



# RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make  
A World of  
Difference

## Helping Our Youth



January 2001

Issue 93

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

## Determination paves path for parent and child

Nidia Concepcion, payroll specialist, began her journey with RCMA as a four year old child in one of RCMA's Immokalee Child Development Centers. Her mom knew then, that education would make the difference in the lives of her three daughters. She worked extremely hard as a single parent to make sure that her children would have the opportunities that she did not as a life long field laborer and packing house worker.

In December 2000 her sacrifices paid off again. Nidia was her second daughter to receive a degree. She graduated with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Computer Information Systems from Florida Gulf Coast University.

Nidia began her quest in 1989 as a high school graduate. Eleven years later, after two changes in her major and the long awaited opening of a new four year University, she has succeeded! She succeeded while working not only full time, but often moonlighting on a second job to help with expenses at home and to pay for her tuition.

Nidia has plans for her future and she hopes that RCMA will be part of them. She has recently applied for a position working with the RCMA MIS department. Nidia loves learning and is already planning to continue her education by becoming Microsoft Certified.

Nidia gave her mother a surprise gift, she held back her graduation news until Christmas where she proudly told her mom of her accomplishment! We applaud both mother and daughter for their commitment to the future!



**Two proud women realize their dream!**  
(left to right) Nidia Concepcion and  
Lourdes Villanueva

Lourdes Villanueva was born in Mexico. Her family traveled to pick crops and in those days children would be allowed to help if they had attended school. Her mother would always make sure that they attended school wherever they were.

When Lourdes was 18 years old, just before finishing high school she got married against her mother's wishes. Lourdes and her husband followed in their parents footsteps as migrant farmworkers. She learned about RCMA Migrant Head Start while working in the strawberry fields. She had three children that she and her husband felt would benefit from this program.

In 1980 she enrolled them and Lourdes became very involved in the program as the Parent President of the Dover Infant Center. In 1984 she became the Policy Committee Chair, an RCMA Board member and a

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FROM  
THE  
DESK  
OF



BARBARA

“Helping parents become more confident, open up, share their dreams (and move toward making them coming true) is inspiring – and humbling.”

## DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

“Ayudar a los padres de familia tener mas confianza, a descubrirse, y compartir sus sueños ( y motivarse para que se cumplan.) es alentador y humillante.”

### Parent Involvement

### Envolvimiento de Padres

**W**orking with children is great fun. It is both hard work and important work. We get to see amazing growth in the period of a year.

But working with adults can be even more rewarding. Adults include staff and parents. We see staff gain confidence, learn English, get their credentials and degrees and become leaders. Many stay on with us and plan to retire with us – some move on. All express appreciation for the opportunities they were given to continue learning.

Parents are in a class by themselves. Most have never experienced a program like RCMA, which makes sure that centers and programs are staffed with people who are from their communities and cultures. People who understand their language, their fears and their hopes. Parents rarely come to us expecting to be treated with respect. They have a hard time believing we want them to be involved in helping hire staff, making decisions for the program and becoming partners in teaching their children. When they realize we are sincere, they begin to shine.

Helping parents become more confident, open up, share their dreams (and move toward making them coming true) is inspiring – and humbling. For me, parent involvement is what makes RCMA special.

**T**rabajar con niños es un gran placer. Es un trabajo difícil y a la vez un trabajo muy importante. Podemos observar sus desarrollos sorprendentes durante el periodo de un año.

Pero trabajar con adultos puede ser mas recompensante. Los adultos incluye a los empleados y padres de familia. Nosotros podemos ver como estos adquieren confianza, aprenden ingles, obtienen sus credenciales y licenciaturas y se convierten en lideres. Muchos se quedan con nosotros y planean retirarse con nosotros – otros siguen por diferentes rumbos. Todos expresan su agradecimiento por las oportunidades que se les brindaron para continuar su educacion.

Los padres de familia estan en una categoria muy especial. La mayoría nunca han tenido experiencia con un programa como RCMA, el cual se asegura que sus centros y programas ocupen personal de su comunidad y cultura. Personas que entienden su lengua, sus temores, y esperanzas. Los padres raramente esperan que los tratemos con respeto. Ellos batallan para comprender que nosotros queremos que se envuelvan en el proceso de ocupar empleados, hacer decisiones para el programa y que se hagan compañeros en la enseñanza de sus niños. Cuando ellos se dan cuenta que somos sinceros, tambien comienzan a sobresalir.

Ayudar a los padres de familia tener mas confianza, a descubrirse, y compartir sus sueños ( y motivarse para que se cumplan.) es alentador y humillante. Para mi involucrimiento de padres es lo que hace RCMA especial.



### The spirit of giving...

Special thanks to all the businesses, organizations and individuals who extended a hand to RCMA children and families this holiday season. Your generous donation of time and gifts helped put smiles on the faces of many children this year!

### SUCCESS continued from page 1

member of the East Coast Migrant Association Migrant Head Start Policy Council. That year she also received her GED.

Lourdes began her work with RCMA in the after school program in 1986 helping children with homework and making home visits to migrant families. She quickly moved to the position of Area Coordinator and currently wears these additional hats; Migrant Head Start Liaison, member of the management team and Goal Champion for Communication for RCMA Strategic Planning.

Lourdes is not known for sitting on the sidelines, armed with a desire to learn more in order to better serve children and families she began to take a college course when she could. Her real momentum came from attending the 24 credit hour Western Carolina University Social Service Credentialing Program. It is there that she found the passion, direction and commitment to go the distance.

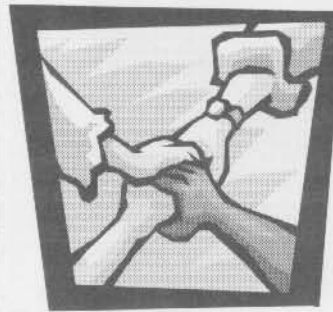
This December with her entire family in attendance she participated in commencement at the University of South Florida where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. Lourdes is a role model for all RCMA parents, and for this we commend her!

These two women begin the chapters of an RCMA book that surely will be unending!

# A team at work!

By Pat Harder  
Health Specialist, Palatka

A possible strep throat outbreak was avoided at the Palatka Head Start center thanks to staff observation, communication and team style follow through! Toyce Crosby and Lacey Comer, both teachers at Palatka Head Start noticed after doing their morning daily health checks that several of the children had a "strange rash". They shared their observations with Luz Garcia, early childhood specialist. They didn't hesitate to contact their health specialist to share this out of the ordinary occurrence. When all the questions had been asked the discovery was made that one child had recently gone to the doctor and was in fact receiving treatment for strep throat.



A notice was printed up by Stacey Mitchell, early childhood specialist and the center coordinator, Valaria Murray made sure that phone calls were made to families, and that they were filled in when they came to pick-up their children. As a result of their combined efforts the doctor was able to see all of the children and treatment was given. We are proud to say there have been no new cases. Just an example of how using the tools we have, combined with good communication and collaboration, help us to help serve children and families successfully!



*Our thoughts and prayers  
are with these RCMA staff  
and their families  
during difficult times.*

Maria Charles, Jessica Ocasio, Karen Budnick  
Gloria Padilla, and Velma Adame,  
Tere Jimenez and Maria Jimenez,  
Family and friends of Nydia Marrero

# Is your child safe?



*Thoughts from under the hat...*

By Tim Peters, Fleet Manager

On Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, I witnessed something very disturbing. An RCMA staff was sitting in the passenger seat of the car in front of me, and she was carrying her 6 month old baby in her arms.

No car seat was visible in the vehicle. As the fleet manager for RCMA, and more importantly as a father myself what I saw upset me.

- ⇒ Each year more than 1,800 children ages 14 and under die in automobile crashes, and more than 280,000 are injured.
- ⇒ Approximately 30% of children ages 4 and under are not buckled up or in car seats.
- ⇒ 85% of the kids who are in car seats or seat belts are restrained incorrectly.

People think that as long as it is a short ride or close to home you can ignore restraints. The fact is most accidents occur close to home, that is when we tend to let our guard down. When your child is between you and the dash the force that will be put on the child is equal to your weight times the speed of the vehicle in pounds. A 150 lb. person traveling 30 MPH will literally crush the child under 4,500 lbs. of pressure. Worse yet the child who is unrestrained becomes a projectile that will be thrown from the vehicle and land with a force that would be impossible to survive.

## Child Passenger Safety Week is February 11-17, 2001

RCMA is concerned with the well being of all children! We need to educate people on the importance of using car seats, and making sure that they are used properly. If you see a parent or coworker leaving your center and their child is not properly restrained – do not

remain silent, explain to them that they are putting their child's life in serious jeopardy.

Too many people let the law dictate the use of car seats, but the law in the State of Florida is not enough to insure the safety of all children. Therefore RCMA Policy is to follow the guidelines set down by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). They call them:

### 4 Steps for Kids

1. Use rear-facing seats for children from birth to at least 20 pounds **AND** at least one year of age.
2. Use forward-facing seats for children over 20 pounds and at least one year of age to about 40 pounds and about four.
3. Use belt-positioning booster seats for children from about 40 pound to about 80 pounds and 4' 9".
4. Use seat belts for older children large enough for the belt to fit correctly: at least 4' 9" tall and about 80 pounds.

### Make Sure it's used Properly!

The best way to be sure that you are using the seat correctly is to have it checked by a Certified Technician. Many local safety groups have regular Child Seat checks that are free to everyone. More information about finding one of these checkpoints near you can be found on NHTSA's website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov) or call them toll free at **1-888-DASH-2-DOT** (1-888-327-4236).

Use the opportunity of Child Passenger Safety Week to make parents and staff aware of child safety while in the car and make safety a part of each and every day. Throughout RCMA it has been said many times that the children are our future.

***"IF WE BELIEVE CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE, THEN WE MUST DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO KEEP THEM SAFE SO THAT THEY MAY HAVE MANY HEALTHY TOMORROWS."***

Editor: Leslie Moguil  
Translator: Maria Garcia  
Please send suggestions, comments, and Letters to the Editor to the following address:  
RCMA HOY Editor  
Redlands Christian Migrant Association  
402 West Main Street, Immokalee, FL 34142  
PHONE: 1-800-282-6540 FAX: 1-941-658-3571

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**CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK  
FEBRUARY 11-17  
DON'T BE SILENT!!  
KIDS NEED TO BE RESTRAINED ALWAYS!**