MIGRANT YOUTH

A BRIDGE TO COLLEGE

Instability, poor language skills put recent immigrants at risk, leaders say

By Renee Truex

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The program exposes high-scholars and recent graduates to community colleges, through basic English and computer classes.

Adriana, who plans to continue at Cabrillo full-time this fall, said her mother advised her to work, not study, this summer.

"Many of the parents (in migrant worker families) believe working is not a priority. They believe that education isn't going to get you anywhere," Adriana said.

Adriana said she wants a university degree, partly to earn more income.

"The program gives, it gives us the support that tells us we can do it, whether you have money or not or your parents don't support you," she said.

Skills such as registering online and finishing homework don't come automatically to low-income students with unstable housing and limited computer access, said Francisca Vivas, Cabrillo's Dean of COLLEGE & CAREER.

"All of them want that American dream, not for themselves but for their families," she said.

Garcia said the students she tutors at Cabrillo want to succeed in their communities.

"All of them want that American dream," she said. "Not for themselves but for their families.

Diana Quiroz, 16, said she's attending the summer program because she wants to graduate early. She said she plans to attend Cabrillo, then Sacramento State, to become a social worker.

After immigrating five years ago, Diana said she learned English quickly and has always done well in school.

"It's just a thing I love to do," Diana said. "I love to learn, and I think it's important to learn something that can help you make it worth it."