Greensboro)

SC Migrant Health Program  
SC Migrant Health Program  
SC Migrant Health Program

## Regional Data on Farmworker Housing

Facts from *Abundant Fields, Meager Shelter: Findings from a Survey of Farmworker Housing in the Eastern Migrant Stream* (Housing Assistance Council, 2000)

Total housing units surveyed: 1,566  
Total number housed in these units: 8,965  
Total number of children: 1,584 (36% of households surveyed)  
Most common type of housing: Mobile Homes (32%), Dormitories and Barracks (30%)  
Percentage of overcrowded units (>1 person/room): 85%  
Percentage of units with 1 or fewer bedrooms: 40%  
Percentage of housing units without telephones: 59%  
Percentage of housing units without laundry facilities: 75%  
Total number of units without any access to toilets: 110 (126 had broken toilets)  
Percentage of units bordering fields where pesticides are sprayed: 40%  
Percentage of units with structural problems, roof holes, or both: 33%  
Median monthly income for wage earners surveyed: \$850  
Median housing unit cost per month: \$200 (\$400 for mobile homes)  
States included in survey: CT, FL, KT, MA, MC, NC, NJ, NY, SC, & VA

## Announcements:

Results from the **2002 NAWS**, or National Agricultural Worker Survey, are now available online at: <http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/agworker/naws.htm>. Check out this important, recently reinstated survey of farmworkers in the US.

SAF was recently awarded the **Harry Chapin Self-Reliance Award** by World Hunger Year for its "innovative and creative approaches to fighting domestic hunger and poverty by empowering people and building self-reliance." This March SAF received an **Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award** for its role in the annual Student Labor Week of Action, a "creative partnership of college students and workers for engaging a new generation of activists."

## Thank you SAF Supporters:

John & Ann Marie Carter  
David & Maria Rocio Cruz  
Elizabeth Freeman-Lambar  
Harry & Kelly Gillmore  
Felicia Goins, DDS  
Frank Grauman & Louise Ward  
Seema Kakad  
Jim Kepner  
Jennifer McGovern & Steve Unruhe  
Fawn Pattison  
Aidil Polanco-Ortiz  
Andres Potes  
Noah Raper  
Logan Roberts  
Charles Thompson  
Daniel & Marilyn Smith  
Ann Warshaw  
and many anonymous individuals!

## Upcoming Events:

May 21-22	El Foro Latino/Latino Forum, Greensboro, NC
June 3	SAF Celebrates Photography Fundraiser, 6-8 pm, Durham, NC*
June 6-11	Into the Fields Orientation, Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC*
June 16-18	Farm to Cafeteria Conference, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH
July 4-6	ITF Mid-Retreat, Peace College, Raleigh, NC*
July 16	Into the Fields Backyard Cookout, Durham, NC*
August 10-12	ITF Final Retreat, Trinity Center, Salter Path, NC*
August 29-31	Agricultural Worker Health Initiative Conference, Sacramento, CA
Sept. 10-11	Fiesta Del Pueblo, Raleigh, NC
Sept. 19-21	NIEHS Annual Meeting, Anchorage, AK
Sept. 22-25	Jobs w/ Justice Annual Meeting & Student Labor Pre-Conf., St Louis, MO
Oct. 20-22	East Coast Migrant Stream Forum, Memphis, TN

\*Alumni, sponsoring organizations, and donors welcome. Contact SAF at (919) 660-3652 for more details

For more information about SAF events & programs, check out our website at:

[www.saf-unite.org](http://www.saf-unite.org)

## Thank you to the following organizations for supporting SAF:

Blessed Sacrament Church  
Center for Documentary Studies  
Church of Reconciliation  
Church Women United in NC  
Conservation Fund  
Donation Line  
Harry Chapin Foundation  
Hispanics In Philanthropy  
Home Moravian Church  
Joyce Foods

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Southern Partners Fund  
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United Methodist Women  
Wake Forest University/NIEHS  
World Hunger Year  
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

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