

RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



February 2001

Issue 94

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

Belle Glade hosts recognition

The staff of the Palm Beach area hosted the annual Board recognition at the Dolly Hand Auditorium in Belle Glade. The hospitality that was extended by the area staff included creative child-made decorations, beautiful plant centerpieces, and literature about the proud community of Belle Glade. The best part, however were the knowledgeable tour guides from the area who made local vans available to view Lake Okocho-bee and the RCMA New Hope and Belle Glade CDC. The children were active, happy and learning in these four star NAEYC accredited centers!

A buffet lunch ushered in the important work of announcing CDA recipients, NAEYC accredited centers and recognition to staff who have been serving children and families for 15, 20, and yes even 25 years. What commitment! Congratulations to all the staff who were recognized this year!

NAEYC Accreditation

**Nocatee MHS
Farmworker Village C**



25 Years of Service

**Gloria Kendrick
Area Coordinator
Arcadia**

20 Years of Service

**Rita L. Johnson
Wياماوما Infant CDC**

15 Years of Service

Willie Mae Crawford	Guillermina Estrada
Mary Ann Diaz	Graciana Flores
Nelda Gayton	Teresa Hernandez
Norma Jean Neely	Dominga Medina
Rita L. Johnson	



Child

Develop-

ment Associates

Wanda Jones	Susan Southard
Cheryl Gibson	Hilda Leija
Norma Hernandez	Paula Perez
Carrie Bell Cooper	Audrey Mount
Carmen Sanchez	Maria Zamarripa
Norma Labra	Stella Smith
Lula M. Murvin	Virginia Delgado
Mary Brewer	Jozet Johnson
Nelda Gaytan	Maria Salinas
Rosa Ma De La Espirella	Maria Moreno
Margarita Ferreyra	Mirtha Rodriguez
Josefina Aldana Rodriguez	Fanny Castro
Sonia M. Lopez	

**FROM
THE
DESK
OF
OLGA**



“In doing some research I found that suicide is the third leading cause of death among those 15 to 25 years of age and the 6th leading cause of death among those 5 to 14 years of age.”

**DEL ESCRITORIO DE
OLGA**

“Investige y me di cuenta que el suicidio es la tercer causa de muertes entre la edad de 15 a 25 años y la causa numero 6 entre las muertes de muchachos en las edades de 5 a 14 años.”

Last week while I was in church we got word that a sixteen-year-old teenager had committed suicide by hanging himself. He had been receiving services at the David Lawrence Mental Health Center. We were told that the young man had been on drugs, been in Boot Camp and had just gotten out. I cried and hurt for this young person. I didn't know him, but wondered how could things have gone so wrong. Where were the adults that are supposed to be loving and nurturing him? Why didn't they see the signs? Did the young man cry out for help and no one heard? This should not be acceptable to anyone who works with kids. How can we reach these youngsters? Do we know what signs to look for and do we make ourselves available to them if they need us?

In doing some research I found that suicide is the third leading cause of death among those 15 to 25 years of age and the 6th leading cause of death among those 5 to 14 years of age. The numbers and the ages stunned me. Some people think that by talking about suicide, the attention might encourage others to commit the act of suicide. Actually the opposite is true. Studies have shown that as many as fifty percent of the general public have seriously considered suicide as a solution to their problems. Talking about suicide gives thought to the consequences and victims left behind.

The number one cause of suicide is untreated depression. Some symptoms of depression include persistent sad or “empty” mood. Feeling hopeless, helpless, and worthless. Substance abuse. Fatigued or loss of interest in ordinary activities. Disturbances in eating and sleeping patterns. Irritability, increased crying, anxiety and panic attacks. Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions. Thoughts of suicide; suicide plans or attempts. Persistent physical symptoms or pains that do not respond to treatment. If a person has four or more of these symptoms of depression and nothing can help them to go away, **get help!**

These are some danger signs of suicide. Talking about suicide, or killing oneself, even in a joking manner. Statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness. Preoccupation with death. Suddenly happier, calmer. Loss of interest in things one cares about. Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order. Giving things away. If you are concerned about yourself, family or friends please call the LifeBalance employee assistance hotline benefit provided by RCMA 1-800-811-2849. All calls are confidential – you could help to save a life!

La semana pasada cuando estaba en la Iglesia, me entere que un muchacho de diez y seis años se habia quitado la vida colgandose. Habia estado recibiendo servicios del centro de salud mental de David Lawrence. Se nos dijo que el joven se drogaba, habia estado en una campamento para jovenes en problemas y que apenas habia salido. Llore por este joven y sentia su dolor. Yo no lo conocia pero me pregunte, como es que las cosas salieron tan mal. ¿Donde estaban los adultos que se suponian lo estaban cuidando y creando? ¿Porque no vieron las señales? ¿Sera posible que este joven grito para que lo ayudaran y nadie los escucho? Esto no deberia ser aceptable para los que trabajan con niños o muchachos. ¿Como nos acercamos a estos jovenes? ¿Usted sabe cuales son las señales y estamos disponibles para los muchachos si nos necesitan?

Investige y me di cuenta que el suicidio es la tercer causa de muerte entre la edad de 15 a 25 años y la causa numero 6 entre las muertes de muchachos en las edades de 5 a 14 años. Los numeros y edades me asombraron. Hay gente que piensa que al hablar acerca del suicidio quizas animen a otros a que se quiten la vida. Lo opuesto es la verdad. Estudios demuestran que como cincuenta porciento del publico general ha considerado seriamente en quitarse la vida como una solucion a sus problemas. Hablando acerca del suicidio da mucho que pensar en las consecuencias y en las victimas que se quedan atras.

La causa numero uno del suicidio es un estado deprimido sin buscar ayuda medica. Algunas sintomas de la drepression incluyen una tristeza que persiste o un sentimiento de vacio. Sintiendose desesperado, desamparado, o sin valor. Abuso de drogas. Fatigado o una perdida de interes in las actividades ordinarias. Perturbacion en los habitos de comer y dormir. Estar irritable, llorando mas, ansiedad y ataques de panico. Tener dificultad en concentracion, recordando o haciendo decisiones. Pensamiento de suicidio; planes o atentos de suicidio. Sintomas fisicas persistentes o dolores que no responden a tratamiento. Si una persona tiene cuatro o mas de estas sintomas de depression y nada le ayuda, **busque ayuda!**

Estas son las señales peligrosas del suicidio. Hablando acerca del suicidio, o de matarse, aunque sea jugando. Declaraciones de desesperacion, desamparado o de no tener valor. Preocupacion con la muerte. Derepente ser mas feliz y calmado. Perder el interes en cosas que a uno le importa. Haciendo arreglos; poniendo las cosas de uno en orden. Regalando cosas.

Si usted esta preocupado sobre usted mismo, la familia, o sus amigos, llame a LifeBalance Employee Assistance hotline proveido por RCMA al 1-800-811-2849. Todas las llamadas son confidenciales - y usted podria salvar una vida!

Does your family have Florida KidCare?

By Irene G. Brammertz
KidCare Specialist

Do your children have health insurance coverage? How about your grandkids or your nieces and nephews? What about the children at your center, do they have health insurance, including Medicaid? Did you recently apply to the Florida KidCare program? If so, did you experience any frustrations or did you get your answer without much delay or problems?

You may have found out by now that RCMA has received a new grant to help get the word out about the KidCare Program. Besides developing promotional materials aimed at Hispanic Immigrant Families (fotonovelas, posters, radionovelas, calendars), we are also actively trying to find the children within the RCMA family (staff children and children enrolled in our programs) who currently have no health insurance. We encourage these families to apply to Florida KidCare.

Since this state-run program is still in its early stages (began in 1998), there are some problems that keep cropping up. Because I work closely with the Florida KidCare Outreach Office in Tallahassee, they have asked me to bring any problems to their attention.

A few weeks ago, I conducted a KidCare training for team members in the South Florida area. After the training, Nelly Garcia, center coordinator at Redlands Child Development Center, shared with me that there was a problem with her KidCare application. She told me that she had applied more than two years ago and was still on the waiting list. Even after several telephone calls to check on the progress of her application, she was still on the waiting list. She was very frustrated and was ready to give up hope of insurance coverage through KidCare for her daughter. I felt that I could help her get that care.


When I first contacted the person in charge of troubleshooting, Nelly was told that she had been accepted at KidCare a couple of months earlier. They were waiting for her premium payment. However, because they had a wrong address, Nelly never received this information in the mail. Immediately, Nelly sent in the required \$15 premium payment, which was also lost in the Tallahassee maze for a while. It took another four weeks to get everything settled between premium pay-

ments, identification card for Nelly's daughter and the name of the primary care physician responsible for her care.

Today, Nelly is very pleased that she can have peace of mind when it comes to her daughter's health care.

If you or anyone else you know has any kind of problem with the application or with coverage for any of the benefits (prescriptions, doctors visits, emergency room visits) I can help. To get started, I will need some basic information from you.

Please follow these steps:

- 1) See your center coordinator, family support specialist or outreach worker and ask for the KidCare outreach form. 
- 2) Fill out the required information: Your name, contact information, parent's name, mailing address, phone number and social security number (if available). We also need the children's names, date of birth and social security number for each child. Give a short description of the problem and steps taken to try to resolve it (example: number of telephone calls to the KidCare or HealthyKids hotline and approximate dates when these calls took place).
- 3) Fax the form to Irene at 813-671-5264. Be sure to include the telephone number where I may reach you in case I need to clear up any questions or make a suggestion for a next step.

Together, let us make sure that every RCMA child has health insurance in 2001. With your cooperation, we can do it! Every child deserves a "medical home", a clinic or a Doctor (rather than a scary emergency room) that will see the child every time there is a health challenge. The parents will have peace of mind knowing the cost is minimal, and the children will be more comfortable going to a familiar Doctor's office.



Letter to the Editor

Dear HOY Editor,

On February 6, 2001 Lorena Quinoñes, center coordinator of the Everglades Migrant Head Start asked me, Mary Staggers, center coordinator of Centro Villas in the Florida City area, if I could come to her center and talk to her Pre-K children about Black history. I was surprised, but mostly honored to be a guest speaker. Surprised, because in all the years that I have worked for RCMA, Black History was never acknowledged before by my peers in our area.

When I walked into Lorena's center the Bulletin Board was filled with Black History. In the classroom the room reflected African American culture. Juanita Salazar the teacher had real collard greens, black-eyed peas and different types of clothing.

I wore African American printed material. I shared some of my personal history with the children and staff related to my family tree and passed out some pictures. We also spoke about the different types of food of my culture.

I was very happy and proud of the RCMA Florida City area for acknowledging my culture as part of Black History month. MY HATS go off to, first of all, Juanita Salazar, the teacher for a job well done on promoting Black History and also the whole Everglades Migrant Head Start Team.

My hope is that I left an impression on those young children, that we are all human beings and we all have differences and to value one another uniqueness with respect and appreciation. Thank you for giving me that opportunity to make a difference!

Mary Staggers

RIF adventures will soon usher in R-Day



DRAGONS MAKING PIZZA?

The children of Nocatee Migrant Head Start helped this story book come to life as they made their own pizzas, just like the dragons! Lots of attention was dedicated to creating the perfect chef's table!

WHERE DID IT ALL START?

With the bold creativity and imagination of their teacher, Virginia Delgado. She even dressed the part of the chef as a way to bring her kids into the reading experience. I bet she will be reading this favorite again and again – and the children will become better prepared to read each time!

Photos by Daniel Fell



R-Day is coming!

Together with the *Read Across America* event, RCMA will celebrate *R-Day* in commemoration of Dr. Seuss, who was born March 2, 1904.

Read Across America is a project of the National Education Association. They are calling for every child to be reading in the company of a caring adult on that day. Be sure to celebrate the Big Day. You can find ideas for your festivities at the following website: <http://www.nea.org/> and click on the U.S. map with the Cat in the Hat picture. Find more details about these ideas at their website.

- ◆ Talk to your librarian.
- ◆ Schedule your guest readers
- ◆ Make certificates of participation
- ◆ Get your Cat in the Hat hats!

Happy R-Read-Across-America-Day!

Send newspaper stories & photos (originals) to Bonnie!

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

Any time, any day, any problem. When you need someone to talk to, LifeBalance is there.
1-800-811-2849

We succeed because of all of our heart!
Happy Valentine's Day!



Parent News

February 2001 #27 News about RCMA Parents Involved in their Children's Education

Parenthood: The Best Job for the Best Pay

Thirty-three years ago, in San Mateo, a small community near Palatka, Florida, Dexture Mitchell just missed being the first born in his family. His twin sister beat him to it. Nevertheless, he was able to keep the title of "The Only Boy," even after five more sisters came along.

Dexture, an RCMA parent, took out a moment near the end of the year 2000 to tell us about being the first in his family to finish college. Dexture is married and has two sons, Javin and Aaron. A light of joy shines in his eyes when he tells about his family.

That light of joy he has now means even more when he tells us about some very dark times in his life. Almost twenty years ago, at age fourteen, Dexture listened to his dying father speak these words to him. "Stay in school, son. Do not go to the fields and work like me. I want you to go to college." He promised his father that he would. He says, "I was crazy about Dad. Dad left me with a good example, that you should do everything you can to provide for your family."

Dexture went to college at FAMU, taking a double major of history and nursing. Sadly, near the end of his studies, his mother died. His dream of taking care of her after he graduated was shattered. Dexture decided to graduate with the history major credits he had earned.

Yet, his father's life continued to inspire him, as well as that of a social studies teacher from his middle school days, Mr. Roberts. He went to see him. He says, "Mr. Roberts inspired my love of history. He showed me how important history is, and how much of the history on African Americans

her family, who paved streets and built a hospital for the black population."

Having his children in Head Start allowed Dexture to finish his nursing degree at Santa Fe Community College. Now, if he chooses, he can walk into a classroom and teach history. In addition, he can walk into a health care facility and perform the duties of a registered nurse.



Dexture is also active in a Father's Group at the RCMA "Irene Walker" Head Start Center. He says, "My kids are literally ahead because of Head Start. At RCMA, children have a whole other group of people who love them with their hearts, and teach them to give a gift back to their parents: love."

When asked to share with other RCMA parents some thoughts about what it means to be a parent, Dexture silently reflects for a moment. Then he begins by telling about seeing his son's eyes light up as he arrives at his son's classroom. "It is good when we can remember events that shaped our lives, and the way our parent's presence supported us at those events. Now we have an opportunity to do the same for our kids." He says that, for him, "It's more important to give my kids my time, than to give them toys and games and designer clothes. I just want to be there for my kids." He finishes by saying, "To be a parent is the best job in the world, for the best pay in the world. The pay is that your kids will love you."

"Dad left me an example to provide for my family. Mom left me an example to love my kids and tell them they're special."

"My life has come full circle. Now I do for my sons what my parents did for me."

is left out. I did my senior thesis on Mary Lawson Brown, a black city council woman of Palatka and

Noticias de Padres

Febrero, 2001 # 27 Noticias de Participación de Padres en RCMA

Ser padre: El mejor trabajo por el mejor pago

Hace treinta años, en una comunidad pequeña llamada San Mateo cerca de Palatka, Florida. Dexture Mitchell por tantito es el primer hijo que nace de su familia. Pero ese honor lo tuvo su hermana gemela. Aún así todavía conserva el título de ser el único varón después de que nacieron cinco hermanas más.

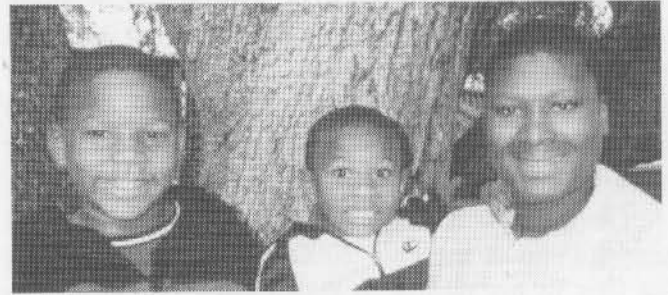
Dexture, un papá con niños en RCMA, tomo unos momentos en los últimos días del año 2000 para hablarnos de cómo fue el primero de su familia en graduarse de una universidad. Dexture está casado y tiene dos hijos de nombre Javin y Aaron. Sus ojos se iluminan de gozo cuando habla de su familia.

Esa luz de gozo significa mucho más cuando habla de los momentos oscuros de su vida. Unos veinte años atrás, a los catorce, su padre antes de morir le dijo: "Continúa en la escuela mi hijo, no trabajes en el campo como yo. Quiero que vayas a la universidad." Dexture prometió cumplir con sus deseos, porque él mismo dice: "yo estimaba muchísimo a mi papá", "Papá fue siempre un ejemplo para mí de cómo proveer y formar una familia.

Mamá fue ejemplo de amor a los hijos, y hacerles ver que son muy especiales". "El ciclo de vida se está completando, ahora, gracias a mis padres, estoy haciendo lo mismo en beneficio a mis hijos."

Dexture fue a la universidad FAMU, donde estudió dos carreras, Historia y Enfermería. Cuando estaba a punto de terminar sus estudios, desafortunadamente su madre falleció y su sueño de proveer y cuidar de ella se esfumó. Al final Dexture solo pudo graduarse como Historiador, ya que había acumulado suficientes créditos para ello.

Aún así, la vida de su padre continuaba siendo su inspiración, al igual que la de un maestro de Estudios Sociales que tuvo en la escuela media, el señor Roberts. Dice Dexture, "El señor Roberts me inspiró el amor por la



historia, me hizo saber que mucho de la historia de los Afro-Americanos se ha excluido. Yo hice mi tesis sobre la vida de Mary Lawson Brown, una Afro-Americana que fue comisionada de la ciudad de Palatka, su familia y ellas juntas, promovieron la pavimentación de las calles y la construcción de un hospital para la población Afro-Americana."

Terminó su carrera de enfermería en el Santa Fe Community College y ahora puede entrar a un salón de clases como profesor de Historia o como enfermero registrado trabajando en un hospital. Dexture es muy activo con el Grupo de Padres en el programa de Head Start de RCMA "Irene Walker". Dice, "mis hijos han avanzado mucho y se han desarrollado bastante por el programa Head Start. En RCMA los niños están rodeados por personas que los quieren, y les enseñan que ellos son un regalo de amor especial para sus padres."

Cuando le preguntamos si tiene algo que compartir con los padres de RCMA, él reflexiona en silencio por unos momentos; y nos relata como los ojos de su hijo se abren grandemente de alegría cuando llega al salón de clase. Dice, "Es bueno cuando podemos recordar eventos especiales que contribuyeron a la formación de nuestras vidas, y como la presencia de nuestros padres nos ayudó para eso. Ahora tenemos la oportunidad de hacer lo mismo para nuestros hijos." Dice, "Para mí, es más importante dar tiempo adecuado para estar con los hijos, en vez de darles juguetes, golosinas o ropa que está de moda, yo solamente quiero estar presente para mis hijos", Dexture termina diciendo: "Ser padre es el mejor trabajo del mundo para el mejor pago del mundo". El pago es el amor de su hijos.