

RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



January 2002

Issue 105

OUR MISSION: We Open Doors to Opportunities! ;Abrimos puertas a las oportunidades!

Mutual support helps in obtaining goal



Olga Hernandez, director of human resources, and Joshua Rincon, director of school-age programs in Immokalee, celebrated with family and close friends who attended the Florida Gulf Coast University Commencement Ceremony. Each took the long walk to the stage, being cheered on by friends and family, holding back the tears, in order to proudly receive their diploma after a long journey filled with determination.

For both Olga and Josue the journey began years ago with the first step of an Associates degree. There had been several pauses in the road, as life priorities sometimes overwhelmed their desire to continue on the path toward a college degree. The final push toward the finish line began again in

1999, when both of them determined “it was time”, and pledged to support each other in reaching their goal of obtaining a four year degree. Joshua had this to say about the partnership, “when you have someone pushing you and than you turn around and push that other person when they are about to give up, it somehow makes the journey easier.” It was a road that continued to bring challenges - and there were times that each had questioned their stamina.

Well, there was no questioning when their names were called and applause rang out as Olga and Josue walked proudly toward their goal, distinguished not only by their cap and gowns, but by graduating with honors, signified by a special sash worn to designate their achievement of a higher than 3.50 grade point average.

Olga Hernandez began her journey with RCMA in 1976. She is the child of a farmworker family and has experienced working in the fields herself. After graduating from Immokalee High School and several jobs later Mr. Rollason recruited her for an important role with RCMA. It did not take her long to move forward after learning a broad range of skills and knowledge. Olga soon became an example to former farmworker staff, and RCMA parents, on what a former farmworker could obtain through education and hard work.

In her current position as the director of human resources, Olga is not only “talking the talk” about professional development, but on this occasion she has truly “walked the walk” toward her goal of obtaining a four year degree. When asked if she could share what she felt was the most important thing which she had gained through her experience as a student at one of Florida’s newest state colleges, she had this to say, “the biggest shock for me came when I realized how small my world

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was. RCMA and Immokalee had always been such a large part of my world. Going to the university and interacting with other students and professors and with new information made me realize how much is out there. And just how much there is to learn about other points of view and also just how much I have to offer those who have not been exposed to my world - as a Hispanic woman, a former farmworker, a mother, a rural community citizen and a middle-aged student.”

Josue Rincon began his involvement with RCMA as a receiver of RCMA services. Juan Medina the director of the RCMA Immokalee Drop-out Prevention program at the time helped change the course of the future for Josue. Josue was in trouble and was toying with the idea of dropping out of high school in order to work full time. Mr. Medina stepped in and spoke with Josue’s father and together they helped him stay on the right track toward graduation. Josue believes this was a true turning point in his life.

Shortly after this event Josue began working with Mr. Medina in the program. He has been a tutor, a site director, and is now the program director. He has not turned his back on his goal to continue his education, in fact in a recent conversation with him Josue said, “I’m ready for my Masters, I’m ready to do it again!” Several staff in the Immokalee School-Age program are part-time college students, and because of his own experiences Josue continues to be a valuable cheerleader in helping to encourage them to cross that same finish line. One of the most special moments of recognition for Josue came when a group of his staff wrote him a note that said, “Congratulations! You are an inspiration to all those who are struggling.” Josue said, “It really made me feel good to know my staff was cheering for me!”

RCMA is very proud of Olga and Josue and shares in the benefits that their personal success will help contribute to improve RCMA as a whole. The RCMA family congratulates both of you on your accomplishments. For all of our readers out there who may be struggling down a similar path, when you face a moment when it all seems just too hard - give Olga Hernandez (800) 282-6540 or Josue Rincon (941) 658-3611 a call for some pointers! They truly have been there!

Children’s Day in Desoto - A fun filled event

By Sharon Fox, Senior Early Childhood Specialist
Desoto County

Nocatee Migrant Head Start and Smith Brown Child Development Center set out to make their mark on the annual Children’s Day outing sponsored by the De-



soto County Youth Consortium. Center teams paired up to make a striking presence by setting up interactive booths for the children. Posters were displayed spotlighting children and families at the centers. Information for parent education was distributed to interested adults.



If that wasn’t enough excitement Dr. Seuss, portrayed by Ovelia Guerra and Rosa Villa showed up to visit with the children. Many teachers volunteered alongside core staff to do a host of activities including face painting, making bookmarks, stringing jewelry, making giant soap bubbles and participating in a scavenger hunt for prizes.

Other children’s services providers were well represented and added even more to the already fun filled day. All of the effort was well worth bringing public attention to the need for continued advocacy on behalf of children and families, both locally and throughout the state.

A big thank you to all the RCMA staff and parents who volunteered their time to make this Children’s Day event such a big success!

Lose weight, eat healthy, popular resolution

One of the most popular New Year's resolutions made is a promise to lose weight. After holidays filled with special foods and celebrations it is easy to put on those extra pounds. Everyone knows that eating right and exercising are the keys to weight control, but not everyone knows that following a few simple tips can help make your efforts pay off fast.

Eat breakfast. It's true—regular meals and occasional low-cal snacks help prevent the “famine-then-feast” syndrome. Fill up first thing with high-fiber cereal, whole grain bread or fresh fruit.

Bite into a pickle or lemon. Neither has any calories to speak of, and the sour taste will curb your appetite. Don't have these handy. Try brushing your teeth.

Post a list of small projects on the refrigerator. Then, whenever you're bored and tempted to snack, take on an item from your list. It will help you from giving in to that next craving.

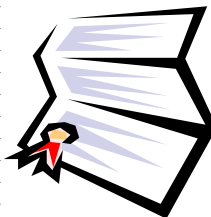
Serve yourself half the amount you usually eat if you tend to eat whatever is in front of you. And make less food look like more by using smaller plates.

Exercise in the morning. Why? After fasting overnight, two-thirds of the calories burned come from stored fat, which contains more calories than carbohydrates—the main energy source in afternoon workouts.

Keep calories burning with aerobic exercise, like biking, swimming or rowing. A single session burns calories during the workout and for several hours after.

Take your time. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to receive the signal that you're full. So gulping food quickly may lead to overeating. Set your silverware down between bites, chew slowly, enjoy the taste and texture, play soft music to help you take your time.

Director's Credentials Numbers Grow!



Congratulations to Jenyfa Rich, center coordinator from Glades Early Childhood Center in Moore Haven. She has successfully obtained her Director's Credential.

If you have received your Credential and the HOY doesn't know about it, give the Editor a call at (800) 282-6540!

Remembering Dr. King

January 15th is the true birth date of one of America's most influential heroes. The first Monday after the 15th is a national holiday honoring the life and deeds of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His words help to carry on the spirit of a man whose life was spent working toward equality. RCMA too, embraces this mission as we move into our 36th year of “opening doors to opportunities” for children, families and staff. The following selected quotations are from Martin Luther King's writings. They help give the reader some spiritual understanding of the man which this national holiday of the United States of America celebrates.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

“The curse of poverty has no justification in our age. It is socially as cruel and blind as the practice of cannibalism at the dawn of civilization, when men ate each other because they had not yet learned to take food from the soil or to consume the abundant animal life around them. The time has come for us to civilize ourselves by the total, direct and immediate abolition of poverty.”

“We must combine the toughness of the serpent and the softness of the dove, a tough mind and a tender heart.”

Excitement high as work begins on new Charter School building

If you have had a chance to stop by the Rollason Center in Immokalee you will notice a whole lot of dust being kicked around behind the Rollason Child Development Center. Construction has begun on a new three story building which when completed will house the RCMA Immokalee Charter School, a child care center, a counselor from the Shelter for Abused Women, School-Age program staff and Area Office staff.

The building will make Immokalee history as the first three story building in this small rural agricultural town. The building was designed by Ted Hoffman, architect with input and assistance from Michael Facundo, an up and coming passionate young architect.

A loan has been secured to get the project going. A capital fund drive to raise money for this important project began with a ground-breaking ceremony which was held for the community, staff and friends of RCMA. There were over 100 guests in attendance, including, board members, George Sorn, Richard Pringle, Fred Thomas, Jack Norris, Holly Kuhlman, and William Laimbeer. County Commissioner, Jim Coletta took his place



alongside charter school children, board members and other dignitaries armed with shovels aimed at turning that first piece of ground. A check for \$25,000 dollars was presented by Holly Kuhlman to Mr. Sorn on behalf of Bank of America to start the fund drive. There are many opportunities for

donors to sponsor individual parts of the building.



The highlight of the afternoons events were performances by each grade level under the competent direction of their teachers. Ms. Eklund's kindergartners recited the ABC song with exciting letter visuals. Mr. Cade's first graders put a most creative spin on "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer". And last but certainly not least, the 6th and 7th graders did poetic justice to a modern rendition of the powerful Marvin Gay song, "What's Going On".



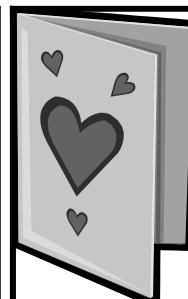
A building model was on display for the crowd to see as well as the sharing of refreshments in the community classroom. Things are moving along quickly and one

of the heaviest prices paid is the loss of parking during construction. Rollason Center staff have been helping out by parking on the other side of Main Street in a temporary dirt and grass field. Their help in creating space for parents, center staff and visitors is greatly appreciated.

The building is scheduled for completion in time for the start of the next school year, when grades K-2 and 6-8 will be in full swing.

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Happy Valentines Day!

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

Parent News

February 2002, Issue #31 RCMA Parents in Action – Reaching out for Opportunities to Grow!

Parents focus on safety, parades, and computers

By Karina Priest
Area Family Support Specialist

This past year has been one with a lot of meaningful parental events for the Palm Beach Area. As the year came to an end, two big events took place showing the involvement of our parents and their motivation to be an active participant in their children's lives.

The parents of our New Hope CDC, participated in the "Christmas in Pahokee USA Parade". The parent committee met and agreed that they wanted RCMA to be represented this year and show parents and children working together. They decorated children's wagons in which two RCMA children rode. There were a total



Children and parents of the New Hope CDC come together to participate in a community parade.

of four wagons. The parents pulled the wagons, while the older children (siblings), carried RCMA's banner. The parade was well attended and the street was lined up with many enthusiastic observers. RCMA won Third place for Best Marching Unit. A parent participant said "I feel proud to be part of RCMA and see how we are recognized". Congratulations to our children and parents!!!

At our Farmworker CDC in Delray, our parents were busy with the "Corazon de mi Vida" event, which was sponsored by the National Latino Chil-



The instructor demonstrates the proper steps in securing a child in a car seat, while parents observe.

dren's Institute along with Nationwide Insurance and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The seat belt and safety awareness campaign was aimed at the Latino farmworker community. The activity was well participated by most of our parents.

They watched a video on the topic, had a lecture, and were later trained one by one on how to install a car seat. Everyone received a new car seat, and each parent had the chance to practice what they learned. It was a pleasure to watch the parents participate and also feel how proud they were to be able to keep their children safe.



The Belle Glade center has been the first in the area to experience the new family support team composed of two outreach workers and the area family support specialist, and it has proven to be an asset to the families. Our parents can now benefit from being assisted in

English, Spanish or Creole; and the center has also set-up a computer lab that is available to all parents and staff.

The parents in Palm Beach are thriving and looking forward to another year full of opportunities.

Noticias de Padres

Enero 2002, Edición #30 RCMA Padres en Acción – ¡Alcanzando las oportunidades para crecer!

Padres: Figuras claves en las vidas de sus hijos

Cuando usted piensa en el involucramiento de padres de RCMA normalmente usted piensa en la madre y el hijo(a). En el centro Smith Brown estamos tratando de cambiar esa idea para incluir ambos padres, la madre y el padre. Las investigaciones han comprobado que el involucramiento de ambos padres en la vida de un niño es muy importante a su desarrollo y su éxito en el futuro.

El centro de Smith Brown comenzó el año pasado un programa para envolver a los hombres. El grupo se formó para conseguir que los hombres se involucraran en las vidas de sus hijos. El nombre del grupo de padres es *De Hombre a Hombre* y está formado por padres solamente. Se reúnen dos veces al mes para discutir diferentes temas con relación a la paternidad y crianza de un niño; incluyen maneras en como convertirse en mejores personas y padres para sus hijos. Tomamos parte en actividades en el centro que envuelven a el padre y el hijo: como, llevarlos a un paseo, cocinar para las madres en las reuniones de padres. El grupo llevó a los niños en un viaje a Gatorama. Para la representación de la formación de nuestro

grupo se plantó un árbol como símbolo que dice que lo estamos criando como a nuestros hijos.

Este grupo le ha dado la oportunidad a los padres que participen más en las vidas de sus hijos. El Señor Brown, padre en el centro Smith Brown, es un gran ejemplo de un padre aceptando la responsabilidad de participar más en las

vidas de sus hijos. El Señor Brown tiene un hijo de cuatro años en el programa. Él es un padre soltero que acaba de recibir la custodia de su hijita de dos años. El Señor Brown ha criado a su hijo desde que tenía siete meses. Él como una madre soltera, tiene la tarea difícil



MANO EN MANO: Rupert Brown y su hijo Rupert Jr. dan el ejemplo a otros padres en el centro de Smith Brown.

de ser madre y padre a la vez. Él no tiene familia en este país, solamente un hermano en el condado de Palm Beach con el cual a perdido contacto. El Señor Brown es originario de Jamaica y a vivido en Arcadia desde el 1993.

A pesar de los tiempos difíciles, él no pierde su optimismo hacia el futuro. Cuando se le pregunta que espera para el futuro de su hijo? Su contestación es que su hijo siempre le dice

que quiere ser doctor. “Me daría mucho placer vivir para ver esto.”

El Señor Brown es una persona y padre que apoya y da el ejemplo a los otros padres en su posición como padre mentor en el centro de Smith Brown. Él voluntariamente en el centro hace limpieza, compone los juegos para los niños cuando salen a jugar afuera. Durante el tiempo que los padres dejan o levantan los niños, él se la pasa animando de uno a uno a los otros padres para que participen en las reuniones y actividades para los padres. Sus esfuerzos no son en vano, nos dice “a veces tenemos la participación de 20 a 30 padres participando en el grupo. El Señor quiere pasar el siguiente mensaje a los padres “los hijos a veces pasan una gran cantidad de su vida en el centro, y los años pasan y nosotros como padres no los conocemos y no sabemos que es lo que están aprendiendo.” Él dice “todos los padres tienen que pasar más tiempo con sus hijos y prestarles atención verdadera.”

Si usted está interesado en conseguir información en como involucrarse como padre con sus hijos, o formar un grupo de padres en su centro, usted puede ponerse en contacto con Darrell Nicklow al (863) 993-4750. Para personas que hablan español llamen a



PADRES EN ACCION: Clarence Perry está dedicado a pasar tiempo con sus hijos (izquierda a derecha) Brandon, Celina, Kejalén.