



Centreville Labor Resource Center

YEAR 2, VOLUME 6

JUNE 2013

“Spring being a tough act to follow, God created **June**.” –Al Bernstein

**4th of July Picnic at Bull Run Park, Thursday, July 4th, 12 to 6 PM, Shelter 7. All welcome!
This issue includes our second quarter report.**

LULAC/CIF Sponsored Town Hall

The Centreville Immigration Forum co-sponsored an immigration reform town hall with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), on the evening of June 24 at the Centreville Regional Library.

The event, which drew about 40 people, was an educational event to update and inform the community on the progress of the immigration reform bill.



LULAC/CIF Town Hall

Facilitators also explained how congress works so that participants can better follow the news in the coming months.

The community was warned that although no law has yet been passed, there are many people who are defrauding immigrants by posing as immigration lawyers or notaries and charging large sums of money to

“help” people with their immigration applications. If you know anyone that may benefit from immigration reform, please spread the word about this kind of scam!



Working on the Raised Bed Project

Raised Beds Project

The CLRC is in the planning stage of an innovative income generating project with the direction of Tori Jameson, one of our summer interns from Wellspring United Church of Christ.

Tori, a former middle school shop teacher, and CLRC workers are designing raised garden beds to be sold and installed by workers.

Raised garden beds are gaining popularity in suburban areas because of rising interest in local food and sustainability. Garden beds are also popular because they allow more control

of soil quality and moisture, leading to better fertility per square foot than traditional gardens.

In the coming weeks, the team will be creating prototypes of different sizes and installing them in test yards to determine how long each box will take to make.

Pricing will be discussed with the workers during our weekly assemblies and will take into account labor time and material cost of the boxes. This project, in addition to creating income for workers, also aims to teach basic carpentry skills and power tool safety. If you're interested in helping us with the project or may want to have one made, contact us at the center. Stay tuned for updates!



Success! Completed Prototype

Roberto Fernández– Director

Molly Maddra– Coordinator

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Meet our summer 2013 Wellspring United Church of Christ Interns

Nathan Watts, Nashville, TN



When I knew I'd be spending my summer at the Centreville Labor Resource Center many life experiences flashed before me that I thought would have prepared me for this summer job: my teenage years being raised in Texas and going to a multi-cultural, multi-lingual public high school; mission trips with my home church to border towns in Texas and Mexico, on both sides of the wall; my studies of Latin American liberation theology and political realities in college and graduate school; trips to Argentina and Cuba. I am fond as well as proud of these experiences, but "El Centro" has elements that the above experiences lacked-- sustained positive and practical influence in the lives of the people we are helping and who in turn help us.

What I've enjoyed most over my first month here is the anticipation around "El Centro" in the moments before a worker or group of workers go out on a job. Due to the organization of "El Centro" everyone knows who is next in line; they know their turn is just a matter of time. While the wages are meager and the labor is back-breaking, there is a certain dignity in their demeanor, in the way they approach their impending tasks. This is for two main reasons: money is going into their pocket, yes, but more so the dignity resides in the mutuality of the exchange—in the very human-ness of it all. Both parties, employer and worker, are getting needs met. The power and politics that are embedded in the language of 'immigrant' or 'illegal' or 'undocumented'

and even 'citizen' melt away. Space is made for the ability to recognize our primary identity: humans.

This is how I know that "El Centro" is living into its mission to build a better world, a better community, a better Centreville. This space helps create a genuine 21st century American experience, one that takes into account the reality of ALL the Americas, not just the United States. While we recognize such realities and the pain and suffering they often entail, what is most important are the relationships that are being built out of these experiences. It is in this fire that the future of our nation is being forged. One where languages, histories and people mix but don't always match. "El Centro", as small and practical as it is, is performing a great task by helping put money into the pockets of international migrants. Those same migrants, these people of great courage and heart, remind me daily what a blessing it can be to be human.

Victoria Jameson— Raleigh, North Carolina

When I applied to the Summer Communities of Service program, I indicated that I would be willing to live and



work at any of the sites; I was thrilled to be placed here at the CLRC.

I did not have a lot of expectations coming into the summer because I was unsure on a lot of the details about the center and what sort of projects would be undertaken. I have been welcomed with open arms by the workers as well as center staff and volunteers.

My main project this summer revolves around the making of cedar raised garden beds. Many of the workers have done some training and a few have then trained their peers in the same skill-set.

Working at the center has posed many challenges, including the linguistic hurdle that I do not speak a whole lot of Spanish. The workers have extended much patience with me by teaching me Spanish when it is needed. Many of my favorite moments at the center have been conversations with the workers about their lives, their culture, and current circumstances and occasions in Centreville. Through these conversations, I have learned how to skin an armadillo and had deep discussion about immigration reform and citizenship, amount many other topics.

Next fall, I am doing field education in a United Church of Christ congregation and attending graduate school at Andover Newton Theological School in Boston, Massachusetts. I am looking forward to being able to engage my congregation on issues of immigration and worker rights. I look forward to the rest of the this summer's work at the CLRC.

Patriot

If someone told me five years ago that it would be a group of immigrant day laborers that would turn me into a patriot, I would have laughed. I was a war protesting, rabble rousing angry young adult that was critical of everything about this country. Typical college kid. Then I grew up.

Last January we took a group of CLRC workers down to the Virginia House of Delegates for an interfaith



immigrant advocacy day. Our goal was to inform our representatives of the repercussions of certain pieces of legislature in the immigrant community. It was tough convincing some of the workers to come with us, and I wasn't above using guilt and the promise of a free lunch to get some of them to come with our delegation. We ultimately ended up with nine workers.

We spent most of the morning learning about how the legislative system works and how voting is only one small part in the political system. I could see enthusiasm building in Oscar, one of the more apathetic workers in the bunch. Oscar is about twenty years old. He still has a touch of that typical teenage melancholy and snarkiness that most of us with younger relatives know too well. He spent most of the ride to Richmond sleeping with his music up too loud. I suspect that he only wanted to go because he had never been to Richmond and wanted to take a long car ride.

When we finally got to speak with our district representatives, Oscar was one of the first to explain how

certain laws would affect him and his family. He also told the story of how he went to work for a week when he first arrived and was never paid a cent. In the end, he was quite good at charming our local politicians.

I was gloating towards the end of the day about Oscar's turnaround when I asked him "Not so bad after all huh?". Oscar responded "Well, I didn't think we would get to do anything. Here, we are not citizens, why should a politician even talk to us about our problems? I was so surprised when we actually got into the room. I couldn't believe it. You know, in my country, we, being citizens with concerns, probably would not even get into the building. I have more of a voice here without documents than I do as a citizen in my own country."

It was at that moment I realized that despite the flaws of our country, we still have one of the most open systems in the world. In the countries where some of our workers are from, doing what we did that day could end in beatings, arrests or any number of unpleasant things. Citizens and non-citizens alike are able to have contact with their elected officials and say their piece. Whether or not the politicians listen is another story, but at least we all get a chance to voice our concerns without the fear of pain or retribution. That is what we will be celebrating this independence day, I hope you will too.

St. Mark Catholic Church

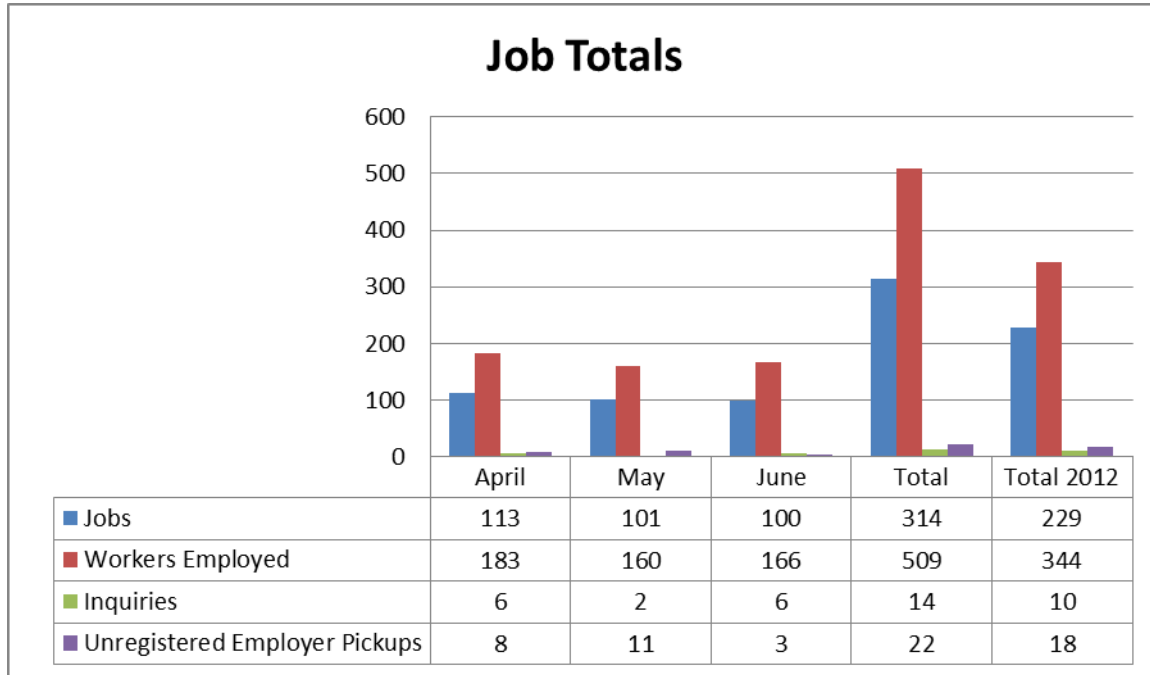
CLRC Staff and a small team of workers paid a visit to St. Mark Catholic Church to participate in their program "Understanding Our Immigrant Neighbors". The group from the Center joined a GMU professor, an employee from Fairfax County Family Services and an ESL student to create a comprehensive view of the immigrant experience in Northern Virginia.

Staff shared statistics and trends about day labor in the United States with a focus on Northern Virginia with a group of about 30 parishioners. There was also a discussion on the sources of contention that arise from the presence of day laborers in the community and the dangers that day laborers face. Workers from the CLRC told their stories of adjusting to a new culture away from their families in the United States and explained some of the difficulties they face as day laborers such as wage theft and mistreatment on the job.

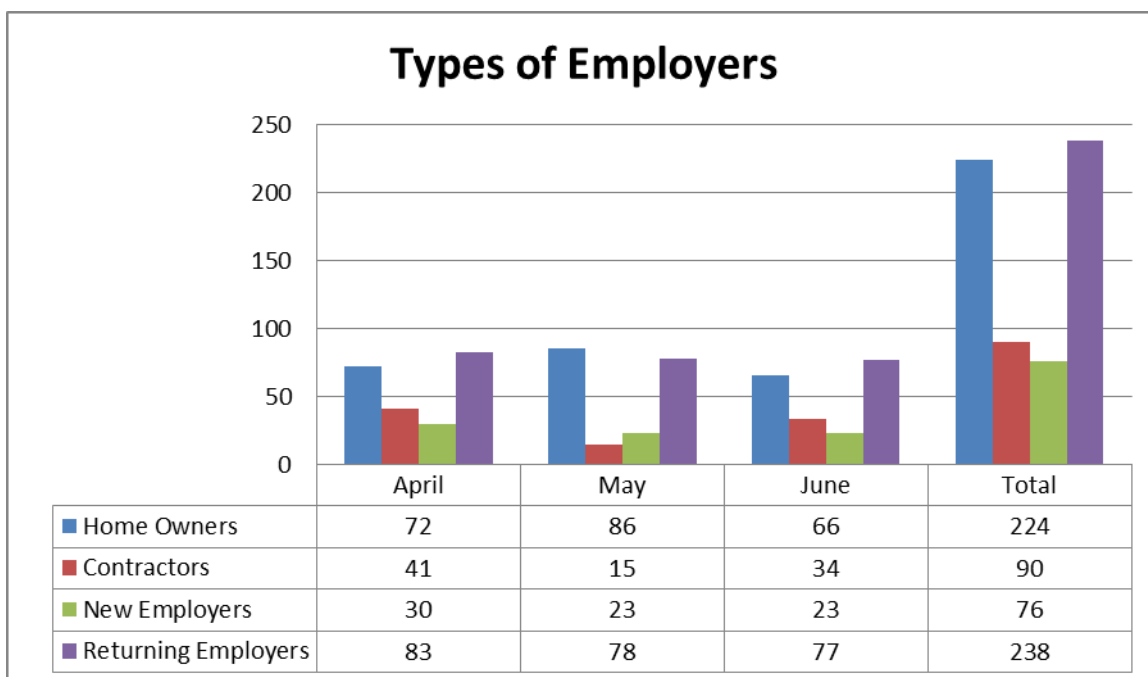
Thank you to St. Mark for having us participate in such a great event!

SECOND QUARTER REPORT

Below is a chart of our different job totals for the second quarter. Note that the CLRC has seen 37% growth in jobs from the same quarter in 2012. Keep in mind that many jobs require more than one worker.

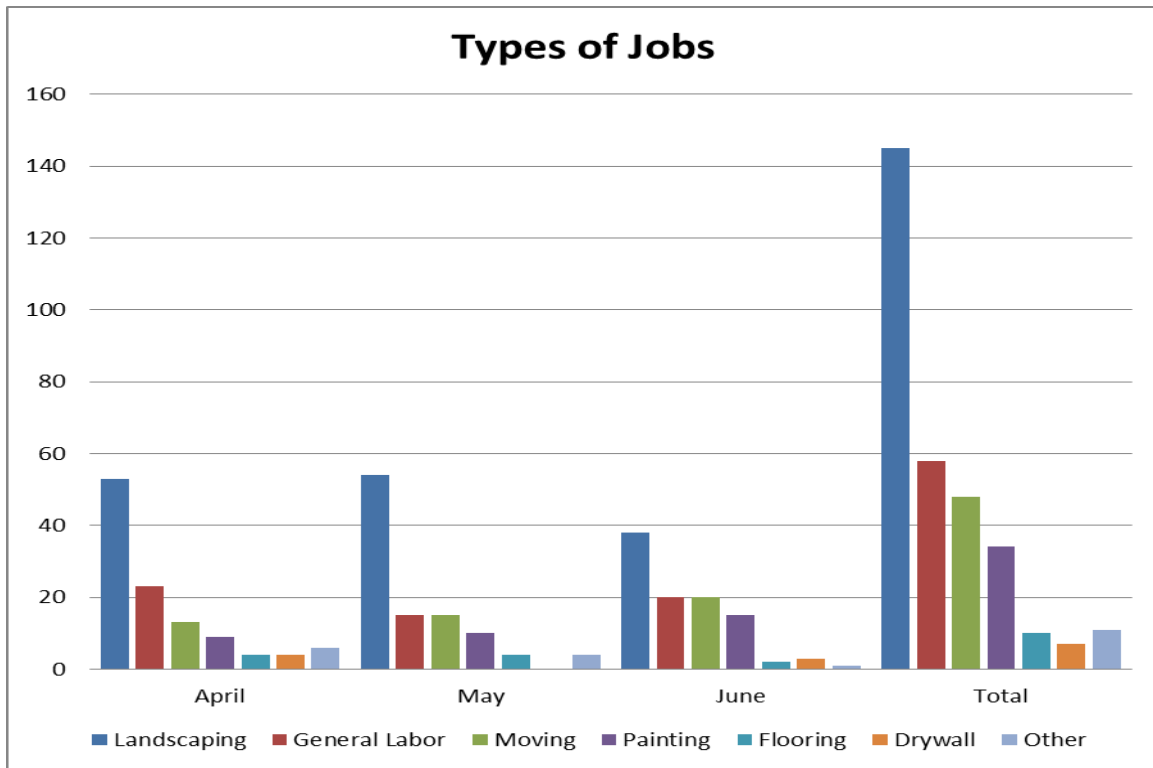


The CLRC is becoming increasingly popular with private homeowners, who make up the majority of our employer pool. While the Center constantly attracts new employers, one of our most important indicators of success is the rate of return employers, which is over double the rate of new employers.

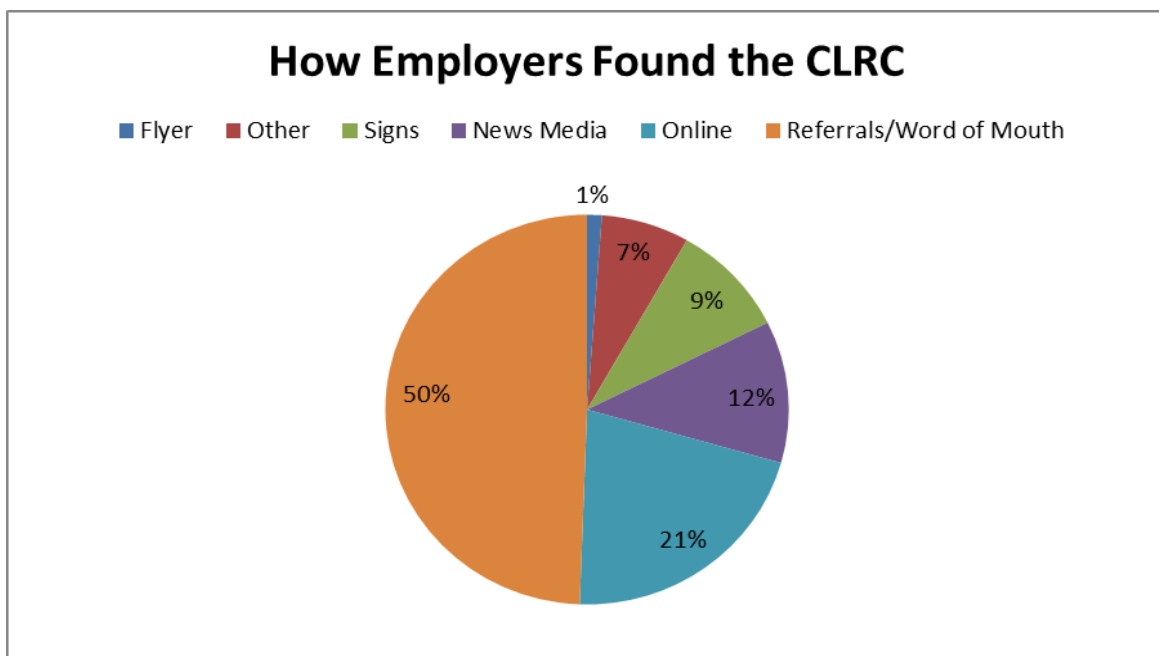


SECOND QUARTER REPORT

The majority of jobs arranged at the CLRC this quarter are in landscaping. This is typical for this time of year. The Center is also seeing more moving jobs this quarter. General labor and painting are also popular fields, with more skilled jobs like flooring and drywall being less frequent.

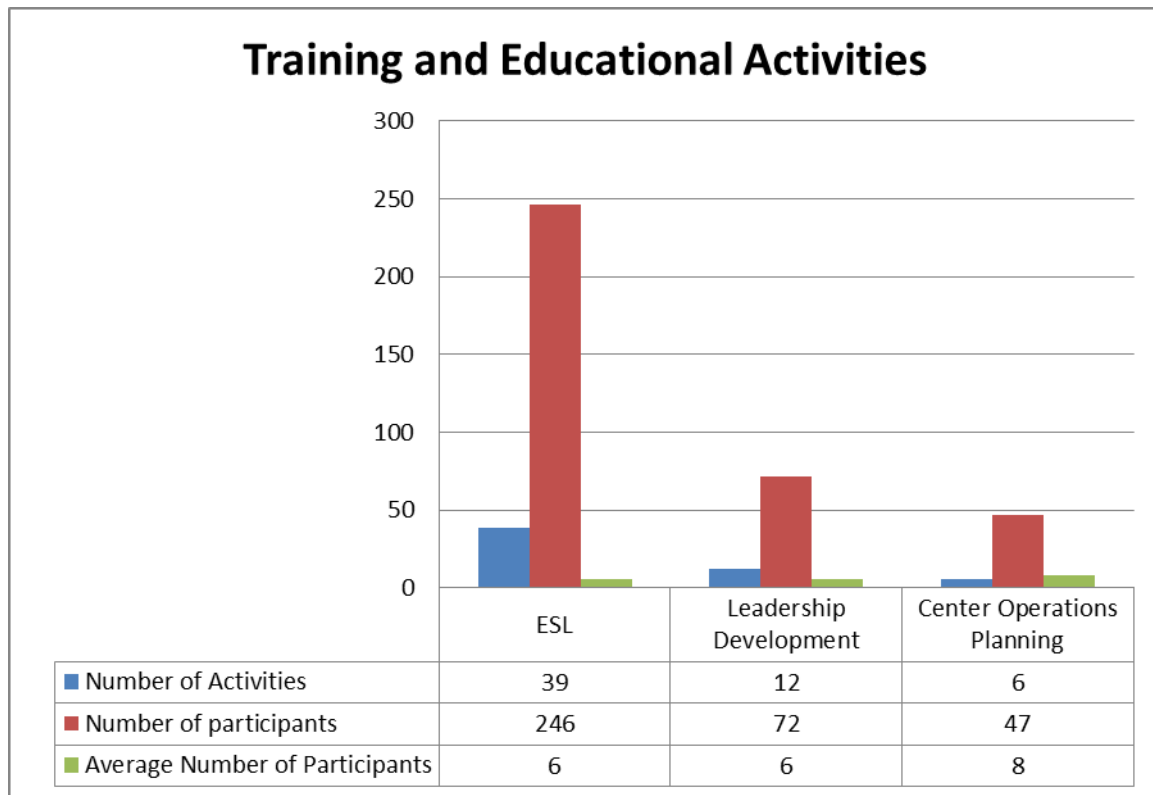


The CLRC tracks how new employers come to know the Center. Word of mouth continues to be our strongest medium of publicity, followed by our web presence which is made stronger by two great web interns!



SECOND QUARTER REPORT

This quarter contains the first data set from the CLRC's training and education activities. The Center conducts daily ESL workshops when volunteers are available, making it the most frequent educational activity at the Center. Workers also participate in weekly worker assemblies held on Wednesday mornings. This helps staff evaluate how well the Center operates according to the workers and also encourages workers to take ownership of the daily activities of the CLRC. The assemblies, along with a few other meetings fall under the category of Center operations planning. Workers are able to participate in various leadership development activities as well. These can include but are not limited to: attending community forums, speaking about the Center at publicity visits to community organizations and participating in leadership development and public speaking workshops. This quarter contains over 700 learning hours. This is calculated by multiplying the total number of participants in Center activities by the average number of hours that activities typically take (2 hours). Worker participation is expected to increase during the slower months in the fall and winter due to the lack of work.



TESTIMONIAL FROM A VERY HAPPY EMPLOYER

"I hired 3 workers to help out on a 3-day patio build job. Everything from the initial dig to the last stone laid was neatly and efficiently done. The guys were responsible and eager to help me complete this project. I will definitely use the CLRC for my next home improvement project."

HOW TO HIRE A WORKER FROM THE CLRC

If you have work you'd like some help on and would like to hire a worker, follow these simple steps:

1. Call us 703.543.6272 or visit us on the web at www.centrevilleLRC.org and click on the "How to Hire" link.
2. Tell us what kind of work you need, how many workers you need and when you need them for.
3. We will match your needs to our registered workers skills and set up the job.
4. Negotiate the price for work.
5. Provide us with feedback after the job to ensure we're doing great work, that you are satisfied and that our workers are fairly paid.



Patio job

It's that easy!!! The CLRC serves businesses and homeowners who need help with just about any home remodel or maintenance project.



Working on drywall repairs