

Southeastern Michigan Migrant Resource Council

Blissfield, Michigan 49228
Heather Yeager Executive Summary

Emily Martinez

Consultant - Multicultural Programs & Services

Lenawee County, MI
517-486-4278
martineze@frontier.com



Catholic Diocese of Lansing

Midwest Catholic Association of Hispanic Ministry

Hispanic Ministry Migrant Office

Representatives for Hispanic Ministry Office:

Reverend Fred Thelen
Christo Rey Church
201 West Miller Road
Lansing, MI 48911
Telephone: (517) 394-4639
Fax: (517) 394-8090
E-mail: fredt@christoreychurch.org
Website: <http://www.dioceseoflansing.org/>



The State of Michigan

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) Lansing

(Governor Rick Snyder)

Maura D. Corrigan – DHS Director,
Chairperson for the Interagency Migrant
Services Committee (who reports to the
Governor of our state on issues and/or items of
importance).

Email: dhsweb@michigan.gov
Website: <http://www.mi.gov/dhs>





Department of Human Resources (Adrian Location)

1040 S. Winter St.

Suite # 3013

Adrian, MI 49221

Telephone: 517-264-6300

Website: <http://lenawee.mi.us/>

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday 8am-4:30pm

Closed 12:00 noon until 1:00pm (no phone service available)

Holidays Closings: New Year's Day, President's Day, Good Friday (1/2 day; PM), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day New Year's Eve.



Mission & Vision Statement

Mission: *Improving the quality of life in Michigan by providing services to vulnerable children and adults that will strengthen the*

community and enable families and individuals to move toward independence.

Vision: *Compassion. Protection. Independence.*

(Michigan Department of Human Resources, 2012).

Goals, Strategies & Objectives

- **Information Exchange:** Provide a forum for exchange of information on programs, eligibility criteria, services, location and dates of programs and the availability of bilingual English/Spanish speaking staff. (Especially significant since many migrant programs hire seasonal staff to serve migrant client population who initially are unaware of their counterparts in other agencies or the services they provide.)
- **Identification of Unmet Needs:** The council can collectively identify problematic service gaps and/or unmet needs. After identification and documentation of service gaps, council members can restructure their programs to meet the need or the responsible agency can be alerted to the problem.

- **Client Referral System:** Through informal contacts between council members, the development of an Agency Resource Guide and a preseason migrant service providers meeting, referral system is established which insures that migrants in need receive expedient and efficient attention by the agency or agencies empowered to meet that need (Michigan DHR, 2012).

The Organization & it's History

The Southeastern Michigan Migrant Resource Council (SMMRC) is just one of many migrant resource councils in the state of Michigan; an affiliate of the Catholic Diocese of Lansing and overseen by the State of Michigan Department of Human Resources and the state's governor. The council meets at the Department of Human Resources, in Adrian, MI, every third Monday of each month from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; unless the third Monday falls on a holiday. There are two co-chairpersons, a secretary, a treasurer,



and a chairperson for the planning committee and a co-chair as well.

This program has been in effect and helping migrant farm workers since the early 1900's. According to Mrs. Emily Martinez, Consultant to the Multicultural Programs & Services in Lenawee Co., MI,

Mexican immigrants began taking the journey north, *El Viaje Al Norte*, in approximately 1910. They migrated north because of the work waiting for them on the railroads, in the sugar beet field and factories and in the auto industries. The migrant programs were created to make it possible for the Hispanic migrant farm-workers, dairy farm-workers and their families to establish themselves in their new environment and temporary homes



and feel and sense of belonging while they worked; their jobs were typically ones that no one else wanted to do.

Martinez, a key contributor in SMMRC, has been volunteering, visiting and participating in the migrant communities since the mid 1940's when her family migrated from Texas and settled in Blissfield, MI. She herself learned to speak and communicate in English through the aid of the Diocese of Detroit. Over a period of time the Detroit Diocese no longer over saw this area and we became a part of the Catholic Diocese of Lansing. Martinez was eventually asked by the Lansing Diocese to coordinate programs for the migrants and she served in this position from 1990 to 1995.

The organization's plan was to create and introduce outreach programs to parents, youth and the children in the migrant communities. Martinez's job entailed collaborating and coordinating with citizens from the Lenawee county area and many others across the state of Michigan for the betterment of the migrant population; examples of the help recruited for these programs were priests, community members, and high school & college students. Martinez put together visitations to the migrant camps so that presentations could be made to the migrant population. Our areas include Branch, Calhoun, Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Monroe, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties have been serviced by not only the Diocese of Detroit and Lansing, but from the outreach work that volunteers through the Department of Human Services through the Migrant Resource Councils in our State of Michigan as well (Martinez, personal communication, April 2012).

Link to the Migrant Labor Housing Sites:

<http://www.dioceseoflansing.org/hispanicmigrant/index.htm>

Ronald Landfair – M.P.S.

Director, Multi-Cultural Evangelization

Telephone: 517-342-2496

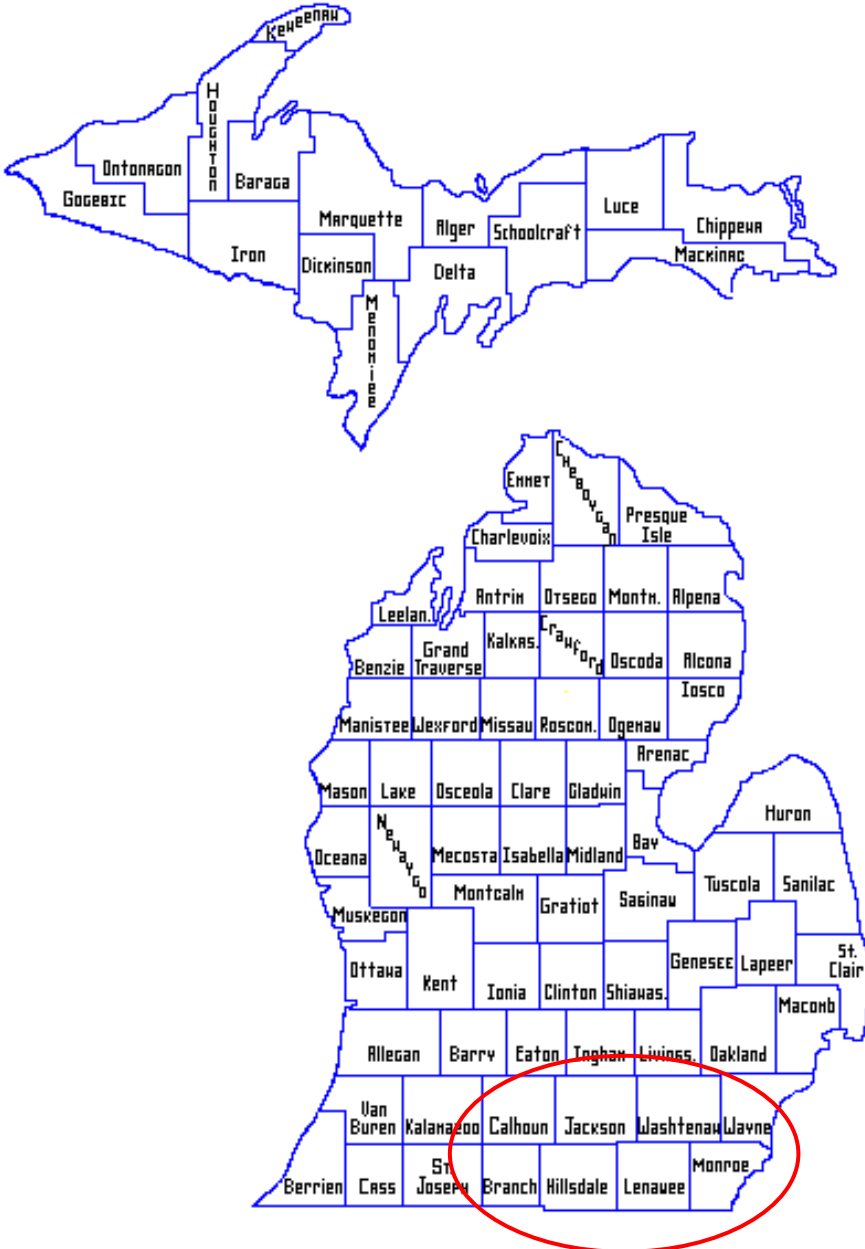
Fax: 517-342-2446

Email: rlandfair@dioceseoflansing.org

Mr. Landfair is always looking for priests, deacons and lay volunteers who are willing to visit the migrant camps.

Multicultural Evangelization Advisory Committee

- Irma Arellano
- Cindi Benavides
- Pamela Capstick
- Frances Jong
- Rosita Kintz
- Paco Lopez
- Anita Myles
- Thuy Pham
- Jim Rouse
- Pat Stokes
- Marcelina Trevinio-Savala
- Ex-officio: Ronald Landfair



The areas circled and pointed out on the Michigan state map are the counties which are benefitting specifically from the Southeastern Michigan Migrant Resource Council. There are a total of 8; Branch, Calhoun, Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee, Washtenaw, Monroe and Wayne.

The council assesses and addresses the needs of the migrant communities; this organization falls under a group who answers to the governor of our state.

Key Persons

There are 2 full staff members through the Department of Human Resources (DHR), http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,4562,7-124-5452_7124_7205---,00.html, Emily Martinez, Ronald Landfair, Governor Rick Snyder, Maura D. Corrigan, Reverend Fred Thelen, Christo Rey Church, volunteers from different local community agencies and citizens within the community who give freely of their time just to be a part of the process and to be a humanitarian.



Cultural Connections

It is difficult for us to become part of the “melting pot” because we strive to keep our individual identity.

- Emily Martinez

Every year the SMMRC puts on gatherings celebrating the start & end of the migrant season; the Welcome & the Farewell. The Welcome, *La Bienvenida*, is put together for the purpose of inviting, introducing and bringing all of the Migrant Community families together so that they can meet and greet other Migrant Farmworkers & their families in the area.



The migrant Farewell, *El Adios*, is for the purpose of making sure that we take the time to thank the migrant families for coming to our state to work and live no matter how long the stay.

There are many other programs that are put together within the times that the migrant families are living in southeastern Michigan. Hispanic Heritage Month is a way for all Hispanics migrant and settled families alike to celebrate their heritage. It takes place from September 15 to October 15 and all are welcome to attend. They also take time to honor the Mexican flag by having a flag raising and recognition. I have realized through my conversations with Mrs. Martinez that most Hispanics alike are a very proud culture. They take time to honor traditions and partake in ancestral customs which have obviously been handed down through many generations.

Challenges

Cost is always a challenge for non-profit organizations. With the cutting of budgets in a nation that is in economic hardship it is hard to gather the resources needed for such organizations. Donations of money, time and resources are key to keeping these types of programs running, but surprisingly this is not the greatest challenge for this organization. The biggest challenge primarily is not getting enough migrant farm-workers needed to get the jobs that are available accomplished.

Another sticky topic is racial profiling in our community. I have witnessed it first hand when people see the migrants return to our area a predetermined set of ideas are already formed on what type of they think they are just because they are migrants.

The Future

So many things are already in the works for this year's migrant return. We are looking at scheduling the Migrant Welcome, The Migrant Health Fair, The Hispanic Heritage Month, and we just hosted the Grower's Pre-Conference on March 19th. We will focus on the programs that we have had as outreach in the Migrant Communities and finalize everything at the end of the season with the Grower's Conference in Lansing in November (Martinez, personal communication, April 2012).

Additional Resources for Migrant Families

- *Migrant Legal Aid* - <http://migrantlegalaid.com/>
- *MICHIGAN CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION JOB SPECIFICATION MIGRANT PROGRAM WORKER JOB DESCRIPTION*
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MigrantProgramWorker_13782_7.pdf
- *Migrant Head Start (Lenawee Co., MI).....263-3969*
- *LENAWEE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES*
<https://webapps.lisd.us/sites/YCS/Documents/Community%20Service%20Numbers%20updated%2042010.pdf>
- *Migrant Health Promotion* - <http://www.migranthealth.org/>
- *Farmworker legal services of Michigan* - <http://www.farmworkerlaw.org/>

Honorable Mention

- An article from the Toledo Blade on the Migrant Program & art in Lenawee County, MI.
<http://www.toledoblade.com/North/2006/08/10/Art-program-gives-migrant-kids-a-hands-on-lesson-in-creativity.html>
- *Emily Martinez honored by state for work with migrant farm workers*
By David Frownfelder
<http://www.lenconnect.com/news/x2128794641/Emily-Martinez-honored-by-state-for-work-with-migrant-farm-workers>