

Engaging Youth Advocates in Community-Based Participatory Research:

The Health of Youth Farmworkers in North Carolina

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This poster outlines one of the central components of community engagement in an ongoing Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) study examining the health and safety of hired Latino youth farmworkers in North Carolina. This mixed-methods study builds on a 20-year partnership between Wake Forest School of Medicine investigators and a farmworker advocacy organization, Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF). The CBPR design incorporates youth from SAF's *Levante* Leadership Institute, which works with NC farmworker youth to build leadership skills and prepare them for higher education, in all aspects of the research process, including the development of the grant application. Two *Levante* youth are paid co-investigators, serving in leadership roles as liaisons between academic investigators and the *Levante* youth. Applying concepts that they learned through the program, *Levante* co-investigators have worked with academic investigators to use a popular education framework to carry out educational sessions, elicit feedback on survey instruments, and make connections between theory and practice with the *Levante* youth. In subsequent years, *Levante* youth will use theater and arts to disseminate research study results to their communities. This project demonstrates the possibilities for enhancing community participation, specifically that of youth, to strengthen scientific studies while building local capacity to foster positive social change.