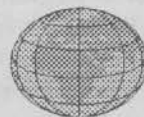


RCMA HOY

We Can Make A World Of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



January 1994 OUR MISSION: Helping Parents Restart, Giving Kids a Head Start, Helping Staff Develop

FROM THE DESK OF OLGA

A TRIBUTE TO ALL RCMA TEACHERS

People have asked: "Who in the organization has the most important job?"

The answer is always the same. "The teachers; those working with our children."

There are some people that would say that our staff are just diaper changers. But far from it, these are the people that are teaching our little ones day in and day out.

From infancy till they go to school they teach our children.

As a former RCMA parent, I thank the staff that loved, nurtured, and prepared Xochitl for public school. These staffers made my life easier.

I knew they were providing the best possible care and that Xochitl was learning and developing every day.

Today she is a successful and happy second grader.

THANK YOU TEACHERS for providing a terrific start to all RCMA children.

DE EL ESCRITORIO DE OLGA

UN TRIBUTO A LAS MAESTRAS DE RCMA

Personas han preguntado: "¿Quién en la organización tiene el trabajo más importante?"

La respuesta es la de siempre. "Las maestras, las que trabajan con nuestros niños."

Hay personas que dicen que las maestras solamente son cambia pañales. Pero están muy lejos de la verdad. Estas son las personas que instruyen a nuestros pequeños día tras día.

Desde infancia hasta que van a las escuelas están trabajando con ellos.

Estas palabras las dijo como una madre que tuvo a su hija en un centro de RCMA por varios años: Gracias a las maestras que amaron, educaron y prepararon a mi hija Xochitl para empezar en la escuela pública.

Hicieron mi vida más fácil. Yo sabía que estaban proveyendo el mejor cuidado posible y que Xochitl estaba aprendiendo y desarrollándose cada día.

Hoy día, ella está en el segundo grado, teniendo éxito y muy feliz.

GRACIAS A TODAS LAS MAESTRAS por un gran comienzo que dan a todos los niños de RCMA.

COMING EVENTS

Jan. 19 - Migrant Head Start Parent Policy Committee Meeting, Ruskin

Jan. 25 - Regular Head Start Parent Policy Council Meeting, Lake Placid, South Florida Community College

Jan. 26-27 - AC/PC Leadership Retreat, Cedar Kirk

PERSONAL PROFILE

A STORY OF COURAGE, STRENGTH AND HOPE

When Silvia Chamúl left her homeland of El Salvador in December of 1989, she hardly could imagine what the next month would hold for her.

If you saw the movie *El Norte* you might have some idea.

Silvia, a Teacher Trainee at Farmworker Child Development Center in Delray Beach since February 1992 when the center opened, recently shared a familiar story for many people and an incredible one for many more.

With the United States as her hoped-for destination, Silvia set out by land. Heading northward, Silvia first came to Guatemala. She spent one night there and crossed over into Mexico the next day.

Just leaving her own country was hard enough, but not knowing where Silvia was going to lay her head each night and what she might encounter along the way certainly made the trip even more difficult.

It wasn't long after Silvia entered Mexico that she had her first frightening experience of the trip. In the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico, Silvia's group with which she was traveling encountered the police who told the group to either give them some money or they would be deported. They gave the police some pesos and continued.

In the next month of traveling north through Mexico, Silvia got sick, had fevers, had a difficult time getting used to the food, and thought about returning home as the experience

was draining her not only physically but psychologically as well, and made her cry.

When Silvia was asked what gave her the strength to continue, she replied: "I met a Honduran woman who told me that 'you are all that your family back in El Salvador has. If you were to return, how would you be able to help them.' She gave me the strength and helped me to realize that I needed to go on, however difficult it may be."

Silvia recounted how one month before she left home, guerrillas bombed her house, leaving it half destroyed. That was only one in a succession of events that made Silvia feel that the best thing to do to be able to help her family was to go to the United States and find work.

What made her decision especially difficult was her one-year-old son, Oscar, whom she would have to leave behind for now.

With so many tragedies happening in her country, El Salvador, all throughout the 1980's, and with her life full of uncertainties, the one thing that was certain was her family and that they were most important for her.

She was fortunate to not have lost any family members during El Salvador's continual unrest of the 1980's. This is especially miraculous considering that her brother, a policeman, was shot five times in the stomach and was in a coma—unconscious in the hospital—for six months.

But now leaving her family that she loved very much because of that very reason, her life became even more uncertain.

Perhaps the most scary part of her trip occurred at the U.S.-Mexico border in Tijuana, Mexico.

As part of a large group trying to cross the border, Silvia was pursued by police on the ground, by helicopters and by immigration on both sides of the border.

Silvia burned tires just to stay warm in the cool winter air along the border under a bridge while waiting to cross.

(continued on next page)

APPLAUSE

North Region Hillsborough Area

Congratulations to Anselma Fernandez, Dropout Prevention Program Site Director, who had twin babies, Luis and Julio, on January 4. What a wonderful gift of new life to begin the new year!

**

Wimauma Child Development Center is very proud of Teacher Jeanine Joseph. Jeanine, who had been unable to write her name, not only has learned this but currently works a split shift in order to be able to go to school for an hour each day to take basic education classes.

**

South Region

Highlands/Hardee Area

Congratulations go to Charlene Edwards, the Program Coordinator, who had many things to celebrate on Christmas day last month. Not only was it her 40th birthday but she also became a new grandmother. Jordan Ashlee Edwards was born on December 25, and Charlene says that the baby looks just like her—all wrinkled and pink.

**

State Office

Velma Adame, Assistant Food Program Director, also had a wonderful Christmas gift as she became a grandmother in December. Congratulations to

Velma and her daughter Amy, a new mom, on the new member of the family, Carlos Christopher Vargas.

Nieto. Welcome is also extended to Marianne Haven, the new Health/Disabilities Coordinator.

WORDS OF SUPPORT . . .

Mildred Pagan, the Eligibility Clerk in the Sebring Office, receives our condolences. Her husband recently passed away.

**

Apolonia Ramirez, the Center Director of Bonita Springs Migrant Head Start, also has our support. We would like to wish her mother a speedy recovery.

HAPPENINGS

STATE OFFICE

Congratulations and welcome go out to Lawrence Perez, the new Contracts Manager, and Larry Banwart, the Assistant Personnel Manager—a newly created position.

Congratulations to Norma Cruz as well as she undertakes new responsibilities as a Payroll Specialist.

South Region

Palm Beach Area

New Hope Child Development Center in Pahokee had 100 people in attendance for a parent meeting in December. Quite a turn-out!

Immokalee Area

Immokalee Child Development Center welcomes three new Teacher Trainees: Alma Flores, Esmeralda Rodriguez, and Jane

Safety News

Congratulations to the following accident-free centers in December:

Palatka Area

Ragsdale Child Development Center, Palatka Child Development Center, Crescent City Child Development Center, Long After School Program.

Pasco and Lake Area

Dade City Migrant Head Start and Mascotte Migrant Head Start.

Gadsden Area

Gadsden County Migrant Head Start.

Keep up the good work and remember to THINK SAFETY AND ACT SAFELY!

**

A special hello to our staff who got hurt on the job in December:

Marie Delphin, Maria Martinez, Dominga Medina, Consolacion Saucedo, Lisa Vasquez, and Lucia Pimienta.

**

A big HURRAY for: Gladys Chirinos, Dominga Medina, and Maria Martinez.

We welcome them back to work!

Editor: Gerard Lambert
Applause Contributor: Leslie Moguil

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

RCMA Hoy Editor, 219 N. First St., Immokalee, FL 33934

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

After Silvia crossed the border, she spent a night in San Diego—not exactly safe yet—sleeping near strangers in a strange country that speaks another language.

Before long, however, within four days to be exact, Silvia was more at ease, having made it to Florida where she had a friend that helped her out and gave her a place to stay.

Fulfilling a dream that she had sustained for more than three years since their separation, Silvia was very happily reunited with her son, Oscar, in April 1993.

While the transition was not easy for Oscar at first—still thinking of his grandmother as his mom—he was in the Farmworker Child Development Center for five months before entering Kindergarten which helped him to adjust to a hopeful new beginning for mother and son alike.

Being together with her son again is a very special blessing for Silvia, as are her two other children, Jose, 3, and Eric, 3 months.

Silvia misses her family in El Salvador very much and dreams to be reunited with them at some point as well.

In the meantime, she sends them money regularly and with her help, they have been able to rebuild their house.

While Silvia's story is certainly an important reminder of the painful and frightening circumstances many of us may experience, it is even more

Dear Hoy,

A few weeks ago a friend of mine from college called with the news that he had been diagnosed with Hodgkins Disease — one of the many forms of cancer. He wasn't just calling to tell me the news; he called for advice, understanding, and answers. I was able to provide all of these for him because I, too, have had cancer.

In 1985 I was diagnosed with hepatoblastoma — cancer of the liver. Luckily the cancer had formed a tumor and with surgery, the doctors were able to remove it. A year of numerous minor operations, tests, and chemotherapy and its side effects followed.

importantly a story that illustrates that with courage, strength and hope similar to Silvia's, we can overcome any extremely difficult as well as unfair obstacles that we may face in our lives.

We are fortunate to have Silvia, and teachers like her, to help develop in the children the courage, strength and hope that they will need in striving to reach their great potential.

When Jason called he wasn't looking for a few minutes of oohs and ahhs, I'm sorry.

No, he wanted facts, to share feelings, and to talk with someone who had been there and experienced the same.

If you or someone you know is going through the same experience and would like some answers, advice, and understanding from someone who has "been there," please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Signed,

Lynn Bowen,

Resource Coordinator.

Immokalee Child
Development Center.

Infant/Toddler

(813) 657-5108 (work)

(813) 455-3469 (home)

Dear Hoy,

I enjoyed tremendously the "Nothing More Than Nothing?" story.

It gave me a nice warm feeling of Christmas.

Signed,

Cuba Giblin

Program Coordinator.

Immokalee Area