



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

State Senator Jen Metzger Visits Summer Camp for Children of Migrant Workers in Pine Island

JEN METZGER July 18, 2019

| ISSUE: **FARMWORKERS, SUMMER CHILD CARE, DULCE ESPERANZA SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM, PINE ISLAND**



Pine Island, NY....State Senator Jen Metzger this week visited a summer camp on Pine Island for the children of migrant workers and announced a \$5,000 grant that she secured to support the camp's educational enrichment programs--the first state funding the program has received. "This funding will help to support some vital educational programs for the Dulce Esperanza (or "Sweet Hope") program--serving children of farmworkers throughout the year," said **Katherine Brieger, WAMC Executive Director.**

Dulce Esperanza serves over 80 children from five school districts in Orange County, including Warwick, Minisink, Florida, Goshen, and Chester. The program is coordinated by

the Warwick Area Migrant Committee (WAMC) and is held at the former Pine Island Elementary School, thanks to the support of the Warwick Valley Central School District.

The WAMC, established in 1959, has provided this important program to farmworker families for 3 years. Enrichment programs at the summer camp include reading, art, music, sports, computers and robotics, horticulture, and other studies and activities.

"Finding summer child care is particularly challenging for farm workers who need to find a safe place where their children can play and learn while their parents are working. At Dulce Esperanza, the WAMC has provided a fun and enriching program for the children and an invaluable support system for farmworker families," **said Senator Metzger.** "I am pleased to be able to secure a small grant to support this unique program, which relies primarily on private donations, and I want to thank the many individuals, volunteers, and local business, agricultural, and community organizations that have sustained this important program over the years."

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools for Warwick Valley Central School District said,

"Dulce Esperanza is a gratifying example of the local community coming together and using existing resources to benefit children. Educators and parents often talk about children's summer learning loss. This program accounts for this loss and much more. It recognizes that summer is an opportune time to make up for the disadvantages with which some children enter school. In essence, it provides children with extended-year programming, which can ameliorate these learning gaps."

Chris Pawelski, a 4th-generation onion farmer in Goshen who serves on WAMC's Board of

Directors said, "Our Board of Directors and the farming community greatly appreciate the support that Senator Metzger has provided for this incredible program. This program is the definition of win-win-win! It's first and foremost a safe and enriching experience for the children; it's a great place for kids to go to so parents can work without worry, and it's great for the farm employers who have people able to work for them during the summer season." Pawelski has two employees whose children are enrolled at Dulce Esperanza.