



RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



SEPTEMBER 1998 Issue 65 OUR MISSION: Helping Parents Restart, Giving Kids a Head Start, Helping Staff Develop

Barrera and Concepcion help usher in computers

By LESLIE MOGUIL
Staff Writer

As RCMA approaches the new millennium computers are becoming part of the way in which we provide quality services to children and their families.

The Head Start Family Information System (HSFIS) is a computer program that stores information for children and families at our Head Start centers, as well as makes it possible to look at our child development programs as a whole.

We have two computer specialists who will help us make a smooth transition to greater computer use. They are Cesar Barrera, the HSFIS Coordinator and Nidia Concepcion, the HSFIS Data Specialist. They bring their unique talents and experiences to provide support for the successful launching and on-going technical assistance necessary to make HSFIS an RCMA success story.



HEAD START FAMILY INFORMATION SYSTEM SPECIALISTS: Nidia Concepcion and Cesar Barrera help make documentation process easier for Head Start Centers.

Photo by LESLIE MOGUIL

According to Nidia, "she did her absolute best so that me and my sisters could have a better life than she had."

Nidia began her education at an RCMA center in Immokalee when she was three or four. She entered

returned by the time school started in the Fall. "She really believed in that. She felt education was important if you wanted to make something of yourself."

Nidia's mom thought school was important, but was not directly involved due to her limited English and the amount of time she spent working in order to support her three children.

Nidia was recognized as the highest achiever in the sixth and eighth grades and graduated third in her class from Immokalee High School.

Nidia shared that she had two positive adult role models who made a difference in her education. Both were males. Her ninth grade history teacher "really made us think. He helped create my passion for

As a freshman Nidia enrolled in a computer class, where she had to write a simple program. "When it worked I fell in love with the idea of working with computers and now they would become part of my future."

I had the pleasure of interviewing Nidia and Cesar to explore their past, and look at their present and future goals. These are two RCMA staff who truly beat the odds!

Concepcion's story

Nidia Concepcion is a native Floridian, the oldest of three girls. Her mother, born in Texas, speaks little English and was a single parent since Nidia was nine.

kindergarten not speaking or understanding much English. "It was hard, I was very quiet and shy. Reading aloud was the most difficult. I had difficulty with my pronunciation and went to speech classes throughout my elementary school years."

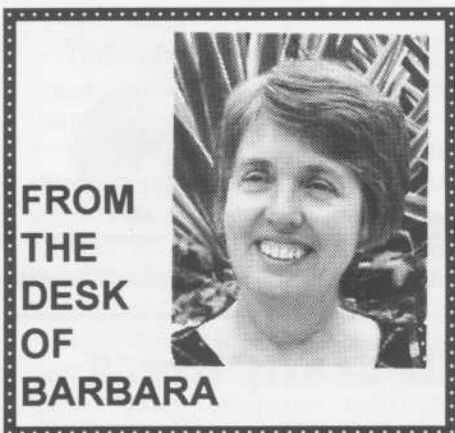
During these same years Nidia's family traveled up the Southeast migrant stream during the summer months to work in the fields. Her mother made sure they didn't leave before school ended and they always

history." Her high school librarian encouraged her to read the classics, like Shakespeare and mythology. "Once I began I continued."

Nidia attended Tampa University as a freshman on her high school counselors

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Vacation renews passions



Vacations are over now and most of us are back to work. I hope everyone had a chance to step back from the day-to-day job long enough to get the perspective we need to keep going in the best RCMA tradition.

Within the few weeks of my return from vacation, I have shared some passion for parent involvement with the Palatka staff and got to see their classrooms set up and ready for kids. The staff was enthusiastic and full of hopes for what they were going to do for kids this year.

Then I had the opportunity to see the beautiful new doors at the Delray Farmworker Child Development Center and watch teachers lovingly guide the toddlers in play.

At Belle Glade I observed teachers seriously working on lesson plans at naptime while beautiful children slept on, regaining energy to run and play before going home for the day.

At Belle Glade I observed teachers seriously working on lesson plans at naptime while beautiful children slept on, regaining energy to run and play before going home for the day.

And last, but not least, after visiting the Glades Center in Moore Haven, and sharing the center coordinator's enthusiasm for their newly painted classrooms, computer, and bright floors, I saw a teenager waiting for her mother in a car in the parking lot.

Jenny Rich, our center coordinator, shared with me that she was "one of ours"—ten years ago. I immediately turned to the teenager and asked, "How are you doing in school?" She smiled beautifully and said, "Just fine, ma'am."

Now with days like those my perspective is great! We do the most important work there is—helping children succeed in life. Give me a call if you ever forget it. □

Barbara Mainster, Executive Director



CAREER DEVELOPMENT: Congratulations to Isabel Garcia, a new area coordinator. In order to better serve the Highlands/Hardee counties, the area has been divided. Isabel, former center coordinator at Bowling Green Child Development Center, takes a big professional step in assuming this position. Isabel is currently pursuing her associates degree from South Florida Community College, with a continued interest in early childhood education.

Photo by GERRY LAMBERT

Vacaciones renuevan pasiones

**DEL ESCRITORIO DE
BARBARA**

En Belle Glade observé a las maestras seriamente planeando lecciones mientras que los niños tomaban una siesta y recobraban su energía para correr y jugar antes de regresar a sus casas.

Las vacaciones se han terminado, ahora la mayoría de nosotros hemos regresado al trabajo. Espero que cada uno haya tenido la oportunidad de retirarse lo suficiente de la rutina diaria del trabajo para recapturar la perspectiva necesaria para continuar la mejor tradición de RCMA.

En las cortas semanas de mi regreso de vacaciones, he compartido mi pasión por involucramiento con familias con el personal de Palatka y pude ver sus salones organizados y listos para los niños. El personal estaba entusiasmado y lleno de esperanza por lo que iban a hacer por los niños éste año.

Entonces tuve la oportunidad de ver las nuevas y hermosas puertas de Delray Farmworker Child Development Center y observé a las maestras guiando amorosamente a los niños mientras jugaban.

En Belle Glade observé a las maestras seriamente planeando lecciones mientras

Sigue en pagina 3, VACACIONES

Barrera and Concepcion value their education

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advice thanks to the scholarships she had qualified for. Her mother and sisters drove her to the dorm where she would be living away from home for the first time with a stranger.

She soon found out that she was very naïve. Lots of drinking and partying were going on around her in the dorm. She found it relatively easy to say no, and spent most of her time with her studies.

As a freshman she enrolled in a computer class, where she had to write a simple program. "When it worked I fell in love with the idea of working with computers and now they would become part of my future."

After one year her scholarship money was exhausted, she returned home where she worked full time and went to school part time at the local community college. After receiving her associates she enrolled at the local branch of USF. Much to her dismay computer science was not an option. She settled for accounting and found an apartment in Fort Myers, so that she could find a job that related to her field. Six months later she applied for an Accounts Payable Position with RCMA and moved back to Immokalee.

Good news arrived with the opening of Florida Gulf Coast University. Computer Science was now an option. Nidia wasted no time transferring. Her mother continues to support her in her educational goals with encouragement and any money she can spare. "I remember my mom working all day at the nursery, coming home to cook dinner and then spent the night working

Cesar has graduated with an A.S. Degree from Florida Technical College in computers.

at the packing house. She really made sacrifices for us. I want to be able to find a good paying job so that she will not have to work any more.



Nidia looks forward to her new position as HSFIS Data Specialist. "It's related to what I want to do, I have the opportunity to meet new people and travel sometimes. "It is even getting easier for me to go up to a stranger and help answer their questions about HSFIS."

Nidia continues her studies at FGCU and is aiming to receive her degree in two years.

Barrera's story

Cesar Barrera was born in Mexico, second of five children. His mother and father had a small farm in Mexico. His father's first love was music, and he moonlighted playing a twelve string guitar called the bajo sexto with local groups.

Two of Cesar's siblings had been born in the U.S. and were being cared for in Texas by his grandmother. Cesar's family came to the United States in a small borrowed boat across the river. "It took two trips to cross the river because the boat was small.

The family stayed with an aunt in Texas and began migrating to Florida with her. Mostly they worked in strawberries and tomatoes. Cesar remembers eating more strawberries than picking them. Cesar didn't care for school in Florida. "I felt like an outsider, very different. I did not speak English and most of the kids did not speak Spanish. I would consider myself a shy child who followed the rules." Following the rules was not enough, Cesar was retained in both

the second and third grades in Plant City.

When Cesar was nine his families' home in Texas was broken into while they were working in Florida. They returned to Texas unwilling to take the risk of this happening again. Cesar's father got a job as a machine operator working with assembling automobile components.

This turn of events made it possible for Cesar to finish his education in Texas, graduate from high school and enroll in the local community college for the coming Fall semester. During his senior year Cesar's father was injured on the job and was unable to return to work. Cesar sold his car of six months in order to help his family make the move back to Plant City.

College didn't seem an option in Florida, especially without transportation. "My mom had gotten a job with RCMA as an assistant cook and later encouraged me to apply for a teacher trainee opening."

He did, and was hired. Cesar has also been a center coordinator, outreach worker and a services support assistant. He has since graduated with an A.S. Degree from Florida Technical College in computers. He is married and has two children.

He plans to continue his education, and is waiting to hear on his application for U.S. citizenship. He also would like to get started on some home improvements.

Cesar is excited about his new position as HSFIS Coordinator. He enjoys meeting new people. "It makes me happy to be able to help someone else." He believes Rodney Suratt, Nidia and himself make a good RCMA HSFIS Team! □

Vacaciones

(Sigue de pagina 2)

que los niños tomaban una siesta y recobran su energía para correr y jugar antes de regresar a sus casas.

Y finalmente, después de visitar el Centro de Glades en Moore Haven y compartir el entusiasmo de la coordinadora

del centro por sus salones recientemente pintados, computador, y pisos brillantes, ví a una joven esperando a su mamá en un carro en el parqueadero. Jenny Rich, nuestra coordinadora de centro, me dijo que esta chica fue "una de las nuestras" hace diez años.

Yo inmediatamente volteé y le pregunté a la chica "Como te está llendo en la escuela?" Ella sonrió lindamente y respondió "Bien, señora."

Así que con días como esas mi perspectiva es fantástica! Nosotros hacemos el trabajo mas importante que hay—ayudando a los niños a triunfar en la vida. Dame una llamada si esto se te olvida. □

Barbara Mainster,
Directora Ejecutiva

Floor award winners

Three classrooms in south region centers received recognition for maintaining exceptional floors.

They included Fred Dennis Child Development Center (Wauchula) teachers Gracie Valadez and Valerie Thomas of Red Bird classroom, and Ramona Matthews and Lorraine Santellano of Green Frog classroom.

Avon Park Head Start teachers Sandy Cook, Pam Allen, and Melvin Hymes of Yellow Duck classroom were also recognized for maintaining exceptional floors.

Three south region centers were recognized as outstanding in maintaining classroom floors. They were New Hope Foundation Child Development Center, Avon Park Head Start and Fred Dennis Child Development Center.

Tremellings' son takes first place at modeling and talent competition

Teresa Tremelling, The Rollason Center, and Steve Tremelling, floor crew supervisor, are proud of their son, Andy, age 16.

Andy competed in the American Modeling and Talent Convention in July. He was the winner of the teen monologue competition. He was sixth in his commercial, 15th in his sitcom and in his theatrical head shot, and second in group runway. Two hundred teenagers competed in the 13-17 age group.



Andy Tremelling has three agents in Atlanta and New York and one producer in Orlando interested in him. He is also modeling and recently was in the Lifestyle section of the News-Press, a Ft. Myers daily.

Center dedicated to local educator and community activist

By **LESLIE MOGUIL**
Staff Writer

Dedication ceremonies took place this summer in the community of Oak Grove with a host of local dignitaries, community members, RCMA staff and friends and family of Ms. Irene Monroe Walker looking on. The Irene Monroe Walker Head Start Center awaits the last few finishing touches before it opens to serve children this Fall.

The center is dedicated to the life and work of Ms. Irene Monroe Walker, born in 1910, she assisted her father in his store as a salesperson, postal assistant and in recording marriages and deaths when he performed such services. She attended the Oak Grove Grammar School in Johnson, Stanton High School in Jacksonville, Florida National Junior College in St. Augustine and Florida A&M University in Tallahassee.

Ms. Walker taught school for sixteen years in Putnam County. She moved to Philadelphia where she was involved in academic, religious, political and social causes for 35 years. Upon returning to Putnam County she represented the poor in West Putnam by becoming a Community Action Board Member. Ms. Walker served as an appointee to former governor Bob Graham, attended the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter, by special invitation, and was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

Ms. Walker was the first black woman elected in Precinct 17 where she worked to register non-voters. She was an active leader in the Mt. Bethel Church, as well as a volunteer who truly made a difference in her community and beyond.

It is with great pride and honor that RCMA's newest Head Start Center bears the name Irene Monroe Walker Head Start in commemoration of Ms. Walker's lifetime commitment to community service and advocacy on behalf of the poor. □

Birth announcement congratulations . . .

Lupita Hendricksen, center coordinator at Children's House in Vero Beach, gave birth to Travis Keith on August 25.

Becky Garcia, early childhood specialist at Indian River Early Education Center in Fellsmere, gave birth to a girl, Yurely on August 30.

Register to vote

The deadline for registering to vote is **October 5 for the November 3 election day.**

For information on how to register call **Leslie Moguil at The Rollason Center in Immokalee at (800) 282-6540.**

Happening bit

Congratulations to Fidel Apolinar, maintenance department for Hardee County, who recently purchased a house in Wauchula.



Upcoming Event RCMA Statewide Conference

Who: CCs, ECSs, FSSs, OWs, SSAs
When: October 7-9
Where: Delta Orlando Resort, Orlando

Editor: Gerard Lambert
Staff Writer: Leslie Moguil
Please send suggestions, comments, and Letters to the Editor to the following address:
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1-800-328-1952**

PARENT NEWS

September/October 1998 Issue 16 A Bi-Monthly Parent Involvement Supplement of RCMA HOY

New Benefit! Florida KidCare! Apply now! **Call: 1-888-FLA-KIDS**

Recently I met a working family in Ruskin that was bemoaning the fact that they could not afford health insurance. They were especially worried about coverage for their five children. Both parents are working which brings their combined income above the limit to qualify for Medicaid. Since I had just learned of the new Program in the State of Florida called Florida KidCare, I sent Mrs. H. to the local Health Department to see if she could qualify.

Later that day she came back, grinning from ear to ear to tell us that for \$15.00 per month all of her five children were now insured and a big burden was lifted from her shoulders. The plan covers her children through an HMO, a clinic where she has taken her children before.

This story could be repeated again and again all over the State of Florida. Our State Government has decided to spend the Tobacco Settlement in a way that would benefit our most vulnerable citizens - our children.

Besides Medicaid, there are three additional separate programs:

CMS:

A Program for children who have special health care needs.

Ages birth through 18
Medical and income eligibility required.

Cost: no more than \$15 per household for family of four making less than \$2,742.00 per month.

MediKids:

A health insurance program similar to Medicaid.

Ages birth through 4.
For those ineligible for Medicaid and CMS.

Price is based on a sliding fee scale from \$10.00 per month to \$82.00 per month, depending on income.

MediKids offers more benefits than Healthy Kids and has no co-pay.

Healthy Kids:

A public/private partnership that provides comprehensive health insurance for children in participating counties.

Ages 5 through 18.
For those ineligible for Medicaid and CMS.

Price is based on a sliding fee scale from \$10.00 per month to \$82.00 per month, depending on income.

Healthy Kids requires a small co-payment for some of the services.

How to apply: Go to your nearest County Health Department or call **1-888-FLA-KIDS (1-888-352-5437)** toll-free (Spanish or English) or ask your Center Coordinator for help in getting more information.

Editor: Irene G. Brammertz

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

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Spanish Translation: Josie Gracia

Fax: 813-671-5272

NOTICIAS DE PADRES

Septiembre/Octubre 1998 Núm. 16 Suplemento Bimensual de RCMA HOY en Envolvimiento de Padres

¡ Nuevo Beneficio! ¡Florida KidCare! ¡Solicítelo ahora! Llame: 1-888-FLA-KIDS

Recientemente yo conocí a una familia en Ruskin que se quejaba de que no podía pagar un seguro de salud. Ellos estaban especialmente preocupados acerca de la cubierta de sus cinco hijos. Ambos padres están trabajando lo que trae un ingreso muy alto para calificar para Medicaid. Desde entonces me he enterado de que hay un programa nuevo en el estado de Florida llamado Florida Kid Care y envié a la señora H. al Departamento de Salud local para ver si ella podía calificar.

Ese mismo día ella regresó sonriendo de oreja a oreja para decirnos que por \$15 al mes todos sus niños estaban ahora asegurados y sentían que un gran peso se les había levantado de sus hombros. El plan cubre a sus hijos a través de un HMO, una clínica a donde ella había llevado a sus hijos antes. Este relato podría repetirse una y otra vez en Florida. Nuestro gobierno estatal ha decidido gastar el dinero de las demandas a las compañías de tabaco de una manera que pueda beneficiar a nuestros ciudadanos más vulnerables - nuestros niños.

Aparte del Medicaid, hay tres programas adicionales:

CMS:

Un programa para niños que tienen necesidades de salud especiales.

Edades: 0 a 18 años

Se requiere calificar por el ingreso y condición médica

Costo: no más de \$15 por casa para una familia de cuatro que hagan menos de \$2,742.00 al mes.

MediKids:

Un programa de seguro de salud parecido al Medicaid.

Edades: 0 a 4 años

Para las personas elegibles a Medicaid y CMS.

El precio se basa en una escala de pago desde \$10.00 al mes hasta \$82.00 al mes, dependiendo de los ingresos.

MediKids ofrece más beneficios que Healthy Kids y no tiene que pagar nada.

Healthy Kids:

Un acuerdo público/privado que provee seguro de salud para los niños de los condados que participan.

Edades: 5 a 18 años

Para aquellas personas que no califican para Medicaid o CMS.

El precio se basa en una escala de pago desde \$10.00 hasta \$82.00 al mes dependiendo del ingreso.

Healthy Kids requiere un pago pequeño para algunos de los servicios.

Cómo solicitar: Vaya al Departamento de Salud del Condado más cercano a usted o llame a 1-888-FLA-KIDS (1-888-352-5437) llamada gratis (Inglés o Español) o pregunte a su Coordinador/a del Centro para ayuda para obtener más información.

Editor: Irene G. Brammertz

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

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