For many, education is something only one dreams about and the idea of attaining higher education seems completely out of reach. Recently, BC Staff helped make that dream a reality for a group of future renegades by taking education to the fields. In partnership with the Central Valley Farm workers Foundation, Bakersfield College Rural Initiatives team and outreach advisor’s visited 20 farm worker crews at local vineyards throughout North and South Kern to promote higher education. The team was able to reach over 1200 farm workers, planting a seed of hope for higher education. Over 150 workers have requested follow-up services to begin their matriculation. Special shout out to all those who assisted in this project and Adult Education Program Managers, Jaime Lopez and Endee Grijalva for coordinating the efforts to make this possible. Although, this outreach effort is the first of its kind, it will not be the last as the Rural Initiatives Team continues to change lives across Kern County!
Due to the collaboration with our long-time community partner, The Wonderful Company, the North Kern Adult Education Team has been able to expand conversational English opportunities to the residents of Lost Hills. The class is small—six to ten students—but the students are wonderful, and, considering that the total population of Lost Hills is 2,412, the class size seems fairly proportional. The students are a constant reminder to me that every community, no matter how homogenous it appears, is unique and special. One older Argentinian couple in the class has a rich history. The husband was a war cartographer and bank manager in Argentina and now he rents bees to almond farmers (the wife adds that they studied for two years to learn everything about bees). The wife speaks glowingly of her garden in which she grows all the produce needed to create authentic Argentinian dishes. Another student dashes to join a volleyball game during our brief ten minute break, always returning to class with a big smile. Each one has a unique personality and story. And their reasons for attending are equally unique. Some attend class to better communicate in English with their children, others want to understand native speakers in the grocery store and other public spaces, while others just want to fulfill their life-long desire to speak English. One fun, exuberant student shouted her reason, “Because I’m American.” We all smiled and then it was back to the hard work of increasing English fluency. The Wonderful facilities and staff have been fantastic and have made my job easier. The staff is attentive, always helping with technology and course material needs, accommodating, switching meeting areas to optimize the class environment, and friendly, always smiling and welcoming. The facilities are spacious and outfitted with everything needed for the class. Lost Hills may be a remote location, but, it is a privilege and pleasure to serve its residents. Hopefully, the work will expand as more people become aware of BC’s presence in Lost Hills and its commitment to its residents. Thank you to everyone at The Wonderful Company for graciously allowing BC to be a part of enriching the community of Lost Hills.

RURAL INITIATIVES HIGHLIGHTS

Adult Education is proud to be under the umbrella of Rural Initiatives and in collaboration with the entire team serving through-out Kern County. Check out some of the highlights from this fall semester...

Above: Academic Liaison, Kim Collins, facilitating a workshop in Lost Hills

Above: Support Specialist, Jesus Jimenez providing BC info to 600 Farmer workers

Above: BC Adult Education Team members, spreading the word of Adult Education on La Campensina Radio Station.

Above: The BC Adult Education Team visiting the Jasmine Vineyards in Delano in preparation of Outreach Week.

Above: Program Manager, Endee Grijalva and Educational Advisor, Lupe Aguirre speaking on a panel at the Career Pathway Symposium.

Above: UFW sharing resource and information to students on the Delano Campus.