

RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



April 2002

Issue 108

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

Immigrants show a passion for language

This article, by Terry Roen, appeared in the March 7, 2002 issue of The Florida Catholic. Permission has been granted to reprint it for all of our HOY readers. We thank Terry for finding this story and creating a wonderfully written piece about a group of highly motivated staff at the Zellwood CDC who continue to learn a little more English each day.

The shades are drawn, the children are napping and ten women sit in a circle around a Little Tikes easel conjugating verbs and learning English.

Maria Lopez takes a piece of chalk and conjugates while the class repeats, "He gives. She gives. We gave." Her classmates correct her spelling and cheer her on when she completes the sentence cor-



rectly. There's camaraderie in this group of day care workers who range in age from 29 to 70 and come from Cuba, Peru, and Mexico. They share a passion for learning and a drive to master the language of their new country.

Nilda Lozano Evans teaches the class of women in a darkened room amid snoring toddlers and con-

struction paper umbrellas. Twice a week, she brings a folder full of worksheets to the Redlands Christian Migrant Association in Zellwood, where children of farmworkers receive care at free or reduced rates. A Tupperware bowl of papaya sits in the middle of the art table as a snack for the women who use their lunch hour to learn. The students say they do their English-as-a-second-language homework after they feed, bathe and put their own children to bed in the evenings. "I want to study to learn English because I feel very, very bad when I can't explain myself," said Hulda Lopez, a 67-year-old grandmother from Cuba. Teresa Garcia sits patting the back of a 2-year-old who has awakened in tears. Teresa said she wants to learn English so she can help her 10-year-old daughter, Karen, with her homework at St. Charles School in Orlando. Garcia also has a 2- and 4-year-old.

Loza-Evans, a former lawyer from Peru, can relate to their struggle to learn English. She left Peru searching for a better life three years ago and is working as a Notre Dame Americorps volunteer so she can earn an educational stipend to get her law degree in the United States. The 52-year-old taught English during her law school days and said she enjoys the challenge of her latest assignment. "I'm very happy because my students have such a desire to learn," she said. Each week, Loza-Evans takes her English classes on the road to nurseries, elementary schools, and community centers to reach those who need language skills. The program is paid for through the Greater Reading and Writing Skills Literacy fund from the Peace and Justice Office for Farmworker Ministry.

We are proud of all of the Zellwood teachers for their commitment to learning English! Teresa Garcia, Hilda Lopez, Ramona Vidales, Antonieta Belzu, Maria Lopez, Lidia Ramas, Maria Isabel Posadas, Maria Leonor Posadas, and Martha Vinoja. Special thanks to Ms. Loza-Evans, an inspiring teacher.

FROM THE DESK OF BARBARA



“I saw the RCMA quality in the wonderful, warm, well trained and well spoken staff, who are professional early childhood educators, without question.”

DEL ESCRITORIO DE BARBARA

“Vi la calidad de RCMA en el conocimiento, el profesionalismo y el calor humano de nuestras maestras

What time cannot change

J had the good luck to go visit one of our centers this month which reminded me of the old days **and** the new days. What I saw of the old was a trailer type facility, very plain and not up to our new standards of space, color, lighting and so on. I saw the RCMA quality in the wonderful, warm, well trained and well spoken staff, who are professional early childhood educators, without question. In addition, I saw an enthusiastic and supportive parent president, who supports the center 100%. Then I saw a cook who cooks for over 80 children using only microwaves and one regular oven, washes the dishes without a dishwasher, in a small kitchen with no stainless steel cupboards – The food smelled wonderful, her smile was sincere and her dedication obvious.

Moving to the new days, I saw super materials for pre reading and writing activities to make sure the children were going to be prepared for kindergarten. I saw color coded lesson plans which made sure a well planned program was in place for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. I saw daily health checks with notations that made it clear we were checking children carefully each day. I saw lots of books for both children and parents to take home and read. I learned that the last two Transition to Kindergarten Support groups took place at the elementary school. I saw respectful teamwork in both the center and the area, with pride and recognition in the team for their partners' contributions.

So why do I choose to share this? Quite simply to let you know we will continue to try to provide the best facilities we can, but to also let all of you know that what happens **inside** the buildings between the staff and children and parents is what makes RCMA so special. When we are able to build a new center for the Indian River Early Education Center, it will be in recognition of all the amazing opportunities staff are giving our children and families. Talk about making a difference.....thank you staff -- everywhere!!!

Lo que el tiempo no puede cambiar

Este mes tuve la buena suerte de poder visitar uno de nuestros centros que me recordó los viejos tiempos y a la vez los más recientes. Lo que me recordó el pasado fue que el centro esta una “trailer” (casa móvil), la cual no tiene todavía todas las facilidades como espacio, iluminación, etc., de nuestros centros mas modernos. Vi la calidad de RCMA en el conocimiento, el profesionalismo y el calor humano de nuestras maestras y maestros. También observe que el presidente de los padres del centro tiene gran entusiasmo y apoya el centro cien por ciento. En la cocina tienen una cocinera con una sonrisa sincera y una dedicación admirable. La comida olía riquísimo! Ella cocina para 80 niños en una cocina pequeña con solo un horno y microondas, lava los platos a mano porque no tiene maquina de lavar platos, y el fregadero es de acero inoxidable.

Al visitar otro de los centros más modernos observe como usan fantásticos materiales en actividades para ayudar a los niños que están aprendiendo a leer y escribir para prepararlos para entrar a kindergarten. Vi como se organizan las lecciones con guías de diferentes colores para asegurarse que un buen programa esta planeado para los bebés, niños y los que van rumbo a la escuela. Tenían anotaciones escritas en sus listas de salud lo cual me indica que si están revisando a los niños cuidadosamente todos los días. Hay libros para que los padres y los niños se lleven para sus casas para leer. Me di cuenta que los últimos dos grupos de apoyo para la transición a el kindergarten se llevo acabo en la escuela elemental. También observe como trabajan en equipo y el respeto y admiración con el que se aceptan las recomendaciones de los padres.

¿Se han de preguntar por que comparto esto con ustedes? Simplemente para dejarles saber que continuaremos construyendo los mejores centros posibles, pero también para que sepan que lo que ocurre en el centro entre los empleados, los niños y los padres es lo que hace a RCMA muy especial. Cuando estemos listos para construir el nuevo centro de Indian River Early Education, será en reconocimiento a las oportunidades que los empleados les están brindando a nuestros niños y sus familias. ¡Así es que se hacemos la diferencia --- gracias a todos los empleados – en donde se encuentren!

Staff meets personal goal for health

Nancy Heppard, a cook at Indian River Migrant Head Start, had a goal at the beginning of the season. For her 10th wedding anniversary, she wanted to be able to fit into the dress she was married in. She started going to Weight Watchers and they helped her set two goals. The first one was that she would lose 10% of her body fat and a total of forty pounds.

She was able to reach her first goal in a couple of months. Nancy's desire was so strong she was even able to continue losing weight through the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season, when it seemed like everyone else around her was gaining weight. Nancy has been persistent and stuck to her goals. Her willpower was constantly tested. One day, a staff member treated the staff to Dunkin Donuts. The donuts were next to the coffee pot. Nancy walked past those donuts on several occasions and did not eat a single one.

Days passed, weeks passed, and months passed and always Nancy stuck to her goal. She got smaller and smaller. Her motivation and persistence paid off. Because of the support and education she received from Weight Watchers she has developed better eating habits. What other big reward did she receive from her weight loss and better eating habits? Her doctor took her off two of her medications in February because she had lost so much weight that she no longer needed them.

Now, the doctor has taken her off all of her medications. No more pills for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and chest pains, and no more pain in her legs. "The difference is like night and day. I feel so much better.", she said. Her success has inspired other staff to join Weight Watchers so that they too will lose weight and become healthier.

Nancy is always doing extra little things for the other staff. Her generosity and thoughtfulness are some of the things that make her a special person, so for Cook's Appreciation, several of the staff at the center brought her new clothes. Her other clothes did not fit her very well anymore. She was filled with excitement, as she tried to figure out which outfit to try on first.

On April 3, Nancy celebrated her anniversary, and guess what? She and her husband went to a photographer to have their picture taken, and she was wearing her wedding dress. Congratulations Nancy on the healthier you!

Professional Development Corner



Seven Teachers Receive G.E.D. at Rollason CDC Infant in Immokalee!

Congratulations to:

**Maria Olga Alvarado
Hilda Almanza
Sonia Escobedo
Ismelda Montez
Norma Nieto
Enedina Gonzalez**



Congratulations to Florencia Carreno, also a teacher at the RDCDC Infant who received her National C.D.A.!



Alert staff make all the right moves

It was a day like any other day at the Lake Placid CDC, or so they thought. Two teachers were outside with a group of children, when they noticed what looked like smoke coming out of a vent on the side of the building. They observed and then acted immediately. The center coordinator, Maria Diaz, service support assistant., Sara Mojica, maintenance person, Jose Flores and early childhood specialist, Debra Neverson went immediately to the laundry room where they discovered smoke coming out of the dryer. Maria turned the breaker off. Jose grabbed the fire extinguisher off the wall and doused the small fire. While all this was happening Debra and the teachers began evacuation of the children as a result of Maria pulling the alarm. Sara had made the call to 911. Children were quickly and safely evacuated from the building and moments later the fire department arrived. They checked for safety and was well thanks to the awesome teamwork of all the staff!

Child safety is key at local event

On Saturday, March 25th a child safety seat checkpoint was held at the Winn Dixie parking lot in Crescent City. RCMA's Palatka Area cosponsored the event with the Florida Highway Patrol. Cars began streaming in at 10:00 a.m. and the last car seats were being inspected and installed at 4:30 p.m.



Participation was very good, RCMA provided 40 car seats and the Highway patrol contributed the rest. Participants got first hand instruction on how to properly secure their car seats and technicians checked car seats for safety. Special thanks to Child Safety Restraint Technicians, Trooper Dawn Tomlinson, Florida Highway Patrol; Peter Millard, Palatka area Office; Sandra Sevilla, Volusia CDC; and Chris Keller of Palatka CDC. Crescent City staffer Maria Benetiz also lent a hand to technicians.



If you would like to know more about partnering with the Florida Highway Patrol or other community safety agencies in your area to hold a similar event please contact Peter Millard at the Palatka Area Office at (386) 312-2200 or Tim Peters, fleet manager, at (800) 282-6540.

Immokalee Charter holds "Young Woman's Summit"



A Young's Woman Summit was held for young women at the Immokalee Community Charter School. Teachers, Nicole Theide and Alma Reyna organized the day to expose 6th and 7th grade female students to different careers and opportunities that are available to them. Guest speakers from the fields of medicine, law, public relations, and business, all shared the underlying theme of working toward your goals at all times.



Also, most importantly anything they set out to do is within their reach!



Congratulations to our new proud parents!

Michael Facundo & Family
Roland Barron & Family
Angie Granadero & Family

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Please send suggestions, comments, and Letters to the Editor to the following address:
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1-800-811-2849



Thank a Teacher!
National Teacher Appreciation Week begins May 5th.