

To: Susan
From: Julia Illman Maness
Re: Summer Experience Narrative
Date: August 5, 2004

I sat at the kitchen table in a dilapidated farmhouse, surrounded by a family—grandparents, parents, children, babies and a raccoon on a leash—who were being forcibly evicted from their home. They were hand-harvesting migrant laborers who had come to Michigan from “el valle” in Texas, planning to work the entire growing season. Now, mere weeks into the season, their employer had told them to vacate their house within 24 hours. This was a pivotal time; in 24 hours, they would either have a roof over their head, or they would be homeless, sleeping in their van.

We received the telephone call that morning: a family of twelve migrant farmworkers was being evicted. Could we help? Farmworker Legal Services attorneys and interns set to work, gathering information about the situation and communicating with the farmer-employer. In the end, a fellow intern and I got in my car and headed three hours north to meet this family where they needed us most—in their home.

The clients we serve at Farmworker Legal Services live at the margins of society; they are isolated by their poverty, by being part-time residents of multiple states, and often by speaking only Spanish. FLS works to ensure that even the most marginalized in society have rights, *que todos tienen derechos*.

FLS is a group of exceptionally capable attorneys, assistants, and interns with a strong sense of justice and of doing what is right. Attorney Tom Thornburg says, “We right wrongs.” This summer I, too, helped right wrongs.