



# RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make  
A World of  
Difference

## Helping Our Youth



April 2001

Issue 96

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

## Let me see it!

By Veronica J. Gutierrez  
Former RCMA Student

*The HOY was fortunate to receive the following story from Veronica Gutierrez, a former RCMA student enrolled in the Dover Infant Center in 1982, and again in the RCMA Westside Village School Age Program. Twenty years later Veronica reflects on her past and looks forward to her future!*

José and Dyanira Hernandez are the proud parents of three former RCMA children. Veronica, 24, that's me, my sister Deyanira, 22, and my brother José Jr. My family migrated from Florida to Michigan, and back every year. All three of us had the opportunity to be a part of the RCMA Dover Infant program, and later my sister and I were enrolled in the Westside Village School Age Program. It was here that Roger Villanueva and his wife made me believe that it was possible to leave the fields and do something else in life.

My dad was always a very involved parent, being that all three of his children were part of the RCMA family. That same year he was named President of RCMA's parent organization. Mom did not stay behind though. In 1989, she began working with RCMA in the very same center that we had attended. Twelve years have gone by and she is still part of the RCMA family.

My parents made a big decision when I was in the 4th grade. Our family was no longer going to

travel. An opportunity to move from the camp where we lived to a new migrant housing project, combined with the fact that they felt it was important for us not to miss any school enabled my family to put down roots.

My dad was very active at school. He never missed a meeting despite the fact that language could often pose a problem. He was there. He was always there on report card day, waiting for us to get home. He didn't only ask us how we did, or what we got - He said, "Let me see it." He never missed a one all the way through my High School graduation.

Both of my parents, practiced what they preached. They took advantage of ESOL classes offered by the Hillsborough County Schools Migrant Program. At Plant City High School, both my sister and I were part of a special migrant program that allowed us to get academic help from a bilingual aide. We also were involved in a program that allowed us to serve as a mentor to a child in Elementary school.

What did all this encouragement and support lead to? For me it was high school graduation with four scholarships to college. Hillsborough Community College is where I received my A.A. in Liberal Arts.



**A PROUD FAMILY:** (left to right) Deyanira, Deyanira and Veronica

**Proud Family** continued on page 4

FROM  
THE  
DESK  
OF  
OLGA



## DEL ESCRITORIO DE OLGA

"Thomas Carlyle, writer, states "Tell a man he is brave and you help him become so." Wise words."

"Thomas Carlyle, escritor declara " Dile a un hombre que él es valiente y usted le ayuda a volverse asi." Palabras sabias."

### "TEEN IS NOT A FOUR LETTER WORD"

"Just wait till she gets to be a teenager, that's when the trouble really begins."

These are words that I have been hearing for a long time and I think about the self-fulfilling prophecy. I also think about the fact that people live up to one's expectations.

I have been giving this subject a lot of thought. And I wonder and I ask myself why we are so sure that children are going to give parents and/or society a difficult time. Thomas Carlyle, writer, states "Tell a man he is brave and you help him become so." Wise words. My daughter has not disappointed me. I have been telling her since she was a baby that she was a good child. And she is. Even through the **TERRIFIC TWO'S** (not the terrible two's.) Maybe it is time to change our way of thinking about teenagers. They are neat people! Let's shock them and tell them how great and cool they are! And yes, they will live up to it.

### "ADOLESCENTE NO ES UNA MALA PALABRA"

"Espera que llegue a la adolescencia, eso es cuando los problemas empiezan." Estas son las palabras que estoy escuchando por mucho tiempo y me pongo a pensar en la profecía que llegara a cumplirse. El también de Y yo pongo que un pensar en que la gente cumple con las expectativas de uno."

Yo he estado pensando mucho en este tema. Y yo me pregunto que porque nosotros estamos tan seguros que los niños van a dar un tiempo difícil a los padres y/o a sociedad. Thomas Carlyle, escritor, declara " Dile a un hombre que él es valiente y usted le ayuda a volverse asi." Palabras sabias. Mi hija no me ha defraudado. Yo he estado diciéndole desde que ella era un bebé que ella era una niña buena. Y ella es. Incluso a través de los **TERRÍFICO DOS** (no los terrible dos.) Quizá es tiempo para cambiar nuestra manera de pensar sobre los adolescentes. ¡Ellos son unas personas únicas! ¡Asustémoslos y les decimos que son unas personas grandes y buenas. Y sí, ellos lo lograrán!



### Committed students & instructor right combination!

Staff and parents of the Nocatee Migrant Head Start Center are taking advantage of on-site English and G.E.D. classes. With the special cooperation of the Coordinator of the Family Service Center these classes are available at a variety of times, so that students can come at their convenience. (left to right) Feliciano Avila, Kathy Severson, instructor, Guillermina Delgado and Catalina Cendejas.

# Getting there...

By Wanda Jones  
Early Childhood Specialist



I began working for RCMA as a part-time teacher, in October 1994. In two weeks time I was offered a full-time position, which I gladly accepted. I started to inquire about how to get promotions. I was given job descriptions for teacher, senior teacher, lead teacher, and education coordinator.

Upon arriving at Fellsmere Child Development Center, I found my center coordinator (CC) and early childhood specialist (ECS) to be very helpful. They encouraged me to grow and to do my best. They gave me the opportunity to learn more about the operation of the center, and I gladly accepted the responsibility.

I decided I really wanted to become an ECS. I moved from trainee to teacher to senior teacher to lead teacher. I worked diligently toward my goal. I witnessed the coming and going of lots of teachers, a CC, and ECS. I asked if I could fill in for the position until they hired a permanent ECS for my Center. I was turned down, but I still did the work, and when something was needed I was asked for the information. This was frustrating at times, because I felt if I could do the work, why not give me the position. I didn't have my CDA so I did not qualify for the position. I didn't give up. I felt like quitting, but I remembered something my mother instilled in me at an early age. "A winner never quits and a quitter never wins." So I stayed right there knowing my time would come.

We began to prepare for NAEYC. There were ups and downs, but I remained focused on my goal. The news finally came I received my National Preschool CDA. I was happy and proud of my accomplishment. Our center received NAEYC Accreditation.

Finally my time had arrived. I will never forget the day I was offered the position as ECS at Indian River Early Education Program. My Area & Program

Coordinator, and ECS called me in the office. All I could think at the time, was what had I done wrong. Was I about to be fired? I didn't know what was going on. My AC and PC said they wanted to ask me something. Then came the question. Wanda would you consider taking the position as ECS at the Camp? It happens to be the largest center in Area G. I told them I would think about it. Did I say that? I thought just a moment and said, "this is what I have been working toward, yes I will take the position."

As a new ECS, I attended monthly institutes and training on top of training. Some was very helpful, and others were rather boring. But I always tried to learn all I could from them. As my first year ended, I did a self-evaluation. Some areas I did very well in, and other areas I did a terrible job. I took the areas I needed to work on and started making improvements. During the summer of 2000 I attended a four day training which made my job as an ECS come alive. I obtained and learned so much about what the job of an ECS really was.

Then as I began the 2000-2001 season, I was transferred to Children's House Child Development Center where I had started. It is so nice to be back home. I was welcomed with open arms by the staff, which made my transition very easy.

I continue to use the information I have learned. I am very considerate of the teachers and their feelings. I never let an opportunity pass me by to let them know they are very special and are doing a good job. I also let them know if they are not doing a good job. I greet them every day. I encourage them to be creative. I give them space to grow. I know they know what their job descriptions are because of the way they perform their job. Knowing this, I observe to see where they need help, and give it. There is one training I attended that really made a big impact "Train the Trainer". It has helped me to better understand my staff.

We as supervisors need to be sensitive and caring to our staff. Because I was a teacher, I have a better understanding of what it is like to be in the classroom. I always feed on the positive. Never the negative. I praise my staff. I encourage them. I support them in what they want to do, or try as long as it is within RCMA rules and regulations.

I am blessed to work with staff that can function with or without me being in the center. They believe in following the rules. They know how to find the information they need. I tell them where and how to perform

**Proud Family** *continued on page 4*

**Getting There** *continued from page 3*

different tasks in a professional manner. They do not wait for me to tell them what to do, because they know what they need to do and what their responsibilities are. They do their work above and beyond.

United Way just came and visited our Center and the compliments they gave were humbling. My staff and I talked about what was said, and agreed we are going to keep up the good work. We do not claim to be perfect. We are striving for perfection. As ECS's, we need to do things to motivate our staff. When you have staff who are not motivated to do their job, we need to find out why. They may be having a problem and don't know how to solve it. Sometimes it goes beyond work.

One of the most important things I have learned is to treat my staff with respect at all times. Don't be afraid to admit you're wrong. Remember we are only human, and we do make mistakes. It takes a real person to admit they were wrong. Remember it's cool to say thank you, please and you're doing a great job. It's also cool to let staff know they did wrong. It must be done the proper way. Always try to give ways to do it a better way.

My staff keeps me on my toes. They inspire me to be the best ECS I can be. I try daily to inspire them to be the best teachers they can be. In our center we have taken the word "can't" out of our vocabulary. We now say, "I'll try". At Children's House we strive not to be equal to anyone, but we strive to excel in all that we do.

There's a peace in our Center that is recognizable as you enter. We understand we are a team. Most of all we are a family. We are firm believers that together we can weather the storm. Together we are strong.



**Congratulations  
Immokalee Staff on  
receiving your G.E.D.!**

**Sanaida Martinez  
Thelma Martinez  
Patricia Armond**

**Proud Family** *continued from page 1*

I moved from a family type atmosphere where I knew my professors and they knew me, to the University of South Florida where I became just a number. I was prepared and graduated in August 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. I am currently working for the State of Florida as a Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Outreach Worker and plan to pursue my Masters in Counseling.

My sister Deynira, also graduated from Plant City High School with five scholarships. On to Hillsborough Community College, where she graduate in 1998. She is currently doing her final internship and will graduate in May with Honors, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Education. She also, plans to pursue a Masters in Counseling.

José Jr. follows behind his two sisters. José has been playing baseball since 1994 when he was eight years old where he played for the Plant City Little League. He now attends Durant High School and is part of the Durant Cougars baseball team. José is very dedicated to his hobby and hopes to get drafted. He plans to attend college and major in Engineering.

My sister, bother and I are very thankful to have parents who have always encouraged us to set goals and meet them. Our migrant background is something we are also very proud of. And thanks to the services RCMA provided to all of us, the Hernandez family is able to recommend and encourage others to seek the help of the RCMA family.

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**Stay Tuned!**  
May issue will feature the winner of the RCMA 35th Anniversary brand new car!

# R-Day 2001 Special Edition



April 2001

## Dateline: Wimauma RCMA Charter School

Issue #3  
Reading is  
FUNDamental

Editor:  
Irene G. Brammertz  
RIF Coordinator

The air was charged with excitement. Smiles were stretching across the faces of the assembled crowd. What was bringing all this energy? Yes, it was R-Day, and people were aflame with anticipation.

A distribution kicked off the literary celebration. One-by-one, students were able to choose from a table full of books. Just as the high energy began to subside, a new current of excitement began to bubble up. The assembled throng of book lovers knew it was time for the Reading to begin.

Sixth graders

searched to find their reading buddies from the kindergarten class. Hand-in-hand they traveled to quiet spots under tables, in quiet corners or on sunny steps. They found places where a person could do some serious reading.

R-Day ended, but one got the impression that it



*John Vega and his reading buddy David Sanchez find quiet time for R-Day lecture*  
Photo by Tom Moonan

continued in the homes of the students that night. And who knows, maybe the last thing each child heard that day were the voices of their mother or father reading them to sleep...

### Special Note:

Also present at the festivities was noted literary figure Sam B. Waffles. Sam gave a short talk about how books had changed her life. (Sam once ran with a pretty bad pack and spent a lot of time barking up the wrong trees). When asked by one of the students which were her favorite letters, Sam was reported to have said: "GRRRR!"

### RCMA and RIF Facts:

- ✓ First RIF Season: 1994/95
  - ✓ First R-Day: February 15, 1995
  - ✓ Number of Books distributed since 1994: 68,718(\*)
  - ✓ Number of RIF volunteers since 1994: 3928(\*)
  - ✓ Joy brought to children and their families: IMMEASURABLE!
- (\*) approximate



## Parade! R-Day at Ruskin Migrant Education

Our center celebrated "R" Day by having a parade around the apartment complex. Everyone wore some kind of stripes for "R" Day as well. We began the day before by making

African Kufi Hats to wear during the parade. This was a lot of fun!

Each child made their own with very little help from the teachers.

Each classroom

made banners for "R" Day or to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday for the parade.

After we returned from the parade, each group chose a RIF book to read and take home.



*Oswaldo Montoya snuggles down in a box to read a good book*  
Photo by Tara Huls



At Nocatee, Pre-K teacher Irma Cisneros dressed as "Cat in the Hat" gives some TLC to Brenda Martinez during R-Day celebrations  
Sun Photo by Marcia O'Steen

### Fellsmere Kids devour green eggs and ham to celebrate R-Day...

More than 40 children at the **Fellsmere Child Development Center** ate green eggs and ham Friday March 2 in honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday.

County firemen from Station 10 in Fellsmere showed up to read to the children.

Each child was also able to pick out one book to keep for themselves as part of the festivities, as well as shared a birthday cake, received a "Cat in the Hat" sticker, and a certificate of participation.

Crescent City Child Development Center had a special visitor for R-Day. Sheriff Taylor read Dr. Seuss' "Green Eggs and Ham" to a group of 20 preschoolers. Then he went to the toddler's classroom to read "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". Several parents came to help with the book distribution and each child went home that day with a book of their own.

### After School Kids show off certificates, new books

**Wimauma Drop-Out-Prevention** After-School Program celebrated R-Day on March 2, 2001. Children chose a book of their very own. As they feasted on popcorn and sodas, they began reading and relishing their books. After all had selected the book of their choice, they shared it with the entire group by telling the title and author of their book as they held it up for all to see.

The many certificates posted on the bulletin board above the table are awards from Wimauma School. Among these certificates are many

for "Reader of the Month". Through the combined efforts of RCMA promoting the RIF program and school, such honors are possible.



Maria Lopez, Myra Hernandez and Jorge Lopez show off new books while Angel Ramirez has not yet decided which book he likes best  
Foto by Sister Maureen Smith

### More from Around the State:

☺ **Dover Migrant Head Start** celebrated R-Day by going outside and reading in groups. Later, inside the classrooms, they discussed colors and made books about them. They took home their special books.

☺ **South Highlands Child Development Center** combined R-Day with a visit from the local police who came to finger print all the children. Their theme was: "Play it safe, be a Gold Seal Reader".

☺ R-Day at **Zellwood Child Development Center** was spent under a canopy of oak trees! The children sat on the grass in small groups as the teachers read exciting stories to them. Their special guest reader was a teacher from Colombia, who is 90 years old! After the stories, each child chose a RIF book to take home.