

# RCMA HOY

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

We Can Make  
A World of  
Difference

## Helping Our Youth



July 2003

Issue 123

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

## Summer Belongs to School-Age Programs

By **Josh Rincon**, Project Director, Collier School-Age Program  
**Sharon Fox**, Program Coordinator, Arcadia Area Office  
**Josie Gracia**, Project Director, Ruskin School-Age Program

As many of the schools and our centers close for the season and the Florida weather heats up, RCMA School-Age programs gear up to provide fun-packed and educational activities for three months to help make a difference in the lives of the kids who attend their programs. Throughout the state, school age children are having the summer of their lives, thanks to the creative and talented folks who work for and with our school age programs. Here are a few examples of the cool activities going on this summer:

### SMOKEY VISITS COLLIER COUNTY

In Immokalee, Smokey the Bear made an appearance to talk about Florida wildlife and fire prevention. The kids had a chance to meet Smokey and ask questions.

During the first part of July, Josh Rincon and his staff held career week, where representatives from various agencies talked to the kids about their job, answered questions about their experiences and explained what educational requirements were needed to get a job in that field.



Of course, there's time for fun too! The kids had a chance to go to the beach during the summer and have fun in the sun.

### HOT ACTIVITIES IN RUSKIN

The Ruskin Area has and is providing many educational and fun activities for their kids. For their Summer Reading/Writing program, children read an appropriate number of books, and draw or write a summary on a daily basis. At the end of the summer program they

will receive an award. This year Ruskin received a grant that paid for a trip to Adventure Island. Other activities this summer include intergenerational activities with local seniors, a Sports Day in cooperation with the local Parks and Recreation Department, that included sports, games, face painting, and a magic show, fishing trips, and a safety fair.

### BADGES OF HONOR

The Smith Brown Afterschoolers are wearing their "Badges of Honor." The children have been working towards accumulating badges for all of their major accomplishments this summer. Each badge is tied to a set of criteria that the children have to master before being awarded the badge. Some of the badges are tied to activities at home i.e. washing dishes, making their beds. The parents must acknowledge the successful completion of the activities before the badges are awarded.

At the Center, the children are involved in many challenging activities. Just a sample of these activities for badges involve: the regular visits to the library to complete their reading and writing badges; visiting Walmart to do comparative shopping to work towards their math badges; making pizzas at Dominos Pizza to work towards their nutrition and cooking badges; becoming successful gardeners to master their gardening badges and they have enjoyed a trip to the Tampa Museum of Science and Industry as one step towards accomplishing their science badges. In addition, many of the children have learned to properly set the table to receive a badge and they have learned to sew by putting together their sashes. Of course, they all have become good citizens by following the rules and respecting each other.

Motivation and enthusiasm is high with this group of children. The real credit goes to dedicated and excited teachers, Alisa Ashford and Tiare Hollimon. Hats off to them for implementing this successful program this summer. They have made a **real** difference in these children's lives! They have opened the doors to opportunities.

**FROM  
THE  
DESK  
OF  
BARBARA**



**R**ecently, we have had quite a few staff who are in the care giving role at home. When someone in your family has surgery, or an illness, or an injury and you are the one “in charge”, you become SUPERWOMAN or SUPERMAN!! You do things you never knew you could. You speak up to hospital staff, change dressings, transport to appointments, cook up special food to help the patient eat, sleep with one eye open or give up sleep altogether! You worry. It is exhausting. You wonder if it will ever end. **But mostly, you just do it and never question that you can.**

The strength each of us has is a marvel. Our ability to give and love is astounding. But we also need to remember to take care of ourselves. Take a break – read a magazine, have a hot fudge sundae. Let others help out. Let the house get a little messier - what does a little dirt matter in the big picture of life?!

When the care giving crisis ends, we realize how lucky we are to have all the little things that we take for granted. Our health is precious. Our families are wonderful. For a while we remember to be grateful for all those gifts and more – the humming bird, the juicy mango, the car that starts right up, the smiling baby granddaughter, and rewarding work.

Please, show your care and concern for the care giving people you know. That is just one more way we love our neighbor. And before I forget, have a great vacation and come back to us rested and raring to go!

**Del Escritorio de Barbara**

**R**ecientemente, hemos tenido algunos de nuestros empleados cuidando familiares en su hogar. Cuando en tu familia alguien tiene cirugía, una enfermedad, o algún accidente y tu estas “a cargo”, tu te conviertes en “Súper-Mujer” o “Súper-Hombre”!! Haces cosas que nunca pensaste poder hacer. Hablas con el personal del hospital, cambias gasas, transportas a citas, cocinas comida especial para ayudar al paciente a comer, duermes con un ojo abierto o simplemente no duermes toda la noche! Te preocupas. Esto es muy cansado, y te preguntas si esto va a terminar algún día; **Pero sobre todo, lo haces y nunca te preguntas si puedes o no.**

La fortaleza que cada uno de nosotros tenemos es una maravilla. Nuestra habilidad para dar y amar es increíble. Pero también tenemos que recordar que tenemos que cuidar de nosotras mismas. Toma un descanso – lee una revista, comete un helado, deja que otros le ayuden, deja la casa media sucia – que importa un poco de mugre en el gran esquema de la vida?!

Cuando termina la crisis, nos damos cuenta la suerte que tenemos de tener todas las cosas pequeñas que nunca apreciamos. Nuestra salud es inapreciable. Nuestras familias son maravillosas. Por un tiempo recordamos todos estos regalos y muchas cosas más con gratitud: las gallinas, los mangos jugosos, el carro que prende inmediatamente, y nuestro trabajo que nos llena de satisfacción.

Por favor, muestra tu cariño y preocupación a la gente que conoces que cuida de alguien. Esa es solo una manera más de amar a nuestro prójimo. Y antes de que se me olvide, que tengas muy buenas vacaciones y que regreses a nosotros descansada y lista para seguir!

## AREA F2 FINDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING

By Sharon Martin, Program Coordinator, Hardee Area Office

An opportunity was recently given to Area F2 (Bowling Green Child Development Center; Fred Dennis Child Development Center, and Lake Placid Child Development Center), Teachers and Core Staff. This opportunity did not just occur out of the blue, but by a phone call between Sharon Martin (then Early Childhood Specialist for Head Start/RCMA Fred Dennis Child Development Center), and Instructor Judy Dellepere, South Florida Community College. Sharon spoke with an excited Instructor Dellepere via phone about a play-based curriculum model, known as, *“Beyond Center and Circle Time,”* that was created and supported by research from, *“The Creative Center for Childhood Research and Training,” (CCCRT)*. This research represents an approach that uses rich, well planned, and organized play opportunities with teach scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1962, 1967, 1978). In other words, taking the “best of both worlds.”

So, Sharon Martin set up a meeting with herself and Graciela Valadez (Early Childhood Specialist/Early Head Start/RCMA Fred Dennis Child Development Center. After Instructor Dellepere explained and demonstrated, *“Beyond Centers and Circle Time,”* curriculum, Sharon Martin, set up another meeting with Area F2 Core Staff at their monthly meeting. Everyone was impressed with Instructor Dellepere’s presentation, so she decided to give (at that time), RCMA-Fred Dennis Child Development Center, a chance to be one of the first to reap the benefits of a free training. This was a unique opportunity for the staff to receive a training that positively impacted the way young children are supported in their acquisition of knowledge and skill, where quality early experiences will support children’s journey toward readiness and success in school and later in life. This opportunity was later expanded to the entire Area F2, after Sharon Martin was promoted to Program Coordinator and with the approval of Instructor Dellepere.

*Beyond Centers and Circle Time: Scaffolding and Assessing the Play of Young Children*, acknowledges the importance of well planned, organized, and scaffolded play experiences have on the positive long term, total development of young children. This training also provided RCMA Area F2 Staff with an understanding in terms of what children’s products and play has in the development of reading, writing, and abstract thinking, knowledge, and skill.

Sharon Martin (Program Coordinator for Area F2), would like to thank Instructor Dellepere for training Area F2, two members from Sebring Child Development Center, and one member from East Coast Migrant Head Start in Bowling Green, and the entire RCMA staff for taking the time out of their busy summer schedule (the staff is laid-off for the summer), to attend this week long training, June 16-20, 2003. Everyone walked away motivated and with a better understanding of this play-based curriculum, ideas, and handouts to use in the future and their classrooms.



Instructor Judy Dellepere



## Learning Together So We Can Live Together

By Priscila Vidal, Center Coordinator, Gadsden MHS  
Shawne Thomas, Inclusion Specialist

On June 2, 2003, 2 ½ year old Yair Ramos enrolled in the Gadsden Migrant Head Start Center (Yair was first identified and enrolled at our Hacienda MHS center in Naples.) In the 2 weeks he spent there, the staff started his evaluation process and worked with mom on how to play with her special son. Then his family migrated to Gadsden. When he first came, Yair could not hold a cup or feed himself. He also did not interact with other children. However, just six short weeks later, Yair can hold a cup, finger feed, brush his teeth and clap his hands when he gets excited! Best of all, Yair has a classroom full of friends. Friends that see him as a child with abilities! However, Yair does have a disability, but he is seen as a child FIRST by his friends and teachers. The whole staff is to be commended for ensuring that Yair is included in every aspect of the program. Special recognition goes out to Yair’s team of teachers: Graciela Arias, Monica Munoz, Teresa Tejada and especially Leticia Cardenas, Yair’s special caregiver. Leticia is always pushing Yair in every aspect of his development and



Above: Yair fingerpaints alongside his friends as Leticia encourages him to touch the paint.

even took it upon herself to do research on his disability. Leticia makes sure Yair is included in each and every activity alongside his classmates. Thank you Leticia and all Gadsden MHS staff for promoting and ensuring the value of inclusion!

## Barbara Visits Gadsden MHS

By Priscila Vidal, Center Coordinator, Gadsden MHS



On Monday, June 23, Executive Director Barbara Mainster, spent the day with the kids and staff of the Gadsden Migrant Head Start. During her visit, she changed, fed and spent time with the children. She also had the opportunity to meet with teachers, take pictures and blow up some balloons. She did all of this on an almost empty stomach, with only two oranges for lunch! What a trooper!



## NOTES AND NEWS

### Words and Photos from Around the State!

A very special person who touched the lives and hearts of many has left us. Nancy Woolfork McDonald, a long time RCMA employee and special person, departed this life Tuesday, July 8, 2003.

Nancy began work for RCMA in 1989 as an Eligibility Specialist, and later came to the Rollason Center as our Office Manager. Nancy loved to joke and had a great sense of humor. She did a great job making the Fed Ex man tow the line! Nancy will be remembered for her honesty and contributions to RCMA as we grew into our new office space at the Rollason Center.

Services were held for Nancy at the Lake Trafford Cemetery on July 12, 2003. Nancy may be gone, but she is not forgotten. She will live on in the many lives she has touched, in both our hearts and minds.

Perhaps the best expression of her departure is the following poem placed in her memorial service program.

*God saw that she was getting tired, and a cure was not to be had,  
So He put His arms around her, and whispered, "Come with me"  
With tearful eyes we watched her, suffer and saw her fade away  
Although we loved her dearly, we could not make her stay.  
A golden heart stopped beating, hardworking hands to rest,  
God broke our hearts to prove to us, He only takes the best.*

Nancy's last message to her family was beautiful: "We have the best parents in the world. I'll always be grateful for what they have done for all of us. Take care of my boys, tell them I love them and to listen to you". With these last words, Nancy reminds us all of what matters in life. May she rest in peace.



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Check out the RCMA Intranet at [www.rcma.org/intranet](http://www.rcma.org/intranet)

### Indian River Teacher Earns Her AS Degree

By *Helen Davis, Program Coordinator Indian River AO*

The Indian River Area is very proud to be the home of the first Migrant Head Start teacher in RCMA to receive the AS degree. Wanda Perez, a former farm worker, came to RCMA February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1995 from a packing house where she graded fruit. Wanda remembers her Mom working in the tomato fields. She began her career as a teacher with RCMA at Indian River Migrant Head Start. Over a period of eight years Wanda moved through the RCMA professional development system. She got her GED from the State of Florida, and then moved on to a CDA National, and then, on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003 she earned an Associate of Science degree in Child Development and Education.

These eight years have been full of hard work but, according to Wanda, have been very rewarding. She took classes every semester and passed all classes without having to repeat any of them. However, Wanda said, "Algebra nearly killed me!"

Many staff in the Indian River area have been inspired by Wanda's efforts. Those attending college with her, formed,

under the leadership of Shannon

Tracy-Faust, a "cohort group". They attended classes together, supported and helped each other. When Shannon received a call from Wanda informing her that she had completed her last class, Shannon said, "I feel like I just had one of my own children graduate because we have worked together on this goal from the beginning."



Wanda is very grateful for all the help she has received from RCMA and the T.E.A.C.H. program. Congratulations on all your accomplishments, Wanda!

### RCMA Conference Coming In September

By *Amy Smith, Resource Production Manager*

The 39<sup>th</sup> Annual RCMA Conference is just around the corner! "Making the Connection" is this year's 2003 Annual Conference theme, which will be held at the Rosen Centre in Orlando on Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> thru Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Participants at the conference will be able to attend sessions focusing on "Communicating in a Culturally Diverse Settings," "Knowing Yourself", and "Bosses vs. Leaders." In between the sessions, participants will have an opportunity to expand their computer knowledge at the Computer Kiosk where email and other technological programs can be viewed starting early Wednesday through Friday. This year's Hall of Fame which will also be open Wednesday through Friday, will focus on Cultural Diversity. Booths will educate staff about different countries and their history through food, flags, costumes, games, money and other important facts. Other festivities will include a multi-cultural fashion show, a variety of exceptional speakers, and a chance to have a great time with RCMA friends! If you have any questions or concerns about the conference, please contact Amy Smith at [amy@rcma.org](mailto:amy@rcma.org) or 800-282-6540 ext. 279.