



RCMA HOY

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



SEPTEMBER 1995 Issue 30 OUR MISSION: Helping Parents Restart, Giving Kids a Head Start, Helping Staff Develop

**FROM
THE
DESK
OF
OLGA**



Father aimed high for six daughters

I recently read a story about a couple that had six children.

It was the early 1950s.

The father worked as a laborer and the mother worked as a cleaning woman.

The father had a dream. He had set his heart on the improbable notion that his six daughters would grow up to become doctors.

Improbable because during the early 1950s, there was no equal opportunity or affirmative action. The odds against his dream coming true were astronomical.

For his daughters, life was filled with constant challenges and higher expectations. If they brought home an A on their report card, he said, "that's good, but there's an A+. You've got to keep in mind that there's always more to reach for."

"Daddy was the bow and we were the arrows, and he aimed high . . . If you're educated, once you've got something in your head, it's yours as long as you live."

The father was loving, overpowering, driven, annoying, unreasonable, hardworking and very often right.

He passed away in February of 1983, soon after his 58th birthday. His six daughters were the pall bearers.

The girls, adults now, have become the following: Betty, a nurse; Donna, a court reporter; Linda, a dentist; Rita, head of the science department in a private school, Jeanette and Yvonne, both doctors.

They are

PLEASE SEE
DAUGHTERS,
PAGE 2

Labor of love



South Dade cook, who made nearly 1.5 million meals, retired

Clara Mae Millner, who has been preparing nutritious meals for RCMA children and staff for 16 years in Homestead, has retired.

Think about all those meals that Clara Mae prepared - approaching 1.5 million.

We send Clara Mae, who "loves RCMA," best wishes and truckloads of thanks for her monumental effort and commitment over the years.

Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

INSIDE:

• Moonan shared "seed" of hope with parents (please see page 4).

As the bow, do you aim high for your children, the arrows?

DAUGHTERS, FROM PAGE 1

independent women capable of taking care of themselves. They sat around the table and asked, "How did Daddy turn out six women like us?" This is how they answered:

Daddy was the bow and we were the arrows, and he aimed high. He always said, if you're a musician, they can break your fingers. If you're an athlete, they can break your kneecaps. But if you're educated, once you've got something in your head, it's yours as long as you live.

Are you your children's bow? Do you aim high?

DEL ESCRITORIO DE OLGA

Como arco, padre apuntaba alto para sus hijas, las flechas

Léi una historia recientemente acerca de una pareja que tenían seis hijas.

Era el principio de los años 50. El padre trabajaba en el campo y la madre trabajaba limpiando.

El padre tenía un sueño. El había puesto su corazón en la idea improbable de que sus seis hijas

"Papa era el arco y nosotras eramos las flechas y el apuntaba alto... Si eres educado, cuando ya tienes algo en la cabeza es tuyo mientras vivas."

cuando crecieran serían doctoras.

Esto era difícil de que ocurriera porque en aquel tiempo no existía ningún programa que asegurara oportunidades iguales para toda las personas. Las probabilidades en contra de su sueño eran astronómicas.

La vida para sus hijas estaba llena de constantes retos y altas expectativas. Si ellas llevaban una A en sus reportes el decía "Esta bien, pero hay una A+. Tienen que recordar que siempre hay algo mas para alcanzar."

El padre era amoroso, dominante, irrazonable, trabajador y casi siempre estaba en lo correcto.

El murio en febrero de 1983 poco despues de que cumpliera 58 años. Sus seis hijas fueron las que llevaron el ataud.

Las hijas, ahora adultas, alcanzaron lo siguiente: Betty es una enfermera; Donna es una reportera de la corte; Linda es una dentista; Rita es jefa del departamento de ciencia en una escuela privada; Jeanette e Yvonne son las dos doctoras.

Todas son mujeres independientes y capaces de cuidarse a sí mismas.

Al sentarse alrededor de una mesa se preguntaron, "Cómo pudo nuestro padre haber criado seis mujeres

como nosotras?" Esta fue su respuesta:

Papá era el arco y nosotras eramos las flechas y el apuntaba alto. El siempre decía que si fueses músico te podrían romper tus dedos. Si fueses un atleta te podrían romper las rodillas. Pero si eres educado, cuando ya tienes algo en la cabeza, es tuyo mientras vivas.

¿Es usted el arco de sus niños? ¿Apunta usted alto?

Traducido por JOSIE GRACIA



Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER Mike Clark, a returned Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala, shares his many talents with all programs in Highlands and Hardee Counties, assisting with parent meetings, workshops and educational opportunities.

APPLAUSE

Homestead/Florida City Area

Congratulations to Carmelita Elizalde of Everglades II who recently brought a baby girl into the world.

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Margarita Hinojosa, the Area Coordinator, has someone to be proud of. Her daughter, Iliana, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Florida International University.

Iliana began her school days at the age of four at RCMA's Redlands

Center. She later became president of her High School Student Council.

Margarita is proud of all four of her children.

State Office

Nancy McDonald, Office Assistant, has purchased her first home. This came after many delays and challenging times during which she wanted to call it quits. It is worth the persistence that it took for Nancy and her husband to finally complete the transaction.

HAPPENINGS

Highlands/Hardee Area

Congratulations to all the staff at Fred Dennis Child Development Center in Wauchula for recently achieving NAEYC accreditation. This represents tremendous teamwork and dedication to providing quality child care. This center is the first in Hardee County that has received this honor.

Ruskin/Wimauma/Palmetto Area

Who thinks change is not good? Josie Gracia, who has been Education Coordinator of Ruskin Infant Center, is the new Project Coordinator for the "Beyond Barriers" program.

This is a special program to support parents in their attempts to achieve a better future for themselves and their children. The counties served by this program include Hendry, Hardee, Hillsborough and Palm Beach. Congratulations go to Josie on this new and important challenge.

The second major change for Josie is that she bought a home. She is excited about starting a garden which she finds very relaxing.

Palm Beach Area

Congratulations to the Palm Beach Area centers - Belle Glade, New Hope in Pahokee, and Farmworker Child Development Center in Delray Beach for being recognized for staff contributions to the United Way.

United Way is a contributor to these RCMA programs. Forty percent of staff donated an average of \$60 per person during the 1994-95

Pageant winner Gomez aims high



CONGRATULATIONS to Homestead Area Secretary Maria Gomez, who placed second in a pageant coronating a queen as part of the Mexican Independence Day Celebration. It was held September 16 in Homestead. She won \$300 in jewelry for her proud accomplishment. It was hard work but Maria certainly thought it was worthwhile, gaining public speaking confidence and serving as a role model.

Maria has more than just beauty going for her. She began her first year of college at Miami Dade Community College. Maria is pursuing a career in education.

Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

program year.

This is an important effort for staff in giving something back to the community and their own center. Some of the staff donations to United Way went into their own centers.

Immokalee Area

Welcome to Becky Hoffman, the new Program Coordinator. Becky is very interested in language development of children. The HOY found out something unusual: Becky spent two years living in the country of Pakistan.

Olga Gutierrez, Education Coordinator at Immokalee Child Development Center Pre, began her first semester at Edison Community College. The first step is the hardest. Now we know she will go all the way!

Homestead/Florida City Area

Welcome to Patricia Castillo, a new teacher at Everglades II.

Three cheers for Adela Lopez of South Dade Early Intervention Program, who was promoted to acting Education Coordinator. This program, formerly the Ounce of Prevention, serves elementary school age children.

Lee/DeSoto/Glades/Hendry Area

Welcome to the following new Teacher Trainees at the LaBelle Center: Claudia Salinas, William Brown, Regina Rhoomes, and Janet Qualls; and to Linda Gunsby, a new Senior Teacher.

Safety News

During the first six months of 1995 many centers and programs did not have accidents that required days off work, or major medical treatment or light duty as reportable by federal government requirements.

They are: Andrew, Crescent City, Dade City, Dover Infant, Dropout Prevention of Hillsborough County, Everglades II, Farmworker Village A and B, Fellsmere, Gadsden, Immokalee Infant, Pre and Annex, Indian River Early Education Program and Indian River Migrant, LaBelle, Long After School Program, New Hope, Ounce of Prevention, Palatka, Ragsdale, Ruskin Migrant Head Start, Ruskin Migrant Education, Sebring, Smith Brown and Annex, South Highlands, Special Effort Homestead and Immokalee, Wahneta, Wimauma Child and Wimauma Infant, and Zolfo Springs After School Program.

Congratulations to all these centers and programs for their excellent safety record during this six month period.

Moonan shared with parents the idea of seeing the "seed" in their children and helping it grow

Maybe their child will find the cure for AIDS. Perhaps their child will be a poet, artist, architect, or even a teacher who makes learning a joy for every child in class.

By GERARD LAMBERT
Editor

Tom Moonan, who has been planting seeds of hope in the lives of migrant families and staff over the past year, is leaving to explore other possibilities in Kansas City, Missouri.

Tom is also known as "Mason the Magnificent" when entertaining children and staff alike with magic.

At parent meetings around the state during the last year Tom could be found developing staff and empowering parents. He challenged parents to think beyond the ordinary not only for themselves but for their children as well. Parents were challenged to think of extraordinary possibilities for their children.

Maybe their child will find the cure for AIDS. Perhaps their child will be a poet. Maybe their child will be an artist. Perhaps

their child will be an architect. Or possibly even a teacher that makes learning a joy for every child in class.

He asked these two questions: "How many seeds are in one avocado?" One, of course. Then he asked, "How many avocados are in one seed?"

That all depends.

It depends on many things:
⇒It depends on whether the seed takes root and survives the vulnerable early years.

⇒It depends on the amount of nurturing care and attention the tree receives as it grows.

⇒It depends on the climate and Mother Nature.

⇒It depends on the soil in which it grows and develops.

⇒It depends on whether infestations or other harmful elements are present.

The answer to the question "How many avocados are in one seed?" depends on you. The answer is largely in your hands and in your heart.

In using this metaphor, Tom made a connection to the children and what parents can do to nurture the "seed" within each child to help the child become all that she or he is meant to be.

Tom brought awareness to the seed as much more than just an avocado seed.

The seed in each child is a living, breathing core that is waiting to

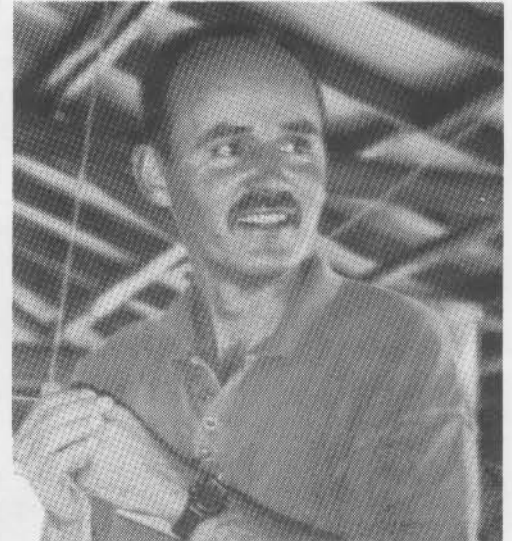


Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

Tom Moonan

bear fruit if only supported in its growth and development.

But the seed within every one of us can only be heard if we listen. Often, the seed is little more than a faint and gentle whisper that hopes and longs to be heard.

If we are not awake to this whisper, the child's hopes will be undiscovered, and his dreams and talents will go tragically unfulfilled and be wasted.

That was at least part of the beautiful message that Tom shared with parents and staff as he traveled the backroads of Florida. Oftentimes, late into the night after parent meetings --in his aging though trusty Hyundai.

Tom will be missed, but he has left behind some "avocado seeds." They have been planted and careful nurturing has begun.

The important work of helping families move "beyond barriers" will continue around the state in the 75 centers and programs of RCMA. And the more than 1,000 staff will continue onward with our mission of giving kids a head start, helping parents restart and helping staff develop.

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