

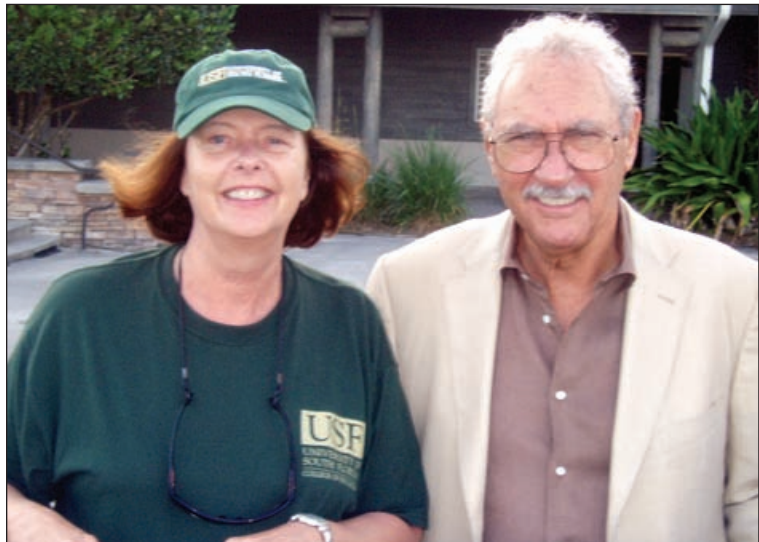
Sunripe Golf Classic going strong in its 10th year



Cynthia Baltazar, a graduate of the University of South Florida and a past beneficiary of the Sunripe Migrant Scholarship Fund, thanked those in attendance at the 10th annual Sunripe Golf Classic for their support of the program. Ms. Baltazar, now a teacher at an area school, became emotional while addressing the crowd, saying, 'Thank you so much. Without the scholarship, I would not have been able to do it.' (Photos by John Groh)



Billy Heller, chief executive officer of Pacific Tomato Growers, and Joey Poklemba, sales manager of the company, entertained the crowd while conducting a raffle following the golf tournament.



Colleen Kennedy, dean of the College of Education at the University of South Florida, and Nate Esformes of Pacific Tomato Growers, which held the 10th annual Sunripe Golf Classic to benefit the university's Center for Migrant Education.

BY JOHN GROH

BRADENTON, FL — The 10th annual Sunripe Golf Classic, held April 18 at the Legacy Golf Club, here, saw continued strong support from the produce industry, raising \$80,000 to endow a scholarship program at the University of South Florida that benefits the children of migrant farmworkers.

To date, the Sunripe Golf Classic, held each year at this Arnold Palmer signature golf course, has raised close to \$1.2 million for the Sunripe Migrant Scholarship Fund. The tournament is fully underwritten by the Esformes, Heller and Collier families, principals in Pacific Tomato Growers, Pacific Triple E, Pacific Collier Fresh, Sunripe Pre-Pak and Heller Bros., meaning that 100 percent of the proceeds go to endow the scholarship.

This year, 13 students benefited from the scholarship, and so far 27 students who were beneficiaries of the program have graduated and are in teaching or administrative positions.

"We are proud of our migrant education scholars and grateful for our partnership with Sunripe," said Colleen Kennedy, dean of the university's College of Education. "Many of the recipients worked in the fields with their families, never dreaming that they would be able to pursue a university education. Thanks to Sunripe, these students have a promise and a pathway to become educators and educational leaders."

Ann Cranston-Gringas, a professor of special education and the director of the university's Center for Migrant Education, said, "The scholarship

benefits not only the students themselves, but the communities where they return to work after they graduate."

"I used to pick with my parents, and I know what kind of life that is," said Cynthia Baltazar, a scholarship recipient and a graduate of the university, who is now teaching at an area high school. "Thank you so much. Without the scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to do it."

The Sunripe Golf Classic was the brainchild of William Gross, former marketing director of Pacific Tomato Growers, who came up with the idea to raise funds to help the children of migrant farmworkers. The tournament receives wide support from industry and allied organizations through participation in the tournament as well as the donation of money, goods and services.



Student beneficiaries of the Sunripe Migrant Scholarship Fund flank Ann Cranston-Gringas (second from left) and Colleen Kennedy of the University of South Florida, and Liz Esformes, Billy Heller and Nate Esformes of Pacific Tomato Growers, following the 10th annual Sunripe Golf Classic, held April 18 at the Legacy Golf Club in Bradenton, FL. This year's event raised \$80,000, bringing to approximately \$1.2 million the amount raised to endow the Sunripe Migrant Scholarship Fund, which helps children of migrant farmworkers pursue an education and career in education and administration at area schools.



Student beneficiaries of the Sunripe Migrant Scholarship Fund flank Colleen Kennedy, dean of the College of Education at the University of South Florida, and Nate Esformes of Pacific Tomato Growers at the 10th annual Sunripe Golf Classic to benefit the university's Center for Migrant Education.



Showing pride in their university, Sunripe Migrant Scholarship Fund beneficiaries flash the 'horns' to recognize the University of South Florida, whose nickname is the Bulls. With the scholarship recipients at the April 18 Sunripe Golf Classic in Bradenton, FL, is Ann Cranston-Gringas (right), a professor of special education at the university and director of its Center for Migrant Education.