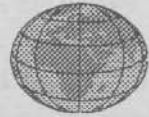


# RCMA HOY

We Can Make A World Of  
Difference

Helping Our Youth



JULY 1993 OUR MISSION: Helping Parents Restart, Giving Kids a Head Start, Helping Staff Develop

FROM THE DESK  
OF BARBARA

## APPLAUSE

### South Region

#### Homestead Area

I believe in vacations. You are all glad to see that in print! The work each of us does is so important that without a vacation break, we would probably get boring and stale.

RCMA provides paid holidays and vacations for staff because that's one way we can show employees we care about them.

For me vacations also provide perspective. When we are so closely involved in doing our work, we sometimes can't even see what we do.

A teacher on vacation might see sales people in stores treating customers rudely—or she might experience parents expecting unrealistic behavior from their children.

These experiences make us realize how important our behavior is—how others might see us.

So you see, even vacations are training experiences for us. Enjoy yours!!

The evening of June 18 was dedicated to the Homestead Area staff who recently received their Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. Seventeen CDA recipients, along with their spouses and parent representatives, were honored with a dinner at Homestead's Champagne Night Club. Mr. Rollason and Olga Hernandez were also on hand to recognize their accomplishment. Many heart-felt appreciations and recognitions were given that evening.

The Homestead area's CDA recipients included five staff not mentioned in the June issue of *RCMA Hoy*. They are Mercedes Walls, Lorena Lopez, Guadalupe Stroud, Dahlia Quiroz, and Nilda Garcia. Congratulations on your achievement!

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### Immokalee Area

This area is running a summer program for 60 school-aged children. The children go on field trips three days a week. The trips include the following places and activities: beaches, parks, bowling, movies, swimming lessons and various tours.

In order to make these field trips possible, which add an exciting dimension to the program, the staff had to get their Commercial Driver Licenses just before the program began.

This summer program, which is in its second year, will go until August 27. It should definitely be a memorable summer for these children and the staff.

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### North Region

#### Gadsden Area

Gadsden County Migrant Head Start was successfully monitored June 30. The staff worked extra hard to prepare for the monitoring, including some nights and weekend hours. It came only four weeks after opening. The program is open six weeks in all to serve the children of parents who work in the tomato harvest.

Congratulations is extended to all the staff who do a wonderful job serving the 54 children in this short, important program.

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### Pasco/Lake Area

The Dade City Migrant Head Start Center in collaboration with the Health Resource Alliance Clinic held a Health Fair at the Center on May 22.

It was a great success due in large part to the hard work and preparation of Sonia Soto, the health coordinator, Angie Herrera, the Area Coordinator, the staff of the Dade City Migrant Head Start Center, and the MHCCP Pasco Health Clinic.

Free health screenings and exhibitions were offered for the 103 participants which included mostly farmworker families in the community.

Eighty participants had Tuberculosis skin tests done and of the 71 who returned in two days to have them read, six came out positive and were referred to the Health Department.

There were six blood donors who also were able to have their cholesterol levels checked.

All participants had their blood pressure checked and persons whose blood pressure was borderline or high were referred to the clinic. Dental screenings were also performed.

They were able to collect approximately \$4,000 of in-kind donations for the health fair.

The health exhibitions included the following concerns: AIDS, family

planning, safety/injury prevention, pesticides, head lice, speech and language, WIC, drugs, and RCMA Resource and Referral.

## CENTER PROFILE

The "owls" of RCMA is how they could be described. Every evening as the sun is setting and the mosquitoes are rising, Immokalee Dropout Prevention Program Site Directors Debbie Avelar, Joshua Rincon, Diana Rios, Maribel Cuello, and Gilbert Garcia with their companions head down the streets and pot-holed camp roads to visit their families. "My families" is how they refer to the families of the children in their program.

During the year as Lisa's grades soar, Jerry's attitude toward studies changes, Jennifer's self-esteem rises, and Daniel's behavior continues to be disruptive in the after-school programs, the "owls" share the children's happenings with their parents, brothers and sisters.

Getting acquainted and remaining in regular contact with the families, the "owls" also, in some cases, become part of the family. Because of their "after-work" evening hours, they relate that they have often been invited to dinner, but more often than not they have excused themselves.

The "owls" take pride in the invitations because they are ways that families show their appreciation and acceptance of them. It is easy for a teacher to recognize that a family's acceptance of her will lead to reinforcement in the home of the teacher's lessons.

Contrary to belief, "owls" function well during the day also. There is no exception with the Immokalee Dropout Prevention staff. With their understanding of the need to offer a program of diverse opportunities they organize field trips with the kids that have become expected events to look forward to and to plan well.

As Program Director Bill Francisco reflects, "On one trip to Babcock Wilderness Adventures the whole swamp of alligators headed in our direction as the kids learned the language of baby alligators." The trips also make some of the shy students less so.

Some of the trips behold lasting memories. And when situations are remembered, then the lessons that go along with them are also remembered.

In order to pay for the field trips this past season, the children and staff raised nearly \$2,000. Some kids worked with mini-contracts to sell so many boxes of M&M candies, others helped wash cars on Saturdays, and still others helped bake at home for Friday bake sales in front of Winn-Dixie. The students also went into business learning manufacturing principles and recognizing costs and profits with a key chain venture. Rumor has it that they are looking to expand.

So "owl" fits as a description for the Dropout Prevention staff, not only because of their night work, but also due to the lessons learned by the students and the staff as well. The after-school program makes them all a little wiser and certainly has a lasting impact not only on the children they serve, but on Debbie, Joshua, Diana, Maribel and Gilbert as they facilitate life's lessons in learning.

## Health, Safety And Wellness News

### EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

**W**e hear about the climate from the weathermen on the nightly news but what does the "emotional climate" in our centers and offices mean?

At RCMA our mission includes providing quality child care, support for farmworker and rural poor families and advocacy of issues relevant to their lives. In order to achieve this mission we need to establish a work environment that will allow children and staff the best chance of success. We must strive for a balanced or moderate emotional climate.

We need to realize that each person has problems and they can be serious. Even though we can't necessarily tell by looking at a person we can make a general assumption that we all deal with difficult issues at times. Your personal climate may be stormy, clear, cool, or calm just to name a few.

We only know the pain and discomfort of our own problems and it is important for us either to evaluate, confront and solve them or to confront and decide to accept them as they are. Acceptance can also be a solution.

If we decide to accept our

situation even though it is not exactly what we would prefer, we need to detach from the pain and move on with our lives. But if our problems get in the way of our work and family life, and drain us emotionally or physically, then we need to do something about them.

You may ask, "How do I decide which path to take? Will I solve my situation by taking action or accepting it? How long does this process take?" The answers to these questions will differ for each person. At first, if you confront a problem it might become more upsetting than it was before you decided to deal with the problem. That is why you may need extra support.

Support can be found through many resources. One's choice of available free resources include the following.

1. Talk to a family member.
2. Talk to a friend or pastor.
3. Call the EAR (Employee Assistance Referral)  
1-800-328-1952  
or 1-800-328-5000.
4. Attend self-help support groups.
5. Write a journal—your emotional diary.
6. Change your diet.
7. Exercise.
8. Take time for yourself and your own interests.
9. Some of the above/all of the above.

Because RCMA cares about you and your family, it makes the EAR available to you. RCMA also recognizes that your daily performance can be affected by problems unrelated to your work.

Your EAR benefit, which is fully paid for by RCMA, provides a 24-hour HELP line and four free therapy

sessions for you and four for each of your family members per year.

When staff come to work they need to contribute to the positive emotional climate in the center or office. This does not mean you must have all your problems solved before coming to work. But you are needed by the children or staff through your smiles, hugs, or words of encouragement.

If your personal problems are painful and you feel you would not be able to leave them aside you can always ask for a day off and your supervisor will appreciate your honesty and concern for the emotional climate of the organization.

Remember, needing help and turning to the EAR does not mean you are not strong enough to solve your own problems. On the contrary, it shows courage and strength by wanting to take action to improve your situation and that of those persons concerned.



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*Please send suggestions, comments, and letters to the editor to the following address:*

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Hoy,

I would like to comment on two items in the May edition of *RCMA Hoy*. The first is a statement in the Mentally Healthy Role Models column, the second concerns the scorpion story.

Role model number two states, "Practice being cheerful and outgoing even if you're not naturally so." Having been a psychotherapist for eight years, I have dealt with people who have been behaving in a way to feel accepted by others. This behavior generally is not their natural way of behaving.

In this process people become like the bonsai tree whose limbs are twisted, clipped and tied but the result is not beautiful. The result to a human is quite painful. Why can't we all look more to accepting other peoples' "natures." Very often it is that acceptance which promotes cheer in others. Why can't we look towards building an environment where people feel comfortable saying "I am quiet and prefer solitude." There is a wealth of wisdom to be found in a quiet soul if we take the time to seek it.

The scorpion story caused much more concern. A scorpion is deadly. The story to me reinforced that people who risk their well-being to rescue are virtuous. Co-dependency is a term that has been thrown around for years. The term no longer solely applies to those who are in destructive relationships; it has begun to apply to everyone. I would, for the purpose of this letter, like it to apply to destructive

relationships in particular, and secondly, to women's roles.

The story of the man and the scorpion is clearly a destructive relationship. It may have been in the man's nature to save but apparently it was not in his nature to caretake for himself.

Do we tell our children that if a kitten runs out into the road, to run after it without first looking for traffic? When flying on a plane the flight attendant instructs us that in case of an emergency to first place the oxygen mask over our mouth before helping our children.

The message is quite simple. We cannot help anyone unless we first safeguard our own well-being.

Women have traditionally been placed in the role of caretakers. At times we become martyrs to our families, friends and occupations. This story tells me that no matter how much it hurts it is our obligation to help someone else. Women seem to be delegated this painful and futile task over and over again.

There comes a time in everyone's life when we realize that a choice we made was not good. We say "I should have known better." Fortunately, we don't have to die to learn these valuable lessons. We should remember to learn from the mistakes of others, because we don't have enough time to make them all ourselves.

**Signed,**  
Donna M. Bardwell  
Social Worker, Ruskin Area

Dear Hoy,

Over a year ago, we requested everyone's help to raise money for Bobby so that he could get a bone marrow transplant. RCMA staff were truly generous and in less than two months we reached our goal of \$5,000.

I phoned Bobby's house last week to find out that Bobby and his mom were back up at All Children's Hospital. The good news is that Bobby is happy, in high spirits, has gained weight and looks good. Bobby has surprised everyone, including doctors, time and time again.

We're hoping and praying that he has a full recovery. Our thanks goes to everyone who helped!

**Signed,**  
Judy Brill  
Office Manager, State Office

## BIG IDEA SPACE

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me is more important than facts, it is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company. . . a church . . . a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. . . We are in charge of our attitudes."

Charles Swindoll