

California AgrAbility

May/June 2006

California AgrAbility Project

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*A partnership between the
University of California Farm
Safety Program (Cooperative
Extension) and Easter Seals
Superior California.*

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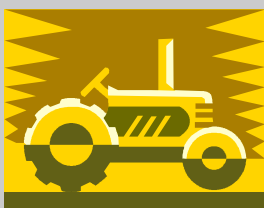
For Spanish call

1-888-877-3257, ext 117

or

916-679-3117

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Promoting Success in Agriculture for People with Disabilities and Their Families

¡Cultivando & trabajo del campo... un estilo de vida!

Farming & farm work... a way of life!

At first glance, Marcos Quiones is just like any other 18 year-old. He balances school, work and family. He enjoys dancing, playing pool, and hanging out with his friends and cousins. One would not know Marcos has overcome major challenges in his 18 years.

Marcos is one of CalAgrAbility's many farm worker consumers who seek assistance to continue working. He was born and raised in Mexico with severe hearing loss. He arrived in the farming region, the Sacramento Valley, with his family 3-4 years ago.

As a toddler in Mexico, Marcos underwent a series of ear operations. Some hearing was regained through use of hearing aids. His family could not afford the hearing aids until he was seven. Due to this, Marcos never developed speech abilities. He has learned some Spanish sign language, but still has difficulty communicating. His mother is his primary interpreter.

Marcos joined the family work crew at an early age.



Figures Nos. 1 and 2 above: To Marcos Quiones, agriculture is a way of life, an important part of his culture and his survival.

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Events

Upcoming Events

August 5-6, 2006

Monterey Bay Strawberry Festival

Watsonville, California

<http://www.mbsf.com/>

August 7-9, 2006

The Future of Agriculture: Science, Stewardship, and Sustainability

Hyatt Regency Sacramento, CA

<http://www.dce.ksu.edu/dce/conf/ag&environment/>

August 13-16, 2006

2006 National Rural ITS Conference, Western Transportation Institute

Big Sky, MT

406.273.7224

<http://2006nrits.org/index.htm>

September 7 & 8, 2006

Northern California Rural Roundtable Meeting Central and Southern Rural Roundtables

Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite

contact

sjimenez@fhcn.org or (559) 737-4789.



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¡Cultivando... Continued

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He recalls tagging along to the fields and orchards with his aunts, uncles, cousins, and parents as a child. The kids would play near the trees as the adults picked fruit. At age 7, he received hearing aids, but they were perspiration-sensitive and could not be worn in the fields.

Since Marcos had no hearing aids, he had no way of navigating the California system to obtain them. In order to teach him American Sign Language, his special education school required hearing aids. They are also essential for his work on the farm. Farming is dangerous for workers *without* hearing loss. Low hearing adds to the hazardous environment on the farm.

While at his school Marcos came to know his special education assistant, Nelly Trejo, who is a CalAgrAbility advocate

(see Jan-Feb 2006 News). Nelly referred him to California AgrAbility. Staff began work with California Children's Services of Roseville (CCS) and the Placer Speech and Hearing Services. CCS purchased Marcos' hearing aids from Placer County Speech and Hearing in Auburn, CA.

CalAgrAbility staff attended audiologist and fitting appointments and provided translation services as well as technical assistance so that Marcos' family could understand the results of his audio tests.

On the farm the new hearing aids allow him to understand his work assignments. He can hear danger warnings around equipment and large animals. Marcos uses his hearing aids both for school and on the job.



Figure No. 3: Marco and his parents work together in the Sacramento Valley

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More Events

September 20-22, 2006
Health and Safety in Western Agriculture: Research to Practice
 Asilomar, CA
<http://agcenter.ucdavis.edu/Announce/R2P2006.php>

November 3-5, 2006
Northern California Abilities Expo
 Santa Clara Convention Center, CA
<http://noc.abilitiesexpo.com/aenoc/v42/index.cvn>

February 12-14, 2007
The Clock is Ticking for Rural America, A Behavioral Health and Safety Conference
 Sioux Falls, SD
<http://www.agriwellness.org/ConfInfo.htm>

February 22-24, 2007.
The Active Living Research Fourth Annual Conference
 Coronado Island Marriott Resort in Coronado, CA
<http://www.activelivingresearch.org/index.php/Conference/7>



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The hearing devices changed Marcos' life and the future looks bright. He has reaped many benefits and improvements in his life.

The new hearing devices were selected specifically to assist him on the farm and *are not sensitive to moisture*.

In the past Marcos' farm supervisor had to use hand signals, eye contact, and demonstrations to train Marcos. Today they communicate verbally.... "I can call out his name and Marcos responds."

Hearing specialists say that his hearing level will not change overnight, but with hard work Marcos' hearing should continue to improve.

Marcos works full-time during the summer. During school he works part-time during the week and all day Saturday. He is proud of his work and has never let his hearing loss affect his love of working outdoors.

Marcos sees his audiologist regularly and uses the health literacy skills CalAgrAbility staff taught him.

Marcos' next goal is to enroll in intensive speech therapy. Not having speech frustrates him, but he is ready for the challenge because he sees it as a life-changing skill. CalAgrAbility will continue to provide him with information and advocacy to help meet his goals.

Many Options for Hearing Impaired

There are a wide variety of hearing aid options. Most designs depend on each individual's level of hearing loss. Also, many hearing aids must be designed for a specific user for a proper fit. For these reasons *an audiologist should always be consulted when considering hearing aids*. While hearing aids can be quite expensive there are a number of options for those in need of funding. Of course private insurance or Medi-Cal are potential options for those eligible. However other avenues are also available.

For instance, if teachers are not able to communicate with students, they may work with the public school district to provide hearing devices. Alternatively the California Department of Rehabilitation's Vocational Rehabilitation program are also charged with the responsibility of providing assistive technologies, such as, hearing aids to allow employees to continue work, in this case, on the farm.



Figure No 4 Marcos' new hearing aids help him to communicate on the farm

Resources

More Information

American Association of
the Deaf-Blind
<http://www.aadb.org/>

Beginnings for Parents
of Hearing Impaired
Children, Inc.
<http://www.beginningssvcs.com/>

Better Hearing Institute
<http://www.betterhearing.org/>

California Children's
Services
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/pcfh/cms/ccs/>

Placer Speech and
Hearing Services
<http://placerspeechandheari5308237532.worldpages-ads.com/>

NorCal Center on
Deafness
<http://www.norcalcenter.org/>

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Sometimes traditional avenues for obtaining devices or funding do not work out. Here is a list of other resources for those looking to fund hearing aid purchases:

Ear of the Lion Hearing Foundation of California/Nevada
1030 Gettysburg Ave. #100-D
Clovis, CA 93612
800-327-8077
559-291-4662
hearfoundation@aol.com
<http://www.md4lions.org/projects/earofthelion.htm>

Ear of the Lion is a Lion's Club Foundation which provides low cost hearing aids to those earning less than \$25,000 per year. Ear of the Lion will charge \$150 per hearing aid.

Agency for Hearing
1800 28th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816
916-732-9040 (voice)
888-725-8372 (toll-free)
916-732-9040 (TTY)
afh@agencyforhearing.org
<http://www.agencyforhearing.org>

About CalAgrAbility ...

The California AgrAbility Project's primary goal is to help farmers, agricultural workers, ranchers and their families to continue working in agriculture regardless of physical limitations, impairments and disabilities. Staff will help conduct on-site assessments and identify appropriate assistive technologies to make the job safer and easier. This is supported by the CSREES USDA under special project number 2003-41490-01584.

1-800-477-6129

Agency for Hearing provides a comprehensive program of testing, ear molds, hearing aids and assistive listening devices. Their Hearing Aid Loan Program loans out hundreds of hearing aids per year to individuals who could not otherwise afford them. The Agency for Hearing charges a fee for service on a sliding scale determined by the consumer's income.

Hear Now
Starkey Hearing Foundation
6700 Washington Ave. South
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
800-648-4327 (toll-free)
nonprofit@starkey.com
<http://www.sotheworldmayhear.org/forms/hearnow.php>

Hear Now provides hearing aids to low-income individuals living under the federal poverty level. There is a non-refundable processing fee of \$60 to apply for each hearing aid.

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