

## Friendship Beyond the Classroom

By Flor Barrientos

Community Based Instruction (CBI) seems to be beneficial for students, enhancing a better quality of life. It promotes a positive outcome, enhancing happiness, friendship, and satisfaction in both social and academic skills. It was the middle of May and as usual, the teacher asked students to provide ideas for going out to CBI activities for the following month. Suddenly, one student said "Let's go to the movie theatre" another said "No, Let's go to Barnes and Noble" and another "Let's go to a Restaurant". While making plans for our next CBI, one of the para-professionals was taking attendance. When she called out Kim, one male student said "She is not here, she is still at the hospital". Another student replied "She had brain surgery". Our class conversation quickly changed to talking about Kim. Teacher replied "Why don't we visit her at the hospital?" One of the students interjected by saying, "She is at Baptist Hospital." Teacher asked students to vote if everyone was in agreement to schedule our next CBI to the hospital to for a surprise visit to our very special friend. Everybody voted "Yes" and students started talking about Kim's abilities and past events they all visited together. Next day, during arts & crafts class, three

students were on task, making a special card for Kim. A couple of days after, teacher read an email saying that Kim was transferred to a recovery room. Teacher scheduled a CBI to Baptist Hospital at Southwest Miami. Two vans departed from Central with students, staff, and our class nurse. On our way to the hospital, one van made a quick stop, for students to buy flowers and a balloon for Kim. After a few minutes, we arrived to the hospital and knocked on Kim's bedroom. We opened the door and Kim was there, lying down on her bed, turned around and said: "Teacher and began to call each student by their names". The youngest of my students asked for help to stand up and handed Kim the flowers. Kim grabbed the flowers and gave her a kiss in appreciation. Kim smiled and said "Flowers". One student said "We miss you Kim". Another, the oldest one was very excited and started to get teary eye while looking at her. Right after, Kim smiled at her friend and said "Thank you guys".



Students took turns entering the room and were very polite with hospital personnel.



It was a great experience for all and friends were happy to see each other.



We left Kim's room and ended having lunch all together at the hospital food court.



Every day is a different life experience. Thanks to Community Base Instruction, teachers practice hands on experience and skills that are beneficial to students not only academically but in their social and emotional lives.