



RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



December 2000

Issue 92

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

“Ella no esta aqui”

This Shining Star story appeared in the 1998-1999 RCMA Annual report. There is a new chapter added to this RCMA shining star's life and the HOY found it to be the right time to share it with our readers.

That's Susan Vega, early childhood specialist at the Zellwood CDC, using her Spanish again. Susan wasn't always so confident speaking Spanish. Before when the telephone rang and it was a Spanish speaker Susan would quickly pass it off to someone else. Now as she says, "I take the time to listen..." By taking the time to listen, to practice, plus taking Spanish classes at college Susan is becoming quite the Spanish speaker!

Susan's mother came from Hungary and couldn't speak English. Her mother remembers and frequently shares a compelling story about an incident in first grade. The teacher had asked Susan's mother a question in English. Knowing the answer and excited to share it, she quickly responded in Hungarian. The entire class erupted in laughter... that is until the teacher brought them to silence by asking them: "Now how many of you could have answered that question in another language?" None could... "My mother loved that teacher and still after all these years remembers her name."

Susan relates to migrant families. Just like her parents, many migrant children and their parents have not mastered English. "Our families know that my Spanish is not great, but they appreciate me for trying to speak to them in their native lan-

guage."

Most of us would like to know a second language and continue our educational development. Susan shows us a way. She has made a commit-



ment to develop by improving her Spanish language skills and by attending college. In fact in 1997 when Susan's 18-year-old daughter enrolled in college, Susan was right there at her side enrolling with her.

It took lots of time and effort and Susan recently crossed an important educational milestone. She

successfully obtained her Associates of Arts degree! I recently congratulated Susan on her degree and posed the question, What's next? "A Bachelor's Degree of course!" It may take me a long time, but I am committed to doing it! Bien hecho Susan!

Look for other shining stars in future issues of the HOY! At RCMA there is no shortage of human potential and no barriers that can not be overcome!

FROM
THE
DESK
OF
OLGA



"In order for everyone to win, many times we have to compromise or to "bend so you don't break." And it makes you stronger!"

DEL ESCRITORIO DE
OLGA

"Para que todos ganemos, muchas veces nosotros tenemos que llegar a un acuerdo o a "dobla para que usted no se rompa." ¡Esto lo hace más fuerte!"

Bend so you don't break!

Jt takes courage to live because the unknown is feared many times. Life brings us many ups and downs. It would be so easy to give up and say, "this is as far as I go."

The courageous individual will get depressed, get angry and then say, "OK, now how am I going to get through this. What can I do to make things easier or better for everyone that is affected?" In order for everyone to win, many times we have to compromise or to "bend so you don't break." And it makes you stronger! This practice becomes easier as we realize that it is better to partially win than to totally lose.

Many times we have to separate our challenges, or loads into small tasks or goals. Then it is easier to deal with. Talking to someone (the right person) also helps. The next time a strong wind blows, look at how the trees bend with the wind so they don't break. After the winds stops blowing, the trees are still strong. Think about it.

My best wishes to all RCMA staff and families as we enter into a brand new year of possibilities!

Sincerely,
Olga Hernandez

Doblate para que no se rompa!

Se toma valor para vivir porque el desconocido se teme muchas veces. La vida nos trae muchos altos y bajas. Sería tan fácil de rendirse y decir, "hasta qui llege."

El individual valeroso se deprime, se pone enfadado y entonces dice, "OK, ahora cómo es yo que voy a superar esto. Qué puedo hacer yo para hacer las cosas más fácil o mejor para todos que somos afectado?" Para que todos ganemos, muchas veces nosotros tenemos que llegar a un acuerdo o a "dobla para que usted no se rompa." ¡Esto lo hace más fuerte! Esta práctica se hace más fácil cuando nosotros comprendemos que es bueno ganar parcialmente que perder totalmente.

Muchas veces nosotros tenemos que separar nuestros desafíos o cargas en tareas pequeñas o metas. Entonces es más fácil de solucionarlos. Hablando con alguien (la persona correcta) también nos ayuda. La próxima vez que el viento sople fuerte, mire cómo los árboles se doblan con el viento para que ellos no romperse. Después que el vientos para de soplar, los árboles son todavía fuertes. Pienselo.

Mis mejores deseos para todo el personal de RCMA y nuestros familias que este año nuevo este lleno de posibilidades.

Sinceremente,
Olga Hernandez

Remembering

By Tom Moonan
Charter School Teacher

Under the leadership of Maria Jimenez, director of charter schools, RCMA has extended its reach to embrace the field of public education. Now when it is time to choose a school there will be another name to consider...RCMA.

RCMA has been in the education business for a long time. But what does it mean to be educated? Does it mean filling brains with facts. Or does it mean something much, much more?

“Education is what’s left over after you’ve forgotten all the facts” - unknown

To be truly educated may mean that a person has started to remember. First, let me give you an example of forgetting. I asked a sixth grade class recently this question: What sounds do the wings of a butterfly make just before it lands on a flower? The students responded with looks of annoyance, and answers like these: “What a dumb question”, “who cares”, “you can’t hear the wings of a butterfly”, “your weird”, “Boring!”

Now, this same question was given to a kindergarten class. They listened! The room got real quiet. You could tell that each child was really thinking. Some looked up to check for possible butterflies in the room – others scratched their heads... Finally a little girl pronounced with authority, “It sounds like the wind!”

It would serve us well if we had more people who could remember what it was like to think and imagine as a child.

“Knowledge can be dangerous unless it passes through the heart” - unknown

It does no good to preach and punish those who have forgotten their childlike wonder. However, it does a great deal of good for us to remember what we were like.

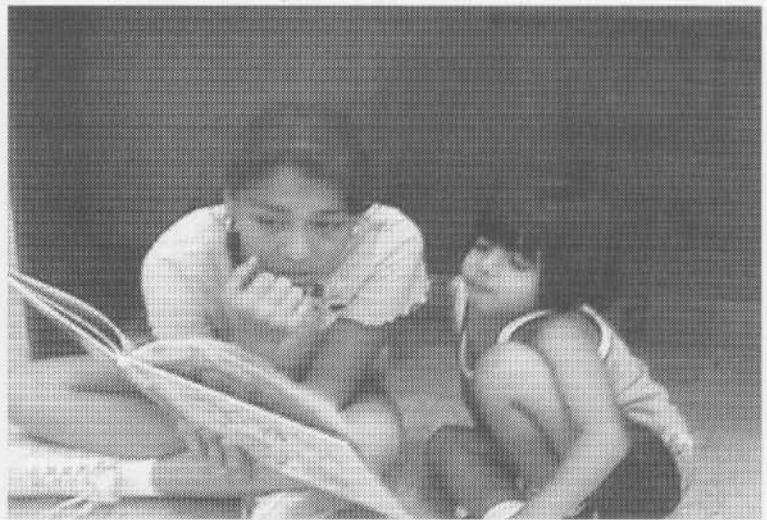


Photo by Juan Caldaron

“We were too young to know better...and too cool to care!” - John Denver

If we are ready, then we will remember what it was like to be uncertain and unsure. We will remember being frustrated, angry and confused. And as our memory improves, we will also remember those who somehow seemed to understand, and who had just the right words to guide us and help us see with different eyes.

You would be proud of our sixth graders and maybe somewhat amazed. One moment they are selfish, impatient, and inattentive, and the next moment they are as wise as little sages. What triggers this remarkable switch? Well each week they are offered the wonderful opportunity to learn from 5-year-olds! They each take a little one and lead them to a quiet place where stories can be told and remembering can take place.

You can always tell when the big kids are learning the lessons given by their small teachers. They become more patient, more kind, and more gentle. These are sure signs of an educated person. And sometimes when the sun is bright and the clouds are big and puffy a look of wonder will cross the face of a sixth grader. Perhaps it’s just the dappled sunshine...or perhaps this child is hearing again the message sent by the whisper of butterfly wings...

“When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge.” - Albert Einstein

Head Start Policy Council elects new officers

The RCMA Policy Council welcomed its new officers for the 2000-2001 term. April Bryant was re-elected to her second term as President. April represents the Fred Dennis Early Head Start program located in Wauchula. Joining her are Vice President, Jessie Alford, representing Smith Brown Early Head Start located in Arcadia, Treasurer, LaCreshia A. Morris representing Booker T. Washington Early Head Start, and Kimberly Hale, representing Head Start for our delegate agency Child Care of Southwest Florida for the Harlem Academy center located in Clewiston.



Officers: (left to right) Jessie Alford, Vice President, April Bryant, President, Kimberly Hale, Secretary and LaCreshia Morris, Treasurer

The officers are very excited about the role they will play with all Policy Council members in making RCMA Head Start and Early Head Start programs the best that they can be! Officers also serve as RCMA Board members.



TEAMBUILDING TAKES SHAPE AT RCMA NEW STAFF BASIC TRAINING:

Over 50 new staff participated in a four day Basic Training that took place in Fort Myers. They were introduced to the Head Start Performance Standards, RCMA Plan of Action and the nuts and bolts of their new positions.

The last day was dedicated to teambuilding an important ingredient in the success of all RCMA programs! Participants are seen here with a tinker toy structure built from individual characteristics that each member brought to their team model.

Proud Parents



Congratulations to Lynn Chambers, payroll specialist who recently returned from maternity leave. She welcomes Kianna M. Chambers, born September 29th beautiful addition to her family.

Latoya Shipman, accounts payable specialist has had a big smile on her face since the arrival of Adriana L'Fay Morgan to her family. We share in your joy!

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**MAY THE CANDLES OF
YOUR HOLIDAY
CELEBRATION
HELP TO SHINE
HAPPINESS
ON US ALL!**

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

Parent News

December 2000 #26 - A Parent Involvement Supplement of RCMA

Stories that guided my life...

Speaking softly in her Guatemalan Kanjobal language, Doña Petrona Tomás says she is honored to share her story and her thoughts about life with other parents at RCMA. Her nine-year old granddaughter, Rosa Julia, speaks for her grandmother in English and Spanish.

"In 1994, I left my village in the mountains of Guatemala, against my will. I didn't know what to do. We were very poor, and our house was falling to pieces. My husband's brother met death in the civil war that came into our village. I was afraid to stay, and yet, I was also afraid to come to this country. My husband had gotten in trouble with the law in this country, and he got so sick in the jails here, he died just a few days after they sent him home to me. But my daughter was here with her family, and she asked me to come so I could help calm her family that was in turmoil here."



"Rosa Julia and I walked through Mexico for more than one month, and at the US border, we paid smugglers \$800 to

bring us into Arizona. Then we paid \$1,500 to other smugglers to bring us to Florida. My daughter paid them \$3,000 more when we arrived, and I worked to pay her back."

Maybe Doña Petrona could not have imagined how the civil war she saw in her village would play itself out in her own family. Her son-in-law began to act out by inflicting violence on his children, his wife, Rosa Julia, and even herself. Her son became an alcoholic, and inflicted such severe abuse on little Rosa Julia that he was jailed, then deported to Guatemala.

In October 1997, Jerónimo Camposeco entered the family's life on his first home visit as a newly hired Family Support Specialist. Jerónimo could speak Doña Petrona's and Rosa Julia's language of Kanjobal. He could relate to their culture, being from the highlands of Guatemala himself.

But in addition, Jerónimo brought to his first home visit (and hundreds more later) the ideals of RCMA. "Support the family by making sure they have a place to live, a job to buy food and other needs, and school for the whole family. Strengthen any positive family ties that are present.



Celebrate their festivals and dances. Sing their songs with them. Reinforce their cultural roots that will keep them grounded in strange surroundings so they know

who they are, no matter where they are."

Asked what she likes best about RCMA, Doña Petrona says, "Oh, they are nice to me. Plus, I like to hold the babies." Jerónimo proudly points out her role as a go-between with other parents and the RCMA center.

As for advice to other parents, Doña Petrona says, "Teach your children to be nice. Clean their clothes good, and give them good food. And don't worry about your kids during the day while you are working, because they will be safe at the center with the nice teachers." She says, "My grandfather and grandmother used to tell me stories about the old times when everybody helped each other without needing any money, and everyone treated each other peacefully, and there was harmony among all the people. These stories have guided my life and they guide me still today."

Noticias de Padres

Diciembre, 2000 # 26 Noticias de Participación de Padres en RCMA

Hablando con una voz muy tranquila en su idioma Kanjobal de Guatemala, Doña Petrona Tomás dice que es un honor para ella poder compartir algo de su vida y sus pensamientos con otros padres en RCMA. Su nieta de nueve años, Rosa Julia, habla por su abuela en español e inglés. También Rosa hable Kanjobal.

"En el año 1994, yo salí de mi pueblo en las montañas de Guatemala en contra de mi voluntad. Yo no sabía que hacer. Eramos muy pobres, y mi casa se estaba cayendo. El hermano de mi esposo se había muerto en la guerra que llegó hasta mi pueblo. Yo tenía temor de quedarme, pero también temía venir a este país. Mi esposo había tenido problemas con la ley, y se enfermó mucho en las cárceles de aquí, y después me lo enviaron a Guatemala, él murió a los pocos días. Pero mi hija me pedía para que viniera para ayudarle con su familia que estaba siempre en dificultades."



"Rosa Julia y yo viajamos por todo México durante un mes y después entramos a pie a Estados Unidos."

Pagamos \$800 dólares a los coyotes que nos trajeron a Arizona. Después, pagamos \$1,500 dólares a otros coyotes que nos trajeron a Florida. Cuando llegamos, mi hija les pagó \$3,000 dólares más. Yo trabajé para pagarle."

Pero Doña Petrona no podía haber imaginado cómo la guerra civil en su país iba a revelarse en las acciones de su propia familia. Su yerno comenzó a actuar con violencia contra sus hijos, su esposa, contra Rosa Julia, y ella misma. Su hijo llegó a ser un alcohólico, y un día cometió abuso físico grave contra Rosa Julia, lo llevaron preso, y después lo deportaron a Guatemala.

En Octubre, 1997, Jerónimo Camposeco se presentó a la casa de la familia como parte de su trabajo con RCMA. Él apenas había comenzado a trabajar con RCMA, y esta fue la primera visita a la casa de una familia. Él puede hablar Kanjobal. También conoce los

lugares de Guatemala donde ellos vivían, por eso pudo relacionarse culturalmente con ellos.

Pero en adición a esto, Jerónimo trajo los ideales de RCMA en esta primera visita (y cientos de visitas después.) "Apoyo a las familias, para que tengan un lugar para vivir, un trabajo para comprar la comida y otras necesidades, y escuelas para los miembros de todo la familia. Y para que haga más fuerte las relaciones positivas que hay en la familia. Para celebrar sus festivales, sus fiestas y sus danzas tradicionales. Para cantar junto con ellos las canciones de su país. También ayudarles a profundizar sus raíces culturales, para que ellos estén bien sembrados y que puedan crecer fuertes en su nuevo y extraño ambiente. Ayudarles para que dondequiera que estén, siempre sepan quienes son."

A la pregunta "¿Qué es lo que más le gusta de RCMA?" Doña Petrona responde, "Oh, ellos son muy amables conmigo. Además, me gusta



mucho cargar a los bebés en mis brazos." Jerónimo orgullosamente explica cómo ella ayuda a los demás padres para jugar el papel intermediario entre los padres

padres y el centro RCMA.

Cuando le pedimos a Doña Petrona a dar un consejo a los padres de RCMA, ella dice: "Enseñe a sus hijos que sean buenos. Limpie bien su ropa y déles buena comida. Y no se preocupen por sus hijos durante el día cuando están trabajando, porque ellos están bien seguros en el centro con las buenas maestras." Ella sigue diciendo, "Mi abuelo y abuela me contaban historias de los tiempos antiguos, cuando todo el mundo se ayudaba unos a otros, sin necesidad de pagar dinero a nadie. Todos se trataban pacíficamente, y había armonía entre toda la gente. Estas historias me han guiado durante mi vida, y me guían en mi vida hasta el día de hoy."