

# RCMA HOY

We Can Make A World Of  
Difference

Helping Our Youth



AUGUST 1993

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

## FROM THE DESK OF OLGA

I took a month vacation and I went to beautiful Mexico. The climate was wonderful, no higher than 75 degrees. It was a dream vacation. I was truly pampered - my husband did a great job.

I feel like a human being once more. Now I can sincerely and happily offer my help and support to you. Call me. I am here for you.

I have learned that before I can love my neighbor as I love myself, that I have to take care of me first. It is not easy.

We have not been taught to think of ourselves first. But, stop and think. When you feel good, doesn't your behavior reflect it?

Do you smile more? Are you cheerful? More patient? More sensitive? Nice to be around?

So, pamper yourself and become a cheerful giver.

## COMING EVENTS

**August 24 and 25** - Regular Head Start Retreat - For Center Teams (CD, RC, OW, HHC), Cedarkirk Conference Center, Lithia

**Sept. 7-10** - Regular Head Start Pre Service for teachers

**Sept. 13** - Regular Head Start Centers re-open for children

**Sept. 16** - Career Development Committee meeting, Avon Park

## APPLAUSE

### State Office

Welcome and congratulations is extended to Clare Caldwell, the new Contracts Manager.

### South Region

#### Immokalee Area

Congratulations and welcome goes out to Shirley Sloan as the new Family Support Worker.

### Palm Beach Area

The staff at New Hope Child Development Center in Pahokee achieved better teamwork through a treasure hunt.

Cindy McClendon, Center Director, created several puzzles with hidden clues for staff to complete as teams. The staff went from building to building, classroom to classroom, and using effective communication skills, had to solve the puzzles.

Being part of a team with different staff members helped staff understand teamwork in a different way.

### DeSoto/Glades/Hendry/Lee Area

The new portable at Smith Brown Child Development Center is finally ready for use. In fact, the cooks have been using the kitchen since July.

It will be used as a Head Start classroom beginning September 13. It also contains a parent resource room, a concept which is new for this area.

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### Highlands/Hardee Area

With the importance of on-going professional growth in mind, forty staff attended High Scope training in Sebring from June 28 through July 1. The four day High Scope training addresses developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom.

The teachers received certificates upon completion of this training.

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A welcome is extended to Samantha Welsh, the new Outreach Worker for Highlands County. She comes to RCMA through the voluntary service organization, Catholic Volunteers in Florida.

### North Region

#### Palatka Area

Rosa B. Lane, a teacher at Palatka Child Development Center for more than ten years, recently retired.

A retirement and appreciation service was held on August 8 to honor Mrs. Lane.

She began caring for children in her home more than 45 years ago and is well known throughout the community for her dedication to children and families. RCMA will miss Mrs. Lane very much!

#### Ruskin/Wimauma Area

Twelve high school graduates were recipients of the Wendell N. Rollason Scholarship. Five applicants were chosen to receive \$750 and seven were selected to receive \$500.

It is with great sadness that we must tell of one recipient passing away after having been shot during a holdup at the family's business. A bright and promising burning candle being snuffed out is a difficult thing to understand. \*\*\*

## WITH APOLOGIES TO NONE

When I am introduced as a teacher, I am usually asked what I teach. When I say "Preschool" I generally hear a very flat, "Oh." I have never been certain whether it is an expression of pity, sympathy, disgust, or perhaps disinterest. Always I wish I had the time to explain to them like this:

Yes, I teach preschool. Where else would a handsome and very young man put his arms around me and ask, "Do you know that I love you?"

Where else could I see a fashion show daily and keep up on the latest trends for the very young?

Where else could I eat a soiled piece of candy from a grimy little hand and not become ill? They watch and see that I do eat it!

Where else could my limited wardrobe be complimented or my earrings thought beautiful?

Where else could I walk and have warm little hands reach to touch me?

Where else could the future look as bright as it

does amid an energetic group to whom nothing is impossible?

Where else would I guide a chubby little hand that may someday write a book or an important document?

Where else would I forget my own aches and pains because of so many cut fingers, scratched knees, bumped heads, and broken hearts that I need to care for?

Where else could I forget taxes and even "The State of the Nation" because Joey isn't adjusting as he should and other methods must be tried?

Where else could my mind stay so young as with a group whose attention span is so short that I must always have a "bag of tricks" up my sleeve?

Where else could I feel so close to my maker as I do each year because of something that I have done to help little children learn and grow?

Yes, I teach preschoolers with joy overflowing and with apologies to none.

Yes, I teach preschool, and I love it!!!

*author unknown*

*Submitted by: Lourdes Suarez*



# CENTER PROFILE

It has been a year since the Homestead child development centers were devastated by hurricane Andrew in the early morning hours of August 24, 1992.

It has been a year of many losses, a year of growth, a year of new friends, a year of accomplishments.

One year ago the Homestead staff stood in front of their centers, many of them with tears in their eyes. After one long look, they picked up shovels, mops, buckets, and paint brushes, and began the arduous task of cleaning up.

Friends, both within and outside of the RCMA community, joined in and reminded the Homestead staff that they would not be left alone. With friends at their sides, the challenge was made easier.

The accomplishments of the staff in Homestead and the blessings bestowed upon them this year have been many. The centers and playgrounds are beautiful once again, classrooms are filled with children's laughter and the trees have new canopies. They look back with wonder in their eyes and thanks in their hearts.

The Homestead staff will

remember this year as the year that they were humbled by nature and given the opportunity to know that obstacles can be overcome no matter how insurmountable they may seem.

A new center appropriately called the Andrew Child Development Center has been erected and will soon be filled with the playful and joyous sounds of tomorrow's leaders. It is an enormously encouraging sign of the hopefulness borne of difficult and trying times.

It is a tribute to the staff of the Homestead centers that the devastation wrought by such a forceful act of nature has made them stronger and more able to face the many on-going challenges that they have so successfully met this past year.

It will be remembered as the year in which many RCMA staff showed they are true heroes.

As we reflect back over the past year and about the morning of August 24, let us think of it not only as a time of tears but of laughter, not only tragedy but blessings, not only destruction but reconstruction, not only loss but new life, not only fear but courage, not only devastation but reaffirmation, not only sad moments but joyful possibilities.

All this can be seen as a sign of hope for the RCMA staff and the families that they so tirelessly and continually serve.

## 100 STAFF ATTEND SUMMER CONFERENCE

The early childhood 1993 Summer Conference held August 4-6 in Tampa, was widely attended by approximately 100 RCMA staff from all over Florida from Homestead to Palatka.

The annual conference covered a variety of program themes including advocacy, management and leadership, health and safety, resource and referral, family involvement/support, career development, early literacy, developmentally appropriate curriculum and cultural diversity.

Six of RCMA's conference attendees were presenters as well. Program Coordinators Charlene Edwards and Peggy Lawson, along with Jean Eklund, Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator, presented a workshop titled "Turkeys, Shamrocks, Easter Bunnies: A Look at Traditional Holiday Classroom Activities."

This workshop encouraged teachers' awareness when planning holiday activities for the classroom. It posed the question, "Is the holiday you are celebrating meaningful to the children in your center?"

For example, if your children are

*(Continued on next page)*

not Irish-American you may want to skip St. Patrick's Day for three- and four-year-olds. Talk to parents and find out what holidays are celebrated in their homes. Many African-Americans celebrate Kwanzaa in December and have many colorful and interesting customs you could introduce in your center.

Gyla Wise, State Director for Health, presented a session based on RCMA's "Staff Manual About AIDS and HIV Infection in Child Care Centers."

Mary Eileen Ameigh, Quality Assessment Monitor in Pasco County, presented on "Redirecting Children's Behavior."

Finally, Barbara Mainster, Executive Director, examined the topic, "How Healthy Is Your Organization?," assisting participants in doing an agency or program needs assessment.

All four sessions with RCMA presenters had standing-room only with more than 150 people at each one. They all did a great job presenting!

In all, 1,700 people attended the conference.

There was a banquet the second evening for all teachers with the Child Development Associate credential. This special recognition event was attended by 200.

All the staff that attended the conference went away with some good ideas for improving the child development programs in their respective centers.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Hoy,

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for the \$385 scholarship I received from RCMA for the January to June 1993 semester, that was approved by Angie Hererra.

Thank you for making my goal to obtain a Bachelor of Arts in Child Psychology from St. Leo College more attainable. May God give Angie Hererra what she richly deserves.

Glendora A. Jones  
Teacher, Dade City Migrant Head Start Center

Editor: Gerard Lambert  
Contributing Writer: Tere Jimenez

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

RCMA Hoy Editor, 219 N. First St.,  
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# BIG IDEA SPACE

*The following is a letter to Everlina Richardson, Center Director of Smith Brown Child Development Center in Arcadia. The letter, dated July 30, 1993, is being reprinted for readers of RCMA HOY.*

Dear Everlina,

I want to congratulate you on your very well run day care center.

I had the opportunity to visit the center several times a week for more than two months while I was managing a child in your center's home care.

Although I went regularly, my arrivals were unscheduled and I was always touched by the quality of the interactions between the day care providers and the children who spend their time there. I was also pleased by the cleanliness of the center and how pleasant the playgrounds are maintained. The staff were friendly, intelligent and assisted me in whatever I needed.

Perhaps one day we will have a society which realizes that large, soft laps, loving arms and gentle voices are the means to creating a great society of happy children. When that time arrives, your employees in rockers will be paid more than business men or women with lap tops.

Sincerely,  
Ellen Poage, RN, BSN, MPH  
Case Manager  
Shands Homecare  
Ft. Myers