

The Central Valley Opportunity Center 1984 Annual Report

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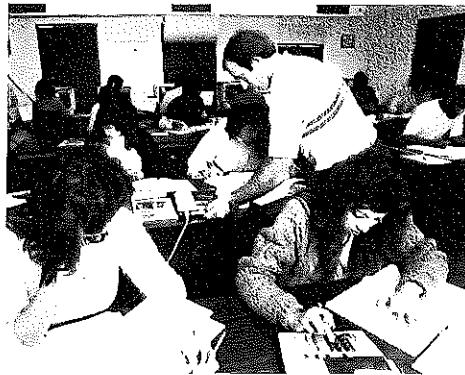
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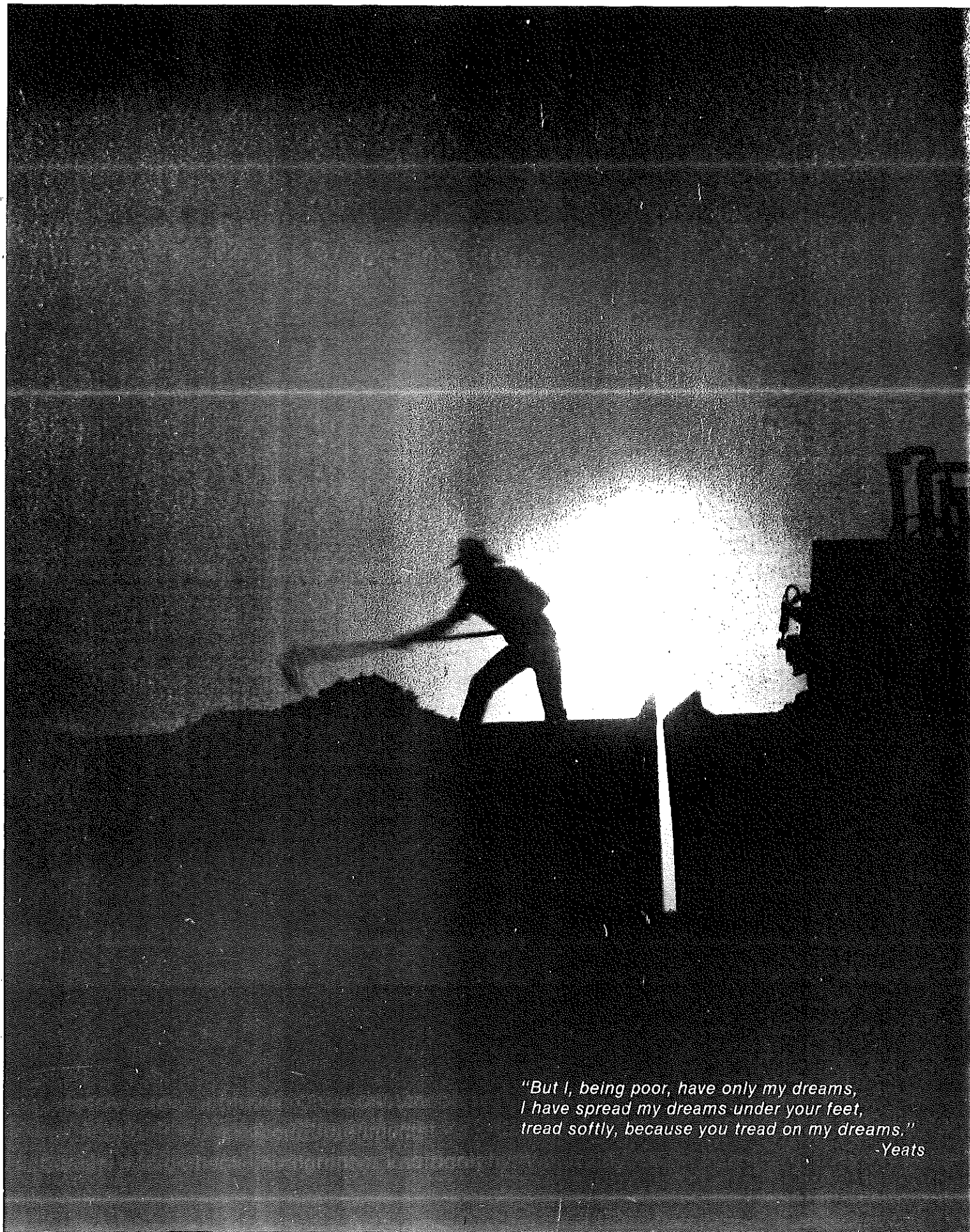
Education



Employment



The Central Valley Opportunity Center 1984 Annual Report



*"But I, being poor, have only my dreams,
I have spread my dreams under your feet,
tread softly, because you tread on my dreams."*

-Yeats

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The Central Valley Opportunity Center
1984 Annual Report

1984: "A Change In Direction"

The Year 1984 has been a memorable one for CVOC - it's Board, it's staff and it's students.

I think the most significant change has been expanding CVOC from a primarily farmworker-service center to a many-faceted organization which extends a helping hand to many low-income persons, such as the elderly, young adults, and the long-term unemployed.

Yet, our commitment to our farmworker participants remains an important cornerstone of our programs.

This is quite a turnabout from what might have been. Financially, 1984 could have been a disaster for CVOC and its students. Governmental funding for many social programs were substantially reduced and others were totally eliminated. This is true for programs sponsored by the Federal, State and local governments.

I must take time to credit our success amid this climate of fiscal adversity to CVOC's leadership and excellent administration. Rather than see the storm and pull back, our Board and administration realized these programs are important to our students and many people are depending on us. We therefore proceeded to search for alternate funding sources.



Margaret E. Snyder
Chairperson, Board of Directors

A wonderful result occurred. We were so successful at demonstrating the importance of our program and what we are doing to help people that we were allowed to continue our farmworker program, and also were allowed to become involved in areas of social service not previously undertaken by CVOC.

The foundation of our existence continued to be our farmworker program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. Under this program, former farmworkers are retrained with vocational skills necessary to seek employment in other areas, such as data processing, welding, construction, media-video or cashiering.

CVOC administers many programs, including a summer youth program,

a program to encourage high school dropouts to continue their education, and a youth job search workshop.

If you are unemployed, I invite you to talk with one of our staff to see how CVOC might assist you. If you are concerned about your community, I invite you to become a volunteer on one of CVOC's community advisory committees. If you are an employer or governmental official, I invite you to contact our Executive Director to tour our facilities and meet our staff.

I believe CVOC will enjoy continued growth and be able to assist even more people in 1985 as a result of the vision of our volunteer boards, the resourcefulness of our administration, and the dedication of our staff.

Board of Directors - Merced County

John M. (Mike) Corley
Public Sector Representative.

Mike Corley is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, with a Bachelor's degree in History and Languages.

While at the University of New Mexico, he earned a Master's degree in Spanish. Mike has completed additional graduate work in Italian and

Religious History.

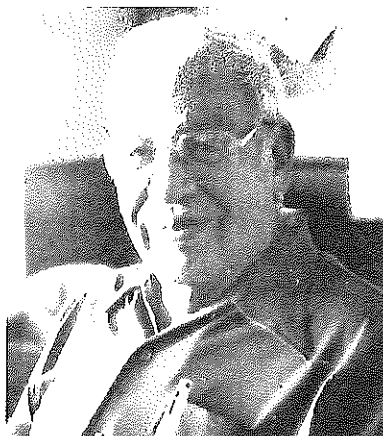
Mike has taught school since 1958 and became an instructor at Merced College in 1968. During the past 17 years, he has taught various subjects including Languages, History and English-as-a-Second Language.



Elias Romo
Farmworker Representative.

Elias Romo was born on July 21, 1911 in Los Angeles, where he attended Garfield High School.

During World War II, he served in the tank corps and when the war ended, he became involved in the problems of California's farmworkers. Elias has dedicated the past 40 years to



helping to ease the plight of California's farmworkers in various capacities, most recently through CVOC's Board of Directors.

For all of his energies and time spent, Elias Romo remains a very modest person. He believes, "God put all of us into this world to help each other."

Richard Almanza
Private Sector Representative.

Richard Almanza was born in Hanford, California. After graduating from Hanford High School in June 1973, he attended the College of the Sequoias in Visalia for two years. In September 1975, he entered San Francisco State University and graduated with a B.A. in Business Administration in 1977.

In 1978, Richard found himself back in Hanford as a credit trainee for the Bank of America. Since then, he has worked for the Bank of America in Fresno, Stockton, and Chowchilla. In April 1984, Richard was assigned to the Bank of America branch in Merced as an Agricultural Loan Officer.

**Meet CVOC's Newest
Board Member**

Board of Directors - Madera County



Nick Espana

Public Sector Representative

Nick Espana attended Chico State College and the Latin-American Institute in Los Angeles. He is the former owner of Espana's Restaurant and Espana's Farm Labor Service, both in Los Banos.

In addition to his commitment to CVOC as past chairman of the Board, Nick is a director of the Madera District Chamber of Commerce, the Madera Exchange Club and the

Madera Action Committee. He is past director of the Madera County American Cancer Society, and is past chairman of the Agri-Business Committee of the Chamber of Commerce.

Currently, Nick is employed by the State of California as a County Manpower Services Representative where he is responsible for placing hundreds of persons in farm-related or entry-level positions.

Sally Venegas

Farmworker Representative

Sally Venegas was born on an Indian reservation in La Jolla, near San Diego. Her father was a migrant farmworker. The family moved to Imperial Valley and later to Orange County where they had a poultry and trucking farm. Sally graduated from Huntington Beach High School and attended Orange Coast College.



Sally is a graduate of Fresno City College and is employed by the Madera Unified School District where she monitors and trains new community aides. Her husband Al is employed by the U.S. Postal Service in Madera.

Willie Long, Sr.

Private Sector Representative

Willie Long, Sr., was born in Georgia. Willie has the distinction of having worked in the shipyard at Pearl Harbor on that fateful day of December 7, 1941. While in the Navy, he was stationed in Tennessee and Alameda, California. In Alameda, Willie worked evenings for his certificate at Vallejo Junior College.

Willie passed the California State Board Contractor's license in 1965. Later, he earned his General Contractor's License.

"I have seen lots of progress in the job CVOC is doing. I hope that through our efforts, and under the divine guidance of God Almighty, we can continue to progress and be of service to others."



Board of Directors - Stanislaus County

Alicia Rojas

Farmworker Representative.

Alicia Rojas was born in Durango, Mexico and came to the United States in 1966. She worked as a farm laborer and harvested many diverse crops, including tomatoes, grapes and chiles.

Alicia came to CVOC in 1981, and was accepted as a student for classroom training in clerical skills. Alicia concentrated on improving and

upgrading her vocational skills and discovered many job opportunities open to her. She is presently employed as a paralegal for a Central Valley law firm.

Alicia's farm labor background and experience as a CVOC student have been a great asset to her as a Board member and in helping others understand the CVOC program.



Pat Maisetti

Public Sector Representative

Pat Maisetti was born in Texas and moved to Modesto 36 years ago. She is a graduate of Modesto High School and Modesto Junior College. Pat and husband Jerry have two children and one grandson.

The couple farm and also have been involved in various real estate investments. She retired from the Stanislaus Credit Control Service



after 21 years of service. In 1978 Pat was the first woman elected to the Patterson City Council. She has been Mayor of Patterson for the past six years.

Pat is a member of more than 30 boards and commissions, including her appointment by President Reagan to the Region V Selective Service System.



Margaret E. Snyder

Private Sector Representative

Margaret Snyder was born in Elizabethton Tennessee, in the heart of Appalachia. Since then she has traveled extensively throughout the world. Margaret and husband Mel moved to Modesto in 1975. They have three children. She is employed as a legal secretary for Modesto attorney

Armando Flores and is very active in various community groups. Mrs. Snyder is a member of the Girl Scouts' Finance Committee, the Board of Directors of the Red Cross of Stanislaus County, and is active in local politics.

Migrant - Seasonal (402) Farmworker Program

CVOC's Federal Department of Labor (JTPA) Farmworker Program provides vocational training and employment services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. It is CVOC's ultimate goal to mainstream participants into full-time, unsubsidized employment. Why is this concept so important to the farmworker and to the community?

The average annual income for a migrant/seasonal farmworker family of four is \$5,500. Nearly all farmworkers in this area have incomes below the Federal lower-living standard. The average education level for a farmworker is the sixth grade and more than 75 percent have little or no English-speaking abilities.

While the current condition of farmworkers is bleak, the future looks even more dismal. California agriculture indicates continual declines in demand for agricultural land, increasing mechanization and a trend toward increasing production of less labor-intensive crops.

Additionally, California farmworkers must compete for jobs with expanding numbers of illegal aliens, new immigrants, disenfranchised citizens from underdeveloped countries, and even with Federal foreign-worker programs.

The effects of this additional competition has resulted in continued low pay for manual agricultural jobs,

instability in the labor market, and a decreasing number of available jobs.

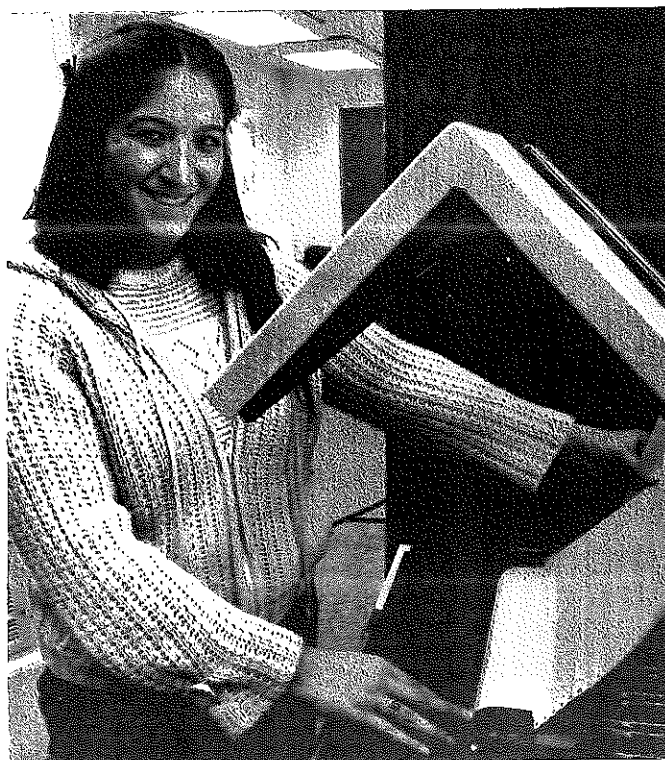
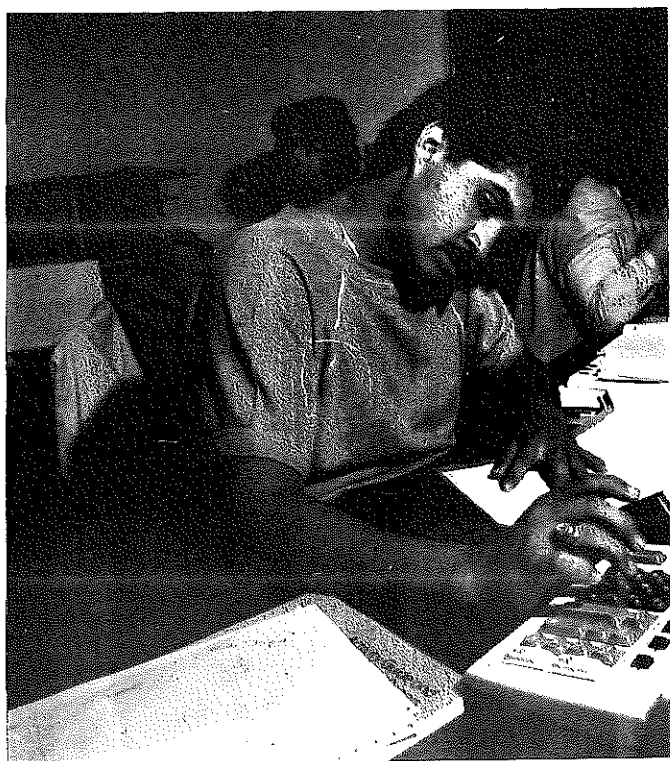
To help alleviate the plight of some farmworkers, the Central Valley Opportunity Center has been operating farmworker-assistance programs since 1980. CVOC has operated eight major Federal Department of Labor farmworker grants for a total of nearly \$9 million.

Since January 1, 1980, CVOC adult Migrant/Seasonal Farmworker programs have served 2,587 farmworkers, and placed 1,264 of them into unsubsidized jobs. CVOC also has

(See page 9)

Vocational skills taught in CVOC classroom training courses include office-business skills, such as proper use of the 10-key adding machine (left

photo) and data processing and computer print outs (right photo).



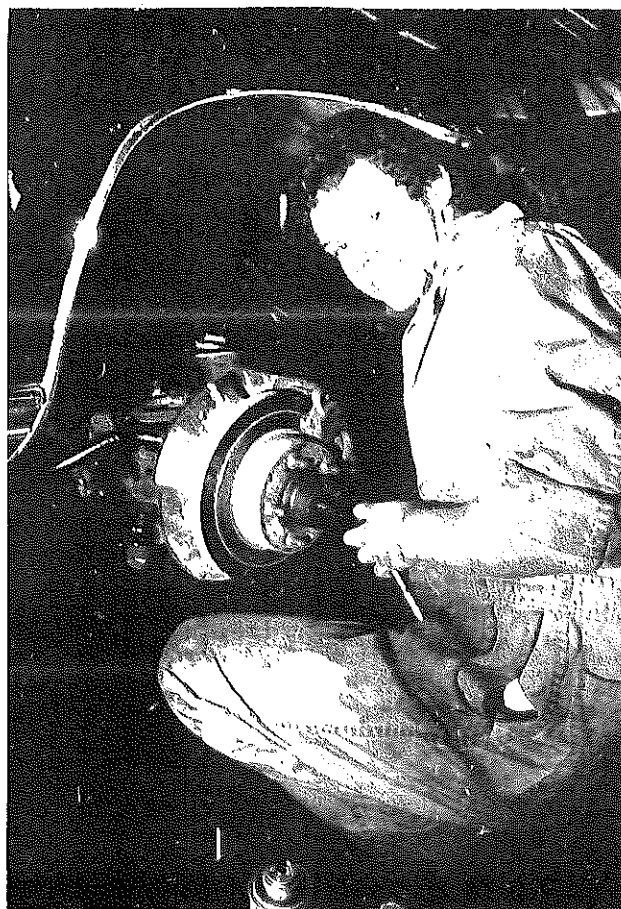
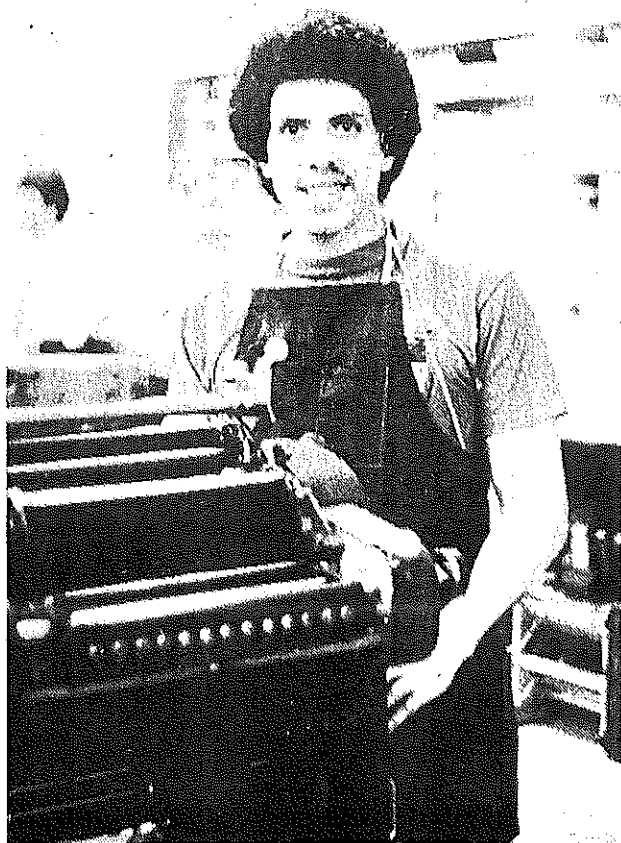
provided emergency services to 538 farmworker families. CVOC's employment and training component maintains an 87 percent placement rate for clients in our skills-training program. CVOC's overall entry wage at placement is in excess of \$1 above the minimum wage. In 1984 for an example, the average starting wage for CVOC's participants was \$4.48 an hour.

In these times of budget cuts in domestic programs and closure of many non-profit organizations, the Department of Labor has chosen to continue funding CVOC. Why?

First, CVOC has an excellent track record of retraining farmworkers and placing them into higher-paying jobs.

(Continued on next page)

Classroom training courses include cashiering and retail sales (top photo), Offset Printing (bottom, left photo), and automobile service repair (bottom, right photo).



(From page 9)

Second, CVOC has an excellent relationship with area employers. This helps CVOC graduates obtain employment within their communities.

Third, CVOC has offices and staff in each of its three California counties in the Central Valley, so the community can meet with staff and participants may receive necessary assistance.

Fourth, CVOC's transportation program provides buses and vans to transport students from their rural hometowns to classrooms in other cities. This is necessary since many of the students live in areas where job skills training is not readily available.

Fifth, regardless of the program in which a participant is involved, CVOC provides supplemental services, such as English-as-a-Second Language for Spanish-speaking Americans, Hmongs and Laotians. Also provided are job-search

workshops, counseling, and emergency-services including food and clothes for qualified needy persons.

Sixth, CVOC's structure directly involves farmworkers in the development, implementation and evaluation of farmworker programs. This involvement of farmworkers helping farmworkers has resulted in programs which are custom-built for our clients. This also helps explain our continued success rates.

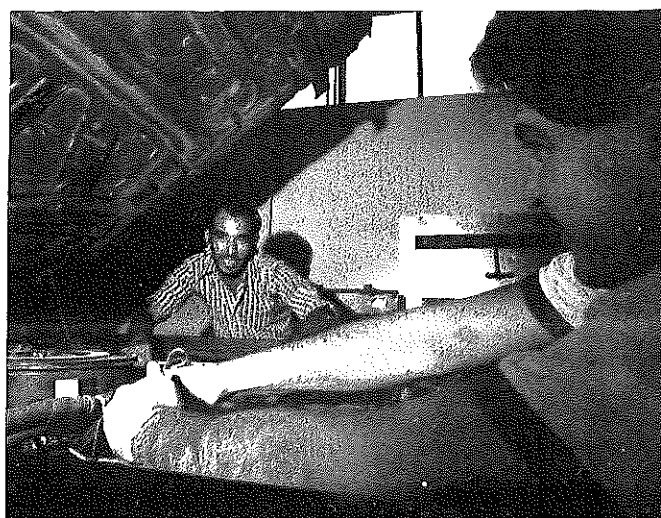
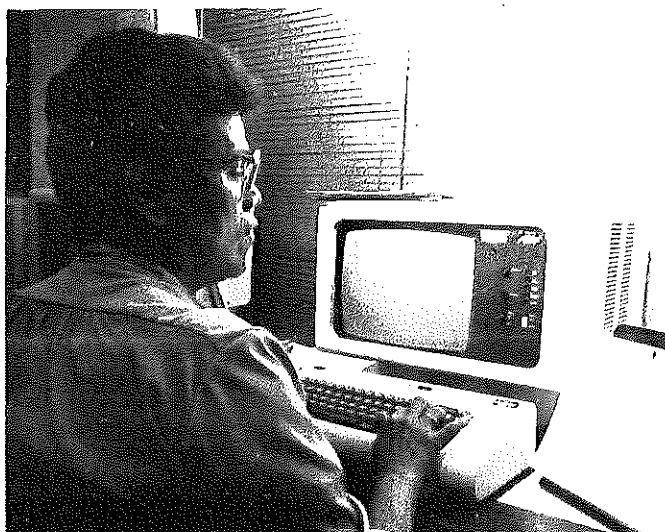
The Central Valley Opportunity Center has offered a high-quality training program to our clients while maintaining an administrative cost below 14%. Similar statistics hold true for CVOC's accomplishments under several other programs for the economically-disadvantaged people of our communities, as is documented on the following pages.

CVOC training courses include:

Agricultural-skills Upgrade
Automotive Service & Repair
Cashier Training
Computer Data Entry
General Business Occupations
Janitorial Maintenance
Offset Printing & Typesetting
Video Training / Production
Weatherization Training

Hope Zaragosa (left photo), 1984 CVOC graduate from Merced's Business-Data Processing course, was hired at the Madera Unified School District. She has since been promoted to a supervisorial position. Francisco

Barragan (right photo) watches as CVOC student Ramzi Abraham adjusts a carburetor as part of the Auto Service and Repair classroom training.



Supplemental Services

To counteract some problems being faced by the Central Valley's farm-worker population, CVOC provides the following services to expedite transition into mainstream employment.

Each services is designed to minimize or eliminate one or more of the barriers faced by our participants.

Outreach and Recruitment

Finding persons in need and explaining to them which CVOC services will benefit them.

Intake/Eligibility Determination

Each CVOC program is aimed at a different group and it's special needs. CVOC staff request that many

forms be filled out and much information provided to (1) guarantee the applicant qualifies for CVOC assistance and (2) to determine which program is best suited for each applicant.

Counseling

CVOC's counselors provide one-on-one meetings to identify an individual's special needs, and then contact the agency, person or program which could most help the individual. Often these person-problems must be solved because they prevent the applicants from obtaining and keeping meaningful employment.

Additional Services

Job Readiness Orientation

Job Search Workshops

English-as-a-Second Language (ESL)

Vocational ESL

Vocational Remedial Education

GED Preparedness

Supportive Services-Emergency

Supportive Services-Referrals

Job Interviews, Referrals/Placements

Employer/Employee Follow-up

One-on-one counseling and assistance (left photo) is part of CVOC services available to every participant regardless of which CVOC program he/she has entered. CVOC also provides transpor-

tation in CVOC vans or school bus (right photo) for students living in outlying areas who want to attend vocational training classes.

Short Vowels



Direct Job Placement

Some MSFW already have employable skills and are looking for immediate work. CVOC assists them in finding direct job placement into an area of interest to them, and for which they have an aptitude.

As with our other training programs, CVOC cooperates with potential employers and assists the enrollee to improve upon skills needed for successful employment.

In addition to our job search and

training workshop, we strive to promote self-reliance and self-respect within the individuals we assist.

Targeted Job Tax Credit

If an employer hires a CVOC applicant, the employer could save \$5,100 in tax credits for each CVOC trainee hired.

The targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC) program is a Federal program which

allows employers up to \$4,500 credit per employee if the worker falls into one of several categories. These include economically disadvantaged, Vietnam-era Veterans, recipients of AFDC programs, former PSE employees, and youth.

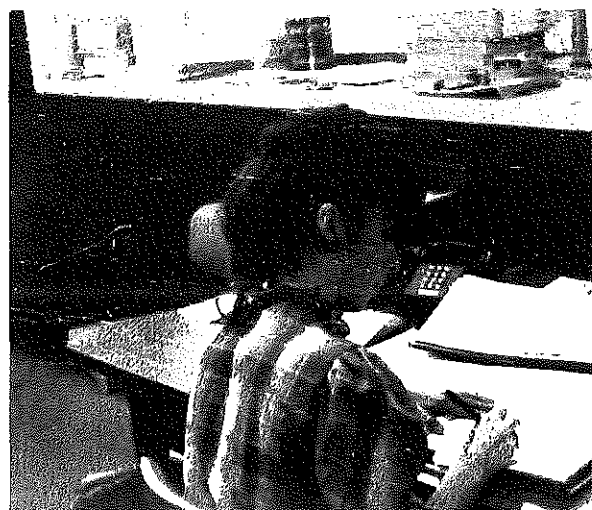
The California Jobs Tax Credit is similar to the Federal program and can save an employer up to \$600 in additional tax credits.

The following is the total actual number and planned number of migrant seasonal farmworkers served in calendar year 1984 under the Federal 402 JTPA Adult grant:

	Actual	Planned	% of Plan to Actual
Total Number of Participants Served	440	465	95%
Classroom Vocational Training	287	336	85%
Trained At Private Sector Worksite	42	45	93%
Completed Program	351	353	99%
Placed Into Jobs	230	242	95%
Placed Into Jobs With No Training	49	44	111%
Placed Into Jobs After Skills Training	181	198	91%
Received Emergency Services Only	72	40	180%
Not Hired Or Returned To School	45	50	90%

CVOC graduates are employed by various companies in different occupations, for an example, one graduate is a forklift operator at Stuart Auto

Products (left photo) and another is employed as a computer operator-bookkeeper at Keller Industries. Both companies are in Merced County.



Vocational Education Components

On-the-Job Training

CVOC provides for additional services or programs under the JTPA 402 migrant/seasonal farmworker program which mandate a more orbital explanation: (1) Classroom Training, (2) Vocational Education Component, (3) On-the-Job Training, and (4) Direct placements.

Our Trainees learn job skills in areas such as computer data entry, office procedures, media production, welding, auto mechanics and weatherization.

The classroom training period depends upon the skills and knowledge the student already has, and the number of skills which must still be learned. All students are instructed in proper dress, attitudes, work habits and office/shop safety. CVOC's goal is to help meet the labor needs of area business by training responsible and reliable entry-level employees.

Vocational Experience Component

At a VEC job site, employers have the opportunity to observe applicants prior to hiring them. Under this program, the employer only provides supervision and allows trainees the opportunity to learn first-hand about the hour-to-hour skills needed to perform the job. CVOC pays the trainee's stipend and workers' compensation costs.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Under this program, employers are monetarily reimbursed for providing on-the-job training to CVOC students. This includes paying up to 50% of the trainee's wages during the training portion of employment. Employers often prefer this method, as it allows them to train a potential worker to fit the company's operations and meet an employer's specific needs before

hiring. It also helps the trainee learn a job at an actual work site.

OJT's usually are written for a (40) forty hour week with a minimum wage of \$4 per hour. OJT's may be in conjunction with classroom training as an initiative to the employer to hire a participant.

Instructors and counselors at CVOC also work in cooperation with the employer to supplement the trainee's knowledge and skills to reflect the exact needs of an employer. All costs are paid by CVOC at no cost to the employer.

The on-the-job training program helps both the employer and the student make a smooth transition from trainee to employee.

CVOC graduate working at Stuart Auto Products separates brake pads for cars (left photo). Richard Rodriguez (right photo) graduated from CVOC Graphic

Arts class and was assigned to an OJT where he learned additional technical graphic skills.



Home Energy Assistance Program

The Central Valley Opportunity Center operates a Home Energy Assistance-Weatherization Program in Madera County and soon will be operating one in Stanislaus County.

The program seeks to reduce energy costs for the poor through energy conservation measures applied to their homes.

CVOC installs door and window caulking, storm windows, insulation, hot water tank blankets, and wrap

pipes. CVOC students perform additional home repairs necessary to stop heat and cold loss.

CVOC students, under the direction of instructors, perform all insulation work on the homes. This activity provides students with valuable hands-on training and experience which they can use when applying for employment.

The community benefits under this program since low-income persons

can have their homes weatherized at no cost to them. CVOC students benefit since they are trained on real homes performing the actual tasks.

In 1984, more than 200 homes of low-income Madera County residents were insulated and weatherized by CVOC. These weatherization grants came from the California Office of Economic Opportunity.

During 1984 CVOC Weatherization-Construction students helped weatherize the homes of more than 200 low-income persons. A mutually beneficial program, poor people had lower utility

billings and home improvements at no cost to them, and students received hands-on experience on actual homes.



Video - Media Television Course

The video-television-media (VTM) training operates as a television station or commercial video production facility.

Most video employers want to hire employees with hands-on experience. It is assumed the more theory and book knowledge an employee has, the better. But reliability, energy, creativity, attitude, and actual experience are what employers want. Therefore, most of the theory taught at CVOC is a direct result of hands-on experience by the trainees.

They are taught proper format for news anchors, what constitutes a

story, and how good camera work can assist a reporter in presenting a story. Additionally, students learn how to work the in-studio control boards and how to develop and edit their own film.

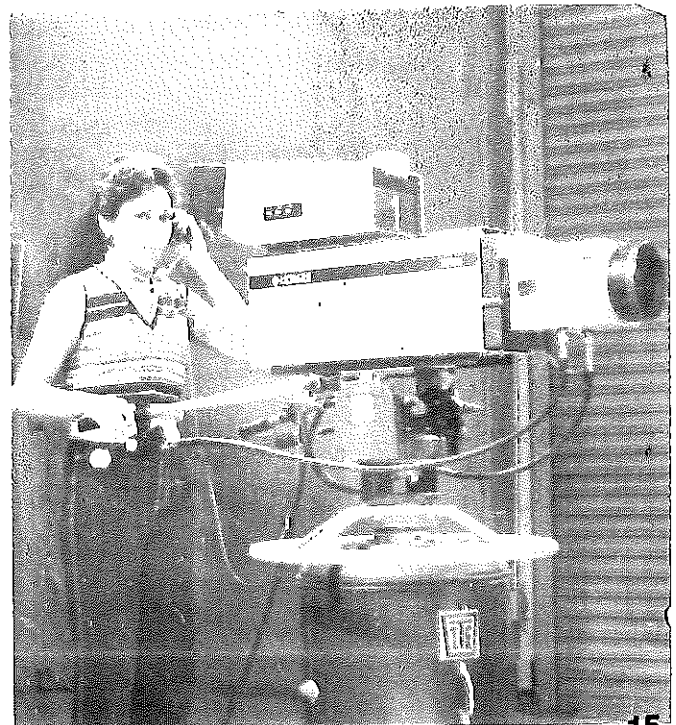
The VTM training component includes producing a one-hour local television show. Each student is responsible for technically producing individual segments and/or the entire program on a rotating basis. Trainees work closely with community volunteers, but the trainees do all the work and are responsible for completing the program to play at its scheduled air time each week.

Trainees have produced documentaries, public-service announcements, training programs and commercials. The trainees interview and work with local business persons, government officials, agency directors, public relations personnel and many others. CVOC has a close working relationship with several local cable companies and television stations in Sacramento, Fresno and Modesto.

The results of CVOC's efforts in video-television-media have led to CVOC's graduates working in television in Salinas, Hanford, Fresno, Stockton, Sacramento, and other locations in Northern California.

Each student is taught to properly operate all equipment used for television news casts and feature shows. This equipment includes in-studio

electronic and mechanical monitors (left photo) and on-the-air camera and sound equipment (right photo).



Merced County Refugee Project

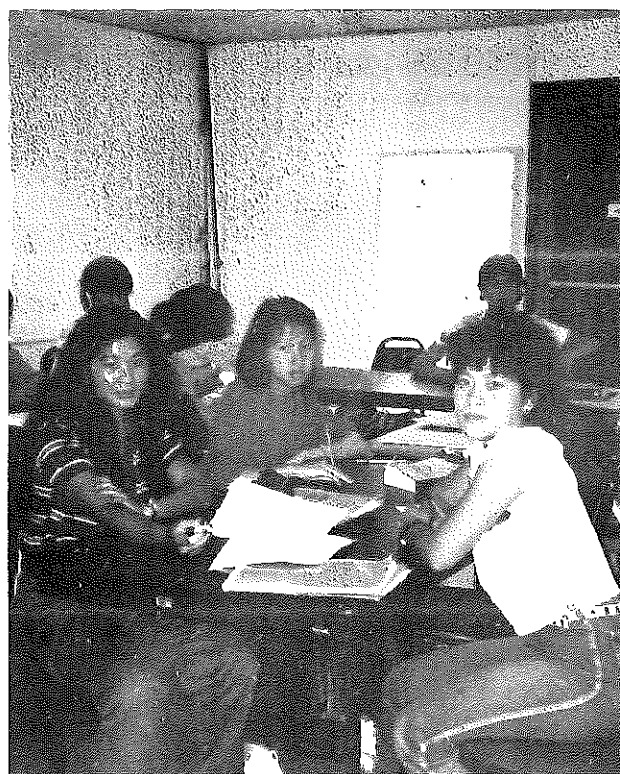
The composition of the Central Valley's unemployed has undergone some significant changes in the last five years. There has been a tremendous secondary migration of Indo-Chinese, Laotian and Hmong refugees into the Valley. The rapid growth of this refugee population has placed a burden upon the limited number of unskilled and limited skills positions available in the local labor market and upon public social services for the poor, not to mention the additional strain this places upon the already-displaced refugee.

CVOC responded to the needs of the community and refugees through the development of a 20-week program of Vocational English-as-a-Second-Language Course. The participants are provided instruction in the development of English-speaking skills needed at the worksite, vocational skills development through one of CVOC's classroom trainings, and job search counseling.

As the refugee client improves his/her skills, CVOC job developers work with local employers to secure employment for the refugee participant. More than 100 Merced County refugees were served under this program this year. And more than 50 percent of them had obtained full-time unsubsidized employment by the time 1984 came to a close.

Lee Vang (left photo), graduate of CVOC's Refugee Project, is employed as a teller at a Central Valley credit union. Part of the Refugee Pro-

ject includes instruction in the development of English-speaking skills (right photo), vocational classroom training and job search assistance.



CVOC's Youth Program - General

Central Valley Opportunity Center serves the Central California area consisting of Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus counties.

This area is in the heart of the richest agricultural land in the world. But this year was not good for California agriculture. Many farmers lost their land and others took governmental subsidies rather than grow their crops. This led to unemployment rates hovering near 20 percent in parts of the five-county service area.

Unfortunately, when unemployment is high, there is a domino effect whereby highly-qualified people take lower-level positions, forcing less qualified persons into either still lower levels or into the unemploy-

ment line. And persons with minimal skills, such as the youth, are placed at a tremendous disadvantage as they compete for a limited number of jobs.

CVOC recognizes that the problem for youth goes beyond unemployment. The young adult starts to visualize him/herself as being outside of mainstream America. They believe they, as people, are below the norm, incapable of ever achieving a lifestyle they see through the mass media.

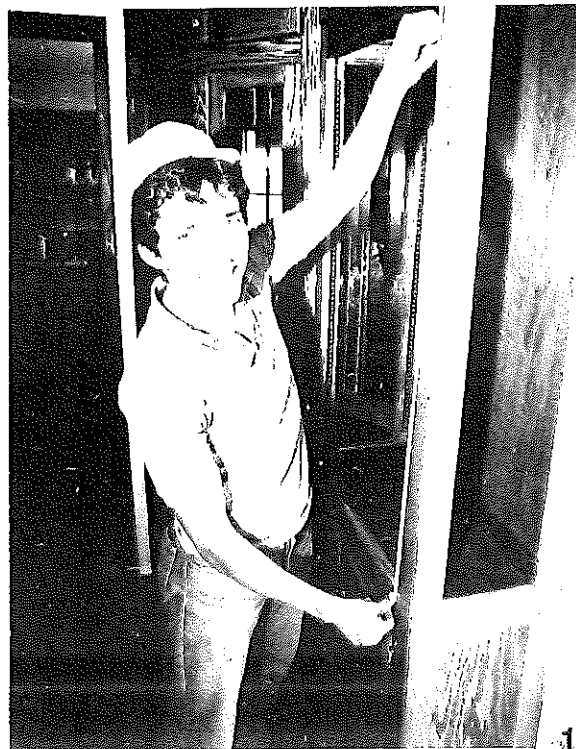
It is not surprising, therefore, that these same youth tend to drop out of school, are involved in various criminal activities and turn to welfare as their sole means of support.

CVOC's administration and Board is strongly committed to breaking this defeatist-dependency cycle. It is our belief that despite coming from a low-income family, there is much today's youth can do to help themselves create a better life for themselves their families and the community in which they live.

We at CVOC are proud to have created a vehicle, through our various youth programs, to help these young people find alternative paths to broaden their horizons and to gain self respect that allows them to contribute to, rather than take from, society.

CVOC's various youth programs reach out to young people of all ages. The CVOC 4-H program (left photo) works with children of low-income families, teaches them socialization skills, and gives them an opportunity to make friends, a luxury for them because of their families' migrant lifestyles. In photo, the youths learn geography as

they play with the "world ball" under the supervision of CVOC instructor Carlos Rocha. CVOC student (right photo) learned carpentry and cabinet making through CVOC's youth try-out employment program, aimed at assisting 16 to 21 year olds.



Vocational and Academic Training System (VATS)

Central Valley Opportunity Center and Migrant Education, Region III, during the past two years have sought to develop an alternative educational system. The goal of this project is to provide a program which attacks the severe problems migrant and seasonal farmworker youth have in staying in school.

The VATS program was divided into two parts. The first being in-school support activities and the second, an intensive summer school program.

In-school Component

This segment provided tutorial assistance and skills activities to 53 youth during the school year. The students received tutorial assistance, instruction in basic remedial high school courses, and the Portable Academic Study Sequence (PASS) materials. Courses covered reading, English, math and social studies. The academic instruction was combined with career exploration, job search information, and worksite experience.

The results of the in-school component were very encouraging. A total of 87 percent of the participants completed the program. Sixty-four percent of the participants earned at least 20 high school course credits. *Of those completing the program, 100 percent stayed in school. This is most significant since these students were specifically selected because of their high dropout potential.*

Summer Program

The seven-week VATS Summer Program served 70 students attending class from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday

through Friday. They studied writing, reading, mathematics, English (either remedial or ESL), work study and experience, PASS high school credits program, and CVOC introductory vocational classes. In addition to the academics, the students took field trips, heard guest lecturers, and participated in a CVOC vocational class.

The results of the summer school program also were startling. For an example, 46 students took a portion of the competency test required by the Merced and Stanislaus County high schools. Eighty percent of them passed the writing competency test, 89 percent passed the reading segment, and 78 percent passed the math.

The program's success in meeting individual needs becomes more significant when one realizes that the 70 students come from a broad mixture of language, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds including Hmong, Vietnamese, Mexican-American, Punjabs and Filipinos. In addition to language barriers and cultural transition problems, these students had in common their poor academic standing, high potential for "dropping out", a history of geographic migration, and being from low-income families with a predominate history of farmworker labor.

Need For Alternative Education

CVOC believes these students truly represent a hard-to-serve group and a group in great need of an alternative educational environment.

Many other educators agreed and contributed to this program's suc-

cess. The VATS program would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many organizations and individuals. CVOC extends a formal thank you to the following organizations for their sincere interest in the needs of Central California's Farmworker youth:

Migrant Education, Region III provided a tremendous amount of expertise and funds to ensure the program's success. CVOC sends a special thank you to Fred Montoya, Ph.D., and his staff for their contribution to, and support of, the VATS program.

The Federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provided the necessary matching funds needed to develop an alternative educational system for farmworker youth. CVOC would like to praise HHS for its fast action toward meeting the severe needs of CVOC's farmworker youth.

The California State Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) provided state-level funding and coordination assistance in the implementation of this program. State OEO has continually taken a leadership role in efforts to improve the condition of California's Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers.

Modesto City School and Merced County School District provided tremendous support and assistance in getting the VATS program implemented. The hard work of these school administrators ensured the quality of the program.

Migrant Youth Dropout Project

While CVOC has been actively working at the local level with Migrant Education Region III and local school districts to develop alternative high school programs for youth, La Cooperativa has been working on a similar program at the State level. La Cooperativa is a Statewide association of farmworker programs which coordinates and develops services for farmworkers. La Cooperativa's efforts were rewarded with a pilot project approved by the State Department of Vocational Education.

Known as the Vocational Education Dropout Program, it is designed to meet the vocational and academic

needs of out-of-school migrant youth. Migrant youth drop out of the educational system at an alarming rate, with some surveys indicating an 80 percent dropout rate. The current public education system appears to lack the resources, programs and/or special curricula necessary to prevent migrant farmworker youths from dropping out.

It also lacks a realistic mechanism allowing the students the opportunity to return to their education after they have quit. CVOC strongly believes some alternate means of education and vocational training must be made available to these individuals.

The Migrant Youth Dropout Project accomplished two goals. First, it assisted high school dropouts in obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent, the GED. Second, CVOC taught vocational-occupational skills which could lead to full-time, permanent, as opposed to seasonal employment. As with most CVOC programs, youth enrolled in this program received a variety of services designed to meet immediate subsistence needs, develop self sufficiency, and establish the knowledge and attitudes to succeed.

Classroom training is geared to be relevant and interesting to students' current needs (left photo). Under this project students are encouraged to

continue their education and receive either Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) or a high school diploma (right photo).



Stanislaus Summer Youth Work Experience Program

The Stanislaus County Private Industry Council (PIC) sponsored CVOC's operation of an educational and vocational training program for Hispanic youth, aged 16 to 21. This program was targeted to assist low-income youth who have an interest in exploring careers in education.

The program was divided into two activities. First, participants attended workshops where they researched career opportunities in education. Second, the youth actually worked in local schools under a concept called worksite experience.

The young participants were placed in pre-entry level positions, such as that of instructional aides, clerical aides, and supportive service aides. They worked in Migrant Education classes at various local schools in Stanislaus County. The youth were instructed and supervised by school instructors and administrative staff, who emphasized good work habits and provided a variety of practical occupational skills, such as teaching participants to operate office equipment.

Through the monthly workshops, CVOC youths were provided vocational education materials on varied but related subjects, such as an analysis of career options, employer expectations, job survival skills, and post secondary education opportunities.

Other highlights of the Summer Youth Work Experience Program were guest speakers, field trips and an awards ceremony marking the culmination of the program.

Stanislaus Summer Youth Counselor Mayo Green (center) conducts an informal discussion with students and other CVOC staff. Students were

given an opportunity to discuss their fears and concerns prior to being placed into an on-site pre-entry level job.



Madera County Youth Program

Just as the older worker has problems remaining in the job market, today's youth have problems entering the job market. The reasons vary as much as the individuals: some do not have high school diplomas or GEDs, others have no experience and employers are hesitant to hire someone without a track record, some are weak in their work habits or lack realistic expectations about the job market, and others just have no idea what they want nor what they are capable of doing.

Statistics support this contention. According to the 1980 census, there are 6,287 persons aged 16 to 21, or 10 percent of the entire Madera County population. The unemployment rate

for youth in the county is 31.3 percent. Therefore, the young person who has left school before graduating has a very slim chance of finding meaningful, full-time employment.

CVOC's Madera Youth Program, in conjunction with the Madera County Private Industry Council (PIC), began in July to assist youth in obtaining full-time permanent employment or in returning to school or other training. This program is designed for those youth no longer in school, especially those who have "dropped out".

CVOC conducts a two-week, (40) hours-per-week workshop where

students receive counseling, develop a reasonable employment plan for their skills, and get support in their job-knowledge search. CVOC also helps the youths find a job (often their first job) or return to school or vocational training.

Effective December 31, 1984, 12 of the 20 students who had completed the program were placed in unsubsidized employment in Madera County; three returned to school, and one was involved in a special skills workshop which will lead to employment in 1985. The remaining 4 are expected to be placed within the first few months of 1985.

Madera County Youth Program instructor Richard Stone (center) shares a laugh with student Sylvia Medina. After completing the CVOC youth program Sylvia was hired as a hostess in a local restaurant and made plans to return to school as a business major. Charlotte Maya (right) com-

pleted the youth program and then entered CVOC's adult 402 program. Upon graduating from that course she was hired and is working as an assistant to the director of a Madera private nursing home.



(Photo compliments of Diana Balderica, Madera Tribune)

Stanislaus County Community Service Program

In the 1960s, the Federal Government's "War on Poverty" Program led to the creation of local-level agencies which united government leaders, private sector representatives and the poor themselves to develop programs to help poor people at the local level.

CVOC recognizes community action and involvement as an essential ingredient within the framework of public and private human service programs. Community action is the process whereby an area, be it a neighborhood or an entire county, mobilizes and coordinates its many resources to resolve identified community problems.

During 1984, CVOC was involved in community service activities. Funding was received through two separate contracts. The first was a Limited Purpose Agency contract derived directly from the California State Office of Economic Opportunity. The

second was a Rural Uncapped Counties grant funded through California Human Development Corporation, subcontracting with CVOC.

Three primary goals were accomplished under this program in 1984. The first was to increase the availability of public social services to the poor. This was partially achieved by hiring community aide workers. The community aides provide Stanislaus County poor with information on available social and educational programs, translate and prepare applications and other forms necessary to obtain services, and provide personal counseling with clients.

Second, CVOC has attempted to increase services to seniors through technical assistance to employment and training programs for older workers. CVOC is providing training to older worker program staff in job development and placement. The CVOC instructor-job developer has

trained volunteer and program staff on such matters as contacting an employer on behalf of your client, assisting applicants in their job interviewing skills, providing motivation for the long-term unemployed client, placing clients in existing available jobs, and working with employers to create new positions.

The third goal accomplished under this program was providing vocational training services to seventy-eight low-income persons. Those persons served seemed most in need, including unemployed heads of households, unemployment recipients and exhaustees, and welfare recipients. To date, twenty-five of these participants have been placed in jobs. Many more placements are forthcoming, as participants complete their skills training.

Returning to school might not be all fun (left photo) but unemployed youth, older or displaced workers (right photo) and the rural poor understand the importance of continuing their educa-

tion as they compete for a limited number of jobs. The CVOC Stanislaus County Community Action Program places a special emphasis on assisting these people.



Fresno Summer Work Experience Program

In 1984 CVOC explored and tested a creative approach to youth services in the rural Fresno County communities of Sanger and Mendota.

With the assist of local volunteers and contributions, CVOC began operation of two youth centers in the rural Fresno County communities of Sanger and Mendota. The Centers provided a full-range of services for youth, including tutorial assistance, vocational training, recreational activities and counseling in drug abuse prevention and gang violence intervention.

The response from local youth was tremendous and greatly exceeded CVOC's and local volunteers' abilities to assist all youth expressing interest in the program.

Therefore, the Fresno County Private Industry Council was approached for assistance. The Fresno PIC provided CVOC with sixteen summer work experience youth to assist in the operation of the Centers. In return, the summer work experience youth were provided vocational instruction in careers as peer counselors, recreational leaders, instructional tutors and clerical aides.

Feedback from youth in the community, volunteers, project staff, parents and community officials termed this project very successful. The program greatly exceeded all projections and goals concerning the number of youth who could be served.

As 1984 came to a close, plans for 1985 already had been implemented. Under the direction of CVOC coordinators and local advisory boards, each center began to target its energies on specific youth needs in the community.

The Youth Centers were able to offer local youth with on-going, as opposed to summer-only, recreational, counseling, tutorial services.

Fresno Summer Work Experience Program provided many services for youth, including tutorial and study skills (left photo), and gave children of migrant farmworkers a chance to meet new friends (right photo).



Stanislaus Private Industry Council

During 1984, CVOC sought to increase the coordination and cooperation between CVOC programs and those services offered by local Private Industry Councils. In Stanislaus County, CVOC responded to the Private Industry Council's request for new training activities with proposals to operate retail sales and building maintenance courses.

CVOC's curriculum seeks to introduce clients to the technical aspects of modern cleaning equipment usage and maintenance, proper use of cleaning chemicals, labor saving measures, and techniques for proper building maintenance

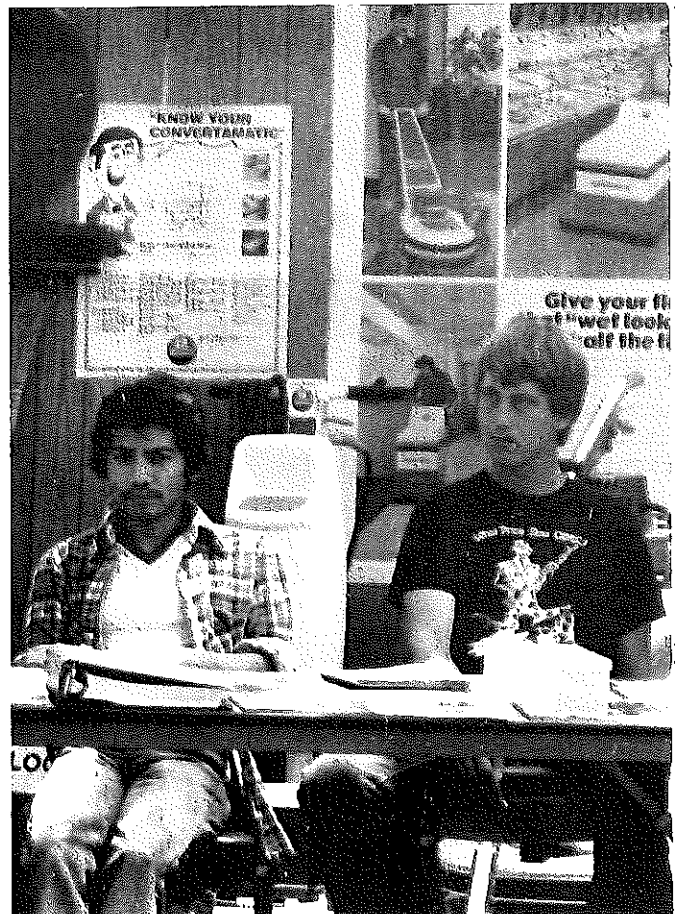
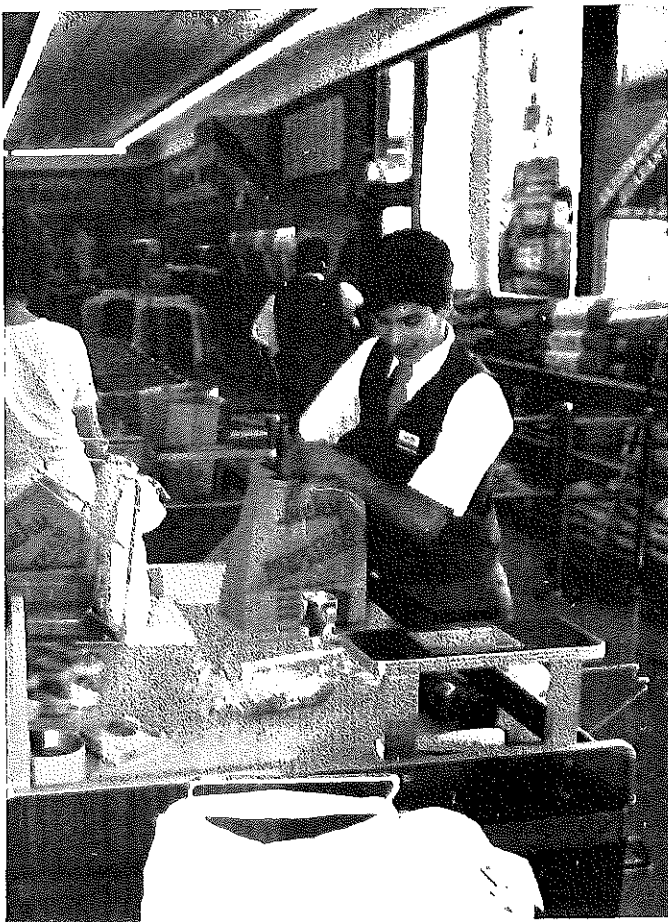
CVOC's retail sales program prepares clients to enter the sales

job market. This curriculum concentrates on improving math abilities, developing public relation skills, stocking/inventory procedures and the physical operation of standard and electrical cash registers.

These classes, as with all CVOC trainings, are supplemented with student counseling, support services and client job development services.

The Stanislaus Private Industry Council program with CVOC operated training

courses in retail sales (left photo) and building maintenance (right photo).



Merced County JTPA Program

For several years, CVOC has worked cooperatively with the Merced County Employment Program.

Adding another dimension to that relationship, in 1984 CVOC entered into a contractual agreement to provide Merced JTPA clients with classroom training.

Under this program JTPA clients were referred to CVOC on an individual basis following a one-on-one

interviewing process to determine the applicant's abilities, interest and eligibility. Additionally, the Merced JTPA Office has access to CVOC's vocational training classes, instructors and materials.

CVOC believes that cooperative efforts with local JTPA programs, such as the one in Merced, increases employment program coordination, eliminates duplication of efforts, and streamlines the operating costs for

both programs.

CVOC has projected that in 1985 more than 100 Merced JTPA clients could be trained at CVOC facilities.

Additionally, CVOC looks forward to working with the Merced JTPA Employment and Training Program on other projects which would benefit the Merced County community and its low-income residents.

All of CVOC's programs are aimed at upgrading an individual's vocational skills. Classes range from industrial maintenance (left photo) to business courses for displaced workers (right

photo). Other courses include offset printing, welding, data entry, medical transcriptions and construction-weatherization.



Employment Training Panel for Employers

CVOC has always attempted to design its training programs around the needs and realities of our community's employers. CVOC seeks to establish and upgrade its training programs so they train participants in skills specifically needed by local employers.

CVOC, with the funding and support of the Employment Training Panel, and local employers negotiate a contract to reimburse the employer for the time and expense of training new employees. Under this training con-

cept, employers design their own training curriculum and make the final selection of trainees. The employer also decides which graduates to hire from the program.

Additionally, CVOC attempts to use the Employment Training Panel as an incentive for new businesses to relocate in our communities. New companies or local companies wishing to expand but concerned about start-up or expansion cost have found this program makes expansion financially feasible.

CVOC's operation of the Employment Training Panel Programs helps match the need of employers for custom-trained workers with the need of employees for good jobs in stable and/or expanding occupations. Training tied to an employer's current needs works best for everyone: for the trainee who wants work, for the employer who needs qualified workers and for the taxpayer who wants results.

Governor's Discretionary Program State Office of Economic Opportunity

During the first half of 1983, the Central California Counties of Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Stanislaus and Tuolumne were experiencing an average unemployment rate of nearly 18 percent. Many factors contributed to this situation of high unemployment, including the seasonal nature of the area's largest industry, agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley.

In an attempt to address this serious problem, CVOC submitted a proposal to the Office of Economic Opportunity requesting monies for Governor's Discretionary Funds to accomplish two goals.

The first was to institute a program to help stimulate economic develop-

ment of year-round industries and businesses in an attempt to help stabilize the labor market.

The second is to provide training in growing occupations for currently unemployed low-income persons with limited skills. CVOC's two concepts were approved and monies were granted to accomplish the outlined goals.

During 1984, CVOC successfully contacted hundreds of large and small employers who might be interested in relocating to the Central Valley, or to assist current businesses in expanding their current operations. When a business leader showed interest, CVOC staff provided guidance and

materials to help the company in its search for a good location, qualified employees, and other needs the employers might have expressed.

CVOC also was successful in providing training in labor-demand occupations. Under this aspect of the Governor's Discretionary Funding Program, CVOC participants received vocational training in occupations where there was a need for more employees but there existed a limited number of people possessing these skills.

Agricultural Career Upgrade Training

Central Valley Opportunity Center is actively involved in the development of programs which meet the needs of agricultural employers. The agricultural Career Training Program seeks to train current seasonal or part-time agricultural workers with new skills which will increase their year-round employability.

Many farmworkers enjoy their jobs, but because of the seasonal nature of agriculture they may be forced to migrate with each crop or endure long periods of unemployment. Additionally, today's agricultural employers are relying on fewer, but more-skilled, workers.

Entry-level farmworkers realize that without technical training they will not be able to advance to the steady, better-paying positions. The new farmworker must be flexible and multi-skilled to meet the requirements of modern agriculture.

California legislators and the California Employment Development Department have taken the first step to assist farmworkers and agricultural employers through the funding of this program. It is now up to CVOC, in cooperation with local growers, to develop a program which best meets both the employers' and employees' variant, but compatible, needs.

Many of the necessary farmworker skills could be taught by the agricultural employer if the employer is reimbursed for training expenses incurred for this worksite instruction. Other skills are easily provided through CVOC classrooms or shops. The exact design of the 1985 training will depend primarily upon the individual agricultural employer's needs. The Agricultural Career Training Program is scheduled to begin early in 1985.

Today's farmworkers know that agricultural employers are relying on fewer and multi-skilled farm workers. Previously, being a tractor driver (left photo) was skill enough. Today, farm

employers also want the workers to have specialized skills, such as being able to disc soil with heavy equipment attachments (right photo).



College - University Scholarship Program

The 1984 Scholarship Banquet was held in March and six recent high school graduates received awards ranging from \$250 to \$1,000, for a total of \$4,000 in scholarship money. Of this amount, \$750 was offered in conjunction with scholarships provided by the California State Department of Migrant Education.

This year's choice for the grand \$1,000 scholarship, was so difficult that the judges decided to award two top scholarships.

Mary Lou Lopez, of Merced, graduated high school with an im-

pressive 3.86 grade point average. A student who receives all A's during his/her high school career could receive a 4.0 GPA. Eduardo Gonzalez, of Stanislaus County, also received a \$1,000 scholarship. His high school grade point average was 3.79. Currently, Ms. Lopez is attending California State University, Stanislaus, and is majoring in Social Science with an emphasis on International Studies. Mr. Gonzalez attends Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo and is majoring in Petroleum Engineering. Both scholarship winners are from farm-worker families and are active in their communities.

Other scholarship winners include two young women from Madera, Maria Saravia, and Alicia Arriola. Both attend California State University, Fresno.

Esther Brizuela, of Merced County, and Virginia Arauza, of Stanislaus County also were awarded scholarships. They are using their scholarships to help finance their studies at California State University, Stanislaus.

CVOC realizes that some high school students would like to continue their education, but a lack of financial support can hinder their quest. For this reason, CVOC has implemented a high school student's College University Scholarship Program

to assist deserving students. In 1984, CVOC presented six high-school graduates with \$4,000 in scholarship money to help them earn a college or university degree.



(Photo courtesy of the Madera Tribune).

Celebration '84

CVOC's Fifth Annual Celebration was punctuated with food booths, live music, guest speakers and door prizes.

The Annual Celebration is the one day each year when family, friends and business associates of CVOC staff and participants get together for an afternoon of fun.

Nearly 800 people picnicked on the lawn, listened to live bands and watched the entertainment, including local breakdancers.

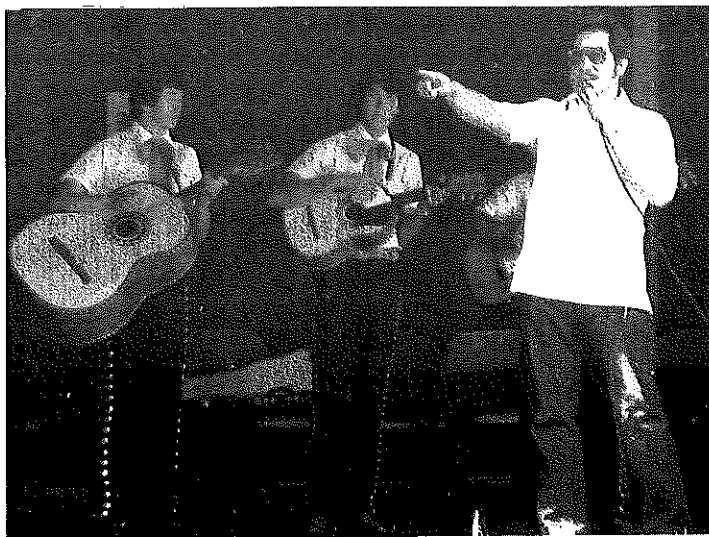
Proceeds from the Annual Celebration went into the CVOC Scholarship Fund to assist deserving, former migrant-seasonal farmworkers or

their children in their quest for a college or university education.

Planning for the 1985 Annual Celebration is under way with a projected attendance goal of 1,200 persons.

Entertainment at Celebration '84 included Mexican dancing (left, top photo), Merced County break dancer finalists (top, right photo), Mariachi musicians and

singer (bottom, left photo), and the Senior Citizens Dixieland band from Merced.



CVOC Graduates' Success Stories

Helen Gonzales, being from a farmworker family, went to work in the fields.

She was a tallier, which meant she recorded the time cards of other farmworkers; was responsible for keeping track of the trucks loaded with produce; and counted the number and size of the bins leaving the farm.

But Helen, married and soon-to-be mother, wanted to do better for her family than working in the fields for minimum wage.

Helen, was luckier than most. For one thing, she had stayed in school and earned her high school diploma. For another, she had a sense of self which told her she could do better.

In December, 1983 she entered CVOC's General Office-Data Class and graduated in April of the following year. She immediately was hired as an office aide for \$4.50 an hour

"I typed, answered phones and assisted the public," She said. "I enjoyed being able to dress up to go to work and I enjoyed learning new skills and office procedures. I was grateful for my CVOC classroom training. They taught me good work habits and gave me confidence that I had the skills, or could learn any new skills, the employer needed me to have."

But that voice inside of her kept telling Helen she could still do better. "My daughter is two years old and I know that as she gets older, she'll need things that I couldn't buy her if I only earned \$4.50 an hour."

So, while keeping her clerical job, Helen continued looking for other employment. Then, late in 1984, she was contacted by the U.S. Postal Service.

"They gave me forms to fill out and tests to take. I kept getting called back for something else," said Helen.

"Sometimes I felt so positive that I would get the job, and at other times I just didn't know. But I always knew I could do the job if I could just get the chance."

Apparently, the Postal Service also thought she could "do the job". She placed Number One on the Civil Service Exam list and was hired just days before the post office announced a wage reduction for all new employees.

"That day I was doubly lucky," she says. Helen now works part-time as a mail carrier, and part-time as a clerical worker at the main post office in Sanger, just south of Fresno. She earns \$10.62 an hour.

Helen credits her employment success with having stayed in high school, studying at CVOC's training center, and her own determination that she could do better.

Helen Gonzales and daughter,



Success Stories (continued)

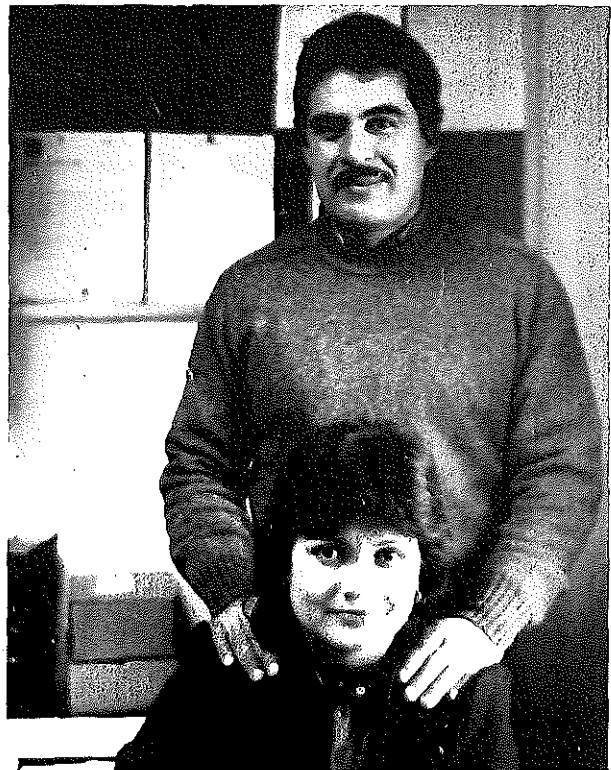
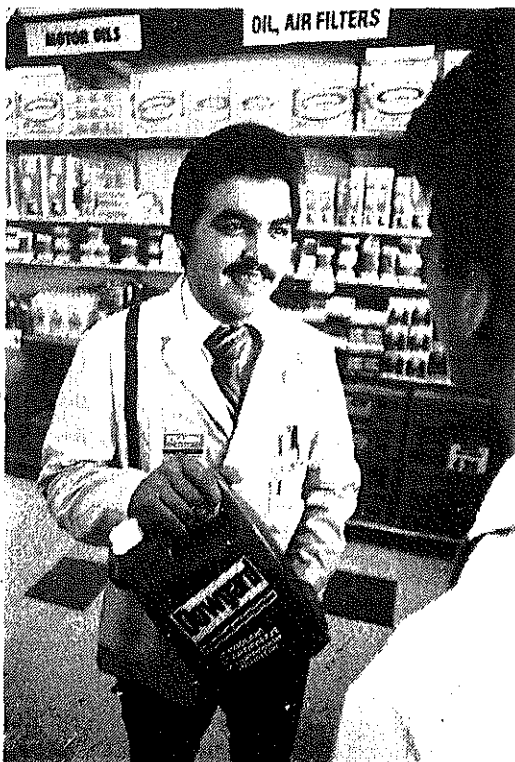
Salvador and Mary Lomeli made CVOC a family event. In August, 1984 Mary entered the Data processing class and after graduating was hired at the Merced County Health Center's WIC Program, as a receptionist-secretary. Her job duties include typing, ordering supplies and assisting the public. "I am very pleased with my job here," says Mary. "The people are friendly and

I feel as if I am doing something to help others." After seeing Mary's success story, husband Salvador also came to CVOC for assistance. He signed up in November and within three weeks was working at World Color Press in Merced as a fork-lift operator in the shipping and receiving department. The Lomelis have two children, seven-year old

Salvador Jr. and one-year old Erica. "We feel CVOC has been a tremendous help for each of us as individuals and for our family as a whole," said Salvador Sr. "We both are working at better jobs which we enjoy more than farm work. Also, the additional income allows us to give more to our children and to do more things as a family."

CVOC graduate Jerry Ortega (left photo) was hired at a Central Valley auto parts store. His employers were so impressed by his positive attitude and ability to learn quickly, they have assigned him to train other new employees on the computer

terminals and in assisting the public. Salvador and Mary Lomeli (right photo) went to CVOC for assistance and shortly thereafter were placed in jobs they describe as "interesting and better paying" than their previous positions.



The Central Valley Opportunity Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping low-income persons in California's Central Valley.



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