



RCMA HOY

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



August 1996 Issue 41

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

FROM
THE
DESK
OF
BARBARA



Our voices can be heard in many ways, one of the most powerful is by being a voter.

If you have already taken this step, encourage a parent, family member or friend to join you as a registered voter.

Feel the Power! Vote!

How strong is your voice? Can it be heard at a voting precinct near you?

If you have been watching television, reading the newspaper, walking or driving through your town, you have probably noticed something different. Many candidates are asking for your vote.

Are you prepared to have a voice in your future, and the future of your family, friends and community; or will you just accept what comes.

The fact is that freedom is not free, each one of us must speak out for it. Our voices can be heard in many ways. One of the most powerful ways is by being a voter. Politicians keep their jobs because of voters. Because of this politicians listen to what voters tell them.

Strengthen your voice, and ask your center coordinator how you can register to vote.

To register you must:

- be a U.S. citizen.
- be a Florida resident.
- be 18 years old
- not now be adjudicated mentally incapacitated with respect to voting in Florida or any other state.
- not have been convicted of a felony without your civil rights being restored pursuant to law.
- not claim the right to vote in another country or state.

Twenty-four RCMA centers are NAEYC Accredited

By LESLIE MOGUIL
Staff Writer

Twenty-four of RCMA's 52 centers achieved accreditation by the National Association of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC).

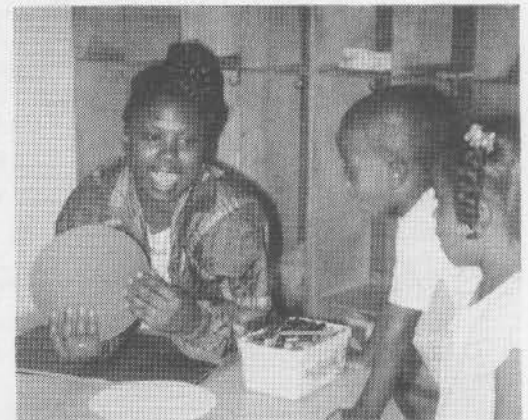


Photo By GERARD LAMBERT

Veronica Adams, teacher, at Belle Glade has captured the attention of her kids with her brilliant smile and a stimulating activity. Belle Glade received their NAEYC validation visit in August, and are eagerly awaiting notification!

Congratulations to all the staff and parents of our newest NAEYC accredited centers: Westside Village CDC and South Dade Infant and Pre. Their willingness to undertake the challenge of self-study and their commitment to

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Nuestras voces pueden ser escuchadas en muchas formas. Una de las maneras mas poderosas es el de votar.

Si usted ha estado mirando la televisión, leyendo el periódico, ha caminado o manejado por su pueblo, probablemente ha visto algo diferente. Muchos candidatos estan pidiendo su voto.

¿Está usted preparado para tener una voz en su futuro y para el futuro de sus amigos; o aceptará a lo que venga y quejarse despues?

En realidad es que la libertad no es libre, cada uno de nosotros tiene que hablar en voz alta. Nuestras voces pueden ser escuchadas en muchas formas. Una de las maneras mas poderosas es el de votar. Los politicos mantienen su trabajo por los votantes. Por esta razon los politicos escuchan lo que dicen los votantes.

Haga que la fuerza de su voz sea escuchada y preguntele a su coordinadora de su centro como usted se puede registrar.

Si usted ya ha tomado ese paso; anime a sus padres, a un amigo, o a un miembro de su familia para unirse junto a usted como un votante registrado.

Para inscribirse:

- Ud. debe ser ciudadano de los Estados Unidos.
- Ud. debe ser residente de la Florida.
- Ud. debe tener 18 años de edad.
- no se le puede considerar a Ud. jurídicamente incapacitado para votar actualmente en la Florida ni en ningún otro Estado.
- a Ud. no se le puede haber hallado culpable de un delito mayor y, a consecuencia, habersele retirado sus derechos civiles, a no ser que se le hayan restituido dichos derechos de conformidad con la ley.
- Ud. no puede reclamar su derecho a votar en ningún otro condado o Estado.

HAPPENINGS

Plant City Area

In an effort to increase the number of parents and children using the Plant City Public Library, the librarian turned to an expert for help.

She asked Lourdes Villanueva, area coordinator, for suggestions and recommendations on books to be purchased.

Lourdes was able to give the librarian some insight about our families along with a resource list of children's books that would enhance the existing collection.

This act strengthens valuable community relationships.

Homestead/Florida City Area

Each and every day the staff of the South Dade Infant Center make sure that all the childrens toys and center equipment are brought inside before closing.

Esperanza Jaramillo, cook at this

center was on her way to check her mail after the center was closed, and noticed that a mop bucket had been left outside. She thought she better stop and pick it up because it could be a temptaion for someone to take.

Then she thought well if I stop and pick it up the people will think that I am stealing it. Her daughter advised her against it, but she new what she had to do. She stopped, picked it up and took it home, returning it when she returned to work the next day.

This was the action of a true team player, not to mention the role model she was for her daughter, by doing the right thing no matter what others may have thought about her.

Immokalee Area

Michelle Martin, Mennonite volunteer, at ICDC Pre can often be spotted on the playground bending down, softly speaking and caring for a child, comforting them with a hug or a smile!

Please see **HAPPENINGS**, page 3.

Safety News

Preparation is best protection should a disaster strike

Many of us think about disaster plans at the workplace . . . But what do you do at home?

No one likes to think about disasters. We want to think they will not happen to us. But the truth is, disasters do happen, and often when we do not expect them.

Take a little time to become familiar with what you should do. What is your response? What do you expect your spouse and children to do? What each of you does could be the difference between life and death.

Fire, severe weather conditions and even bomb threats are some of the more frequent types we must cope with.

Many of us think about disaster plans for the workplace. We have fire drills at the centers monthly. If the power goes out, we know what to do.

RCMA has written procedures for different types of disasters. They are posted and the staff are to be familiar with them.

But what do you do at home? Do you and other family members know what to do to protect yourselves?

It is just as important to prepare for disasters at home.

Be ready by developing, reviewing, and practicing a disaster plan for each of the following situations: Fire, power outage, hurricane, tornado and bomb threat.

Please see **DISASTER PREPARATION** Page 4.

NAEYC: A Mark of Quality

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providing a high quality, professional early childhood program are to be commended, along with the 22 other centers which came before them.

The following centers are now NAEYC accredited centers: Avon Park Head Start, Bowling Green CDC, Farmworker CDC, Fellsmere CDC, Fred Dennis CDC, Gadsden County CDC, Glades Early CDC, Immokalee Infant, Pre, and Annex CDC, Indian River MHS, LaBelle CDC, Lake Placid CDC, Migrant Education Center, Palmetto MHS, Redlands CDC, Ruskin MHS, Ruskin Infant CDC, Smith Brown CDC, South Dade Infant and Pre CDC, Westside Village CDC, Wimauma CDC, and Wimauma Infant MHS.

Many other centers are either waiting for official notification or are in the process of self study. We are cheering for them as well.

RCMA's goal is 100 percent. We are well on our way to meeting it.

Happenings

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She has served as a center volunteer for a year and has demonstrated her commitment to children, families, and staff on a daily basis.

We will miss her as she moves on in September to life's other projects. We wish her all the best.

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Two staff of Immokalee Child Development Center Pre and our executive director were featured on the 6:00 pm FOX Newscast on August 2. Maria Rodriguez, center coordinator, Olga Gutierrez, education coordinator, and Barbara Mainster, executive director, commented on the recent Welfare Reform Bill.

They spoke openly about the unfairness of denying benefits to legal immigrants and their children and what impact the legislation would have on these children and their families.

Glades/Hendry Area

Congratulations to Frances Canty who

was recently promoted to program coordinator. Frances was center coordinator/education coordinator at Glades Early Childhood Center.

Homestead Area

Homestead staff and parents came together one evening at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Hall to recognize each other for their hard work and commitment to RCMA children and families.

Entertainment included staff performing the Electric Slide, La

Macarena, poetry reading and a rendition of "Corazon, Corazon". Grupo Casanova provided live music.

Tere Jimenez, program coordinator, and Marbelia Zamarripa, area coordinator were recognized for 15 years of service.

Miriam Garcia, lead teacher, and Nelda Gayton, senior teacher were commended for 10 years of service.

Many other staff were recognized, as well as volunteer recognition



Palm Beach Area

Lula Murvin, teacher, at the New Hope CDC is one proud grandmother! Her grandson, Markevius, a kindergartner at Pahokee Elementary was recognized with four principals' awards, which included certificates for Academic Achievement, Outstanding Behavior, and Honor Roll.

Markevius also received a trophy for remaining on the principal's honor roll for the entire year. Lula and an aunt were there to cheer him on for his accomplishments. Markevius is planning to use his talents to become an architect when he grows up.

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Nina Gallegos, family support assistant, at Farmworker CDC in Delray is celebrating her son,

Antonio, who recently addressed this year's graduates of the Summer Institute held at Lynn University in Boca Raton.

Last year Antonio attended the institute to help get the needed credits for graduation. The experience meant so much to him that he volunteered to tutor this year's students. Antonio received a small scholarship from Palm Beach Community College, and will begin classes this Fall.

Immokalee Area

Minnie Fernandez, the area secretary, gave birth to Marisol Lyssette on August 15. The family is excited about having a girl after two sons.

Highlands/Hardee Area

Antonia Santiago, education coordinator at Sebring Child Development Center, recently moved into a new home through the assistance of SHIP, a local program for first-time home buyers.



LONGEVITY RECOGNIZED: Marbelia Zamarripa, recently honored for 15 years of service with RCMA, interacts with the children at South Dade CDC Pre.

Marbelia who was education coordinator at this center, has been promoted to area coordinator in Homestead.

We congratulate Marbelia on these accomplishments.

Photo by Gerard Lambert

Palatka children and staff conquer the currents of change

Palatka area coordinator Edna Blue, and program coordinator, Martha Wright had some good and bad news to pass on to the staff and parents of the Long and Ragsdale Centers.

The good news was that both centers would be going through intensive renovations to become Family Investment Centers, places where parents will receive job training, GED classes, and life skills training. While they are participating their children will be enrolled in RCMA child care programs right there at the center. Sounds like a great place for parents, and it will be.

The challenge was that the housing development plan had been to renovate one center at a time, to allow RCMA to continue to operate the program at one of the sites. Well, things do not always work out as planned.

RCMA had one month to find a temporary site. Edna and Martha had cruised the community for space before in anticipation of closing one center, but two would be next to impossible.

Persistence paid off, Jenkins Middle School provided a small space for 33 children. Children were placed in family day care homes. Some of the staff became providers and other staff were hired by the school system.

Sandra Matthews, center coordinator,

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear HOY,

On March 12, 1996, my husband was given a new life . . . he received a long awaited heart transplant.

We had a very long and difficult year waiting for the surgery. Without the support, caring and understanding from everyone at RCMA, I'm not sure I or my husband would have "weathered the storm."

I appreciate the cooperation, support and understanding while I was on Family Leave for three months. Not only did this afford me the opportunity to spend undivided time with my husband, but it really made me aware of

the wonderful people at RCMA who continued to support me while I was on leave.

My husband is home recovering now and things are going quite well.

We both thank you for your generous gift certificates and kind wishes. Because of your support and caring, we both look forward to a happy, fulfilling life.

RCMA, you are to be thanked for your true spirit of caring for others.

Marilyn Morrow
health/disabilities specialist,
south region

Julia Young, and Mary Clemmons took on the challenging job of providing stability for 33 at-risk children who were not feeling very secure in their new surroundings.

The center team has developed clear rules and routines, used positive guidance techniques and approached the move with positive energy and commitment, which can be observed by the progress of the children in adjusting to the new surroundings.

Sandra led her team without an office, or even a desk to call her own. Julia and Mary have also taken the changes in stride. Children families and staff eagerly await the day when they can enjoy their newly renovated centers.

Disaster preparation: Your best protection

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Follow these steps:

STEP 1: *Answer these questions:*

- a) What are the safe ways to leave the house during a fire or other emergency?
- b) Where do you go in case of a hurricane?
- c) Where do you go in case of a tornado?
- d) If you are not home, what do you do? Where do you go? And where will you meet other family members?
- e) Who will look after the pets?
- f) Who will call 911 to report the fire?
- g) How will you notify other family members you are alright?

STEP 2: *Review the plan with all members of your family.*

STEP 3: *Practice your plan. For example, practice the way to leave the house, just as we do at the center.*

The more you practice and are familiar with the routine the less chance there is for panic, property loss, and hopefully injury or death.

Be prepared and protected.

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someone
to talk to,
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