

RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make
A World of
Difference

Helping Our Youth



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Issue 114

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

Mainster recognized for long term leadership

Barbara Mainster, RCMA Executive Director was in for a big surprise at the RCMA Annual Training Conference held from October 1-3 in Orlando. Wednesday's entertainment was top secret and the guest of honor had little idea that she would be publicly recognized for her 30 years of leadership directed toward the betterment of children, families, staff and communities.



The surprise was launched with a video montage of Barbara in action pre-RCMA snapshots. Yes, she did have another life prior to RCMA. The video was followed by two surprise serenades, one from Board member Eduardo Galvan, accompanied on piano by his nephew, Abel Avelos. He sang a most powerful ballad by John Denver and showcased his singing talent for the first time in front of an RCMA audience. Mr. Galvan was followed by keynote speaker, Roberto Dansie who sang two songs in tribute, one in English and one in Spanish. The audience joined him as he played the guitar.



Two special guests, the blues sisters, a.k.a. Gloria Kendricks and Evan Portee took on as the Mistresses of Ceremonies for a parade of area creativity. There were many Barbara imposters, poetry, songs, ceremonies and a lot of kind humor. Angie Herrera helped get the word out - very hush, hush and coordinated the presen-



tation order. Last but not least an overwhelmed Barbara made her way to the podium to express her thanks for all the love that she felt in the room that evening.



Celebration of a thirty year commitment was not all that was special at the conference. The RCMA Hall of Fame Exhibits were coordinated by Irene Brammertz and were on display for the first two days of the conference. There was a learning quiz for gathering information on individual exhibits complete with door prize incentives for the most correct answers. Dana Reeves, Benefits and Risks Manager arranged to reduce the stress level of attendees by teaming up with Blue Cross Blue Shield to give out brief chair massages.

Conference learning revolved around teambuilding, supervision, conflict resolution and communication. Expert facilitators provided in depth workshops on the topics. Between workshops staff could pop in to the High Tech message center to read or send email or check out what was new on the RCMA website and Intranet. A Breakfast of Champions showcased some of our very own speaking talents. Myrta Rivera, Evan Portee, Judy Burleson, Jennyfa Rich, Lorena Quinoñes, Isabel Garcia, Maria Jimenez and Dollie McSwain helped illustrate the theme of Looking Back, Looking Forward, Looking Up through their own experiences. The theme was chosen from many ideas submitted by staff across the state. Thank you to the individual or group who submitted this great theme idea.

Keynote Roberto Dansie moved most to tears with his ability to use his own life stories to illustrate thought, bewilderment, and compassion. He integrated the use of the guitar in transmitting his message of humanity. Two thumbs up for a successful event!



**FROM
THE
DESK
OF
BARBARA**



“How little I knew about how well staff know me! To have “right to the point” and assertive advocate as parts of my name are very valued compliments.”

**DEL ESCRITORIO DE
BARBARA**

“Que poco sabia cuánto me conoce el personal. Ser nombrada una persona que es directa al punto y decidida, son complementos muy valorados.”

A huge thank you to all!

Sure I knew I had been at RCMA for thirty years. To me these “landmark” dates don’t mean much, especially when you have no plans to leave or make any great changes. So imagine my surprise when some very sneaky and talented people organized a big surprise party for me at the annual staff training conference in October!! Beginning with Roland’s superb video, using old photos of me which my sister provided (without telling me), than RCMA Board member Eduardo Galvan shared his beautiful voice when he sang a special song for me, and ending with tributes both funny and touching from each of the areas – it was a wonderful, and once in a lifetime party recognition.

I am always so pleased when I experience our staff’s creativity and ability to make fun of someone without being hurtful. Seeing all the Barbara look alikes, with grey hair and glasses around their necks, wearing my clothes was hysterical. Hearing how many staff got the message about not having our dolls look neglected, dirty and naked, was rewarding. For those of you who don’t know what I am talking about, our dolls in the centers represent the children when playing house. Therefore, we sure don’t want them to look neglected, do we? It was one of my training topics for several years.

Then there were the descriptive words. How little I knew about how well staff know me! To have “right to the point” and assertive advocate as parts of my name are very valued compliments. The cheerleaders, the hip hop crew, the more serious presentations all came together so beautifully. I was awed, embarrassed, grateful, and deeply touched by the love that each and every one of you conveyed to me.

Thank you again to all who had a part in making this anniversary one to remember. Working at RCMA with staff, parents, Board, Policy Council, Policy Committee and the children is an ongoing celebration of life for me.

Gracias a todos ustedes!

Por supuesto que sabía que tengo treinta años en RCMA. Para mí estas fechas no significan mucho, especialmente cuando no tienes planes de irte o de hacer grandes cambios. Imagínense mi sorpresa cuando unas disimuladas y talentosas personas organizaron una gran fiesta en mi honor en la Conferencia Anual de Octubre. Roland empezó con un súper video, usando viejas fotos mías que mi hermana proporciono (sin decirme nada), y luego el miembro de la mesa directiva Eduardo Galvan contribuyo su linda voz cuando me canto una canción especial y finalizando con homenajes chistosos y tiernos de cada una de las áreas. Fue algo maravilloso, y un reconocimiento único en la vida.

Siempre ha sido un placer experimentar la creatividad y habilidad de nuestro personal para burlarse de alguien sin herir los sentimientos. Ver todas las imitaciones de Bárbara con cabello gris, espejuelos alrededor del cuello, y usando mi ropa fue divertidísimo. Escuchar cuanto personal entendió el mensaje sobre no descuidar, ensuciar y dejar sin ropa a las muñecas me hizo sentir muy satisfecha. Para esas personas que no saben de lo que estoy hablando, nuestras muñecas en los centros representan a los niños jugando a la casita. ¿Así que hay que asegurarse de no descuidarlas, verdad? Fue uno de los temas en mis entrenamientos por varios años.

Después hubo palabras descriptivas. Que pocos sabía cuánto me conoce el personal. Ser nombrada una persona que es directa al punto y decidida, son complementos muy valorados. Las porristas, la banda hip-hop, y las presentaciones más serias se juntaron maravillosamente. Me quede con la boca abierta, avergonzada, agradecida, y profundamente conmovida por el amor y respeto que cada uno de ustedes me demostró.

Gracias de Nuevo a todos los que fueron parte de este inolvidable aniversario. Trabajar con RCMA, el personal, los padres de familias, la mesa directiva, Consejo de Póliza, Comité de Póliza, y los niños sigue siendo para mí una celebración de vida.

Conference inspires

As I returned from the RCMA Conference in Orlando, I was reflecting on the wonderful work that RCMA has been doing in Florida. I also reflected on some questions that some of the participants had in my workshops. They had to do with the three "C's" namely, communication, culture, and community. I ended up writing a little article on the subject. Hope you and your colleagues enjoy it..

Communication and Community - By Roberto Dansie

The process of community building is a permanent challenge to anyone working with others, for it not only requires an ongoing awareness of the inner-world, but also the openness and vulnerability to the lives of others. And yet, it is in this relation to others that one finds communion, the answer to humanity's primordial longing. For we are beings of community, and it is in the process of building community that we also unfold our true self in the world. We find four elements that affect each other in the process of community building, namely: Self ; Others; Communication; Community. We will now reflect on each one of these elements and their interaction with each other.

SELF AND COMMUNICATION

Communication is at the center of community building. Without communication there is no community. Being real is the foundation of our communication; for if our true Self is not the source of our communication, it doesn't matter which vehicle of communication we use there is no life in it. And without life, how can there be any relation? As we build community, we are confronted with the challenge of finding our own voice and opening our own eyes to the world. That is why life has given me these eyes. That is why life has also given me this voice. To be in the world, and to relate to others. If I deny myself how can I see you or talk to you? And If I deny you, how in the world can I communicate with you? I am, and you are.

That is the foundation of my communication. Being me is up to me. And that is what I will do in order to participate in meaningful communication with others. For us to communicate we first of all must be "present." If we are not present in the process of communication all interaction is frivolous. In the Talking Circle of the Native American Indians, special emphasis is placed in speaking from the heart. It is not about who is in control, or who is right or wrong. It

is a matter of honesty, of being present.

So we ask, when was the last time that you were present in life? When was the last time that you did something wholeheartedly? Is your heart present right now? Is your mind here? If not, find them and then we will continue.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

An ancient Japanese tradition has all of the attendants of a meeting, spend the first few minutes in silence. This silence invites them to arrive completely at the meeting. Silence is the room for our presence. What is the quality of your silence? Do you experience a comfortable silence? Without silence I can't really listen to the other person. I just listen to myself. If I cannot offer my silence to the person with whom I am they will not reach me. They can be on their own, but in reality, without my openness, without my silence, they are not BEING with me. Communication is the common ground of being. Silence is the ground in which meaning words grow. To communicate, to build community, let us all cultivate silence.

BEING AND DOING

Ancestral cultures tell us that who we ARE is far more important than what we DO. By this they mean that in the ever-changing nature of life, what we do goes on changing while who we are, our essence, remains the same. Therefore, if you lost your job, if you do not have the social or financial power that you once had, such change in status has no bearing in our relation. You are you, and our relation is of two Beings. Aside from this, the skills that you have developed are with you. They go wherever you go.

It may happen that you took a job elsewhere. You are no longer in the clinic, or the school. Still, community members come to see you and ask for your expertise. For your expertise did not stop when you left. It is there, still, with you. And the relation of those community members was not only with your organization. It was with you.

Throughout the years I have seen people loose their jobs. It is amazing the wide range of responses to this challenge. Farmworkers get on their cars, pack up, and hit the road. "I always wanted to go to Florida" Jose tells me, and waves good-bye. In contrast, I have seen many wealthy young men from Silicon Valley, being depressed, contemplating or committing suicide when their organization was downsized. For them, what they did was the center of their being, and when they lost their job, their whole sense of Self

Dansie, continued on page 4

Dansie, continued from page 3

was shattered.

In a changing world it makes sense to develop an inner sense of Self, rather than one based on external factors or circumstances, for, as the popular saying goes, “change is the only constant in life.”

Ancient cultures tell us that the Spirit that we bring to our activity is more important than the activity itself. It is our energy in the way of intention and attitudes that infuse our activities with power. Money, is basically an amplifier. It gives us the opportunity of doing more of what we are doing. If what we are doing is meaningful. Then the money will serve this meaning. But if what we are doing is useless, or unsubstantial, then no amount of money will bring meaning into our work.

Organizations that rely on money, and money alone for their functioning have no Spirit, and no resiliency to overcome challenges. They also have no healthy bond among its members and no community building power. They gather people. That is true. But so does a prison. The fact that they are in the same place and doing the same thing does not mean that they are a community.

SPIRIT, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

Spirit is essential for community building and no amount of money can compensate for its absence. Community building requires talent and character from its members.

Education is the process by which we get in touch with our talents and offer them to our community building process. Therefore, if we want to build community we are constantly educating ourselves, unfolding our being in the world, participating in ongoing learning and new ways of doing.

Since we are not just a mind, but also a body, a heart, and a soul, all of these dimensions of our being are going to be affected in our life and in our work. To build community, I must bring all of my being into the process. Much dissatisfaction and

misery is born out of denying Self in modern organizations, of denying our heart while working, of going against our consciousness as we make a living.

There is no soul nurturing in unhealthy organizations. They suck your energy and are constantly depriving you of your being. It is the opposite of self-realization: it is self-destruction.

SERVICE, COMMUNICATION AND WELL BEING

In community building your life is enhanced. You are constantly growing as a person. Your life has meaning. You can see how you are of service to others, how their lives are better because you are part of them. You are not in isolation. You have a place in the circle of life.

The good that you do generates a feeling of well-being, for those who do good are likely to feel good. And also your openness to the world of others, to their suffering and pain moves you to compassion and to pledge your life to theirs.

It is clear that community building is constantly taking you beyond your self. This awareness and caring toward others prevents serious mental health complications that have plagued many modern individuals who cannot get out of their selves.

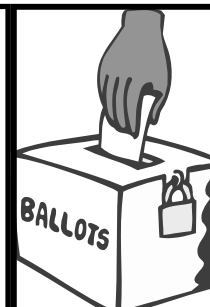
In our process of community building, we know that each participant is a being of experience. No one knows everything, and no one ignores everything. We can therefore learn from each other. Now, if we want to have the benefit of experience, then we are going to do our best to make sense out of it, to learn from it. The ancient Mexicans used the word “Chipotl” for “wisdom”. The word is quite appropriate for it also means “bump in the head.”

CONCLUSION

The ancient Mexicans, referred to the spoken word as “Nahuatl”, Spirit. They believed that our power to communicate was a loan from the Spirit. Like the air that sustains our body, our communication with each other sustains our community. Each and every one of us can be a sustainer or a destructor of our community. It depends on the way we choose to use our word. May your word continue to be one of growth, life, and Spirit.

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