

RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



August 2001

Issue 100

OUR MISSION: Opening Doors to Opportunities!

Building bridges to Tallahassee

April Bryant, Policy Council Community Representative, RCMA Board member and former Head Start parent recently took a trip to Tallahassee with fellow Policy Council member, Lynn Eagen to take part in Team Florida. It was the beginning of a new chapter for April on the advocacy road. This is what she had to say.

As a parent I have always been very active in any thing having to do with my son. As a Policy Council member I was able to take part in everything from approving or disapproving menus to staff hires and terminations. I thought as a parent that I could not possibly do more as a person for my son. I was wrong.



ADVOCATES IN ACTION: (left to right) Michael Toops, Lynn Eagen and April Bryant.

Michael Toops, project director for Beyond Barriers, attended a Policy Council Meeting and extended an offer to us to become a member of another group called Team Florida. I signed up and I was off to Tallahassee. The only thing I knew about Team Florida at the time was that the group met quarterly in Tallahassee and that I would be able to have a voice for my son and other Florida children on a state level. The first thought I had about the situation was that I would

go up there, and like always I would take charge and have my voice heard. I thought they would listen just like everyone at RCMA. I was wrong yet again.

It was me that sat and listened to agencies and other partners give reports about what is going on at our capitol. Although I did not understand all of what they were saying Michael and Judy Burluson, program coordinator, Palm Beach were there to lend a description and shed some light on the fast world of our state government. I know that each and every person who has the opportunity to join an advocacy group like Team Florida group should. It has given me a new mission. It has made me want to dig deeper into my government so that I can learn more about the issues. The knowledge gained on a daily basis will prepare me to make the right choices for children and families when I cast my votes at the polls.

Portee networks with Florida Senator Wilson



Evan Portee, area coordinator for Highlands county helped show RCMA support for Mid-Florida's new Simms Cox Center, a community center which will serve Avon Park youth. Senator Wilson was the keynote speaker at the event. Evan seized the moment to learn more about a nationally recognized male mentoring program that the Senator began in Dade County called, "500 Black Role Models of Excellence"

FROM
THE
DESK
OF
OLGA

"I believe there is no greater experience, no finer feeling than being able to be fully yourself without being judged, critiqued, or mistrusted."

DEL ESCRITORIO DE
OLGA

"Yo creo que no hay una experiencia mas grande, ni un sentimiento mas fino el de poder ser exactamente como eres sin ser juzgado, criticado, o que te tengan desconfianza."

Trust

When there is trust between two people, miracles can happen. I believe there is no greater experience, no finer feeling than being able to be fully yourself without being judged, critiqued, or mistrusted. When your partner is on the same page as you, trusting you with the same intensity, then love flourishes.

And when trust has been broken, the magic stops. We contract and become fearful, mistrusting, and doubtful. We all know instinctively when there is trust and when there is not. But what are the elements that build trust? Here are some of the attitudes and behaviors I've seen operating in successful relationships in my practice. These are simple steps you can take to build or rebuild trust in your partnership.

Keep your word . . . walk your talk.
Tell the truth . . . always.
Be open. . . and willing to be vulnerable.
Share your heart. . . and listen to the other's.

Criticize constructively.
Temper your temper.
Surrender graciously.
Understand . . .and be kind.

-Catherine Cardinal

Confianza

Euando hay confianza entre dos personas, pueden ocurrir milagros. Yo creo que no hay una experiencia mas grande, ni un sentimiento mas fino el de poder ser exactamente como eres sin ser juzgado, criticado, o que te tengan desconfianza. .Cuando tu compañero(a) es sincero(a), confiando en ti con la misma intensidad, el amor florece.

Y cuando la confianza se ha perdido, la magia para. Nos contraemos y nos convertimos temerosos, desconfiados y dudosos. Todos sabemos por instinto cuando hay confianza y cuando no la hay. ¿Pero cuales son los elementos para edificar confianza? Estos son algunas de las actitudes y comportamientos que he visto en mi practica que han tenido mucho exito. Son unos pasos sencillos que puedes tomar para edificar o re-edificar la confianza en tu socio.

Mantiene tu palabra. . . practica lo que predicas.
Di la verdad . . . siempre.
Esta disponible. . . y dispuesto a ser vulnerable.
Comparte tu corazon . . . y escucha el del otro.

Crítica constructivamente
Domina tu temperamento
Cede graciosamente
Comprende y se bondadoso.

-Catherine Cardinal

Community volunteers reach out

In RCMA's rural communities volunteers are reaching out to make a difference. In Collier county a neighborhood association has organized multiple projects to benefit children and families. In Florida City, a retired Special Education teacher volunteers weekly to work with special needs children and their teachers.

It began with the simple act of visiting and volunteering at RCMA centers. These inspired volunteers decided to spread the word about the wonderful things that RCMA does for children and families to their neighbors.

Before long more than 35 Island Walk homeowners organized to participate in an annual Back to School Book Bag Project. These book bags were do-



nated to the children served by the Redlands Christian Migrant Association in Collier and Hendry Counties. A new book bag to start off the school year can help children feel good about themselves. RCMA serves 700 children in Collier County and over 200 children in Hendry County in 11 programs, which include child development centers, school-age programs and a charter school.

Island Walk residents Karen and Ed Farrington spearheaded the group that raised enough funds to put together 160 backpacks filled with school supplies. Sams Club, Wal-Mart, Eckerd, Samsonite,



NEW BOOK BAGS BRING SMILES: (bottom row) Students at the Rollason Child Development Center (top row left to right): Karen Farrington, Michele Nelson Baker, Island Walk Volunteers, Ana Neuhauser, program coordinator.

McDonalds and First Union Bank donated some of the supplies.

The Island Walk Community along with the developer DiVosta and Leisure Services Department support RCMA throughout the year. In addition to the Book Bag Project many residents volunteer once a month at child development centers and donate clothing and household goods to RCMA families. Residents are already gearing up for a holiday gift drive.

In Florida City, Carolyn, a retired Special Education teacher from Massachusetts, who recently made Homestead her winter home was looking for a place to volunteer and share her skills.

She was invited with open arms by Beatriz Hentschel, program coordinator and Margarita Hinojosa, area coordinator, to RCMA programs in Florida City. Carolyn has been volunteering weekly at Everglades I Child Development Center helping children with special needs and their teachers to improve their progress.

Even though distance separates them during the summer, Carolyn takes time to write to Gladys Chirinos, early childhood specialist and remind her that she is ready to help out again when she returns to her home in the Fall.

Thanks to all of our RCMA volunteers and community partners. Your kindness and commitment enable RCMA to continue to open doors to opportunities for Florida's migrant and low income rural poor children and their families. We couldn't succeed without your support!

Zolfo Springs School-Age takes lead

By Rebeca Milan, Program Coordinator
Isabel Garcia, Area Coordinator

The Redlands Christian Migrant Association Zolfo Springs School-Age Program has been accredited by the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA). The Zolfo School-age program is the first in RCMA to receive NSACA Accreditation. The accreditation symbolizes a commitment to quality school-age care.

RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program met or exceeded NSACA's requirements for accreditation based on 144 Quality Standards for Quality School-Age Care. These Standards describe the best practices in after school programs. They are focused on 6 Keys to Quality: Human Relationships, Indoor Environment, Outdoor Environment, Activities, Safety Health & Nutrition and Administration.

As one of the first school-age programs in the nation to be accredited by NSACA, RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program is recognized nationally as a leader in quality care for children before and after school. The program existed due to a long standing partnership between RCMA and the Hardee County School District who provided space in two of their portables for the program at their Zolfo Springs Elementary School site.

Organized in 1987, NSACA is a professional membership organization with state affiliates and over 8,000 members nationwide. NSACA members are leaders in the school-age field that serves over 3.2 million school-age children and youth. NSACA developed the national accreditation system to recognize programs that are offering stimulating, safe and supportive programs for children and youth aged 5 to 14. The need for after-school care is great; an estimated 17 million parents need care for their 24 million school-age children ages 5 to 14. NSACA accreditation is a sign to parents and families that programs are offering quality care. For more information

on after-school programs and the work of NSACA please visit their website at www.nsaca.org.

As part of the accreditation process, RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program underwent a self-study process that involved center staff, children, families and community members. A self-study team was formed to determine how RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program was meeting the national standards for quality. After working to meet the 144 NSACA Standards for Quality, RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program applied for an endorsement visit. Two trained school-age professionals observed RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program for two days and met with families, program staff and community leaders. They sent a detailed report to NSACA upon which it was determined that RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program met the criteria for NSACA accreditation.



Parents, families, staff, children and youth of RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program participated in the program improvement and accreditation process. All should be very proud of the accomplishments and unique qualities of Zolfo Springs School-Age Program. Congratulations to the staff, children, and families for their accomplishments!

With this achievement also comes disappointing news. The RCMA Zolfo Springs School-Age Program was forced to close in May, 2001. The Hardee County School district was No longer able to provide the space needed to house this nationally recognized program.

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