



RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



JULY 1998 Issue 63

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

Smiles, kindness and "going the extra mile" are key

By GERRY LAMBERT
Editor

Annie Lunford, a cook at New Hope Foundation Child Development Center in Pahokee, was at a loss for words on one recent occasion. Her co-workers were not, however.

Annie's co-workers at New Hope chose her as "Employee Of The Year" at their staff recognition celebration on July 2. In honoring Annie, this is what they said about her:

- "Whatever anyone asks her to do, she does with a smile."
- "Mrs. Annie satisfies and goes the extra mile to please everyone, wanting everyone to be happy."
- "She is a kind lady. I look at her as a mother."

Annie was also recognized for her



NEW HOPE "EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR": Annie Lunford prepares corn meal for children at this Pahokee center.

Photo by GERRY LAMBERT

hours over 49 weeks. She did this while taking a break from cooking for one year.

Annie previously worked in sugar cane with her husband, Bobby Johnson, driving a van.

In addition to making the New Hope center a better place for staff and children through her positive presence and cooking, Annie has passed the value of education on to her four children—all daughters.

One daughter, Beverly Smith, just graduated from Florida Atlantic University in May with a degree in Elementary Education. Another daughter, Angela, graduated from high school in June and will enter college this fall. A third daughter, LaShonda will graduate from high school next year and the fourth, Shaneka,

"The first thing I do when I go to the center is ask 'How can I make a better day for someone?'" — Annie Lunford, cook

"good cookin'."

"I felt overjoyed by receiving it. I felt like crying," Annie said, proudly remembering the evening she received this honor. "People are easy to please. They like my cooking."

Reflecting her positive attitude and spirit that endear her to others, Annie added: "The first thing I do when I go to the center is ask 'How can I make a

better day for someone?'"

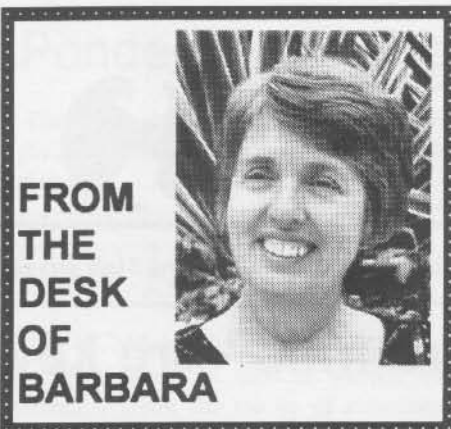
Annie cooks for about 55 children and staff. But this isn't "too challenging" for her. She cooked for nine years in a seafood restaurant in Pahokee which she operated, serving over 150 people daily.

Annie came to New Hope in 1996 where she started as a teacher trainee. She had already received her CDA equivalent when she began, studying early childhood development for 728

will be in ninth grade.

Annie's favorite foods to prepare? "I'm always baking something sweet—cakes and pies," she said. The saying is "You are what you eat." In Annie's case, the staff seem to say, "She is what she bakes"—sweet. □

Computers for kids a reality



Our staff had the chance this past Spring to look five years into the future and tell us what they saw for RCMA as it relates to children, parents and staff.

One of the most consistent "hopes" was for computers in the classrooms for the children.

I know this came up because the staff recognize the need for our kids to be able to compete in school. Very few, if any, of the families we serve can afford to buy computers for their homes. For years, the president of our Board of Directors, George Sorn, also has been advocating for RCMA to get computers for our children.

You spoke and we listened. Every classroom serving four-year-olds will have a new computer with appropriate software and teacher training within the next few months.

You spoke and we listened. Every classroom serving four-year-olds will have a new computer with appropriate software and teacher training within the next few months.

More good news is that the State of Florida has provided more money for our Title XX-funded centers that are NAEYC accredited. That means more money for salaries, better equipment, materials, and facilities.

I hope this will be an incentive to all staff to work harder than ever on NAEYC accreditation.

Thanks for giving us your input for future planning. Together we can make some of those ideas become reality. □

Barbara Mainster, Executive Director

Computadoras para niños una realidad

**DEL ESCRITORIO DE
BARBARA**

Ustedes hablaron y nosotros escuchamos. En los proximos meses cada salon de clase que sirva niños de cuatro años recibirá una computadora junto con programas adecuados y entrenamiento para las maestras.

Nuestro personal tuvo la oportunidad, la pasada primavera, de proyectar su vision hacia los futuros cinco años de RCMA y comunicarnos lo que ven concierne a niños, padres y personal.

Uno de los deseos más mencionado fue el de computadoras en los salones para los niños.

Yo se que éste es un deseo primordial porque el personal reconoce lo que es necesario para que nuestros niños puedan ser competentes en la escuela. Muy pocas, si acaso algunas de las familias que servimos pueden darse el lujo de comprar una computadora para su casa.

Desde hace varios años, el presidente de nuestra mesa directiva, George Sorn, tambien ha estado abogando para que RCMA obtenga computadoras para nuestros niños.

Ustedes hablaron y nosotros escuchamos. En los proximos meses, cada salon de clase que sirva niños de cuatro años tendrá una computadora junto con programas adecuados y entrenamiento para las maestras.

Otra buena noticia es que el estado de la Florida ha proveido mas dinero para

Sigue en pagina 3, COMPUTADORAS



REDLANDS CENTER: Congratulations to this Homestead center which recently received NAEYC accreditation. Staff are (first row, left to right): Nelva Gonzalez, Maria Maldonado, Maria Salinas, Pedro Delgado, Luzu Adame, Delsi Molina, Janet Rincon (Brenda on her lap), Maria Higuita. Second row l-r: Martha Pesina, Yadira Treviño, Marysol Ramos, Blanca Velasquez, Mindy Garcia, Margarita Velasquez, Lorena Lopez, Maria Masias, Mercy Walls, Jackie Jost, Maria Alvarez, Blanca Garcia, Nelly Garcia. Third row l-r: Jaime Burciaga, Yesenia Vasquez. Photo by SYLVIA MIRALRIO

Volunteers do more than help out

By **LESLIE MOGUIL**
Staff Writer

Volunteers are the messengers that take their experience at RCMA and spread it far and wide.

These persons who want to help usually come to us with open arms. They want to help for many reasons:

- 1) It makes them feel good about themselves.
- 2) They were raised to believe that helping others should be a part of life.
- 3) They want to learn something new.
- 4) They want to be involved in their community.
- 5) They have to do it to graduate, or to get off probation.
- 6) They do it as part of their membership in a school service club.

"I really wanted to help, but honestly I felt like I wasn't useful."
—a dissatisfied volunteer

In the past many volunteers at RCMA have commented about how rewarding it is to work with our children and staff.

However, a large number of comments have not been so positive. These are a few of the not-so-good ones:

- "I really wanted to help, but honestly I felt like I wasn't useful."
- "The children and staff do not speak English so it was difficult for me."
- "My concerns were not addressed."
- "I stood around most of the time."
- "No one took the time to explain it to me."
- "I didn't feel welcome."
- "I wasn't appreciated."

These volunteers most likely left dissatisfied, and guess what message they took with them?

They delivered their message to their friends, families, co-workers, churches, synagogues, clubs, schools, businesses.

Wow! Does this hurt RCMA!

Each one of us has the power to control the messages that our volunteers carry out to the community. When a volunteer feels welcome, useful, and helpful, they feel just like we do about our jobs.

Such volunteers feel like they make a difference, and they share that feeling with the world.

Next time someone offers their help, welcome them, give them some of your time, make them feel valued.

The rewards of a volunteer with a positive message to send out to the community are limitless. □



RUSKIN INFANT CENTER: (left to right) Josie Gracia, early childhood specialist, Yolanda Guajardo, center coordinator, and Veronica DuBois, outreach worker. They serve children, families and staff with a smile.

Photo by IRENE BRAMMERTZ

Computadoras

(Sigue de pagina 2)

nuestros centros con financiamiento titulo XX que estan acreditadas NAEYC. Esto quiere decir, mas dinero para salarios, mejor material, mejor equipo y mejores edificios.

Espero que éste sea un incentivo para

que todo el personal trabaje mas duro que antes para obtener acreditacion de NAEYC.

Gracias por compartir sus ideas para la planeación de nuestro futuro. Juntos podremos hacer que algunas de éstas ideas se hagan realidad. □

Barbara Mainster,
Directora Ejecutiva

Career development congratulations

Luz Arnold, senior teacher at The Andrew Center in Florida City, received her CDA.

Mirta Incicco and Erica Martinez, teachers at South Dade Pre, received their CDA. Delia Mendez, also from this center, earned her high school diploma.

Maria Maldonado, Nora Plata and Nelva Gonzalez, all of Redlands Child Development Center, received their CDA.

Birth announcement congratulations

Cesar Barrera, center coordinator, Westside Village, became the proud father of Angel on May 23.

Dalia Martinez, teacher, South Dade Child Development Center Pre, gave birth to Jose Antonio on June 8.

Lisa Bocardo, Mascotte lead teacher, gave birth to Natasha on June 20.

Nelda Gaytan, teacher, Redlands Child Development Center, gave birth to Mirian Lee on June 30.

Melissa Mancha, accounts payable specialist, The Rollason Center, gave birth to Isaac Anthony on July 6.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ponderings of a retired area coordinator

The following is a letter from Edna Blue, longtime area coordinator for the Palatka / Crescent City area, to executive director Barbara Mainster, on the occasion of Edna's retirement. It was dated June 10, 1998.

Dear RCMA HOY,

With plenty of time to ponder and reflect, I think the reality of retirement has become easier to accept. Over the past seven months, I have had the opportunity to truly assess my time and experiences as area coordinator.

Words cannot truly express my appreciation and gratitude for your loyalty, and genuine concern for my welfare during my tenure there. The 16 years of service were definitely great ones, and will remain in my heart.

The family atmosphere was evident at RCMA, which leaves me with obvious mixed emotions. On one hand, I was sad to leave, but very blessed on the other end of the spectrum, because I realized how fortunate I was to have had the opportunity to work with such a wonderful group of people.

The experiences were beneficial and I looked forward to the daily challenges. The development of RCMA was indeed a team effort.

The character displayed by the staff coincided with our focus on the growth

I feel totally confident that the integrity and growth of RCMA is being maintained under Barbara Mainster's leadership. Her dedication and commitment to RCMA will continue to foster a strong bond between families, children, and staff.

— Edna Blue

and development of underprivileged families and children.

I cherish the memories which will be forever etched in my heart. The conferences, social gatherings, and ultimate attention to everyday affairs was special.

I feel totally confident that the integrity and growth of RCMA is being maintained under Barbara Mainster's leadership. Her dedication and commitment to RCMA will continue to foster a strong bond between families, children, and staff.

Remember that I will always be a devout advocate and supporter of RCMA.

Signed,

Edna Blue, Retired Area Coordinator,
Palatka / Crescent City Area

Why you should save now for retirement

By IRENE BRAMMERTZ
PARENT NEWS Editor

Perhaps you've thought about saving for retirement—taking advantage of the retirement benefit RCMA offers—but that's as far as you've gone.

One common question is "Why should I reduce my take-home pay for some distant time that may never arrive?" Then you add, "I can't afford it, anyway."

Here are some reasons:

- 1) Getting older is an unavoidable fact of life and at some point you will most likely reach retirement age.
- 2) Social Security is not going to provide the same standard of living that you have now. You will need additional income.
- 3) It is EASY to accumulate the extra funds if you start early enough.
- 4) With RCMA's retirement plan, you not only help provide for your own future but will leave something for your family upon your death. (With Social Security, whatever you don't get to use is lost to your family.)
- 5) You deserve a retirement with financial comfort. You are worth it.

⇒ And you say you can't afford it?

If you think you can't afford it, now is the perfect time to begin. The pay increase of 2.1%—cost of living allowance (COLA)—that appears in your July 31 paycheck can be your contribution. RCMA will match 2% as well (for eligible employees). Get started today.

Happening bits

Juana Guevara, Ruskin Migrant Head Start teacher, is proud of her son Gilberto, who graduated from Tampa Tech High School with honors.

Dina Cedillo, outreach worker at Zellwood Child Development Center, recently became a notary public to assist

parents in providing proof of residency.

Patricia Armond, Immokalee Child Development Center Pre, completed a program and is now a Certified Nursing Assistant.

Maria Rodriguez, center coordinator at Immokalee Child Development Center Pre, recently became a homeowner.

Jean Eklund, The Rollason Center, studied clownology for a week at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse. She is an enthusiastic clown.



Jean Eklund

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EAR is there.
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