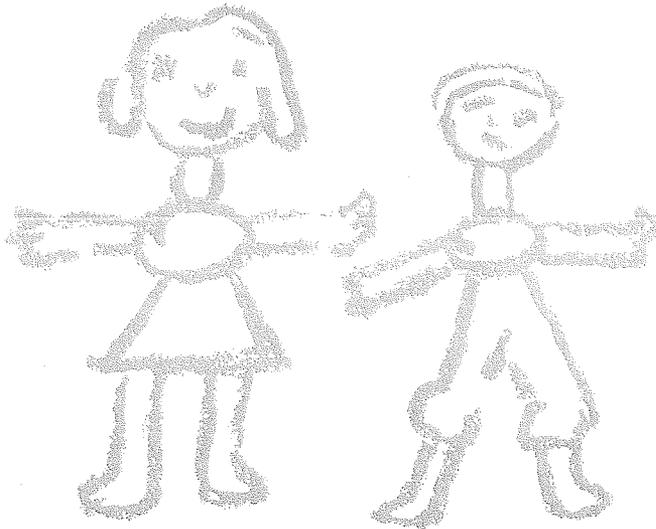


# CHILDREN OF THE ROAD



State of Arizona  
Department of Public Instruction  
Sarah Folsom, Superintendent



State of Arizona  
Department of Public Instruction

SARAH FOLSOM, SUPERINTENDENT

State Capitol  
Phoenix

FOREWORD

Dear Reader:

Among educators and laypeople there is a growing interest in the educational problems that confront the children of migrant farm workers. The needs of these children are numerous and, although sincere attempts have been made by many of our school districts to meet these needs, we must concentrate our efforts to provide the best educational programs for migrant children throughout the State.

The Arizona State Department of Public Instruction established the office of Migrant Child Education to design educational programs in cooperation with school districts who have many of these children during the year.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of Public Law 89-750 provides the funds which enables our State to make these plans a reality.

I am certain that the combined efforts of these schools and my staff have provided the State of Arizona the opportunity to take the first step so that the future of the migrant child will be far better than it otherwise might have been.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Folsom".

Sarah Folsom  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Arizona, Superintendent of Public Instruction,

Division of Migrant Child Education.



## CHILDREN OF THE ROAD



**Arizona's Program  
For Educating the Children of Migrant Workers**



**J. O. "Rocky" Maynes, Jr.  
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Phoenix, Arizona 85015**

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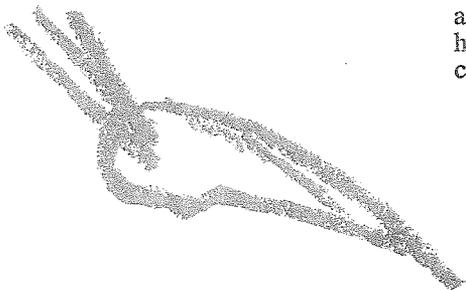
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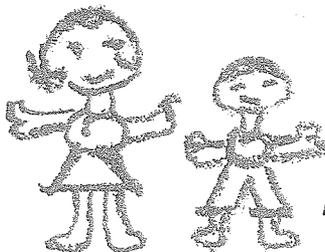
**THE SUN** shines at all seasons in the fertile southern counties of Arizona. Rain-fall is rare, but the water always comes, tumbling from the dams in the north through miles of large canals and little ditches. In such a place, every crop sends down vigorous roots and pushes up a rich harvest. Except the one crop that matters most, the children of the road. The sunshine and the water do little to help them germinate. Most often, they are rootless, and the harvest is scant and bitter.

For Arizona is one of the nation's heaviest users of migrant farm labor. Especially in Yuma, Maricopa, Pima and Cochise Counties, it is manpower, womanpower and sometime childpower that brings the crops along to maturity and brings them in when the time has come. This is called seasonal labor, but the children of the road have no season of their own. They are planted briefly in Arizona when their families work with citrus, lettuce, onions, carrots and other vegetables. Then they are pulled up and transplanted for another insufficient time in California, or the Northwest, or the Deep South, or anywhere, or everywhere.

*"Who am I?" asked the child. And the silent blue sky answered: "Nobody." "Where am I?" the child inquired. And the worn tires sang against the receding pavement: "Nowhere."*

Rootless, purposeless, often even speechless, the children of Arizona's migrant farm workers come home from school—and home may be a truck parked under a cottonwood tree—on a Wednesday afternoon, and find themselves residents of California by Thursday morning. New school but no real belonging, new teacher but no real attachment, new faces but no real friends. Even a carrot has a better chance. And children are more complex than carrots.





**THE CHILDREN** of the road are almost always perfectly behaved. Devoted teachers may even praise their discipline until they realize it is actually a hopeless docility, and teachers break their hearts against a childish silence. While young permanent residents argue, wrestle and contend, the short-term visitor will stand aside in last-ditch dignity, enclosed in a protective armor of his own deliberate making.

*"What is there to say?" asked the child. And the wind over the fields replied: "Nothing." "When is the time to speak?" the child inquired. And the dove in the cottonwood tree sang: "Never."*

How blind distant grown-ups are! How deaf, how unforgivably insensitive! How long it takes people even to begin to understand such simple things. It almost seems that every generation must re-invent the wheel; and every few years we must rediscover love. Affection is a root for the rootless. Praise is a foundation for the uncertain. A kind word brings speech even from the speechless.

Where to begin, if not at the school? There, at least, the children of the road find other children, and may be coaxed into contact with the other world. There also they find a room and a teacher who together may constitute more of a home than home itself does. And there they find that the door to adventure is a tiny bit open, tempting even the most hopeless to creep up and take a peek.

*"What's behind us?" asked the child. And the roar of passing traffic answered: "Nothing." "What's ahead?" the child inquired. And the idle frothing of the ditch water replied: "That's nothing, too."*

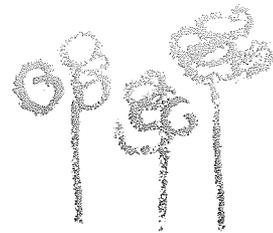




**THE STATE** of Arizona received limited funds for migrant education in fiscal 1967. The funds came under Title One of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It was used in innovative ways, ways that might have seemed revolutionary except that they were anchored to something as old-fashioned as the love of children. Four extensive summer projects broke new ground. And everywhere along a broad front, a start was made toward rescuing the children of the road.

First to be taught were the teachers. They were educated to the compelling logic of building a new curriculum around the migrant child's own experiences. Then summer sessions were begun, with full programs at Somerton and Dysart and smaller efforts at Eleven Mile Corner and Pima. The two large demonstration projects encompassed 650 children. Additional funds went to grant supplemental assistance to school districts already operating limited educational programs for migrant children. And the final project was devoted to interstate coordination; for the first time, a system was developed for teacher exchanges, exchange of materials, and orderly transfer of migrant children's health and school records between Arizona and other states.

*"Who cares?" asked the child. And there was an undertone in the classroom hum that answered: "Somebody, maybe." "What do I care?" the child inquired. And there was a tide of shouting on the playground that seemed to say: "Maybe I really do care, a little."*



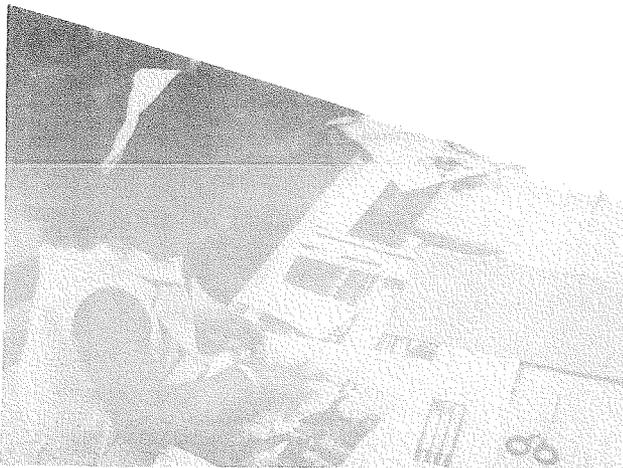
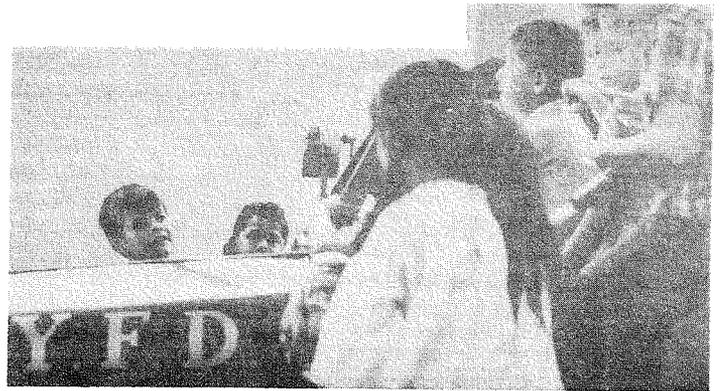
R

evelation is relative.

For some, the world unfolds with the thrill of a visit to a fire station, or the first plunge into a real swimming pool.

Perhaps the struggle with that big ball at the bowling alley is a turning-point. Or maybe it happens with a word from the kindly lady talking over the radio at the police station, or a pat on the head from the gruff but pleasant pressman at the newspaper plant.

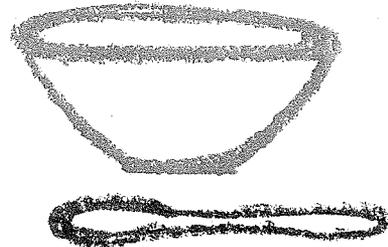
It might even be in the quiet of a museum, rich with ancient relics, or the sudden consciousness of America itself that comes with seeing something new in the flag at the state capitol. There is a starting-place for the argosy of every young mind. One of the vital tasks of an educator is to find it.

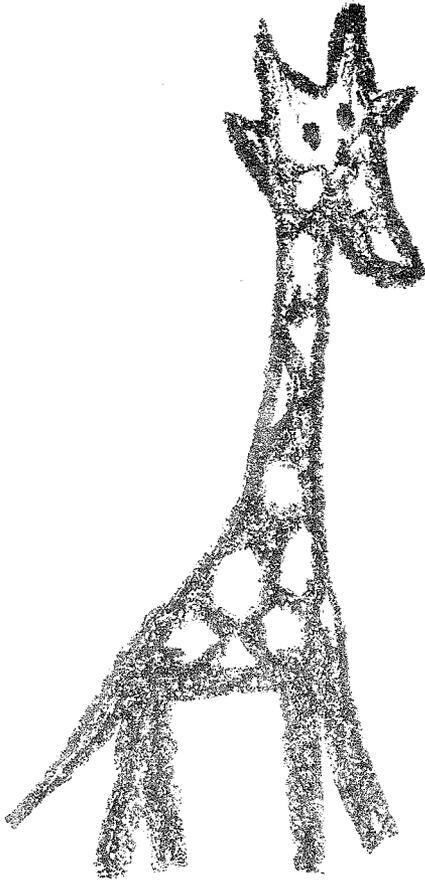




Where to start? Food is a universal point of departure. At Somerton, between June 5 and July 14, the program served 6195 breakfasts and 8206 lunches, all free. Hold their attention? Feature-length films, indoor games, music appreciation, reading children's literature, movies on health and sports, instruction in swimming and water safety, life-saving for advanced students. Girls at the seventh and eighth grade levels learned to choose, prepare and use surplus commodity foods, repair and restyle clothing, care for small children. For many, English was a second language, and they learned it rapidly in practical application.

If anything, teachers learned more than students. They learned to look away from the textbook and let every child find his own level, exploit his personal experiences, develop specific talents. Every teacher contacted the family of every student. Discipline problems were non-existent, absences almost unknown. As word spread, more children hurried out of the fields to attend. Children who had never completed an assignment during the regular school year insisted on staying inside at recess to work. Many who had never before volunteered in class now wanted to make complete oral reports. It was a common experience to find families who made extraordinary sacrifices to stay in the community and let the children finish the course, though the father had to move on to the next harvest down the road.

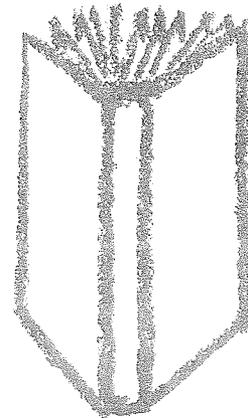




During 11 hectic days at Dysart, teachers contacted all 390 families involved. In addition to work in the classroom, there were field trips to the zoo, a circus, a bird farm, the airport and the state capitol. There were instructions in weaving. There was a tea party. One counselor was an expert guitar-player; and after a particularly fruitful talk with a pupil, he would reward him with a song. Said a teacher: "The most urgent requirement of a migrant child is to feel secure, to have the feeling that he belongs. What he needs above all else is praise and still more praise."

*"Who am I?" asked the child. And there was something in the laughter of the children and the smile of the teacher that seemed to say: "Why, you must be somebody! Somebody is your name!"*

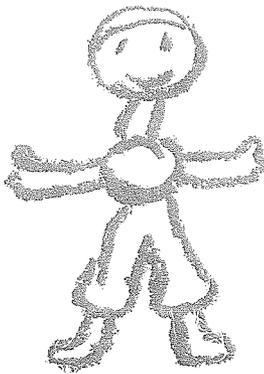
At Eleven Mile Corner, a farm labor camp, there were 88 migrant children registered, representing all groups. Children in the reading program were two years or more below their grade level. Each teacher worked with 10 children a day, two at a time. The library was open during the summer, with a librarian on hand to guide and suggest. Activities included art, band, crafts, Spanish and dramatics. And physical needs were not forgotten. All children were given blood and urine tests. All received a good free lunch, and teachers were convinced that was the primary reason many of the children came. Good food made for better school work, because many of the youngsters were in need of better nutrition. Some of the children who seemed shyest at first were trying out later for the band and the operetta.





At Pima, students actually made their own textbooks, on the principle that "what they could write, they could read." Teachers concluded at the end of the summer session that the social behavior of the group was improved; that the migrant children were mixing for the first time with other students; and that health of most of those enrolled was definitely improved, with the majority gaining weight. And on three vital scores, there was unanimity: teacher attitudes, improved; parent attitudes, improved; school-community relations, improved. A basic problem is dramatized in one conclusion; said the teachers: "Without the nutritional program consisting of a light breakfast and a Class A lunch, our project would not have been a success."

In days to come, the special programs for migrant children will be enlarged and improved. There were, of course, mistakes in such an uncharted voyage, and they will be corrected. More individual procedures and testing should be stressed. Summer workshops should be initiated a week before the children arrive, to develop teacher skills and prepare materials. Teachers should preview all films, so that they can point up especially motivating sequences. Field trips should correlate more directly with the units under study. Typical work sheets and workbooks should be avoided. There should be a wider range of library books, games, tapes and charts, so that instruction may be still more directly individualized.

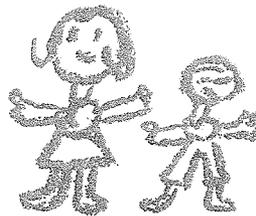




Because of the year-around camp activity in Arizona, emphasis is being placed on providing specialized services and activities for migrant children during the regular school year. This task is most difficult; but no task is regarded as impossible where a child is concerned.

A start has been made. The first cables of a bridge have been stretched between the migrant child and his temporary community. The first breach has been made in the wall behind which the rootless student has felt it necessary to retreat. The first foundations have been laid for a whole new kind of thinking which will enable educators to meet and solve a unique and tragic American problem. In Arizona, so typical of the warm-hearted West, who can help loving a homeless child?

*"Who am I?" asked the child. And he answered himself:  
"I am one of the children of the road. But I am somebody.  
And sometimes people smile."*



**CHILDREN OF THE ROAD**

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