



RCMA HOY



Peace on Earth

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



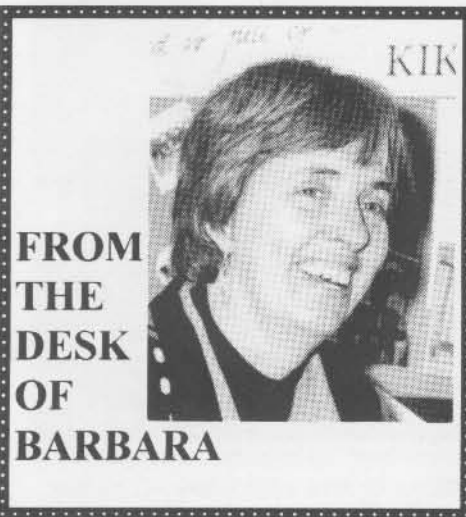
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OUR MISSION: Helping Parents Restart, Giving Kids a Head Start, Helping Staff Develop

What's on your Santa's list?

The spirit of Santa doesn't wear a red suit



The holiday season brings out the best and the worst in us. Somehow reality is never as perfect as our dreams.

So I thought about the basics and made my own personal Santa's list for a wonderful holiday.

Here it is:

1. Time off to be at home with family.
2. A Christmas Tree.
3. Homemade cookies.
4. Lots of food.
5. Shopping done before December 24.
6. Help with the house cleaning.
7. Cheerful guests.
8. Time to be alone.
9. Bills paid on time.
10. Someone else to do the Christmas dinner cleanup.

I'm pretty sure I'll have a perfect ten! Now you do your list and have a wonderful holiday!!

I believe what you told me. That Santa is real. He is, isn't he, Dad?

I slouched down in the passenger seat of our old Pontiac 'cause it was the cool way to sit when one is in the fourth grade.

My dad was driving downtown to shop and I was going along for the ride. At least that's what I had told him—actually I had an important question to ask that had been on my mind for a couple of weeks and this was the first time I had been able to maneuver myself into his presence without being obvious about it.

"Dad . . ." I started. And stopped.

"Yup?" he said.

"Some of the kids at school have been saying something and I know it's not true."

I felt my lower lip quiver from the effort of trying to hold back the tears I felt threatening the inside corner of my right eye—it was always the one that wanted to cry first.

"What is it, Punkin?" I knew he was in a good mood when he used this

endearment.

"The kids say there is no Santa Claus." Gulp. One tear escaped. "They say I'm dumb to believe in Santa anymore . . . it's only for little kids." My left eye started with a tear on the inside track.

"But I believe what you told me. That Santa is real. He is, isn't he, Dad?"

Up to this point we had been cruising

down Newell Avenue, which was in those days a two-lane road lined with oak trees. At my question, my dad glanced over at my face and body position. He pulled over to the side of the road and stopped the car. Dad turned off the engine and moved over closer to me, his still-little girl huddled in the corner.

"The kids at school are wrong, Patty. Santa Claus is real."

"I knew it!" I heaved a sigh of relief.

"But there is more I need to tell you

DENNIS THE MENACE By Ketcham



"Do you believe in yourself?"

(Continued on page 4)

¿Que has anotado en tu lista de Navidad?

DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

La temporada de fiestas hace que brote lo mejor y lo peor de nosotros.

Pero, la realidad nunca es tan perfecta como nuestros sueños.

Esto me hizo pensar en cubrir lo basico e hice mi propia lista personal para tener una maravillosa Navidad.

Aqui está:

1. Tiempo fuera del trabajo para estar con mi familia.
2. Un arbol de Navidad.
3. Galletas hechas en casa.
4. Mucha comida.
5. Compras hechas antes del 24 de diciembre.
6. Ayuda para limpiar la casa.
7. Invitados alegres.
8. Tiempo para estar sola.
9. Pagos hechos a tiempo.
10. Otra persona para que limpie despues de la cena de Navidad.

Estoy segura que obtendré un diez. Ahora ustedes hagan sus listas y que tengan felices fiestas.

Contagious infection spreads throughout Fellsmere community - a strain to be embraced, not feared

By IRENE BRAMMERTZ
Staff Development Specialist

There was an infection that spread throughout the Fellsmere community like wildfire. It was a very contagious strain. But no health referral was given. Why not? you might ask.

Because the infection was a positive strain of enthusiasm and dedication, the kind that we need to spread.

The source of the infection was Nancy Patterson, the education coordinator at Fellsmere Child Development Center. The symptoms included over 750 books having been read to the children from the beginning of November until early December as part of the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) program. This qualified the center for a RIF mini-grant of \$150.

The Fellsmere center hopes to have read the most books by the time it closes for the Christmas holidays as part of a national RIF contest. The top prize would be an additional \$500.

Nancy has had a lot of help from center staff and the community. Ever since articles were published in *Florida Today* and the *Press Journal* in mid-November asking for volunteers to come to the center and read to the children, offers poured in.

"This just snowballed beyond belief," Nancy said. "I had to make up a schedule to coordinate all the volunteers." Many volunteers brought their own children's books, read them, and then donated them to the center. Some local businesses



Photo by IRENE BRAMMERTZ

Nancy Patterson reads to the children.

donated cash as well.

All it takes is one committed, determined individual to make things happen.

This reminds me of what Margaret Mead, a famous anthropologist, said many years ago: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

PEANUTS

Charles Schultz



APPLAUSE

Palatka Area

Congratulations to Edna Blue, area coordinator. Her son Kelvin Blue, a teacher, was chosen by honor students at Landrum Middle School in Jacksonville to the *Who's Who Among America's Teachers 1996*.

State Office

Thanks to program development specialist Jean Eklund's initiative, RCMA has received a \$30,000 grant from the Florida Department of Education to carry out an innovative teaching project.

Twenty-five centers statewide will benefit from this exciting opportunity.

Focus will be on improving the basic education of staff as part of a career development step that would lead to a GED and then a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

Also, interested parents and extended family will boost their language and basic education skills as a step toward becoming a future teacher, a U.S. citizen, or a high school graduate.

Florida City Area

Congratulations to Veronica Martinez, a senior teacher at Everglades II Child Development Center who gave birth to a girl on December 3.

Natalia Contreras, a teacher at Andrew CDC proudly received her U.S. citizenship in a ceremony in Miami. Natalia was born in Mexico.

Immokalee Area

A child is eating breakfast and suddenly begins to gasp for air as he stiffens and stands up from his chair. This scene would cause most people to panic, but not LaQuita Prudent, Gloria Lopez and Neche Rodriguez at Immokalee Child Development Center Pre.

Faced recently with this situation, LaQuita quickly moved to the child and performed the Hiemlich maneuver. Gloria kept the other children calm and clear from the victim, and Neche called 911. A perfect response.

As a result of the procedure on the child, the food came dislodged and the child was alright. EMS arrived and the situation was calm. They examined the youngster, talked with LaQuita and were on their way.

HAPPENINGS

N. Hillsborough/Polk Area

Welcome to the following new teacher trainees at Dover Migrant Head Start: San Juana Lara, Maribel Calvio, Felica Rangel, Carmen Hernandez, Maribel Vasquez, Aurora Longoria, and Monse Asorin.

Welcome also goes to new center coordinator Anselma Fernandez, formerly an outreach worker at Westside Village CDC, and new outreach worker Santiago Cuellar.

Congratulations to Lorena Gutierrez who received her CDA.

Florida City Area

Welcome to teacher trainee Santa Sanchez at Andrew CDC.

Homestead Area

After six years as a teacher, Nelly Garcia of South Dade Pre was ready for a big career development step. She is the new center coordinator at Redlands CDC. When Nelly was asked about her new responsibilities, she said "I love challenges."

Immokalee Area

Eight staff completed a child development college course offered through Edison Community College. Congratulations to Olga Gutierrez, LaQuita Prudent, Tiffany Koch, Dora Zurita, Neche Rodriguez, Belinda Medina, Rosie Arevalo and Gloria Padilla.

Ruskin/Wimauma/Palmetto Area

Only a quarter mile from the Iglesia de Dios, home to the RCMA Migrant Education Center, something exciting is taking place.

A beautiful center has been constructed, plants have been planted and carpet has been laid.

The days of moving furniture and tearing down wall decorations every week will soon be over for the patient staff of Migrant Ed. They are scheduled to move in to their new home when the new year rolls around.

Safety News

Almost an accident — be warned

How many times have you come close to having an accident, shrugged it off as a near miss, and gone on your merry way without giving it another thought?

Think about those near misses. Many times, the difference between an accident and a near miss is just a fraction of a second in timing or a fraction of an inch in distance. Next time, the difference may not be there.

Near misses are warnings of accidents in the making. If we accept the warnings and look for the causes, we may be able to prevent similar situations from developing.

Suppose you're going up a ramp. Your foot slips, but you're young, agile, fast, and empty-handed, so you regain your balance with NO harm done. Somebody else comes along, but her reactions are a little slower than yours. Her foot slips and, to keep from falling, she jumps off the ramp to the ground. Again, no harm done.

Then comes a third person, carrying a load. She's just as fast as the first two but can't maneuver because she's weighted down. Her foot slips, and she falls, hitting the ramp with the load on top of her.

The seriousness of her injury is a matter of luck — a broken ankle, a fractured rib, possibly a broken neck, or perhaps only scratches — but, it's an accidental injury.

Two warnings were ignored — finally, somebody got hurt. Now the loose sand or slick leaves on the ramp is discovered, and the condition is corrected. But it's like locking the garage after the motorcycle is stolen. Two people saw the thief but didn't bother to take action.

Few accidents occur without some advance warning. If we pay attention to the warning and check into the hazard, most accidents can be eliminated.

A near accident is an indication that something is wrong, and we should be warned by each near accident that occurs.

Keep your eyes open for those advance warnings. Don't think "it can't happen to me." It can happen to you. Find out why they happened and who can take corrective action.

From now on, let's regard near accidents in the same way as bad accidents and weed out the causes while we have the chance.

