



RCMA HOY

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

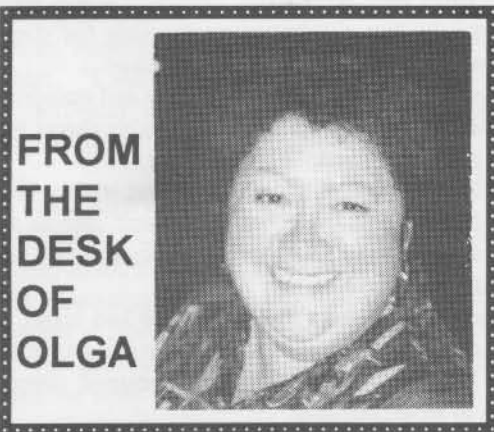
Helping Our Youth



OCTOBER 1997 Issue 54

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

Everyone wants their children to succeed in school — but at what price?



Are we pushing our children too much without giving our help and support?

"When I saw my grades I thought 'my mom is going to get mad.' I thought about taking my life."

This girl isn't even 15 years old yet and she already thought about taking her life.

This girl's mother said to me "my daughter told me crying 'all you do is yell at me.'"

At what price do we push our children to succeed in school. We want them to get good grades, to be model children, to be involved in sports, to be good musicians in band and to be in other school clubs.

I ask myself, "Could I succeed with this schedule?"

We want the best for our children. But in what way do we encourage and support them?

Do we have the patience to sit with our children to help them with their homework?

Do we look for ways to make the work interesting? Are we there for our children so they don't feel alone?

Or do we just nag them and yell at them?

Please see **SUCCESS IN SCHOOL**, page 4

Service and a college education attract Ramirez to Ameri-Corps

By **LESLIE MOGUIL**
Staff Writer

"There is nothing you can't do if your mind and heart are set on it. It requires hard work, but it can be done." These are more than just the words of 19-year-old Genove Ramirez, the daughter of Ester Wainz, outreach worker at Belle Glade Child Development Center.

It is these words of advice Genove offers to other young people by which Genove lives herself. Like the tremendous energy used to thrust a space shuttle into outer space, Genove has created her past

Please see **AMERI-CORPS VOLUNTEER**, page 3



THE WAINZ FAMILY: (Left to right) Ester, Michelle, Genove, John and Shawn (in front).

Todos queremos que nuestros hijos se superen en la escuela — pero a que precio?

DEL ESCRITORIO DE OLGA

"Cuando vi mis calificaciones pense 'mi Mama se va a enojar.' Pensé en quitarme la vida."

Esta niña aun no cumple 15 años y ya pensó en quitarse la vida.

La madre de esta niña me dijo, "ella me dijo llorando 'es que todo lo que haces es gritarme.'"

A que precio empujamos a nuestros hijos a superarse en la escuela. Queremos que ellos tengan buenas calificaciones, que sean hijos modelos, que se envuelvan en deportes, que sean buenos músicos en la banda de la escuela y estar en otros clubs escolares. Me pregunto, "¿Podría yo con este horario?"

Queremos lo mejor para nuestros hijos. ¿Pero de que manera los animamos y los apoyamos? ¿Tenemos la paciencia para sentarnos con ellos para ayudarles con la tarea?

¿Buscamos maneras para hacer el trabajo interesante? ¿Los acompañamos para que no se sientan solos? ¿O solamente los regañamos y les gritamos? ¿Estamos empujando a nuestros hijos demasiado, sin nuestra ayuda y apoyo?

Llorando la madre de la niña le contestó "mira hijita, perdoname porque sé que ultimamente te he fallado. Me ha faltado la paciencia y si es cierto, te he gritado mucho.

"Comenzando hoy te prometo que estaré aqui para ayudarte. No hay ningun problema que con la ayuda de Dios, tu y yo no podamos resolver," la madre de la niña agregó.

"Sería muy triste que te quitaras la vida cuando hay soluciones a tus problemas. Tu haz tu parte y yo haré la mia. Aqui estoy para tí. No te olvides de eso."

Olga Hernandez

Thomas leads with her dancin' ways

By GERRY LAMBERT
Editor

Marjorie Thomas, lead teacher at Avon Park Head Start, knows that she makes a difference. Her actions declare it to be so.

On a recent visit to her center I noticed Marjorie dancin' as I approached the picnic table where she was seated. The music wasn't playing and her feet weren't moving but there was no mistaking her dancin'.

I noticed this even before I caught a glimpse of her name tag-sized, attention-grabbing, conversation-starting, motivational quote pinned to her shirt. It stated:

*You gotta keep dancin'
Don't wait until the battle is over!
Shout!*

Be encouraged...

On the first day of school Marjorie, president of RCMA's Highlands/Hardee Counties lead teacher group, noticed that there were no crossing guards or school signs to alert motorists that children were crossing the street. This was enough to thrust Marjorie into action.

"That's when I and two others, a parent and grandparent, took the initiative to go into the neighborhood and ask parents to get involved," Marjorie said.

After getting parents to fill out petitions stating their concerns, Marjorie and the others took their case to the school board, transportation, the police department, and Road and Bridge. The result?

They now have school crossing guards and signs, as well as one or two parents at the bus stop every morning. Thanks to Marjorie's "dancin'" the concerned parents have reason to be encouraged. □

Zachary never lost sight of her goal

By LESLIE MOGUIL
Staff Writer

Nancy Zachary, family support specialist at Avon Park Head Start, earned her Associate of Arts degree from South Florida Community College. Her accomplishment came after years of focus and many family-related interruptions.

Nancy was awarded a full scholarship in 1980 to Kent State University in Ohio, only to have to make the tough decision to drop out because of a family crisis. This experience was her first taste of college, and she

Please see ZACHARY'S GOAL, page 3



IMMOKALEE & HOMESTEAD STAFF: The following attended Western Kentucky University's Supervisor's Institute: *Front:* Martha Montes. *Seated:* (left to right) Adela Lopez, Gladys Chirinos, Martita Huertas, Maria Gomez, Lorena Quiñones, Lilly Valle, Joshua Rincon, Michael Gramling (instructor). *Standing:* (left to right) Teresa (instructor), Ada Aman, Lupe Leal, Claudia Solis, Petra Castillo, Juanita Garcia, Guille Estrada, Rosie Arevalo, Debbie Avelar, Olga Gutierrez, Arnie Nieto, Mary Staggers, Macrina Vega, Nelly Garcia.

Photo by GERRY LAMBERT

Outreach worker's daughter designs her future by creating opportunities

AMERI-CORPS VOLUNTEER

Continued from page 1

accomplishments. And it is Genove's deep belief in these words that are launching her into an exciting and bright future.

In early October Genove became an Ameri-Corps Volunteer in which she will work on improving family literacy in the Belle Glade community.

As an Ameri-Corps member Genove will receive \$7,440 per year, plus health care. In terms of financial compensation what is especially beneficial is that Genove will receive \$4,725 per year (for up to two years) to use toward educational expenses. Genove will use it for college tuition.

Genove, who was not known for letting the grass grow under her feet, has taken something else she believes to heart. "I want to experience things for myself and do and learn. There is something to learn in everything that I do."

As a high school sophomore she went to Denver, Colorado with her church group to see the Pope. In her junior year she participated in a church service project in Bolivia, South America.

As the winner of an essay contest, Genove went to London, England. The essay's theme was appropriate—"The Importance of Travel on Education."

Travel didn't put a dent in Genove's 3.5 grade point average. She graduated from Pahokee High School in the top ten of her class and was a Florida Merit Scholar.

With an eye on college Genove

worked nearly 50 hours per week this past summer at a convenience store to save for college.

She attends Palm Beach Junior College but her sights are set much higher.

After Genove gets her A.A. she plans to continue studies at The University of South Florida in Tampa. She hopes to enter the College of Medicine and become a doctor.

Many years of study lie ahead for Genove. She realizes it requires hard work.

But as Genove so confidently pointed out, "There is nothing you can't do if your mind and heart are set on it." □

If you want to find out more about how you or someone else can become an Ameri-Corps member call the National Toll Free Number 1-800-94-ACORPS for more information, or call Leslie Moguil at RCMA at 1-800-282-6540.

Zachary's goal

(continued from page 2)

knew in her heart that she would return.

Slowly but surely she took classes over the course of the last seventeen years, during which time she has been raising her fifteen-, five- and three-year-old children.

Had she stopped to think how long it would take her she never would have got to the end of the road.

Nancy has been recognized for her efforts—she has been offered a second chance

at a full scholarship at Warner Southern College in Lake Wales.

She wants to continue her education, but the reality of her three commitments—as wife, mother and family support specialist make this gift a difficult one to accept at present. □



Nancy Zachary

Rollason remembered with state resolution honoring his life

The life and work of Wendell Rollason, the longtime leader of RCMA, who passed away in January, was recognized through a resolution by the State of Florida, House of Representatives.

The resolution's author Rep. Joseph Spratt read and presented it to Barbara Mainster, executive director, at a special ceremony at the new LaBelle II center on October 3.

The resolution read in part:

Mr. Rollason created partnerships with government, businesses, and agriculture . . . which are unique in the state and the nation.

Mr. Rollason measured his success, never in terms of personal or monetary reward, but in contributions made to others . . . and protections and opportunities afforded the less fortunate in our society.

It is fitting that the life and service of Wendell N. Rollason be commended as an example of what one committed person can accomplish.



Photo by GERRY LAMBERT

JEFF ROLLASON, Mr. Rollason's grandson, shared a few words at the ceremony in appreciation and proud remembrance of his grandfather.

Baby announcement congratulations . . .

Belinda Escorcia, teacher, Everglades I in Florida City, had a girl Michelle Alejandra on September 22.

Julia Garcia, teacher, South Dade Infant in Homestead, had a girl Kathleen on October 1.

Becky Amaro, center coordinator at LaBelle I, gave birth to a girl, Jamin on October 1.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

RCMA's eldest employee sees in RCMA "nine hearts beating as one"

"I think they [government administrators] have lost track of me or think I have passed on or they can't pass me on anymore! —Belva Bragg

The following is a letter to Barbara Mainster, executive director, reprinted for HOY readers.

Dear HOY,

Did you know you have probably made the "Guinness Book of World Records?"

Hiring a person who is 88 years old—sure no age discrimination in RCMA. As this is the main goal of the Green Thumb Program—to find jobs for senior citizens on low income—I am really thrilled about it and hope I can stay around long enough to show my appreciation. My last doctor's report was pretty good.

My husband and I thought we had it made when at 62 we started to receive our social security checks. Due to illness of my husband he stopped working at 48 so we received the minimum amount which was about \$200 a piece.

We got along fine. We had grown up during the "depression" and knew how to stretch a dollar. But when he passed away in 1979 I quickly saw I could not live on one check.

Then I saw an article in the paper about the Green Thumb Program; I applied and did qualify.

I was first placed in HRS in the child abuse and delinquent children area. Wow! This was another world I didn't know existed. I realized what a sheltered life I had lived.

I was there 14 years and loved the job

and the folks I worked with. Then a V.I.P. in Washington decided we could only stay two years in one place.

That was when I came to RCMA in 1991. Six years ago.

I think they (government administrators) have lost track of me or think I have passed on or they can't pass me on anymore.

I can't tell you how much I have

"They [RCMA staff] are like 'nine hearts beating as one.' No bickering, no arguing, everyone stretching out to help each other. No worrying about job description here at our office."

enjoyed working with Ms. Blue (area coordinator) and her wonderful crew. They are like "nine hearts beating as one." No bickering, no arguing, everyone stretching out to help each other. No worrying about job description here at our office. And I've found all the folks that come up from Immokalee are just as pleasant.

You are so right. This attitude is what sets us apart as an organization. I am very happy to have been a part of it for the past six years.

Gratefully,
Belva Bragg
Green Thumb worker, Palatka Area

Success in school

(Continued from page 1)

Are we pushing our children too much without giving our help and support?

While the mother was crying she responded to her daughter, saying "forgive me because I know that lately I have let you down. I haven't been patient and it's true, I have yelled at you a lot.

"Starting today I promise that I will be here to help you. There's no problem that with God's help you and I can't resolve," said the girl's mother.

"It would be very sad if you took your life when there are solutions to your problems.

The mother reassured her daughter, "You do your part and I'll do mine. I'm here for you. Don't forget that."

*Olga Hernandez
Deputy Director*

"Perhaps this is not the place to say it but I must say it. There is in the State of Florida and in many other states a shameful lack of understanding of the importance of parent involvement and what all of us must do to make this—the world's wealthiest nation—into a resource for education and the future of children.

It's unbelievable that one person would have to stand up here and beg for the future of children. It's unreal. It's shameful. But dammit, we are going to win."



— Wendell N. Rollason
80th Birthday Celebration
November 2, 1996

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Please send suggestions, comments, and Letters to the Editor to the following address:
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When you need someone to talk to, EAR is there.
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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 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

Traducción Español: Josie Gracia

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

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