

**2011 Leadership Institute:  
The Plate of Bounty Award**

Ann Linehan: I think we have ourselves a good advocate for Head Start in the Administration for Children and Families. Thank you.

[Applause]

I'm sure everyone in the audience knows that we have 12 Regional Offices. One through ten are geographic, and then we have two very special regions. Region 11 is our American Indian/Alaskan Native, and our Region 12 is our Migrant and Seasonal. And I have to say, both of these regions teach us a lot about how they honor people who make contributions to their communities, the way in which they celebrate the contributions. And today, we are invited – I feel like we are very special guests, in being asked to participate in an honoring ceremony from our Region – our Region 12 colleagues. So I would like to introduce Claire Rodriguez, who is executive director of the Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association, and Jose Martinez, who is president of the Association, who will help – who is, who is going to help us –

[Applause]

Who is going to allow us to participate in this ceremony.

[Applause]

Jose Martinez: What a crowd. I, I'm glad I'm not having a bad hair day today.

[Crowd laughs]

So, buenos dias, Head Start.

Crowd: Buenos dias.

Jose: Buenos dias, Early Head Start.

Crowd: Buenos dias!

Jose: Y Buenos dias American Indian and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.

[Applause]

We are just so thrilled about this opportunity. We are very deeply honored and humbled to be able to share this event with you. This is a very spec – very special event for Migrant Seasonal Head Start. On behalf of the board, staff, 26 grantees, and the approximately 35,000 children and families that we serve in 35 states, I would like to thank ACF and the Office of Head Start for this opportunity, this opportunity to share this event with you. Particularly on behalf of our parents, who are phenomenal, I ask – parents in all of our Head Start programs are. Thank you. Thank you for this, for this opportunity.

To help us walk through this, through this journey, I would like to introduce our executive director. We still call him new, and he has requested that we keep that title at least for a year, just in case there are areas that he may still need to learn.

[Crowd laughs]

And, and we're happy to do that. So, please help me welcome to our family Cleofas, Cleo Rodriguez, who is going to make the presentation for us.

[Applause]

Cleo Rodriguez: Yes, I did request at least one year. I thought, "That's reasonable," correct? Everybody agree with me on this one.

[Crowd laughs]

Thank you, Jose, and thank you, Ann. I too would also like to just say thank you for the opportunity to, to be able to present this award here this morning. And, I too would like to be able to say buenos dias to my Head Start family and friends. It's a great honor to be here this morning. The National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association is pleased to have the opportunity to present our prestigious Plate of Bounty award. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with our association, our association is a national voice for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children and their families. And although we share many of the same passions and concerns with our regional programs, and our programs that are dedicated to American – In Amer – excuse me, Native American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Migrant – Migrant Seasonal Head Start programs have a unique set of circumstances and concerns. Each and every day our grantees are faced with a challenge of multi-generation language learners. Every day our families deal with living in fear of being separated from their children due to citizenship status. Each and every day, our families risk their health by exposing themselves to pesticides, whose impact we may not know about, let alone the long-term consequences. And unlike other Head Start programs, our programs open as early as four o'clock in the morning and close down as late as 7:00 p.m., often six days a week, in order to accommodate the demanding schedules of agricultural work. Our families do this to bring to your table a secure and safe food source. This effort brings us peace of mind that we know that the foods that are on our tables are safe and secure. And when you look around this ballroom, I challenge you to find somebody in this room that is not touched by the agricultural industry, because every person in this room is touched by the agricultural industry. If you have fresh fruits and vegetables on your table, your life has been touched by the work of our families. Don't be among –

[Applause]

Don't be among the millions who often take our families for granted. Don't be the ones who take our workers for granted. We may want the workers to remain faceless, but ladies and gentlemen, we know better than that. Our families have a face. Sitting in this very audience, and I see some of them right now, are the very families of which I speak, and I assure you that they are not faceless. They recognize the importance of the work that they do in order to bring us safe and secure food. And it is often said

that knowledge is power, but I challenge you to recognize that knowledge goes beyond power, because it is a responsibility. It is a responsibility because with the knowledge of knowing the behind-the-scenes work of our families, by remembering that there is a face "My life is touched by our agricultural industry." When you reach down for that strawberry, be reminded that it was hand-picked by one of our families in order for you to enjoy with your family. And so, help me say thank you for the amazing job that our families do on our behalf.

[Applause]

Thank you. Thank you for recognizing them. Because, I tell you, in the work that I do every day, I'm reminded that it's the children and the families that are the work that I do. And every day I get up and I'm excited to get on that train, and challenge 3,000 people that are trying to get on the same train that I am, because I know the work that I get to go and do every day at my office, and I do it because our families are incredibly humble, and because of the work that they do. So I, too, thank you. In 1999, the Migrant Seasonal Head Start Conference Steering Committee instituted the Plate of Bounty Award to acknowledge an individual or organization that has made significant contribution to migrant and seasonal farm workers, children, and their families. Every year, the National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association receives several nominations from across the United States. Each nomination is reviewed and evaluated to determine the annual recipient of the award. And this year, the competition was no different. In fact, it was pretty competitive. Each nominee was more than deserving and made outstanding contributions. However, the Committee made the unanimous decision to honor this year's recipient, who was nominated by Teaching and Mentoring Communities, also known as TMC. This year's recipient is Red Gold, Inc., and according to TMC board chairman, Mr. Dan Liska, Red Gold is the "gold" standard among agricultural employers. The work that they have done will have long-term impact on the children and families that are served by TMC. Red Gold has been supporting TMC children and families through continuous stable employment, exceptional safe housing options, recreational activities, including kid's camp, fishing derby, partnerships with Boys and Girls Scouts of America, health and nutritional partnerships with the State Department, and the list goes on and on. And, we have a small video that we want to share with you before we bring up the recipient of this award, so we will show the video, please.

[Video clip begins]

[Music]

♪ This crazy living's got you out of control. ♪  
♪ It's all beside you when you're losing your soul. ♪  
♪ Whoa-oh! ♪  
♪ Whoa-hoh! ♪  
♪ She looks you over with looks and good health. ♪  
♪ No time for lonely when you're all by yourself. ♪  
♪ Whoa-hoh! ♪  
♪ Whoa-oh! ♪

♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't fall. ♪  
♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't fall. ♪  
♪ And, it's all right! ♪  
♪ This crazy living's got you out of control. ♪  
♪ It's uptight! ♪  
♪ It's all beside you when you're losing your soul. ♪  
♪ It's all right! ♪  
♪ She looks you over with look and good health. ♪  
♪ It's uptight! ♪ ♪ No prize when you're all by yourself. ♪  
♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't lose this love, ♪  
♪ Lose my mind at all. ♪  
♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't this love, ♪  
♪ Lose my mind at all. ♪  
♪ This crazy living's got you out of control. ♪  
♪ It's all beside you when you're losing your soul. ♪  
♪ Whoa-oh! ♪ ♪ Whoa-hoh! ♪  
♪ She looks you over with look and good health, ♪  
♪ No time for lonely when you're all by yourself. ♪  
♪ Whoa-oh! ♪  
♪ Whoa-hoh! ♪  
♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't fall. ♪  
♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't fall. ♪  
♪ It's all or nothing. ♪  
♪ Your mind's made up again. ♪  
♪ It's all or nothing when your mind's made up. ♪  
♪ Again! ♪  
♪ It's all right! ♪  
♪ It's all right! ♪  
♪ It's all right! ♪  
  
♪ And, it's all right! ♪  
♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't lose this love, ♪  
♪ Lose my mind at all. ♪  
♪ 'Cause I won't break, won't shake, won't stall, won't lose this love, ♪  
♪ Lose my mind. ♪

[End of video clip]

[Applause]

Cleo: That music is pretty catchy, isn't it? I'm so glad that we got to share that with you, and if I can ask the acting assistant secretary to please come up, and Mr. Martinez, as well. And ladies and gentlemen, and esteemed guests, please help me acknowledge the outstanding recipient this year, Red Gold Inc.,

from the great state of Indiana, and here to accept the award on behalf of the company is Mr. Tim Ingle, director of Human Resources and Human – and Employee Benefits.

[Applause]

Tim Ingle: Cleo already grabbed that from me. Did you see how quickly he grabbed that?

[Crowd laughs]

Cleo: Did I get yours?

Tim: You don't, don't get all that.

Cleo: That's all mine, isn't it?

Tim: No, no.

Cleo: No, no. Uh-oh. Boy.

Tim: Did that sound like a lot of fun or what?

[Crowd laughs]

Well, it's my distinct honor to accept the Plate of Bounty Award on behalf of Brian Reichart, President and CEO of Red Gold. Brian himself, he is very honored to have Red Gold chosen for this very special recognition of our company's dedication and commitment to our migrant children and their families for many years. From the Red Gold family to all of the migrant and seasonal families who have worked for many generations, I am honored and humbled to accept this award on behalf of all of you. At this time, I would like to ask all current and former migrant and seasonal families in the audience to please stand.

[Applause]

This award is for all of you and the thousands of families just like you who have provided superior products and services to feed our nation over several generations. I applaud your loyalty, hard work, your dedication, and your passion. Red Gold is a third-generation family-owned business that'll be turning 70 this year. The company's foundation of success is built upon exceptional quality, customer service, and operational excellence. Today, Red Gold is the largest privately-held tomato manufacturer in the United States. The company's success would not have been possible with the support and effort of our migrant families who year after year, return to Red Gold's three state of the art facilities with their children to assist in the production of fresh tomatoes produced in the Midwest, where tomatoes grow best.

[Crowd laughs]

I couldn't help that. A large part of our success is also attributed to our successful and long-standing relationship with TMC and their Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program for children. Red Gold, in collaboration with TMC, nurtures and enhances childhood growth and education, and strengthens the

families. Due to the tremendous success and growth in our seasonal workforce and families, Red Gold aspired to strengthen its reputation of being the premier employment opportunity. So in 2002, Red Gold invested an additional 5.7 million dollars over nine years to expand our three migrant housing camps with private apartments and many amenities, such as private bath and showers, laundry facilities, kitchenettes, air conditioning, and playground areas.

[Applause]

Additionally, Red Gold wanted to ensure that migrant children and their families would have an abundant opportunity to participate in Head Start programming and benefit from the many services and programs directed at children and families to make our camp unique and a very special place. Over the last several years, Red Gold has taken the initiative to create partnerships with multiple youth programs and activities that complement the TMC's Head Start program. One of many examples of this is the Kid's Camp, our Saturday morning class offering art classes, games, focusing on life learning and self-esteem development activities. Red Gold also sponsors its very own Boys Scout and Girls Scout troops. These troops meet two days a week and use the Scouting/ Venturing curriculum. Now just last month, the first migrant tutoring program for children, first grade through twelfth grade, was launched at Red Gold, in cooperation with the Indiana Department of Education and professor Garfield. This tutoring program transitions the child from their home-school curriculum to their seasonal location, to supplement the education the child is receiving while away from home. Laptop computers and digital cameras are supplied for each child because this program is based on reading, writing, computer literacy, and even photography skills. The children do not know this yet, but when the program is over this summer – this fall – the computers and cameras will be gifted for each child to take home.

[Applause]

Our mission statement at Red Gold is to produce the freshest, best-tasting tomato products in the world. We believe in practicing the same philosophy with the children of the families who help us make our mission a reality, by investing back in our children's education and the programs that help to raise the quality of life. On behalf of Red Gold, its 1,900 employees, I thank all of you for this truly magnificent acknowledgment and honor.

Thank you.

[Applause]