



Contract Renewals, Federal Grants Increase RCMA's Impact

Picture by Joe Bucherer

After a rigorous process that engaged the entire RCMA family, including Board members, staff, and community partners, several major federal contracts valued at more than \$40 million annually for the next five years, about 50% of our annual budget, were renewed. In addition, RCMA was able to acquire \$6.8 million in Head Start grants for program expansion and program enrichment, including one-time funding.

These contracts secure a large portion of our daily operations throughout the state.

The expansion grant is allowing us to serve an additional 144 infants and toddlers and continue to provide many of our children a full ten and a half hours of care daily.

The one-time grants will allow us to make hurricane-related repairs to centers.

These awards significantly affirm RCMA's legacy of providing quality early childhood education. They provide stability to our programs, encouragement to our teachers, peace of mind to our parents, and a safe and enriching environment to our children.

While many people are responsible for this achievement, we want to acknowledge Michael Bayer, Vice President of our Board of Directors since 2000. A member of our Head Start Committee and Strategic Planning Committee, Michael's professional experience and institutional knowledge proved invaluable during our successful bid for our contracts.

We are grateful for all RCMA partners for the many ways they have helped us increase our impact on the children and families of Florida.

Reorganization Strengthens Program Operations

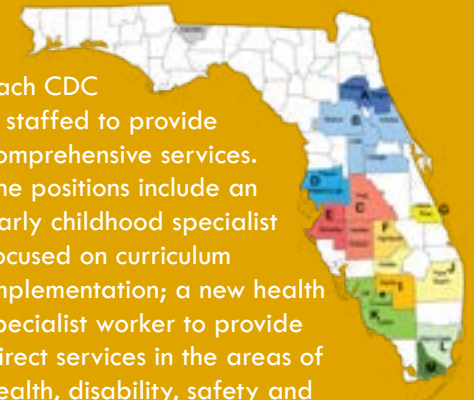
Because our Child Development Centers (CDCs) are spread across 66 sites in 21 Florida counties, having RCMA resources close by strengthens our impact, efficiency and response to opportunities.

With that in mind, our senior management team and Board of Directors strategically evaluated our structure and this summer reorganized our CDC operations into four regions.

Each region is comprised of counties within close proximity to reduce driving time for regional staff, and has a relatively equal number of children.

The four Regional Directors, a newly created position, lead the regional teams, which include a regional coach dedicated to supporting our teachers.

Each CDC is staffed to provide comprehensive services. The positions include an early childhood specialist focused on curriculum implementation; a new health specialist worker to provide direct services in the areas of health, disability, safety and nutrition; a family support worker to ensure our children's families have all the support they need; and an information and data specialist.





New Alumni Program Looking for Members

Established almost 55 years ago, RCMA has more than 40,000 alumni. What a tremendous resource for each other, and what a talented and diverse group to help inspire today's RCMA students.

mentoring program for RCMA students, and other fun ways to stay in touch wherever alumni reside.

We are planning a kickoff event for spring 2020 in Immokalee and would like to hold alumni events throughout the state year round.

For more information, please contact Community Relations Manager Clay Hollenkamp at clay.hollenkamp@rcma.org or 813.215.5803.

We are forming an Alumni Association to engage and support our alumni, continuing our "from crib to high school and beyond" mission. We plan to have an Alumni Council, networking events, career webinars, alumni newsletter, volunteer opportunities,

We're Looking for You!

If you went through an RCMA program – or know anyone who did – we have several ways to connect:

- Register at rcma.org (click the RCMA Alumni tab at top)
- Join us at facebook.com/groups/RCMAalumni
- Network with us at linkedin.com/groups/8826537



Opening doors to opportunities

Two Alumni Give Back Through Leadership Roles

Joaquin Perez and Ansberto Vallejo are great examples of alumni staying engaged with RCMA.

Both serve on our Board of Directors, Joaquin since 2010 and Ansberto since 2018. Ansberto serves on the Charter School Committee and Joaquin is a Vice President serving on the Executive Committee.



Ansberto Vallejo



Joaquin Perez

Joaquin attended RCMA's Mascotte Child Development Center in Lake County. His dad was a harvesting contractor who referred families to RCMA, a tradition that Joaquin keeps as head of human resources at Cherry Lake Tree Farms in Groveland. He knows how difficult it is for families to find affordable childcare that prepares children for academic success.

"I give back by paying it forward," Joaquin says. "I'd do anything to help RCMA."

Graduate Support Coordinator Will Help Guide Students and Parents

Transitioning from RCMA middle school to high school and then post-secondary education just became easier. Thanks to funding from the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay, Lipman Family Foundation and donations from Board and staff members, RCMA is hiring its first Graduate Support Coordinator.

"We want to give our families all the tools they need to prepare students for success," says Isabel Garcia, Executive Director/Head Start Director. **"Navigating all the options is challenging, especially for first-generation college-bound students and for our students, who are transitioning from our small, community school environment. We greatly appreciate all our donors for underwriting this new job."**

We will work closely with our 8th grade students and their parents providing information and holding workshops to help them prepare for high school. Workshops will help enlighten parents and students about high school options, high school and college application procedures, strategic college matriculation, ACT/SAT prep and registration, college access/affordability, financial aid, scholarships, and 529 college savings accounts. Most importantly, 8th graders graduating from RCMA Leadership Academy will have a trusted companion as they embark on their high school journey.

We will also help our alumni find summer jobs and internships as they continue their studies.



From Isabel Garcia, Executive Director – Head Start Director

After nine months as Executive Director and more than 30 years with RCMA, I am excited to say that we are at a great moment in the organization's history and are seizing opportunities. We have strong support from our Board and our partners, who have really invested in our mission, and that gives us the confidence to move forward.

RCMA's integrity and impact are demonstrated by several recent achievements.

The most notable is our five-year Head Start renewal, so we can continue to provide school readiness to children ages birth to five from low-income families. This renewal demonstrates that we are a sound, stable organization that meets or exceeds all Head Start criteria, including not only education but healthcare and family engagement and services. I want to

thank our partners and legislators who wrote letters of support for us.

I am also proud to share that our charter school students scored higher on the Florida Standards Assessments in several categories than state or county averages. When you consider that English is not their first language and that they are not with us the entire school year because of migrant family travel, this achievement is very impressive.

All three of our charter schools are "B" schools – and we're working on an "A" this year! Because of our success with charter schools, we are being considered for expansion support in Polk County, where we own extra land, by the Charter School Growth Fund.

As we approach the time of the year for giving thanks and being with family, I want to thank all of you for being part of our RCMA Family.



Opening Doors
to Opportunities
since 1965



6,500
children served
annually

66
child development
centers

Florida's largest
non-profit provider of
early childhood
education

3
charter schools

21
counties

25
family child care
homes and child
care centers partners

40,000+
Alumni

Migrant
& rural
low-income
families

Headquartered
in Immokalee

1,600
employees

\$82 million
budget

Head Start
Programs

Academic bilingualism
& biculturalism curriculum

Follow us

look for RCMA1965

Fall 2019



The 2020 Census Impacts RCMA Families

More than one third of Florida's general revenues come from federal aid, which is distributed for education, health care, nutrition and other programs that support low-income families like those served by RCMA.

Having an accurate Census is important to this funding, yet the people whose lives are most affected by this support are traditionally among the least counted.

Racial and ethnic minorities, non-English speakers, low-income families, immigrants, refugees, and migrants who travel for work are often disproportionately missed. It is estimated that the 2010 Census missed more than 10

percent of all children under age 5 in the U.S.

The Census letter will be mailed in mid-March, and people are encouraged to complete the questions online, which is another potential barrier to participation as many families remain without home access to the internet.

RCMA is developing strategies to encourage our families to be part of the upcoming Census.

Watch our website and Facebook page for ways you can be a part of our effort to ensure that the 2020 Census counts all Florida residents!

Spread Holiday Cheer... And Your Support of RCMA

An alligator wearing a Santa hat, orange trees decorated with string lights, and a wreath made of berries are just some of the Christmas cards designed by RCMA students and ready for purchase online.

Forty images were created for exclusive use by individuals or businesses on a first-come first-served basis, and three designs are available for everyone.

Exclusive designs can include a logo and personalized message and require a minimum purchase of 100 cards for \$150.

For the three general designs, packs of 10 with envelopes are \$15.

Every dollar raised qualifies RCMA for up to \$16 in matching state funds. That means a \$15 box of cards could entitle RCMA to \$240. Proceeds help us purchase educational supplies.



View and order
your cards at:
bit.ly/rcmacards
by Dec. 13.

Make Your 'Tee Time' for Our Annual Golf Tournament

Come out swinging at our 21st Annual Lipman Family Farms Golf Classic, which will be held on **Saturday, May 9, 2020**, at Naples Heritage Golf and Country Club.

The fun day includes breakfast, shotgun start, sumptuous buffet lunch, and a bounty of awards and door prizes.

RCMA Board member Jaime Weisinger from Lipman Family Farms returns as tournament chair. We welcome Mike Foley from Food and Supply Source, a long-time RCMA friend and partner that agreed to co-chair.

How to Get Involved

We offer several **EXCLUSIVE sponsorship opportunities** (starting at just \$1,000), including Putting Green, Beverage Cart, Breakfast, Lunch, Surf N Turf Game, and Grand Prize Raffle.

Put together a **foursome**.

Donate a raffle item to help us raise additional funds.



To become a sponsor, player, or raffle item donor, please go to rcma.net/golf-tournament or contact Community Relations Manager Clay Hollenkamp at cr@rcma.org or 813.215.5803.

Shop for You... and for Us

If you're an Amazon shopper, here are two easy ways you can support RCMA with the click of your mouse!

1. Visit [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/RCMA) and select "RCMA / Redlands Christian Migrant Association" as your charity. Do this just once, and Amazon will give us a percentage of your eligible purchases each time you shop. We don't see what you buy, and there's no extra cost to you!

2. Check out our Amazon Wish List and purchase an item or two that is sent directly to us. It's a great way to know exactly how your support will impact our kids. Find the list at [rcma.org](https://www.rcma.org) (click at top on "How You Can Help"), [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or <https://amzn.to/30re5L6>.

Our Amazon Wish List includes school and craft supplies, books, clothing, ballet slippers (for dance classes) and running shoes (for the running club). We also need preschooler enrichment items to spark their curiosity, such as puzzles, wooden blocks, Lego and Duplo kits, dress-up clothes, cooperative board games, pretend kitchens, and puppets.

Happy shopping!

Our sixth graders are captivated by two books and we need more copies. *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario tells the amazing true story of a Honduran boy and his journey to the United States to find his mother. *Refugee* by Alan Gratz teaches students about world history through the lives of a Jewish boy living in 1930's Germany, a Cuban girl in 1994, and a Syrian boy in 2015.



Paul and Stella Covill Marking 20 Years as Supporters

Since 2000, Paul and Stella Covill have gifted RCMA with their time and financial resources. The impact they have made in our Indian River centers and overall organization is a lasting legacy that has inspired many other donors over the years.

"It has enriched my life so much to work with these children and their parents," says Stella, who reads to the children weekly at our Robert G. Covill Center in Fellsmere, funded by the Covills and named in honor of their late son. "The children are the sweetest, smartest, most respectful children I've ever run into. I've loved every minute of it. I've never had a dull day."

Learning is fun when Stella is around. She has 14 stuffed animals that she brings when reading a book that features a particular character. One of the children's favorites is "We're Going on a Bear Hunt," and Stella joins the kids to mimic swimming, going into the cave and running away from the bear. "They always ask if we can do it again," she laughs.

RCMA is truly a family project for the Covills. Their children and grandchildren go to the centers to hear Stella read. And their children Chris and

Kitley also make financial contributions, most recently in honor of Paul's birthday.

Continuing to help the agricultural community is important to the couple.

"The families are grateful and attend every parents meeting, which is different from a public school," says Stella. "They look forward to them and learn themselves."

"We firmly believe that donating to RCMA changes people's lives. There are a lot of programs around, but none have the character and uniqueness of RCMA." Paul Covill

Giving kids opportunities is what still motivates them. "This is a chance for these migrant kids to get an education," Paul says of their commitment. "Stella has made a tremendous difference."

RCMA is extremely grateful for the Covill family's commitment.

"Stella and Paul have led by example and inspired hundreds of children, parents, teachers, staff, volunteers and community members over the past 20 years," says Isabel Garcia, Executive Director/Head Start Director. "We value their friendship and stewardship, and we thank them for their unwavering support of RCMA."



Read all about it: 94% of our Immokalee Community School 6th graders scored a 3 or higher (proficient or better) in math and 52% in reading on the 2019 Florida State Assessment. They tied students at Mason Classical Academy for 1st place in math among all Collier County Public School District 6th graders for the highest percentage. Thanks to reading instructors Belinda Long, Bernice Abrigo and Delia Quintana.



Immokalee Community School Principal Zulaika Quintero is featured in Family Pictures USA, a new PBS project that explores families around the country through the lens of family photo albums. An RCMA employee since 2010, Zulaika was born in Zacatecas, Mexico, into a migrant family.

RCMA Wimauma Academy 3rd grade scholars scored in the top 20 in the state in math. At RCMA Leadership Academy, 29 of the 7th and 8th grade scholars entered high school with Algebra I credits and 9 with Algebra I and Geometry. In civics, the 7th graders' proficiency scores beat the state and county and 8th graders topped the state and county in science. This year, 51 scholars are taking accelerated math – our most ever!



Picture by UnidosUS

RCMA Wins National Award

Exciting news! RCMA received the Affiliate Advocacy Award from UnidosUS during the organization's annual conference, which drew more than 3,000 social change leaders, experts and elected officials this summer. UnidosUS serves the Hispanic community through research, policy analysis, and state and national advocacy efforts.

We were recognized for our "commitment to excellence in education and an unwavering belief that migrant students are to be held to the highest standards, so they reach their potential as individuals, and have life choices and opportunities for success," according to UnidosUS.

RCMA works with many partners, including UnidosUS, to raise awareness of the challenges faced by migrant families and children. RCMA staff, students and parents make advocacy

visits throughout Florida and in Washington, D.C. RCMA also informs community and business leaders about migrant family issues, and raises money for our Farmworker Advocacy services.

Isabel Garcia, RCMA Executive Director and Head Start Director, accepted the award. Born into a third generation migrant farmworker family, Garcia knows first-hand the challenges faced by the students and families that RCMA serves.

"Receiving this honor from UnidosUS reinforces the importance of RCMA's holistic approach to engaging and serving the entire family as we provide early childhood education and care," she says.





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Picture by Joe Bucherer

It's Fun to Donate to RCMA!

Seeing big smiles on children's faces – and knowing you made it happen – is rewarding.

Reading this newsletter – and discovering the impact of your generosity – motivates you to keep giving.

That is what makes donating to RCMA fun!

And, we now have some NEW fun ways to DONATE to RCMA.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

Tuesday, Dec. 3

Join us in this global day of celebrating charitable causes!

Watch our Facebook page throughout the day as we...

- unveil a **very special video**
- recognize some of our **outstanding donors**
- post items our kids need from our **Amazon Wish List**
- spotlight **volunteer positions**
- outline **special giving opportunities**

Volunteer in one of our child development centers or charter schools on #GivingTuesday.

Mark your calendar to make your year-end donation on #GivingTuesday.

Ask your employer if they provide matching funds for your donation.

Share our very special video and **invite** your friends to support RCMA.

Stay in Touch!

Sign up for our NEW e-newsletter!
rcma.org

 facebook.com/rcma1965

 linkedin.com/in/rcma-redlands-christian-migrant-association/

For RCMA Alumni

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