



# RCMA HOY

Third Anniversary Edition

We Can Make A World of Difference

## Helping Our Youth



APRIL 1996 Issue 37

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



### Many RCMA staff go above and beyond in helping their center and the community

At RCMA there are many, many people who give much more of themselves than the "average."

We see this at fundraising activities for the Wendell N. Rollason Scholarship Fund, such as the Christmas card sales, the Scholarship 5K Run, festivals, dances and food sales.

We also see this when staff round up their husbands and children to help with center activities, repairs, lawn mowing and so on. Others sew mat covers and curtains, and make doll clothes.

Recently there was a community clean up day in Immokalee and RCMA staff

*We have lots of staff (and their families) who believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive.*

picked up trash all over town for four hours on a hot Saturday morning.

So what's my point?

First, it makes me proud to be a part of such a group of people! Second, we obviously have lots of staff (and their families) who believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

And lastly, we at RCMA obviously accomplish much more, make a bigger difference than the "average" organization.

A staffer in Lake Placid, Carmen "Millie" Yacoboni called me recently to offer to share with RCMA her profits from the sale of a new cookbook she wrote.

Just in time for Mother's Day--a pretty

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### Health outreach project

Sometimes the fragile difference between life and death

By GERRY LAMBERT  
Editor

Raeann Lusik has seen the fragile difference caring people can make.

Raeann is project director of the RCMA Migrant Health and Outreach Project.

In a recent conversation, Raeann shared the following story. It's an example of how



Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

#### Raeann Lusik

reaching out to others makes a difference--perhaps, as in this case, between life and death.

Jose, an infant, was diagnosed with a severe illness. This caused the Hernandez family (not their real name) to panic and go

PLEASE SEE HEALTH PROJECT, PAGE 3

## Muchas personas en RCMA hacen mucho mas de lo esperado ayudando a su centro y a la comunidad

### DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

**E**n RCMA hay muchisimas personas que aportan de si mismos mucho mas de lo esperado.

Vemos esto, por ejemplo, en actividades para recolectar fondos para becas llamada "Wendell N. Rollason Scholarship Fund." Por ejemplo, en la venta de tarjetas de navidad, la carrera de 5 kilometros (3.1 millas), las fiestas, los bailes y las ventas de comida.

Tambien vemos este espíritu de cooperacion, cuando el personal trae a sus esposos e hijos para ayudar en las actividades del centro, reparaciones, cortada de zacate y muchas cosas mas. Otros cocieron cortinas y forros para las camitas, y hicieron ropa para las munecas.

Recientemente, hubo en Immokalee un dia de limpieza por la comunidad en el cual empleados de RCMA participaron recogiendo basura por todo el pueblo por varias horas en un caluroso sabado por la mañana.

¿Entonces, que es lo que quiero decir?

Primero, que estoy muy orgullosa por ser parte de este grupo de personas. Segundo, obviamente tenemos en RCMA muchos empleados y sus familias, que creen que es mas bendecido el dar que el recibir.

Y finalmente, nosotros en RCMA obviamente conseguimos mucho mas y hacemos la diferencia mas marcada que otras agencias en general.

Una empleada en Lake Placid, Carmen "Millie" Yacononi me llamo recientemente ofreciendo compartir con RCMA las ganancias de la venta de un nuevo libro de cocina que ella escribio. Apenas a tiempo para el dia de la madre. Un regalo muy particular para nuestras madres, hermanas, tias y otras personas.

Las ganancias que consigamos se usaran para los centros que usan fondos del titulo XX.

Este libro de cocina se puede encontrar en la oficina de su area si quieres hacer parte de esta obra tan generosa.

Gracias Millie, te contamos entre los benditos donadores. A todos ustedes les deseo un Feliz Dia de las Madres!



**GADSDEN COUNTY MIGRANT HEAD START cook Linnie Wooten. Linnie is a dedicated cook for nearly 60 children at this center in Quincy.**

**Interested in self-development, Linnie has been working hard on her GED and is very close to passing it.**

**She has 3 grown children and is raising a niece and nephew.**

*Photo by IRENE BRAMMERTZ*

## Safety News

### Take time to practice safety

Most of us had some type of safety training during our childhood. We were taught to look both ways before crossing the street and not to play with matches.

As adults we are warned not to smoke in bed, not to stay in the sun too long, and not to drive while under the influence of alcohol.

Yet how many of us have had a sun burn, smoked in bed or driven home from a party after having a couple drinks?

Employees often don't follow safety rules because they are in a hurry, figure accidents always happen to others, or resent their supervisors.

Every time employees are involved in an unsafe act, they are betting that an accident will not occur. Is health and possibly life itself worth such a bet?

We are aware of RCMA safety rules and some of us break them sometimes anyway. When we do this we have an unsafe attitude.

Examples include: Standing on a milk crate to reach a high object instead of using a ladder. Carrying a heavy box of paper towels, paper or some other item without asking for help or using a dolly. Walking by an area where milk has been spilled instead of wiping it up.

Knowing written safety rules will not protect you if you fail to use the knowledge daily on the job. If you are in the habit of doing it the wrong way, the habit may be difficult to break. But it can be done.

Just STOP and THINK about what could happen to you, a co-worker or a child.

Here are some steps you can take:

- Report all accidents to your supervisor--even the minor ones.
- Know where the fire extinguishers are and how to use them.
- Use proper lifting techniques when lifting and moving objects and young children.
- Practice good housekeeping to avoid slips and falls.
- Wear your safety belt in any vehicle.

# A fragile difference

## HEALTH PROJECT, from page 1

back to Mexico.

A few months later the family returned to Florida.

One Friday night an outreach worker in the project received a call from Mrs. Hernandez. Jose appeared to be seriously ill.

The outreach worker and a project nurse made a home visit and helped Mrs. Hernandez get Jose to the hospital.

Jose's condition worsened and within 48 hours he had to be placed on a respirator. The mother didn't speak English and so she couldn't communicate directly with doctors or nurses.

Either the project nurse or the outreach worker stayed by Jose's side with his mother all weekend--day and night.

Mrs. Hernandez needed the support of caring people and they responded. The project team was there for the family.

After that weekend, during several days of testing to find out the cause of the illness, it was finally discovered that the child had a rare but curable illness.

With the baby remaining at the hospital for about two more weeks, the nurse and outreach worker visited the family there every day.

"The child is about three years old now and is thriving," Raeann said.

This nurse-outreach worker team is one of four such teams around the state working with community health centers to meet the health needs of children from newborn to 18 years old. They target migrant children at risk of falling through the cracks.

This health and outreach project serves over 5,000 children annually in Pasco, Orange, Lake, Hendry, and Glades counties.

Pointing to the difference migrant health care is having on children, Raeann said, "In 1988, the project was serving 150 children with disabilities. On average, one child died per month. Now the project serves about 50 children with disabilities and very few have died."

Raeann could be content with resting on the project's accomplishments so far.

But she's not. She sees plenty of challenges that still need to be addressed.

What's the biggest challenge? Raeann says it's "seeing adolescents with no specific goals. Some kids are just getting through their days--lost."

"They lack self-direction and direction from others," she said. "They need someone to identify with."

Raeann came to RCMA in 1981. She worked as a nurse with migrant centers in Apopka and Winter Garden. A year later she became a health trainer in 18 RCMA Migrant Head Start centers from Palatka to Ft. Myers.

Raeann, who began work in the current project in 1985, said the most meaningful part of her job "is seeing families being able to handle their own situations. When we see families tell us how they resolve things, rather than us telling them--fostering independence.

"Also, seeing kids graduate healthy from high school -- that's very rewarding." □

# APPLAUSE

## Lee/Glades/Hendry/DeSoto Area

Jennyfa Rich, lead teacher at Glades Early Childhood Center, gave birth to her third child, Joshua Brendon, on March 13. We welcome Joshua and congratulate his mom.

## State Office

Olga Hernandez, Deputy Director, was smiling with pride. Her daughter, Xochitl, won top honor for fourth graders in Collier County for an essay she wrote on "Why her father should be father of the year."

Xochitl received an award and a \$100 check. She plans to purchase a savings bond for college.

## State Office/Immokalee Area

Velma Adame, food program supervisor, and Silvia Estrada, cook at Farmworker Village C, were excited for their son and daughter, respectively.

As part of the Immokalee High School Band, Jesus Adame and Donna Estrada went to our nation's capital, Washington, D.C. for a week April 18 to 23.

Jesus, who plays the saxophone, and Donna, who is part of the flagline color guard, performed at the Capitol with the band.

They visited all the famous monuments, museums and government buildings including the White House.



Florida City

**CENTRO VILLAS:** This new center, which opened in February, has talented and loving staff caring for the children. They include. *Front left to right* - Marie Barrett (teacher), Mary Tate (center coordinator), Edelmira Valle (assistant center coordinator) who recently received her CDA, Ana Feliciano (lead teacher). *Back left to right* - Maria Lomeli (cook), Angel Martinez (teacher trainee), Maria Nunez (lead teacher), Maria Alaniz (teacher trainee), Ada Cruz (senior teacher), Aliana Suarez (teacher trainee). Photo by GERARD LAMBERT

BARBARA, from page 1

and unique gift for our moms, sisters, aunts and whoever else!

The profits we get will go toward local match for our Title XX funded centers. Just take a look at this cookbook (in your area office) and you'll want to be a part of this generous partnership.

Thank you "Millie"--we count you among the blessed givers. And to all of you--Happy Mother's Day!

# HAPPENINGS

## Lee/Glades/Hendry/DeSoto Area

Congratulations to Maria Teresa Turner, the education coordinator for Bonita Migrant Head Start, who was awarded a CDA in March. She was assessed in both English and Spanish.

## Highlands/Hardee Area

Some pretty weird and wacky things happened in mid-April at an RCMA center. And it wasn't with the children.

Teachers came to work in pajamas one day at South Highlands Child Development Center in Lake Placid. "Many looked like they just got out of bed," according to education coordinator Stacey Wilson,

On another day teachers wore their clothes backwards. Perhaps so they wouldn't be recognized, teachers even wore a wig and sunglasses on another occasion, and a hat on still another.

"The children looked at us like we were really strange," Wilson said.

What was going on in this child development center, anyway?

It was Wacky Week, which also included 1950's & 60's day and bride's day.

It's a great way to take yourself less seriously. Lots of us could use a daily dose of humor and learn to be more lighthearted. What a better way than being wacky or weird occasionally.



**EDUCATION COORDINATORS**  
Sister Jackie Jost and Joseph Infante of Redlands Child Development Center in Homestead. Sister Jackie also works at South Dade Child Development Center - Pre. At a recent R.I.F. day at their center, the theme was "Books are like seeds." The children planted a reading garden of cucumbers, pumpkins, and beans as "the start of something big." *Photo by Gerard Lambert*

## Area Coordinator Gomez creatively gives of herself in appreciating staff

By **IRENE BRAMMERTZ**  
Staff Development Specialist

Area coordinator Elida Gomez of the Indian River area wanted to find a way to reward staff for doing more than is expected.

She came upon "tokens" that would allow her to personalize each reward to the recipient. She wanted the reward to come from the heart.

Her first chance came when she saw the care with which health coordinator Nydia Guzman treated a parent that came to pick up his child.

The parent's leg was in a cast and he was walking with crutches. Nydia noticed the parent's difficulty in picking up his child.

Nydia suggested that for the next few weeks, while the need for crutches persisted, she, or in her absence, staff would watch for the arrival of this parent and meet him outside. She would bring the child, sign out log and a pen to him so he could sign it.

Elida wanted to appreciate Nydia's thoughtful action. So Elida awarded Nydia a token. Nydia's token was for a dessert, either homemade by Elida or store bought. Nydia said, "I really feel appreciated

for what I do, even though I feel this is part of my job."

Other rewards Elida has given include: Elida baby-sitting for a few hours for a center coordinator; a chore of recipient's choice to be done by Elida for an education coordinator; breakfast homemade by Elida and brought to the center for a center coordinator and eaten at the picnic table under a tree while having a one-on-one meeting.

The center coordinators have in turn taken the idea and asked for tokens that they can use to award their staff.

Great role modeling!

## A poet in our midst

Linda Stapleton, a family support assistant at Glades Early Childhood Center in Moore Haven,

recently had a poem that she wrote about children published.

The poem, "Colors of Life," is part of a collection of

poems in a book titled Treasured Poems of America Summer 1996.

The poem reads:

*From a larvae to a cocoon,  
There will be an awakening soon.  
A large span of colorful wings,  
This new life brings.  
A child is, in their own special way,  
Like a butterfly, ready to work and play.*

(Publisher: Sparrow Grass Poetry and Forum, Inc.)



**Linda Stapleton**

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