



WARWICK AREA FARMWORKER ORGANIZATION HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION



The WAFO was established in 1959 as the Warwick Area Migrant Committee. It was established as a Private Foundation by a community coalition which was made up of farmers, health professionals, teachers and community members. Their work focused on establishing services to support the families and men who were working as farmworkers in the Orange County area. The WAMC operated the Alamo Community Center and leased the Alamo Community Health Center building to Sun River Health until 2011. In 2011, WAMC transferred all properties and operation of the Alamo Community Center to Sun River Health.

WAMC operated until 2021 conducting all of the historical programs. In late 2020, Warwick Area Farmworker Organization was established as a 501c3 Public Charity and absorbed all of the programs of WAMC. Warwick Area Farmworker Organization also became an Affiliate of Sun River Health in 2021. While the BOD, budget and operations are separate from Sun River, WAFO supports programs associated with the Social Determinants of Health for farmworkers. WAFO supports access to health, mental and dental services as well.

WAMC remains an Advisory Committee of Warwick Area Farmworker Organization. Our focus remains much the same as it did in 1959. The programs have been developed but the mission remains the same.

Summer Program: Dulce Esperanza

1960: Pine Island School was the site for over 200 children of farmworkers with reading skills and recreational programs. Volunteers provided a safe place for children to go during the day. The program operated during the summer for a few weeks during the summer.



2022: Pine Island School remains the site for approximately 90 children of farmworkers. Parents are very involved in the program and renamed it Dulce Esperanza (Sweet Hope) as they hope for a better future for their children. The children participate in reading programs and science and lots of recreational activities. The program runs for seven weeks, from 9-5 each day.



Sewing Program:

1960-1970s: Cornell Cooperative Extension Service of Orange County provided sewing classes to the farmworker women.



2022: The Sewing Club was reestablished with a teacher during the winter months. This club selects sewing projects for their home and personal use.



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Community Health Education:

1960's-1970s: Programs on family planning and other health topics were provided by volunteers and some groups including Planned Parenthood. Farmworkers would be recruited from the community to participate in the programs.

2022: Farmworkers are recruited to serve as Community Health Workers and trained in a number of programs and provide important connections to services and health care. They are embedded in the community and understand the life of farmworkers. Their programs focus on health and safety as well as chronic disease management.



Youth Programs:

1960-1990's: Programs were held at the Alamo to support reading and other recreational activities. These programs were held as volunteers were available.

2022: Programs are held during the year which support connections and academic success. The Homework Club meets each week and children are paired with a community tutor. The tutor helps students with any work they have from school. At the end of the time, they may pick a book to take home or a game to play with others. Boys and Girls Clubs are held during the year. Activities have included art, recreation, programs on Well-being and mindfulness. There are times when children can take a field trip.



Food Programs:

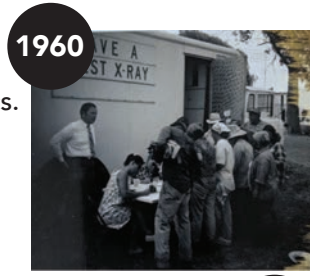
1960-1980: Food distribution was done through community groups and commodity distribution.

2022: WAFO and Sun River Health operate a Food Pantry three days per week and one evening. The food pantry is part of the Hudson Valley Food Bank. WAFO also receives donations of farm foods through Nourish New York and the Restaurant Resiliency Program. WAFO also build Garden Boxes for use by families who do not have a place to grow their foods at home.

Health Services:

1960s: A network of volunteers and local medical providers worked during the season in temporary clinics. Mobile services pictured here were provided (TB Xray). Some support from the local hospital and the Family Services of Orange and Ulster county assisted in providing services. Since 1965, over 220,000 AmeriCorps members in the VISTA program have joined the fight against poverty by helping local organizations expand their capacity to make change. The results of this survey provided the foundation of the application to the Office of Economic Opportunity for the seasonal Farmworker clinic in Orange County. The program was operated by the Newburgh Family Health Center until 1989.

1989: Sun River Health (formerly Hudson River Health) and WAMC moved the operation of the health services to a permanent structure on the grounds of the Alamo Community Center complex. It has operated as a full-time health center with comprehensive services since that time. Medical, Dental and Behavioral Health services are offered to all community members throughout the year.



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