

RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



September 1999

Issue 77

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

From parent to community partner

By Mike Clark
Staff Writer

There is a saying that you get what you deserve. In the case of Teresa Perez, RCMA has gotten what it deserved – an excellent employee who role models parent involvement, professional development, and positive parenting.

Teresa enrolled her children in Fellsmere C.D.C. in 1989. She worked in the fields at the time. She liked the way RCMA encouraged parents to be involved in their children's education. Teresa was an officer on the Parent Committee for one year. Then she worked as an Outreach Worker in Migrant Head Start from 1993 to 1998.

Like many RCMA outreach workers, she was good at what she did and her confidence grew each year. She liked the seasonal schedule that allowed her to be with her children in the summers. She enjoyed working with the families from her community and they trusted her.

From the time she started at RCMA, other RCMA people motivated her to continue her education. She earned her High School diploma and her CDL driver's license. She is now taking college classes in using computers. She has gotten very good at public speaking, also.

In 1998, the United Way (Success By 6) funded a Family Support position to work with all families in Fellsmere with children under six. Teresa was asked to take the new position. It was not an easy decision for her to make. She had to think about how she would balance her professional growth with her family and personal needs. She seems to be doing it well.

Teresa has three children ages 14, 11, and 2. Teresa has always made sure that her children were prepared for school. Also, she is a decision maker at their schools. She serves on the School Advisory Council at Sebastian Middle School and at the Elementary School. She is a member of the Fellsmere Medical Center board



Where It All Started: Teresa Perez was the parent of two children at the Fellsmere C.D.C. ten years ago. Today she advocates for all families.

of directors. Teresa may have a lot to do, but she answers the phone with a bright, welcoming voice. The way she says "hello" tells people that she has time to listen.

Teresa has found balance. She balances family and work, agencies and individuals, and teaching with learning. She gives back to her community the investment that has been made in her by RCMA and other services. She is a role model for other farmworker families and for other outreach workers.

RCMA treated her with respect when she was a parent in our center. Now she is in the community earning respect for RCMA from agencies and families. RCMA got what it deserved.

DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

FROM
THE
DESK
OF
BARBARA



“...and to that end I strongly believe that we must make contraceptives available and the “technology” behind their use must be delivered to these veritable babes.”

“...y a ese fin, yo creo fuertemente que debemos hacer los contraceptivos disponibles y la tecnología detras de su uso, debe ser enviado a nuestros verdaderos bebes.”

A Christmas Gift in August

One of the greatest pleasures for me is discovering the hidden talents of our staff. It's like opening a present at Christmas!

The most recent surprise “gift” I had was reading a Letter to the Editor published in the August 26th edition of the Herald Advocate, a Hardee County newspaper.

It was entitled, Stong Action Needed to Reduce Teen Pregnancy, and was written by our very own Juan C. Cisneros, RCMA family support specialist in Bowling Green. Not only does Juan write exceptionally well, his message was on target and took guts to deliver. Let me quote a small part of Juan's letter.

“When we can finally accept the fact that times are changing and our children will ultimately do what they want to do, when they want to do it, then (and only then) will we see a decline in this mistakenly underestimated and rebellious act. Do not assume that this will not happen to your child! ...To conclude, I would like to say that our children deserve to be protected at all times. ...and to that end, I strongly believe that we must make contraceptives available and the “technology” behind their use must be delivered to these veritable babes.” ...

Thank you, Juan. You make us proud.

Un Regalo de Navidad en Agosto

Uno de los placeres mas grandes para mi fue describir los talentos escondidos de uno de nuestro personal. Es como cuando uno abre un regalo de Navidad! El mas reciente “regalo” que recibí fue al leer una carta al editor publicado en la edición de Agosto 26, 1999, del periódico del condado de Harde, el Herald Advocate.

Fue titulado, Acción Fuerte Necesitado para Reducir Embrazos de Menores de Edad y fue escrito por nuestro compañero, Juan C. Cisneros, especialista de apoyo familias de RCMA, en Bowling Green. No solo escribe excepcionalmente bien, su mensaje pego al blanco y se tuvo muchas agallas al enviarlo. Dejeme citar-leun poco de la carta de Juan.

“Cuando finalmente aceptamos el hecho de que los tiempos estan cambiando y nuestros hijos(a) ultimadamente hacen lo que ellos quieren, entonces y (solo entonces) veremos una disminución en este hecho rebelioso y erroneamente subestimado. No suponga que esto no le pasará a su hijo(a)... Para concluir, me gustaría decirles que nuestros hijos merecen ser protegidos a todo el tiempo. ...y a ese fin, yo creo fuertemente que debemos hacer los contraceptivos disponibles y la tecnología detras de su uso, debe ser enviado a nuestros verdaderos bebes.”

Gracias Juan. Nos enorgulleces.



Portrait of a Teacher

"Every day I learn something from my children"

Andrea Stringfield started with RCMA in the ninth grade as a part-time, after school aide. She grew up in Highway Park, a small community close to Lake Placid, near the center in which she now works.

She new from an early age that RCMA played an important role in the

life of her community. The RCMA Center always provided a place where people could feel comfortable and welcome. Being a part of RCMA was an idea that Andrea grew up with, and it has turned out to be the only place she has ever worked.

Andrea has earned her Child Development Associate credential and takes advantage of the numerous training opportunities offered by RCMA. She has attended college and plans to pursue her degree through the help of a TEACH Early Childhood Scholarship and the support of RCMA.

Andrea, along with her co-workers, feels she is a part of a large, connected family at RCMA. She literally grew up in the organization and is part of the fabric that makes RCMA so important in many rural communities.

Christmas card fundraiser off to a good start

RCMA children provided the inspiration through their Holiday drawings for a statewide fundraiser, which began this month.

The idea came from RCMA Board Chair, George Sorn, who brought partners from agriculture together with Bonnie Rosenmeier, community relations director, to create holiday cards and note cards from our kids drawings.

There are 29 different designs and fifteen are designated as exclusive for orders of 500 or more.

Five exclusive designs have already been sold out. Plans are already in action for next years cards. Teachers will be thinking about hands-on art activities for this holiday season which will inspire children to reach their highest creative potential. so that they will have an opportunity for their drawings to be included in next year's project!

If you would like more information about the RCMA Holiday Card Project please contact your area or program coordinator.



Designed by
RCMA Kids

ARTIST AT WORK: An RCMA artist is seen here concentrating on translating his idea with paint and palette to canvas.

Parent's letter provides center with ultimate compliment

The letter that follows was received by Jennyfa Rich, Center Coordinator at Glades Early Childhood Center in response to a letter thanking Denise (a parent) for all of the time that she volunteered at the center.

Dear Ms. Rich

I received your letter of thanks, and your welcome.

It has been my pleasure to be able to help out wherever or whenever I could at your center. As you know, my time and energy has been limited because of our family situation, and I'd like to tell you, if things were different, I would enjoy doing much more than I have, because I believe in what you are doing for our community.

I was skeptical and fearful when I first let Mariann attend your school, because I didn't believe anyone could care for her with the same vigilance and attention that I've had to attend to in order to keep her safe.

My perspective and attitude has been greatly adjusted, though, and I am now very grateful and thankful for what you and all of the staff have done to improve Mariann's life and quality of life. I thank you for being there in my own, and my families' time of need. You all have been wonderful and we are looking forward to another year of your company. I mean every word from the bottom of my heart!

I would also like to mention that (hopefully, without hurting the feelings of any of Mariann's prior teachers) I believe Mrs. Mount has been Mariann's greatest influence toward success so far. That lady has truly been a God-send for Mariann from my point of view. And of course, Mrs. Wright, also deserves mention for her devotion to our precious little ones; her cheerful attitude and graciousness while under pressure and stress of such a job is to be commended.

All in all, I want to thank all of you there for doing an outstanding job. Also, to Mrs. Lewis, Mariann will always "Wuv Mit Wooce" (love Mrs. Lewis) because Mariann never forgets anything and she will, most likely remember the special people that steered her toward a sound future that gave such little hope before we became acquainted with and involved with your special program.

Gratefully, Denise



Learning is Forever: Early Head Start family child care providers and teachers came together to improve their knowledge of child development. Feeding techniques are being practiced by Maria Medina and Guadalupe Perez.

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 ☆ **APPLAUSE** ☆
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 ☆ Congratulations to Nery Belette and Mayra Gonzalez on receiving their National CDA's! Both teachers are from Everglades I in Florida City.
 ☆ Cesar Barrera, HSFIS coordinator has been selected to be part of the HSFIS Spanish Task Force. The group has nine representatives from California to Florida, along with the software developers, Clev-erex, and Health and Human Service Representation. The task force is charged with making HSFIS Forms available throughout the U.S. in Spanish.
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 When you need someone to talk to,
 LifeBalance is there.
 1-800-811-2849



Remember to reduce the risk of SIDS...
 Infants should always be put to sleep on their backs!