

THIS WEEK VML LOST A FRIEND

By Ken Killary

We at the Sandy Opportunity Center lost a friend this week.

He was a migrant for most of his 32 years. The girl he married never had an easy life, either, and they decided their roaming days were over. "Migrant camps are no place for kids," he told me one day, and I knew he meant it.

Now for my friend, the harvest season has ended for the last time, as it will for each of us.

I have been working with migrant families for years, and I know their fears and frustrations. This man was "somebody" to me — he was my friend.

He wanted to get his high school education, and for awhile he was enrolled in our Sandy GED class. His boss let him change his hours to attend. His wife, too, wanted to learn to read and write better.

The day came when life was getting better; he was able to buy a piece of land. No longer would he toil in the fields of another man. On my last visit to his little trailer house, he told me about his dreams.

He told me especially of the many small towns in California where he had lived in migrant camps and moved on to the next harvest and the next.

I had come that night to ask my friend to be a member of our new Opportunity Center advisory committee, because here was a group where he was needed.

At our first meeting he was elec-

ted temporary chairman.

I drank coffee with my friend and his wife in their trailer. The children darted back and forth between the TV in the bedroom and the "company" in the tiny living room. When I turned to leave, a little patch of light from the trailer door helped me step to the ground. "Come and see my new pump," my friend said. "See these tools and this tractor. A year and a half ago I didn't have nothing."

We stepped over furrows of newly turned earth in the dark, and he said, "This is where I am going to plant some peach trees. Some day I will need my own pickers."

And the next week some of the trees were planted in the spare moments that my friend could get after his long daily drive to and from his winter job in Portland.

Then the terrible crash of two cars brought an end to the dreams of my friend.

But I don't think this is the end.

I think he would want his wife to keep this land, if she can, and to raise these trees and these sons and daughters who are so small now that they won't remember daddy much when they are grown.

In the spring when the blossoms are on these little peach trees and the Oregon air is warm and fresh, I think my friend will know the blossoms are there and that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

We will miss you, Minard Chew.

Nosotros aquí de Sandy Opportunity Center perdimos un amigo esta semana.

Era un migrante por la mayor parte de sus treinta y dos años. Su esposa nunca tenía una vida fácil tampoco, y decidían de terminar sus días como migrantes. "La vida migrante no es buena para niños," me decía un día y sabía que para él era la verdad.

Ahora por mi amigo la cosecha venía por la última vez, como vendrá por todos de nosotros.

He trabajado con familias migrantes por muchos años y conozco a sus temores y problemas. Este hombre era "alguien" para mí — era mi amigo.

Quería obtener una educación superior y por un rato se registró en nuestra clase GED en Sandy. Su jefe le dejó cambiar sus horas de trabajar para asistir. Su esposa, también, quería saber leer y escribir mejor.

El día venía cuando la vida se hacía mejor; podía comprar tierra. No trabajaría más en los campos de otro. La última vez que visitaba su casita, me hablaba de sus sueños.

Me dijo especialmente de los muchos pueblos pequeños en California donde vivía en campos migrantes y mudaba de una cosecha a otra.

He venido esta noche para pedir que mi amigo se ponía miembro de nuestro comité consejero del Opportunity Center, porque aquí había un grupo que le necesitaba.

En la primera reunión le eligieron presidente temporal.

Tomé café con mi amigo y su esposa en su casa; los niños corrieron entre la televisión en la recámara y el "huésped" en la sala pequeña. Cuando empecé a salir, una luz pequeña de la puerta me ayudó a bajar. "Venga a ver mi bomba nueva," dijo mi amigo. "Estos instrumentos nuevos y este tractor. Hacía un año y media que no tenía nada."

Nos paseábamos por surcos frescos en la obscuridad, y él dijo, "Aquí es donde voy a poner algunos duraznos. Algún día necesitare mis propios trabajadores."

Y la semana próxima plantearon algunos árboles que mi amigo podía obtener después de su paseo diario a su trabajo de invierno en Portland.

Luego el terrible choque de dos coches terminó los sueños de mi amigo.

Pero no creo que esto es el fin.

Creo que él quería que su esposa mantenga esta tierra, si es posible, y crie estos árboles y niños quienes son tan pequeños que no recuerdan mucho a su papá en los años que vienen.

En la primavera cuando tienen flores estos duraznos pequeños y el aire de Oregon es caluroso y fresco, creo que mi amigo sabrá que las flores están allí y que Dios da y Dios toma.

Nos falta, Minard Chew.

A Letter From Yolanda De Rueda

To the Opportunity News:

I want to thank Mr. Wilcox for asking me to write a small article about high school life.

First of all I am proud to say that my father Manuel de Rueda is president of the Latin American Club of Jefferson.

I am a student at Albany Union High School in Albany. I enjoy school, especially this year, since it's my first year in high school. There are many activities and clubs that keep me busy, and they are fun. I joined the Band Boosters Club and Future Teachers of America.

I plan to go to college after high school, and major in teaching and music. I play the clarinet with the school band, and I can play the piano, a little. I guess I take after my cousin, she plays the clarinet and piano.

High school life is very interesting, it can be very exciting and you

can make it fun also. As we all know, education comes but once in a lifetime, so now I'm taking advantage of it while I can. I've also been thinking of the "Upward Bound" program and I think it is a very good opportunity, for me and other kids of my age.

I don't know very many Latin-Americans at school, I know only about two or three, but I know many outside of school. I think there could be many more if only they knew about the Latin-American Club.

I remember the first school I attended here in Oregon. It was in Redmond. I went there for a month. Then it was Jefferson Grade School. Now it is Albany Union High School. I hope in the future it will be either Oregon State or the University of Oregon.

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