



RCMA HOY

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



AUGUST 1995 Issue 29

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

**FROM
THE
DESK
OF
BARBARA**



Former Pasco office staff to pursue career dream in drama in New York; Expresses appreciation for support given by RCMA

As some of you may know RCMA chose to close our Pasco office July 1. The following letter came to me from Isabel Natera, one of our staff in that office, and it made my day.

I hope you share in my pleasure and pride. Isabel wrote:

In February of 1993, I joined the RCMA staff of the Central Agency in San Antonio, Florida. At the time I was completing my Associate of Arts degree at Pasco Hernando Community

"Because of the self confidence I developed by working at RCMA, I decided to audition for the American Music and Dramatic Academy in New York . . . and was accepted to their drama program. I'll be leaving to the 'Big Apple' in October." - Isabel Natera

College.

Before working for RCMA I had suffered greatly with the death of my father from brain cancer in early 1992. After his death, and at 17 years of age, I found myself responsible for taking care of all financial conditions in my home.

Thanks to RCMA I was able to help my mother and my sister with all the bills, and I learned how to manage myself in the business world. At the

PLEASE SEE
DREAM, PAGE 2



Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

SOUTH DADE INFANT TEAMMATES: Petra Castillo (left), Acting Education Coordinator, and Claudia Solis, Acting Center Coordinator of this Homestead center.

Congratulations to Claudia, the proud mom of a baby boy born on August 14.

Both have developed impressively as staff. Petra began as a substitute teacher in early 1992. She has also been a part time cook, teacher trainee, teacher and senior teacher, before coming to this center in her present position last September.

Claudia began as a substitute teacher in May 1994. She became a teacher trainee. Then in September 1994 she became Assistant Center Coordinator until she stepped into her present position in April. That's staff development!

INSIDE:

• **Children in summer program learn important life skill** (Please see back page).

Former staff heading to 'Big Apple' to pursue drama career

DREAM, FROM PAGE 1

same time, RCMA was very cooperative and worked around my school schedule so that I could continue to get an education.

I finally graduated on August 12, with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Florida. Because of the self confidence I developed by working at RCMA, I decided to audition for the American Music and Dramatic Academy in New York in February. I was accepted to their intensive drama program and will be leaving to the "Big Apple" in October.

Thanks to RCMA, my mother, my younger sister, and I have been able to rise above our



situation and continue to prosper. My sister is in school and plans to be a radiologist. My mother is currently employed with RCMA and loves working with children.

Although New York will be an expensive move, I know I would not be satisfied if I did not at least try to reach my star.

Although we have met just a couple of times, you have always supported my pursuit of a higher education and my dream.

I just wanted you to know that I am thinking about you and appreciate all that RCMA has done for me in the past two years.

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to grow and prosper with RCMA. It was an experience that I will truly never forget. Thank you once again and God bless.



Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

CREATIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC: Stacey Wilson, Lead Teacher at South Highlands Child Development Center in Lake Placid is a really positive influence on the four- and five-year-olds. Stacey has her own special way of doing the very important work of building self-esteem in children.

DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

Empleada de la oficina de Pasco se dedica a hacer realidad la carrera de sus sueños - drama en Nueva York

Algunos de ustedes saben que RCMA decidió cerrar nuestra oficina en Pasco el pasado primero de julio. La carta que les relataré a continuación me llegó de Isabel Natera, miembro de nuestro personal de esa oficina la cual me alegró el día.

Espero que ustedes compartan mi placer y orgullo, al leer la siguiente:

En febrero de 1993 me hice miembro del personal de RCMA en la

"Debido a la confianza en mi misma la que obtuve en RCMA decidí presentarme en la audición de la Academia de Musica y Drama en Nueva York. Fui aceptada en el programa de drama y viajare en octubre."

- Isabel Natera

oficina central de San Antonio, Florida. En aquel tiempo yo estaba completando mis estudios, 'Associate of Arts,' en Pasco Hernando Community College.

Antes de trabajar para RCMA yo habia sufrido bastante, pues mi papá hacia poco habia muerto de cancer en el cerebro en 1992. En aquel tiempo yo tenia solo 17 años de edad y tuve que hacerme responsable de la condición financiera en mi casa.

Gracias a RCMA yo fui capaz de ayudarle a mi mamá y a mi hermana a pagar las cuentas. Al mismo tiempo aprendí a conducirme en el mundo de negocios. Tambien RCMA me coopero bastante permitiendome trabajar de acuerdo al horario de mis clases. Asi se me hizo posible la continuación de mi educación.

Finalmente me gradue en agosto 12, con un 'Bachelor of Arts degree' de la Universidad del Sur de la Florida.

Debido a la confianza en mi misma la que obtuve en RCMA decidí presentarme en la audición de la Academia de Musica y Drama en Nueva York el pasado mes de febrero. Fui aceptada en el programa de drama y viajare a Nueva York en octubre.

Gracias a RCMA mi mamá, mi hermana y yo hemos podido superarnos y prosperar a pesar de nuestra situación. Mi hermana esta yendo a la escuela y planea ser una Radiologa. Mi mamá esta actualmente trabajando para RCMA y le encanta trabajar con niños.

Aunque Nueva York será una transición muy cara, yo se que no estaría satisfecha sin al menos tratar de alcanzar mi estrella.

A pesar de que solo nos hemos visto un par de veces usted siempre ha soportado mi dedicación a una educación universitaria y mi sueño.

Yo quiero que usted sepa que estaré pensandola con apreciación por todo lo que RCMA ha hecho por mi en los pasados dos años.

Muchisimas gracias por haberme dado la oportunidad de crecer y prosperar con RCMA. Fué una experiencia que de verdad nunca olvidare. Muchas gracias y que Dios la bendiga.

Traducido por STELLA LAMBERT

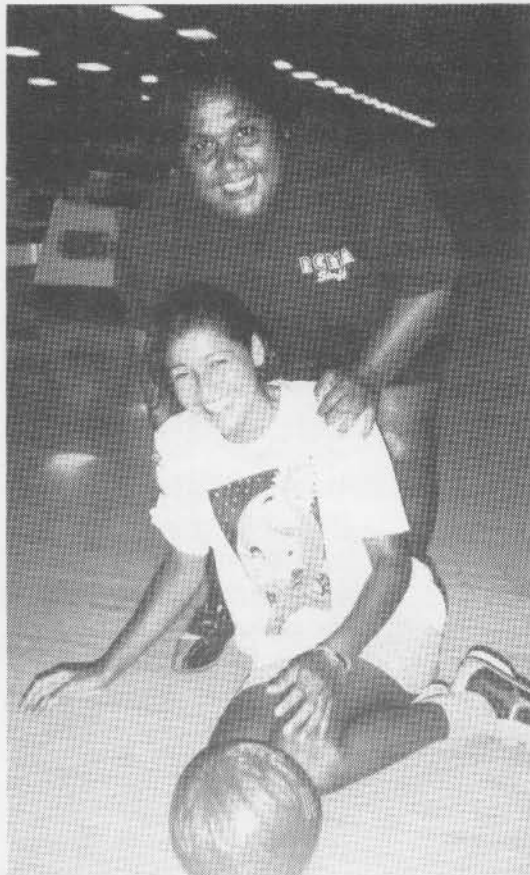


Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

SUMMER PROGRAM FUN: Alicia Martinez (seated) and Debbie Avelar, Teachers in the Immokalee program with school age children. They had a few laughs after Alicia fell while attempting to bowl. They were on a field trip with the children at a bowling alley. They worked with five- to seven-year-olds this summer.

APPLAUSE

Have you ever been asked at a moments notice to help out a facilitator at a huge conference without any preparation?

Well Jorge Velasquez, Education Coordinator in Ruskin, and Deborah Neverson, Lead Teacher at Lake Placid Child Development Center, were asked to do this very thing at the Tampa pre-k conference. And they stepped in.

They sat with three other experts on a panel to answer questions from a packed house on the N A E Y C accreditation process. They made excellent contributions to the discussion.

Bravo to Jorge and Deborah for nerves of steel and getting the RCMA word out.

N. Hillsborough/Polk Area

Debra Downing, Teacher at Parkview Village Child Development Center in Haines City, is very proud of her daughter, Regina. And she should be. As a sixth grader this past year, Regina received six awards for her high accomplishments in music, leadership, science, perfect attendance, reading and as an overall outstanding student.

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Congratulations to Marlene Walker, a permanent substitute Teacher for the Parkview Center, who recently had a baby - Ray Jr.

Palatka Area

Congratulations to Jackie Traxler, the new Director for Long After School Program.



Jorge Velasquez

Staff presented at pre-k conference in Tampa

In addition to the four staff mentioned in the June 1995 RCMA HOY issue as pre-k conference presenters, four other staff led workshops.

Salma Haidermota, Program Coordinator for the Ruskin/Wimauma/Palmetto Area, and Irene Brammertz, North Region Staff Development Specialist, led a presentation titled, "Different or Alike: A Lesson In Cultural Diversity."

Lourdes Villanueva and Sue Klaver, Area Coordinator and Program Coordinator, respectively, for the N. Hillsborough/Polk Area, presented on "Partnership For a Better Tomorrow."

Safety News

A special concern for our staff who got hurt on the job in July: Juan Calderon and Alfredo Gutierrez.

We appreciate the part that everybody plays in keeping our centers as safe as possible. Please remember to THINK SAFETY AND ACT SAFELY!



Photo By IRENE BRAMMERTZ

CRESCENT CITY TEACHER: Teresa Gutierrez, who has her CDA, gives nourishment to an infant.

Children overcome fear of water and learn to swim in Immokalee Summer Program

By GERARD LAMBERT
Editor

It was a hot summer day with storm clouds overhead threatening to disrupt the planned activity for the children.

But plans went forward because Rosa, a six-year-old and the eighteen other elementary school aged children had something very important to do. They were starting swimming lessons at a community pool.

Rosa was hesitant to get even her feet wet at the side of the crystal clear blue pool. She wasn't so sure she wanted to get in. In fact, she was afraid.

Afraid, that

is, of the idea of getting in a body of water that would be over her head.

I can't blame her. After all, you could tell that it was a new experience for her.

Who knows what sort of things she had been told about water in a pool, lake or ocean. Chances are, if a parent is afraid of water, they will understandably pass that



Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

SPREAD EAGLE: A six-year-old girl jumps off a diving board into a pool 13 feet deep.

Rosa was hesitant to get even her feet wet at the side of the crystal clear blue pool because she was afraid. . . I can't blame her. Who knows what sort of things she had been told about water in a pool, lake or ocean. Chances are, if a parent is afraid of a body of water, she or he will understandably pass that fear on to their child.

fear on to their child.

With some encouragement, Rosa did manage to get in that day, though with great caution. She was careful not to submerge her head under water, even for a few seconds.

As the days and weeks went by however, an exciting thing happened. Rosa began to overcome her fear and started to do things in the pool that did not seem likely only days earlier.

It was clear that Rosa was not afraid of the water anymore as she proudly and excitedly said with a smile, "Look at me," proceeding to plunge confidently into the pool.

It's amazing to see the progress that children make in learning new skills outside of school simply by being given the opportunity in a supportive and encouraging environment.

It's very sad to hear of

drowning accidents that sometimes happen with children in canals, lakes or pools that are near a child's house.

These tragedies can be avoided by getting children comfortable with water and providing opportunities to learn swimming skills at an early age.

Check in your area to see if the community pool offers swimming lessons. If it does, take advantage of this opportunity to provide your child or children with this important life skill.

The earlier a child is exposed to a body of water, the easier it will be for her or him to learn how to swim. A pre-schooler is not too young to begin.

In addition, learning such a skill is a great boost to a child's self-esteem.

If you don't know how to swim, just remember, it's never too late to learn.

Perhaps you could learn along with your child. And like Rosa, you too will be proud and amazed at what you are capable of learning if you really want to.

And the benefits speak for themselves.

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