



RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



May 1999

Issue 73

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



How does your garden grow?



By Melinda Cotts
Early Childhood Specialist

A garden grows in Bonita Springs thanks to the hard work and dedication of Eliazar Valdez and Rodolfo Herrera. These two men come to the Bonita Springs Migrant Head Start Center on a regular basis to do yard maintenance. When I asked if they could clear off a piece of land so the preschoolers and toddlers could have a garden, they were more than happy to oblige. They worked very hard and were not satisfied until it was the right size and looked just right. It was hard, hot work, but they worked without complaint until it was finished.

The children here at



MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR KIDS: Eliazar Valdez and Rodolfo Herrera, go out of their way to do expand their maintenance duties to include a garden for the children, families and staff at Bonita Springs Head Start. Children eagerly await the opportunity to tend the garden.

the center had been planting coriander, beans and sun flowers in any little bit of dirt they could find, and were thrilled when they came out to find a beautiful garden waiting for them with rich soil, arranged neatly in rows.

You could tell Eliazar and Rodolfo were proud as they stood back, wiped the sweat from their brows and admired their hand work, just as proud as the staff and children at the Bonita Springs Migrant Head Start Center were of them.

We would like to dedicate this garden to them to show our appreciation for a job well done and for bringing smiles to our children's faces.

Thanks again,
Eliazar and Rodolfo.

A successful open house!

Pomona Park had a wonderful open house on Wednesday, April 13th to show off their recently renovated, beautiful center. The day began with a flag presentation by Mr. Don Beaver of the VFW Post 10177. The children sang songs and recited the Pledge of Allegiance while outside at the flagpole. Mr. Robinson, retired band instructor, played two favorites on the saxophone following the Pledge.

Ms. Evelyn Dabelko Woods donated some very nice books to the center in honor of the Dabelko Family. The children enjoyed cotton candy and watched as people came and looked at each room of their center.

Some brought to the center interesting stories of "how it used to be" and a few brought along pictures to share with us. The guests signed in as they came into the building and their first remarks were all the same, "Boy, it sure has changed!" And they are right!

See **OPEN HOUSE**, Page 3

FROM
THE
DESK
OF
BARBARA



LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN

What happened in Columbine, Colorado could happen anywhere. Staff and parents have been worrying out loud — what can we do, what can RCMA do, to protect our children?

The Policy Committee had group discussions on this topic at their last meeting. Some of their ideas seem excellent to me. Let me share them.

- Pay attention to your kids, especially when they come home from school. Get them to talk to you and **LISTEN**. One parent gave an idea she uses to get her middle schooler to open up to her. She makes her laugh by giving her a piece of paper with “1-800-Call Mama” on it!
- Be a role model against violence. Don’t let your kids watch violent T.V. and videos — and that means you don’t do it either!
- Watch T.V. with your kids so you can talk about good and bad, and right and wrong.
- Let your kids know you believe racism and hatred against any group of people is wrong and that it is a okay to be different.
- Let your schools and School Boards know you want uniforms in your children’s schools.
- Let the schools know if your child has told you something that you think has potential to be dangerous.

RCMA should lead discussions in all our cen-

LISTEN, *continued on page 3*

Escuche a sus niños

Lo que sucedio en Columbine, Colorado puede suceder en cualquier parte. Los empleados y padres de familia han estado preocupados y preguntan — que podemos hacer, que puede hacer RCMA, para proteger a nuestros nis?

El Comite de Poliza tuvo discusiones sobre este tema en la ultima reunion. Algunas de las ideas me parecieron excelente. Las comparto con ustedes.

- Pongan atencion a sus niños, especialmente cuando llegan de la escuela. Animelos a que hablen con usted y escuchelos. Una mama dio una idea que ella usa con su niña que va en middle school. La hace reir porque le da un papel con el numero “1-800-call mama”.
- Este contra la violencia. Sea un ejemplo. No deje que sus ninos vean películas violentas en el television o en un video.
- Vea television con sus ninos para que hablen sobre lo bueno, lo malo, lo que esta bien y lo que esta mal.
- Digale a sus hijos que el racismo y el odio contra cuqlquier grupo de gente es malo y que no hay nada malo con ser diferente.
- Dele a saber a las Mesas Directivas Escolares que quieren que los niños en las esuelas usen uniformes.
- Digale a la escuela cuando su niño le dice a usted alguna cosa que usted crea puede ser peligroso.

RCMA debe de dirigir discusiones en todos los centros y programas con padres acerca de como ellos pueden ayudar. Tambien debemos asistir a los padres envolverse con las escuelas para que se empieze a usar uniformes si eso es lo que ellos quieren. Y en nuestros centros, debemos de continuar dejando que los niños aprendan a luchar sus batallas con palabras y no con punos. Y podemos practicar escuchando, haciendo preguntas, dar muchos abrazos, besos y alagos.

Gracias por su preocupacion.

Barbara Mainster, Executiva Directora



CINCO DE MAYO: One of many exciting special events held at Nocatee Head Start this year. Feliciano made all the costumes seen here, Carmina made piñatas, Maria, Virginia, Angie and Irma made Mexican flags. All the other teachers created the beautiful decorations. Other exciting events during the year included turning their classroom into a jungle, with vines draping from the ceiling and monkeys hanging down to make the classic, "Where the Wild Things Are", come to life. They made a bear's den, planted a garden and many other special things to make learning fun! Thank you for your energy, creativity, dedication and inspiration!



EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Diane Jenkins and Martha Rudgles, teacher trainees in the preschool class of the New Hope Child Development Center in Pahokee, recently received their CDA Certifications.

Cindy McClendon, Center Coordinator, and all of the staff at New Hope congratulate their friends and co-workers for their excellent accomplishment!

OPEN HOUSE, continued from page 1

It has changed remarkably. But from the looks on their faces and the statements made, I think it is fair to say that everyone in the community and parents and the staff are very happy with the changes.

We would like to say thank you to everyone for their generosity and kindness and patience in making these changes possible. RCMA has made this center a beautiful and more pleasant atmosphere for the children to laugh and learn. We would also like to thank all of those who's hard work helped to make our open house such a successful day!

LISTEN, continued from page 2

ters and programs with parents about how they can help. We also need to assist parents to get involved with the schools to start uniforms if that is what they want. And in our centers, we must continue to let our kids learn to fight their battles with words and not fists. And we can practice listening, questioning and giving lots of love, hugs and praise.

Thank you for caring!

Barbara Mainster, Executive Director



CHILDREN AND STAFF LOOK ON: As the flag is raised at the Pomona Park Center Open House. Special guests included retired area coordinator, Edna Blue along with Council members who attended this historic school, as children.

Parent who received special support, becomes family support specialist

BY MIKE CLARK
STAFF WRITER

Rosa Martinez is an excellent example of a parent who has changed her life with the support of RCMA. Rosa is the Family Support Specialist at the Rollason Child Development Center in Immokalee. She is successful in helping migrant families because she has professional skills and personal experience.

When her family moved from Texas to Florida, Rosa dropped out of school in the 10th grade. She worked for two years with her parents in the fields. She got married and continued to migrate for nine years with her husband.

They had three children. The youngest was born with a severe disability and took much of the parent's time and energy. One source of support that they found was the RCMA Special Effort program in Immokalee (for children with disabilities). After being out of school for 13 years, Rosa started going to GED classes at RCMA.

That season was hard because the baby got sicker after they went north. Rosa returned to Florida for medical care. Their baby passed away at 14 months of age.

Rosa took the GED test in 1984 just before going north to work. She received her diploma in the mail. Rosa began working part-time as an outreach worker in the Special Effort program where she had been a parent. Then she went back north with her family. Another tragedy, her husband died



FROM THE BEGINNING A PARENT: Rosa Martinez uses her knowledge and life's experience to help courage other parents to hold on to their dreams.

accidentally in April and Rosa returned to Immokalee with her two children. She began working full time as the Special Effort Outreach Worker.

Rosa continued with RCMA and became the Special Effort Director. A major accomplishment was to buy her own home after renting for many years. In 1990, she and her family moved into a new house. She also took Certified Nursing Assistant classes. That has helped her a lot with the health component of Head Start and explaining medical information to parents. She completed the basic and advanced Social Services classes from Western Carolina University.

As a Family Support Specialist, Rosa combines compassion with reality when she speaks with parents. She knows that they are capable of changing their lives, but the responsibility belongs to them. Rosa knows first hand that having a child with a disability completely changes a parent's life. She also knows that they can overcome adversity if they get support from others in the community.

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Any time, any day, any problem
When you need someone to talk to,
EAR is there.
1-800-328-1952

Wondering why your story is not in the HOY this month?

Perhaps you haven't sent it in yet.

We welcome all stories & photos!