



RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

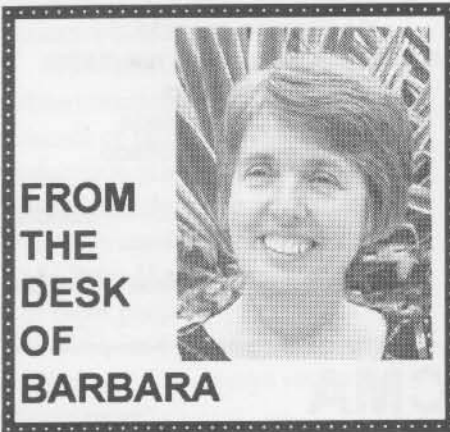
Helping Our Youth



JANUARY 1998 Issue 57

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

A chance to begin anew “to do the right thing”



FROM
THE
DESK
OF
BARBARA

“It’s the action, not the fruit of the action, that’s important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power . . . that there’ll be any fruit. But that doesn’t mean you stop doing the right thing.” —Gandhi

It’s a new year, a chance to begin again, to dream new dreams and make new plans. It’s a good time to think about all we want to do.

All of us in RCMA have big dreams, hopes and plans.

First, we want to do more for the staff and the children we serve. We want:

- Nicer buildings.
- Safer playgrounds with much for the kids to do.
- More training opportunities for staff to continue to grow.
- Increased wages and benefits.
- To value staff contributions through praise and recognition.

Second, we want:

- To provide quality child care for families who sit on waiting lists.
- To help our families recognize their strengths and gifts, and build

upon them.

Third, we want to think about how we can do more for older children who are

- lost in school,
- failing and dropping out.

They need us and we can do more—maybe start some alternative schools.

This is the quote from RCMA’s 1997

*Please see
RCMA CHRISTMAS
CARD, page 2*

School-age staff add to “bag of tricks”

Two dozen of RCMA’s finest school-age teachers met before the Christmas vacation for two days of training.

Loaded with important information as well as an array of fresh, creative activities, the training no doubt helped to maximize each staff’s “bag of tricks.”

Staff from after-school programs in Ruskin, Immokalee and Dade City areas enjoyed the overnight stay at Cedarkirk, which at times was likened to a crazy slumber social, where old and new paths crossed and the anxiety of the upcoming holiday added to the merry madness.

Those who attended the training included: Josue Rincon, Arnie Nieto, Pete Cade, Frank Ramirez, Catalina Torres, Leticia Avelar, Beatriz Avilez, Cynthia Estrada, Osvaldo Quintanilla, Norma Caserez, Michelle Orosco, Catellano Palanco, Andrea Najera, Cecilia Ramirez, Adela Sanchez, Mauricio Palanco, Manuel Benz, Richard Padilla, Emma Martinez, Leticia Manriquez, Hortencia Garcia, Greg Burgos, Daniel Stowe, Juan Calderon.



SCHOOL AGE STAFF take time out from learning at the wooded Cedarkirk site to pose for this photo.

Una oportunidad de empezar nuevamente y "hacer lo correcto"

DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

Este es un año nuevo, la oportunidad de empezar de nuevo, de soñar nuevos sueños y hacer nuevos planes. Es el tiempo oportuno para pensar acerca de todo lo que queremos hacer.

Todos nosotros en RCMA tenemos grandes sueños, deseos y planes.

Primero, queremos hacer mas cosas por los empleados y los niños que servimos. Queremos:

- Edificios mas bonitos.
- Patios de juego mas seguros con muchas entretenimientos para los niños.
- Mas oportunidades de entrenamiento para que los empleados continuen superandose.
- Aumento de sueldo y beneficios.
- Valorar la contribución de los empleados por medio de

Es la acción, no el fruto de la acción que es importante. Tienes que hacer lo correcto. Puede que no esté en tu poder, que no esté en tu tiempo, que haya alguna fruta. Pero eso no quiere decir que paras de hacer lo correcto."

—Gandhi

alabanzas y reconocimiento.

Sengundo, queremos:

- Proveer cuidado infantil de calidad a familias que estan inscritas en listas de espera.
- Ayudar a nuestras familias a reconocer su fortaleza y méritas para avanzar en ellos.

Tercero, queremos pensar que mas podemos hacer por niños mayores los cuales estan

- perdidos en la escuela

académicamente,

- fracasando académicamente y dejando de asistir.

Ellos nos necesitan y nosotros podemos hacer mas—tal vez podemos empezar escuelas de alternativa.

Esta es una citacion de la tarjeta de Navidad de RCMA de 1997 y yo creo que resume el trabajo que hacemos:

Es la acción, no el fruto de la acción que es importante.

Tienes que hacer lo correcto.

Puede que no esté en tu poder, que no esté en tu tiempo, que haya algun fruto.

Pero eso no quiere decir que paras de hacer lo correcto.

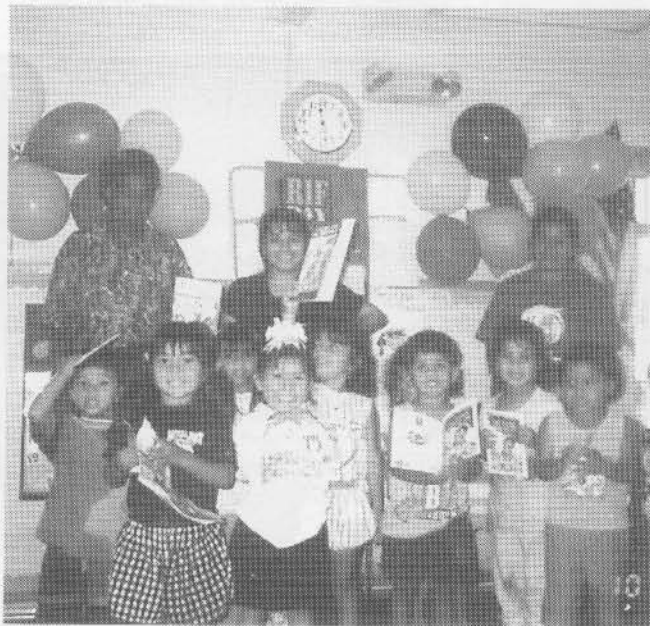
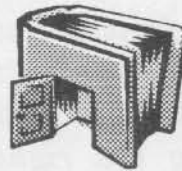
Tal vez nunca sepas los resultados de tus acciones.

Pero si no haces nada no habrá ningun resultado.

— Gandhi

Barbara Mainster

Andrew RIF day brings smiles



READING IS FUNDAMENTAL: Children proudly display their own book choice. Supporting their efforts on a path of reading readiness are (left to right) teachers Marieta Castillo and Flor Amaya, and parent volunteer Hilda Saucedo.

Photo by ADA AMAN

RCMA Christmas card

(Continued from page 1)

Christmas card and I believe sums up the work we do:

It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important.

You have to do the right thing.

It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit.

But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing.

You may never know what results come from your action.

But if you do nothing, there will be no result.

— Gandhi

Barbara Mainster
Executive Director

Support Services Assistant commutes 2,000 miles to college

By MIKE CLARK
Staff Writer

Every RCMA employee should have a career development plan. Many of us include continuing our education. That is often difficult to do because, among many reasons, we live in rural counties far from college campuses where classes are offered.

However, some people have the determination to balance the demands of family and work with education goals.

Edith Edgar, the area support services assistant for Indian River and Palm Beach Counties, is one of those people.

Edie isn't satisfied with staying the same. She always wants to learn more.

Edie has found a different way to get her Bachelor's degree in Business at the University of Phoenix, Arizona.

Phoenix is 2,000 miles away, so driving to class would be very difficult.



Edie will complete all her classes on the computer. When she has to take tests they will be given to her by the Fellsmere Elementary School principal.

RCMA staff are involved in the local schools in many ways, but this is the first time I know of a parent going to the principal's office to take a test.

When I asked Edie why she chose this method of getting a college degree, she responded this



Photo by GERRY LAMBERT

Edie Edgar utilizes her computer skills.

way: As the single parent of a nine-year-old son, Jordan, the "on-line" computer classes allow her to spend time with Jordan and to role model how important an education is to her.

Edie Edgar isn't satisfied with staying the same. She always wants to learn more.

Edie will also take the CLEP tests to get college credit for knowledge that she already has in some subjects. She plans to finish the degree in two years.

Jordan will benefit from mom going to college, but other children are already benefiting from Jordan. He sometimes volunteers at the Fellsmere Child Development Center when he doesn't have too much homework.

Jordan has done puppet shows for the pre-school children and reads stories. This is "cross-age tutoring." When older

children read with younger children, both groups learn to read better.

Edie says that it gives Jordan an activity after school and makes him feel good to help the younger children.

Edie's motivation and support of friends will help her accomplish her goals. Most important, she identified her own goals and found her own way of making her dreams come true. She knew what was important in her personal life and looked for a college program that fit her needs. □

GED Recipient

Congratulations to Maria Cavazos of Zellwood Child Development Center for this accomplishment.

Baby announcement congratulations . . .

Gerry Lambert, staff development specialist in the south region, had a boy, Sebastian Anthony on December 16.

The Surprising Story of Sam The Wonder Dog

T

he following is the introduction of the book *The Surprising Story of Sam B. Waffles: Wonder Dog!* by Tom Moonan.

Sometimes it causes me to wonder! I've been watching, and I've come to realize that among us are some uncommon people. They are different!

I watch these people and keep track of their behavior. I think they may be trying to tell us something. Let me give you an example.

Episode I

"I hate you and I wish you were dead!" The child shouted at her mother. That did it. Until this last burst of angry words the mother had remained somewhat calm. Not now. The

child's words must have penetrated to a deep wounded part of the mother—for now a cloud of angry pain cast its shadow over the situation. The mother reacted with a violent spank to the child's bottom.

Now in a rage, the mother screamed at her child. "Don't you ever talk to me like that again. Don't you know that I'm your Mother?" Spank, spank, spank!

The little girl was screaming now as her mother dragged her back to the car.

We, who were witnesses, were shaking our heads and muttering to each other. "Oh yes, it's uncomfortable and sad to see such behavior. But we all agreed that the child got exactly what she deserved."



Episode II

On a different day at a different time there was a similar incident. An emotional storm was raging inside a child and the effects were bursting out all over the place. Angry, ornery, mean-spirited words were flying out of the child, and all aimed directly at her mother.

"Uh, oh, not again," I thought to myself. She's going to get a good spanking for that. But no. This time it was different.

I watched with amazement as the mother dropped to one knee, looked into her child's eyes . . . and gently inquired, "Are you having a hard day? It sounds like you are feeling very frustrated and angry about something."

The child's anger began to subside—leaving space for a gentle calm to enter. "Yes" the child responded with tears, as she shared with her mother the hurt and pain of a very difficult day at school. And the mother understood . . .

"Would you like a hug?," she asked her child with open arms . . . and of course, like a shivering child too long in the cold, she accepted this offer of loving warmth.

We who watched were also warmed by the radiance of the mother's wisdom and love.

We stared at the mother and child as they walked away holding hands—and shaking our heads, we all agreed, "The child got exactly what she deserved."



We can learn a lot from watching. Watch closely and rain-drops and roses will begin to teach us. We will learn from rabbits, angels, toddlers, trees, flowers, mountains, and bubbling creeks . . . and some of us will learn from watching Wonder Dogs!

And that's what this story is about. It's about watching, learning and discovering wonder. It's

about being different. It's about a little dog and little girl. It's about seeing . . . It's about the power of love to heal . . . And it's about discovering and sharing our gifts of Wonder . . . ! □

Tom Moonan used to work at RCMA. He wrote A Course In Leadership: Steps to Leadership Improvement and began its use in RCMA. He now resides in Kansas City, Missouri where he writes and learns from Sam.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A thank you from one teacher to another

Dear HOY,

The following is from Carolyn Cook, a teacher at Zolfo Springs Elementary School. She wrote this to Theresa Crews, a teacher at the Zolfo Springs After School program.

Please put it in the RCMA HOY.

Signed,

Evan Portee

Area Coordinator, Highlands and Hardee counties

Dear Theresa Crews,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the help you have given my girls—Josie, Belinda, and Mayda—during the after school program. I see lots of improvement in their reading and I appreciate your effort. . . .

Yours truly,
Carolyn Cook

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NOTICIAS DE PADRES

ENERO/FEBRERO 1998 Núm. 12 Suplemento Bimensual de RCMA HOY en Envolvimiento de Padres

Envolvimiento de Padres: ¿Un Cliché Gastado?

Por Daniel Stowe

Director del Proyecto DOP Ruskin

Yo quiero deshacerme del "envolvimiento de padres". Déjeme explicar: quiero deshacerme del término "envolvimiento de padres".

En nuestro programa después de clases usamos un término más largo que nos ayuda a enfocarnos en lo que queremos para las familias que servimos: "Padres envueltos más activamente en la educación de sus hijos."

Claro, no es tan fácil de decir como el famoso término "envolvimiento de padres", pero nos saca de las reuniones donde los padres hacen una actividad y se las llevan a su casa o reuniones para "conocer los padres" a "esto es lo que usted necesita hacer" para ayudar a su hijo/a a tener más éxito en la escuela:

* Envíe a su hijo/a a la escuela con un buen mensaje todos los días "Te quiero, estudia mucho, eres importante para mí."

* Examine el día escolar de su hijo cuidadosamente cada día. Haga que le explique hora por hora, clase por clase, lo que hizo desde la última vez que lo vio siete u ocho horas atrás.

* Visite al maestro de su hijo/a por lo menos cuatro a seis veces al año

* Leale o escuche a su hijo/a leer todos los días.

Nosotros hemos estado ex-

poniendo a los padres a estas ideas por algún tiempo y dándole ánimos para aplicar estos principios más allá de RCMA.

Hemos animado a los padres a usar estos principios con sus niños de edad escolar.

¡Está funcionando! En una junta de PTA reciente en la escuela primaria de Wimauma, 90 padres hispanos asistieron comparado con 5 padres del resto de la población de la escuela.

La matrícula de la escuela es 655 de la cual 508 son Hispanos y 147 No-Hispanos (Euro-Americanos 102, Africa-Americano 42, Asiático, Nativo Americano y Multi-Racial uno de cada uno). En otras palabras, la población escolar es de 4:1 Hispano/No-Hispano donde la ración de padres que asisten a las juntas fue de aproximadamente 18:1 Hispano/No-Hispano.



Foto por Daniel Stowe

Sra. Adame y Sr. Torres hablan durante la junta de padres mientras estudiantes trabajan en el laboratorio de computadora.

Los padres de los niños matriculados en el Programa de Liderazgo de RCMA vinieron recientemente a una junta para revisar el progreso de sus hijos. Mientras los niños estaban en el "Internet" con las computadoras del Laboratorio de Computadoras de RCMA, los padres tuvieron su junta en el mismo salón. Fue muy poderoso.

Aun cuando ninguno de los padres se había sentido lo suficiente confiado para aprender a usar las computadoras, yo noté un brillo especial en sus ojos al ver a sus hijos usar las computadoras.

Mike Sanchez, Director Ejecutivo de una organización nacional que ayuda a los delincuentes juveniles y persona que ha apoyado a la comunidad campesina, explica el camino al éxito con los adolescente de la siguiente manera:

- 1 Expresar amor en la familia
- 2 Escuche y pida que aclare si no entiende a su hijo y
- 3 Siempre muestre respeto.

A esto yo quisiera añadir: la clave es trabajar con los padres uno a la vez o en grupos pequeños para ENSEÑARLES COMO estar más envueltos activamente en la educación de sus hijos.

Juzque su éxito por el grado en que disfruta paz, salud y felicidad.

De: Libro Pequeño de Instrucciones de la Vida

Editor: Irene G. Brammertz

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

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PARENT NEWS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1998 Issue 12 A Bi-Monthly Parent Involvement Supplement of RCMA

Parent Involvement a Worn-Out Cliché?

By Daniel Stowe
Project Director, Ruskin DOP

I want to get rid of "parent involvement" now. Let me explain. I want to get rid of the term "parent involvement".

In our After School Programs we use a much longer term that helps us focus on what we want for the families we serve: "Parents more actively involved in their children's education."

Granted, it doesn't roll off the tongue like that famous catch-all "parent involvement", but it does get us away from just "get to know ya", "make and take" parent meetings to "this is what you need to do" to help your child be more successful in school:

- * Send your child to school with a good message every day "I love you, study hard, you're important to me."
- * Process your child's school day carefully every day. Have them explain hour by hour, class by class, what they did since you last saw them seven or eight hours ago.
- * Visit your child's teacher at least four to six times a year
- * Read or listen to your child read every day.

We have been exposing parents to these ideas for some time now and encouraged them to apply these principles beyond RCMA.

It's working! At a recent

PTA meeting at Wimauma Elementary School, 90 Hispanic parents attended compared to 5 parents from the rest of the school's population.

We have encouraged parents to use these principles with their school-age children.

The School's enrollment is 655 of which 508 are Hispanic and 147 non-Hispanic (Euro-American 102, African-American 42, Asian, Native American and Multi-Racial 1 each). In other words, the school population is roughly 4:1 Hispanic/Non-Hispanic whereas the ratio for parents attending the meeting was approximately 18:1 Hispanic/Non-Hispanic.

Parents of children enrolled in RCMA's middle school leadership program recently came to a meeting to review their children's progress. While their children "surf'd the net" in the

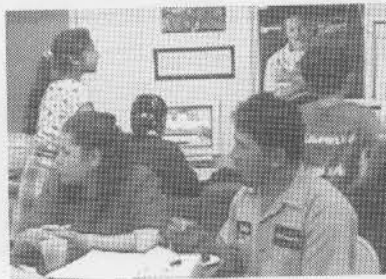


Photo by Daniel Stowe
Mrs. Adame and Mr. Torres talking during a parent meeting while students work in the computer lab.

RCMA Computer Lab, the parents conducted the meeting in the very same room. Powerful stuff.

Although until now none of the parents have felt confident enough to learn more about using the computers themselves, I have noticed a proud gleam in their eyes as they watched their youngsters getting the computers to miraculously execute every command.

Mike Sanchez, a Ruskin farm worker community Favorite Son and Executive Director of a national non-profit organization that helps delinquent juveniles, explained the path to success with teenagers as follows:

- 1 Express love in the family
- 2 Listen and ask for clarification if you don't understand your child, and
- 3 Always give respect.

To this I wish to add:
The key is to work with parents one at a time or in small groups to **SHOW** them **HOW** to be more actively involved in their children's education.

Judge your success by the degree that you're enjoying peace, health and happiness.
From: Life's Little Instruction Book

Editor: Irene G. Brammertz

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

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