



We Can Make
A World of
Difference

RCMA HOY



Helping Our Youth

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1997 Issue 53

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

“Three hearts beating as one” conference unites staff statewide



learn; almost everybody commented on the warmth and caring they felt to be a part of RCMA.

This attitude is what sets us apart as an organization. An eagerness to learn; a willingness to grow, and a deep commitment to our mission.

My thanks to the area, program and center coordinators who provided us with the feedback requested at the end of the season from which we planned this conference.

And to all the staff who prepared materials, organized events, registration and all the important details which made this conference such a success, we all thank you!

Barbara Mainster

I just finished reading the evaluations written by most of the 160 RCMA staff who attended the August 20-22 statewide conference, “Children, Parents and Staff: Three hearts beating as one,” we held in Orlando.

This was the first time in many years we brought staff together from all the centers in Florida. It fills me with pride, awe, and enormous gratitude to realize what absolutely wonderful human beings make up this organization!

The evaluations frequently reported how people learned some new ways to think about problems or work with people; others asked for more time to

Payroll staff worked until 10:30 p.m. to pay everyone on time

By **LESLIE MOGUIL**
Staff Writer

It was a Monday night at 10:30 p.m. when the three-woman team let out a scream and filled the air with high fives. Dee Dee Bermudez, Norma Cruz and Rafaela Partida had one goal to focus on—getting payroll out on time.

On this particular occasion the new ADP computer system froze up, until only one computer in personnel was able to take the data that is usually split among three computers.

Having to adapt, Dee Dee, Norma and Rafaela decided to divide their Saturday into three shifts in order to enter in all the payroll information. As

Please see SAVE THE DAY, page 6



Photo by **LESLIE MOGUIL**

PAYROLL STAFF: (Left to right) Norma Cruz, Rafaela Partida, Dee Dee Bermudez

Conferencia "Tres corazones latiendo como uno" une al personal de todo el estado.

DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

Acabé de terminar de leer las evaluaciones escritas por la mayoría de los 160 participantes de la conferencia del estado el pasado 20 al 22 de agosto en Orlando, "Niños, Padres y Empleados: Tres corazones latiendo como uno."

Esta fue la primera vez en muchos años que tenemos personal de toda la Florida juntos. Me llena de orgullo, admiración y gran gratitud el darme cuenta que absolutamente fantásticas personas forman esta organización.

Las evaluaciones frecuentemente reportaron que algunos aprendieron una nueva forma de pensar acerca de

un problema o de trabajar con la gente; otras pidieron mas tiempo para aprender; casi todo el mundo comentó de como experimentaron el calor y cariño que sienten por ser parte de RCMA.

Esta actitud es la que nos pone aparte como organización. El deseo de aprender, la disposición para crecer, y la profunda entrega a nuestra misión.

Mis gracias a los coordinadores de area y de centro quienes nos proveyeron la evaluación requerida al final de la temporada con la cual planeamos esta conferencia.

Y el personal que preparó el material, organizó eventos, registración y todos los detalles importantes los cuales hicieron que esta conferencia fuese un triunfo, de parte de todos, ¡muchas gracias!

Barbara Mainster

"It's no big deal that we keep the children safe, no big deal that we feed them nutritious food. That's obvious. That's our obligation. But we are putting these kids into a situation where—from day one—they are doomed to failure. This is our biggest challenge at RCMA. To get our kids ready for school. To make sure that they enter kindergarten ready to compete in an environment stacked against them."

— Wendell N. Rollason



STATEWIDE CONFERENCE SURPRISE: With her eyes closed, Frances Canty, Program Coordinator for LaBelle and Moore Haven, reaches in the grab box to unveil the new RCMA Plan of Action.

Photo by TED HOFFMAN

Should you spank your child?

Many parents occasionally lose their patience or, in anger or fear, may spank their child. For instance, if a child runs out into the street, a parent may sweep the child up and, in a moment of anxiety for the child's well-being, spank them to emphasize the parent's sense of urgency or worry.

Spanking may relieve a parent's frustration for the moment and extinguish the undesirable behavior for a brief time, but ***it is the least effective way to discipline.***

⇒It is harmful emotionally to both parent and child.

⇒Not only can it result in physical harm, but it teaches children that violence is an acceptable way to discipline or express anger.

⇒While stopping the behavior temporarily, it does not teach alternative behavior. ⇒It also interferes with the development of trust, a sense of security, and effective communication. (Spanking often becomes the method of communication.)

⇒It also may cause emotional pain and resentment.

This information is provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics in a Wealth of Health Newsletter and was taken from The Miami Pre-K Press, June 1997 issue.

DeLaRosa's daughter wins college scholarship

Alicia DeLaRosa, lead teacher at Immokalee Child Development Center Annex and her daughter Tina DeLaRosa have something to cheer about.

Tina is the recipient of a HOPE scholarship. She found out about the opportunity from a friend and got her application in under the wire. Her persistence paid off.

The scholarship will pay for full tuition and books at Edison Community College in Ft. Myers. Tina was a former Head Start student. Congratulations to both of them.

RCMA mission—creating a brighter future for children and parents—focus of statewide conference

RCMA staff are such a diverse group of caring, committed and talented people. At the August 20 - 22 statewide conference in Orlando, "Children, Parents, and Staff: Three hearts beating as one," this was made clear when staff from all centers and programs came together.

During lunch on one of the days many longtime staffers shared their insightful, interesting and humorous stories which spanned more than a period of 20 years. These stories were quite telling of the wonderful sort of individuals of which RCMA is composed.

When we in RCMA are doing our work in our own center or program, it is easy to forget that over 1,000 people around the state are focused on the same basic mission:

"To develop centers of learning, where the best in each culture is honored—

Where a brighter future for children, parents and staff is nurtured—

Where cycles of poverty are broken—

And where children are given a head start and parents are helped to restart."

If we remind ourselves of our united effort in over 60 centers and programs, we can harness greater energy and resolve in making this mission a daily reality in our work.

And in joining together the children, parents and staff, we are collectively the living, breathing force with "three hearts beating as one."

Staff share their talents on "Late At Night with Char & Ger"

The first evening of the conference was the occasion of "Late At Night with Char and Ger," the nation's only Talk and Talent show featuring an all star cast—The RCMA Ready for Prime Time Players.

Photos by TED HOFFMAN

AT RIGHT:

"Late at Night with Char and Ger" hosts Charlene Edwards and Gerry Lambert started the evening talent show off with a chat. The audience gave them a standing ovation and laughed a lot.

Was it that Char and Ger were so funny or was it the cue cards held up to get the audience involved that caused the great audience response? Either way, the audience was great.

BELOW:

"The Blues Brothers" Gloria Kendrick (left) and Evan Portee chat with Char and Ger before their show-

stopping performance.

They wowed the fans with their brand of the Delta Blues.

"They be bad. Real bad." Do you know what we mean?



"Late At Night with Char and Ger"

The RCMA Ready for Prime Time Players



TOP:
"Ru-Wi-Pal"—
Jorge Velazquez
leads the Ruskin,
Wimauma and Pal-
metto staff in a fine
display of dancing
to a Brazilian beat.



MIDDLE:
"The Aliens"—
Kay Larche and
"Alien" Judy
Burluson chat with
show hosts.

BELOW:
"El Pollito"—
Performed by the
Homestead area.

*Photos by
TED HOFFMAN*

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Please send all related comments to:
"Late At Night with Char and Ger"
RCMA
402 W. Main St.
Immokalee, FL 34142

My Understanding of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

(from a teacher's perspective)

Written and recited by Linda Arredondo

I look at you beyond your clothes, beyond the color of your skin.

I look at you for who you are, unique inside, within.
I reach out to you to lend a hand, to hold you when you're sad, or just sit close to let you know I'm there for you, I care for you!

I watch you closely as you play, as you discover, invent, explore.

This helps me to better see the individual you are.
And then I am more able to extend myself for you,
To offer you the things you need, the things that help you feel complete.

I learn about the way you grow, the way you think, the way you move.

And with my understanding of the person that you are I carefully make plans and offer you experiences that will take you far.

I prepare a space for you that you can call your own,
A place that fits your needs, a place for you to roam.
With lots of things to touch and feel, to gather and explore.

And lots of time for you to try, once, again and then some more.

I offer you a time to rest, to think about your day.

I offer you a loving touch or gentle words I'll say.

I encourage you in what you do,
and because you are so strong, I let you do it your own way, and empower you to problem solve when things sometimes go wrong.

I help you to discover all the skills that you possess, by changing things and adding things and you can do the rest.

We have a time to play outside, to jump and run and climb.

A time that you can talk and play with all the friends that you can find.

I work together with your family, the ones who care for you,

By sharing with them all the many things that you can do.

I welcome them into our class whenever they can come,

And I encourage them and share with them about the things that are best for you.

With all the information I have gathered and have stored, I will carefully use its content for your benefit,
By sharing with your family and sharing with your schools to help us figure out what is most beneficial to you.

I love you child for who you are, for all that you can be.
Because you are an individual.

Because you mean the world to me.

Linda Arredondo, a Support Services Assistant at Smith Brown CDC in Arcadia was previously a teacher.

¿Debe usted pegarle a su niño?

Algunas veces muchos padres pierden la paciencia o con miedo o coraje pueden pegarle al niño. Por ejemplo, si el niño corre para la calle, los padres pueden recogerlo y en un momento de ansiedad, por proteger al niño, le puede pasar una nalgada para enfatizar el sentido de peligro o urgencia.

Pegarle al niño puede desahogar la frustración de los padres y por el momento, extinguir el comportamiento del niño, al menos por un tiempo. Aun así, *esta es la manera menos efectiva de disciplinar al niño.*

⇒ Pegarle al niño hace daño a ambos, el niño y los padres.

⇒ No solamente puede hacerle daño al niño pero también le enseña al niño que pegar es una manera aceptable de disciplinar o de expresar coraje.

⇒ Mientras se para el comportamiento temporalmente, no enseña el comportamiento apropiado.

⇒ También interfiere con el desarrollo de la confianza, el sentido de seguridad y comunicación efectiva. (Pegar se convierte en el método de comunicación.)

⇒ Causa dolor emocional y resentimiento.

Esta información vino de la Academia Americana de Pediatría en un folleto llamado Wealth of Health y se tomó de La Prensa Miami Pre-K de junio 1997.

Baby announcement congratulations . . .

Lucy Garcia, center coordinator at Fred Dennis CDC in Wauchula had a girl, Zenida Diana on August 13.

Gabriela Garcia, support services assistant in the Homestead area, had a boy, Matthew Mosqueda on June 30.

Second grader's enthusiasm and joy for reading are no accident—Velma Adame shows why

By GERRY LAMBERT
Editor

Loving to read doesn't happen by accident.

The importance of instilling in children a joy for reading cannot be overstated.

Any child can find reading to be fun. Parents that are aware of this and make it a priority for their children to have the opportunity to acquire this interest will see their efforts pay off. Velma Adame is evidence of this.

Michael Adame, the second grade son of Velma, who oversees RCMA's food program statewide, was given a summer assignment to read 20 books. Due to circumstances he started late and only had three weeks to read the books.

He read all 20 books enthusiastically, but didn't stop there. Velma took Michael to the library a few times a week, and when the three weeks had passed, he had read 36 books.

"I learned from RCMA the importance of reading to my child," Velma said. "I began reading to Michael every night when he was very young."

Velma also models what she teaches in that she enjoys reading. "I like to read. I read the newspaper to know what's going on. And I check books out from the library too." Actions like

Velma's speak louder to our children than preaching to them ever will.

And even though school has started, Velma and Michael continue to visit the public library once a week.



Photo by LESLIE MOGUIL

Velma Adame

We can all learn from Velma's three part strategy, which is brilliant yet simple:

- 1) Read to your children from an early age.
- 2) Take your children to the library regularly.
- 3) Read yourself. This shows your children that reading is important and fun for everyone; that it's not just for kids.

One of the great things about this strategy for a child's success with reading is that it doesn't cost a penny (except for the gas if you drive to the library). Anyone can afford it.

The library is a treasure often waiting to be discovered.

If you haven't already, take some time with your children to discover this treasure in a library near you. □

RCMA is a trip with many roads that can be taken

"One of my co-workers told me I parked in the wrong place. Another said I drove too slow. One said that I drove too fast. Two more said that there was a better way to go. Someone requested a rest stop, but didn't like the place I stopped. One said we didn't have enough gas and another said if we stopped for gas we would be late."

— Mike Clark

By MIKE CLARK

Working at RCMA can be wonderful and it can be frustrating. I have been thinking about how we work together in RCMA and that sometimes my co-workers and I disagree.

We get upset with each other over details and forget that we want the same thing—we share the same goal even if we don't agree on how to get there. It is like taking a car trip.

It is like a trip I took with six center coordinators. We all needed to go to Immokalee. We left Hardee County in a van and stopped several times in Highlands County to pick up people.

Each time I stopped, one of my co-workers told me that I parked in the wrong place. Another said that I drove too slow. One said that I drove too fast. Two more said that there was a better way to go. Someone requested a rest

stop, but didn't like the place I stopped. One said we didn't have enough gas and another said if we stopped for gas we would be late.

We didn't agree on the route to take or on how I should drive. I felt like I was being criticized and wasn't appreciated. I thought that I would never drive the van again on a group trip. I wouldn't even go



someone noticed we were low on gas, and someone had called ahead to make sure everyone met the van on time. We left the meeting, had a wonderful late lunch together, and argued all the way home about my driving. And that was okay because we made it to our goal and back home safely.

Working at RCMA is like a trip because we share the same goals: children will be safe and nurtured in our centers, children will be ready to succeed in school, and families will improve their quality of life.

We don't agree on the best ways to reach those goals. We will discuss and disagree. We may get upset with each other.

If we realize that there are many different roads we can take and different ways to drive, we will reach those important goals. When we are successful, it won't matter which road we took to get there.

We will do what we do best—have lunch—and start thinking about our next journey together. □

When not having lunch, Mike Clark empowers families in collaboration with other agencies. He's also a wonderful dad and husband.

"Working at RCMA is like that trip because we share the same goals . . . If we realize there are many different roads we can take and different ways to drive, we will reach those important goals. When we are successful, it won't matter which road we took to get there."

with the group again.

We made it to the meeting on time. We reached our goal as a group just when we said we would.

We got there because someone knew a shorter way to go,

Save the day

(Continued from page 1)

another backup Dee Dee called ADP to have the paper worksheets delivered, just in case there was yet another failure.

The computer did in fact fail, so the team switched into manual mode. Pen, paper and calculators whirled into the wee hours Monday night.

These RCMA staffers relentlessly work in the shadows, with minimal praise, largely motivated by personal satisfaction.

They sometimes are accused of being unavailable or tough. When you receive your next paycheck, please think of them kindly. □

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PARENT NEWS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1997 Issue 10 A Bi-Monthly Parent Involvement Supplement of RCMA

POSTER HELPS TO KEEP DREAM ALIVE!

South Region

By DONNA FARR
Family Support Specialist

I first met Miss Miller, a single parent, at a focus group for our new program called Early Head Start.

At that meeting, we asked parents to make a *Dream Poster* -- a poster of the families' short and long term goals.

A *Dream Poster*, also known by the name of *Treasure Map*, is usually made with pictures and words cut out from magazines and newspapers and glued to a poster board depicting the things the person wishes to achieve. They can be material things such as a new home or new car, or more abstract things like a diploma or degree, better

health, an improved family situation. The finished poster is prominently displayed in the home as a daily reminder to strive towards the chosen goals.

Miss Miller had many ambitions including using her Certified Nurses Assistant's (CNA) knowledge in the work force. This was represented in her *Dream Poster* with the picture of a nurse.

Since that first meeting, Miss Miller has had many ups and downs on the road to fulfilling her dream.

Nancy, the youngest of her three children has recently been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Along with this diagnosis have come several therapists,

doctors and all types of professionals working with the family.

Miss Miller had to suspend her job search during the spring and summer while she took her daughter Nancy to appointments all over the state.

Fall has arrived and with it Miss Miller has been able to enroll Nancy and Jonathan, her two youngest children, at RCMA. Barbara, her oldest daughter, is enrolled in Elementary school.

Nancy receives therapy at the center and Miss Miller has been able to return to the work force, where she is working in her chosen field as represented in the *Dream Poster*.

Much of this came about through Miss Miller's determination and her extended family's support. She has never lost sight of her goal, in spite of tremendous setbacks.

Next time you're asked to participate in the *Dream Poster* activity, be careful that you wish for something you truly want — because wishes do come true.

North Region

Center teams were recently trained in the art of making *Dream Posters* in order to use this technique with families.

RCMA staff will start employing this method of goal setting with the families all over the State of Florida this season.

When you are asked to participate in this important activity, keep an open mind and most of all, have FUN!



Photo by Donna Farr
Dream Poster represents staff's vision for Highlands Early Headstart; Focus is on Health, Parent Involvement, Child Development and Budgeting

Remember that overnight success usually takes about fifteen years
H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Editor: Irene G. Brammertz

Please send parent involvement news from your center, ideas and suggestions to:

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NOTICIAS DE PADRES

SEPTIEMBRE/OCTUBRE 1997 Núm. 10 Suplemento Bimensual de RCMA HOY en Envolvimiento de Padres

¡CARTEL AYUDA A MANTENER VIVO UN SUEÑO!

Región Sur

Por DONNA FARR

Especialista de Apoyo a la Familia

Yo conocí primero a la Srta. Miller, madre soltera, en un grupo de enfoque de nuestro nuevo programa llamado Early Head Start.

En esa junta le pedimos a los padres que hicieran un *Cartel de Sueños*: las metas cortas y de largo plazo de las familias.

Un *Cartel de Sueños*, también conocido como un *Mapa de Tesoros*, se hace por lo general con fotos y palabras cortados de revistas y periódicos y pegados en un cartón mostrando las cosas que una persona desea lograr. Estas pueden ser cosas materiales como una casa o carro nuevo o cosas más

abstractas como un diploma, mejor salud o mejorar una situación familiar. El cartel ya hecho se exhibe en la casa como un recordatorio diario para luchar por alcanzar esas metas.

La Srta. Miller tenía muchas ambiciones incluyendo usar su conocimiento por su Certificado de Ayudante de Enfermera (CNA) y ponerlo en práctica trabajando. Esto estaba representado en su *Cartel de Sueños* con la foto de una enfermera.

Desde esta primera junta la Srta. Miller ha tenido muchas experiencias para poder realizar su sueño.

Nancy, la más joven de sus tres niños fue recientemente diagnosticado con parálisis cerebral.

Junto con este diagnóstico han venido varios terapeutas, doctores y todo clase de profesionales para trabajar con la familia.

La Srta. Miller tuvo que suspender su búsqueda de empleo durante la primavera y el verano mientras ella llevaba a su hija Nancy a citas por todo el estado.

El otoño ha llegado y la Srta. Miller ha podido registrar a Nancy y Jonathan, su dos hijos más jóvenes, en RCMA. Barbara, su hija mayor, está registrada en la escuela primaria.

Nancy recibe terapia en el centro y la Srta. Miller ha podido regresar a trabajar en el campo que ha escogido como aparece en el *Cartel de Sueño*.

La mayoría de todo esto se ha podido lograr por la determinación de la Srta. Miller y el apoyo de su familia. Ella nunca ha perdido de vista sus metas a pesar de las dificultades que ha encontrado.

La próxima vez que se le pida a ud. participar en una actividad de *Cartel de Sueño*, tenga cuidado de pedir algo que verdaderamente desea — porque los sueños se realizan.

Región Norte

Los equipos de los centros fueron recientemente entrenados en el arte de hacer *Carteles de Sueños* para usar esta técnica con las familias.

Esta temporada el personal de RCMA comenzará a usar este método para formar metas con las familias a través de todo el Estado de Florida.

Cuando se le pida a ud. participar en esta importante actividad, mantenga una mente abierta y más que nada ¡DISFRUTELO!



Foto por Donna Farr
Cartel de Sueño representando la visión de las empleadas de Highlands Early Headstart; El enfoque del cartel es en Salud, Envolvimiento de Padres, Desarrollo de Niños y Presupuesto.

Recuerde que el éxito de un día a otro toma generalmente quince años.
H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Editor: Irene G. Brammertz

Favor den enviar noticias, ideas o sugerencias sobre involucramiento de padres en su centro a:

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