UNIVERSITY

From the fields to the classroom

By Karen Engels Emerald Reporter

"Si, se puede."

"Yes, you can" is a phrase instructors repeat often at the High School Equivalency Program, both in Spanish and English.

The one-term program, taught in both languages, helps dropouts get their General Education Diploma and encourages them to pursue work or higher education.

"HEP was my ticket out of the fields," said program graduate Hector Rios, who just completed his first term as a University student.

Before entering the HEP program last spring, Rios had dropped out of school and worked picking fruit and in packing houses in the Hood River area for five years. When he got laid off, he heard about the HEP program, applied and was accepted.

Rios, who earned straight A's fall term, has surprised even himself with his success. He got high scores on his GED exams last spring and was accepted to the University where he plans to study business administration and possibly international studies.

Before beginning at HEP, Rios planned only to get his GED, which is equivalent to a high school diploma.

"It's like a dream. I can't believe I'm at the U of O," he said.

Rios is just one example of HEP successes.

HEP Director Emilio Hernandez has also "been there" and wants to help students get out of the fields. The son of a migrant worker who came to Oregon to work in the fields, he has experienced first-hand the difficulties many HEP students face.

Hernandez has a master's degree in public administration and management from the University. He knows what he's talking about when he says, "You can be somebody." Last summer he became the director of the federally funded program located at 1685 E. 17th.

One of 23 such programs around the country, HEP is geared mainly toward seasonal farm workers and their children, but Hernandez emphasizes the program is open to everyone, not just Hispanics.

Anyone who has dropped out of school and has either worked or been supported by seasonal or migrant work in the past two years is eligible. "Seasonal work" also includes fishing, tree planting, ranching and dairy

HEP instructors teach five subjects — math, literature, social studies, science and grammar, all requirements for the GED exam. All instructors are bilingual in English and Spanish.

But the staff teaches more than just the "three R's." Oneon-one counseling, self-esteem building and cultural awareness and pride are vital elements in the HEP program. Many of the students feel alienated due to language barriers and the nature of migrant work, said instructor Karen Ulloa.

"We encourage them to be proud of their culture," she said.

"We do a lot of work with their self-esteem," Ulloa said. Staff members strive for a family atmosphere and group bonding. The small classes and individual instruction are key to the program. Thirty-two students were enrolled last term.

But instruction isn't limited to the classroom. The staff takes students to visit art museums and the planetarium, things they might otherwise never be exposed to. They also provide information on legal aid, higher education, employment, planned parenthood, AIDS and alcohol and drugs

The staff of nine is warm and enthusiastic. On orientation day Monday, counselor Jose De La Pena gave incoming students a nen tall

"You have come here with hope to do something more with your life," De La Pena said. "I see it in your faces you have a lot of courage."

Oscar Hernandez, a former HEP student and now program recruiter likewise exhorted new students.

"It's all up to you. And only you. You can make it happen," he said. "The reason you were selected was because we believe in you."

De La Pena urged students to leave any bad experiences with education behind and to learn responsibility, restraint and re-

After the orientation, Pauline Archuleta, a new student this term from Idaho, said she is eager to earn her GED and go to college. Her four brothers, who all went through the program, talked her into it, she said

Other new students echo her sentiments. Not all speak English yet, but they share common aspirations - to go to college, and to get good jobs. One student wants to be a pilot, another student a lawyer.

While students are in the program, they live in Bean complex of the dorms to get a glimpse of what college life is like. All housing and instruction costs, as well as some health care, are covered by the HEP, said director Hernandez.

Up to 90 percent of enrolled HEP students earn their GED and many go on to community or four-year colleges.

But even those who go on often return to help HEP. Three staff members are HEP graduates and many return as tutors.

At the fall HEP graduation ceremony, Rios gave a speech about what the program means to him. "HEP is the key point in my life," he said. "If it wasn't for them, I'd still be pruning trees or washing dishes... I want to return what they've

given me."



STUDENTS

The Erb Memorial Union will be holding an open house for each of the 5 finalists for EMU Director. You are cordially invited to attend.

TIME: 11:30 am - 12:30 pm

PLACE: Cedar D

DATES: January 7, 1992; January 10, 1992;

January 14, 1992; January 17, 1992;

January 21, 1992

****** ALL DAY-EVERY DAY SELF-SERVICE COPIES PLASTIC SPECIAL BINDING 81/2 X 11 1/4"-1" 25% RAG 24# \$1.75 **FULL SERVE** OVER 1" .08¢ ea. \$2.00 FAX FAX FAX WE'VE GOT A WIDE VARIETY OF CUSTOM PAPERS!!! NEWSLETTERS, FLYERS, BOOKLETS, CLUB HANDBOOKS

The Copy Shop

539 East 13th (JUST TWO BLOCKS WEST OF CAMPUS ON 13TH!!) OPEN M-F 8:30-7:00, SAT 10-4

AWARD

Continued from Page 1

"I think what struck me is that there is a total acceptance there," Jim Lewis, the school's counselor said of their friendship. "For them there are no differences."

"We're best friends. That was my first friend," Lindsay says, explaining what she likes about Yoonie amid laughter from both girls. "She's my best friend because I like her funniness."

"I listen to her rules," Yoonie adds. Then Yoonie sits quiet for a long moment thinking about what to say about what she likes best about Lindsay.

"She's nice to me," Yoonie said. "She wears this fancy clothes. She dances. Because she's nice."

The two girls said they not only have fun together, but they also learn a lot from each other.

Yoonie, who speaks mostly Korean at home, teaches words to Lindsay. "She knows Korean words," Yoonie said. But Lindsay confesses she knows "some of them but not all."

And sometimes, they say, communication can get a little mixed up.

"I tell her stuff and she sometimes says, 'What's that?,' "Lindsay said. Moreover, Yoonie elaborates, "You know what? When I had to go to the bathroom she didn't understand me."

The two friends are neighbors and have been friends since they were toddlers. They were nominated for the award by John Halgren, the school's principal.

"These two girls exemplify the selection criteria of promoting understanding and respect among all people," Halgren wrote to the award's selection committee.

Yoonie and Lindsay said they're excited about receiving the award, but they do have reservations.

"I feel pretty excited," Lindsay said, mentioning that the day they receive the award is also Yoonie's eighth birthday.

"It's gonna be funny in front of all those people," Yoonie said. "Sort of embarrassing."

USSA Continued from Page 1

Bills insists she is playing by the rules.

"The court's decision didn't and doesn't bar us from participating in USSA-sponsored events," she said. "We can fund travel but we can't pay money (directly to USSA)."

On Dec. 17, 1991, University student and former ASUO Vice President Sheila Stickel, who is a USSA member, requested and received about \$300 from the ASUO to pay for travel expenses for a USSA meeting, which took place in early January.

Both Stickel and Bills deny that any of the money in question was paid directly to USSA. "No one is trying to subvert

"No one is trying to subvert the process," Stickel said. Stickel said the USSA board

Stickel said the USSA board of directors recently passed a resolution to change the wording of the job description that conflicts with the ASUO constitution. However, an official decision will not be made until all voting members meet during the summer.

Stephen Briggs, chief justice of the Constitution Court, said the court will probably issue a temporary injunction ordering the freeze of all money going to USSA within a couple of days, and then grant a hearing as requested by Oberson.



Some of our more common "rescue" animals