

MIAMI

COMMENTARY

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ong road leads to graduation

In Virginia Cruz received her graduation diploma Thursday night, in her cap and gown at the Country Club, she didn't receive her own crisp steps. At age 26, she was graduating from high school, an accomplishment I never believed possible in the long days when she drove a truck through fields in South Dade, and she had to walk miles back with her young children, in the heat. As she put on her white gown she wore the most elegant dress she'd ever

symbolism of that night nearly brought her to tears, particularly when she turned to her table.

Her vocal supporters, her child, 3-year-old Jesús, 9-year-old Naomi, 6-year-old Daniel Lee, and 5-year-old Jessica and 5-year-old Antonio.

She hadn't been in school in over a year when she enrolled at the South Dade Community College. But she came to the liberating conclusion that she needed to change her life not only for her, but for her children.

She came to this decision after one particularly bruising week of walking home and from her work at a nursery watching her kids suffer as she walked home with her.

She felt helpless as she learned two boys were having discipline problems at their summer camp. She thought that they would be the way she and her brothers had the bleak holding pattern of life, with no hope for a future.

It was not going to happen to her. She decided when she quit her week job at the nursery and went to school for computer and training. Although she would be a stipend there, she would be making more than half of what she had been making.

She knew she had to work to support the government assistance checks for her children — some monthly in food stamps and \$250 a month in welfare — but she had a

dream is to get a good job, at least in business, someplace that will have a future," says Virginia. She was surrounded by her kids on Saturday afternoon at their home in the Country Club. "I don't want to grow up like this, on welfare food stamps."

Virginia is a child of the picking. She is the only girl among five brothers including her twin brother David,

A world of news in South Florida

El Nuevo Herald

Some free weeklies are aimed at the entire Hispanic community, a new trend.

RUNNING THE GAMUT

They include the 28-page El Noticiero in Broward County, circulation 15,000, which specializes in giving immigrants practical advice about how to live in America, and the entertainment-loaded El Popular of Miami-Dade, launched in 1998,

with a 40,000 to 50,000 circulation, whose latest issue has Madonna on the cover.

But most Spanish-language publications are geared to nationality.

There are four papers for Dominicans, for example, and three for Argentines. Venezuelans and Colombians have two huge papers each.

Why four for a Miami-Dade community of only 36,500?

Siri News

EL COLOMBIANO

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD PATTERSON FOR THE HERALD

POLYGLOT: Newspapers in South Florida speak to readers in Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Chinese, Hebrew, French, Iranian, Japanese, Russian, Yiddish and Tagalog.

Papers serve ethnic groups, and in their own languages

BY PAUL DRINKI EY-ROGERS
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In South Florida, all the news that's fit to print is probably not going to be in English or geared to American readers.

More than 75 newspapers inform and entertain one of the nation's most complex ethnic landscapes, including scores in Spanish and eight in Portuguese for Brazilians — not to mention

Urdu, Gujarati, Chinese, Hebrew, French, Iranian, Japanese, Russian, Yiddish and Tagalog.

The future of South Florida is written in their typefaces and mastheads, say the editors and publishers of this often colorful and squabbling array of papers. Yet many have tiny circulations and are known only in one neighborhood, or even on only a half dozen blocks, making their influence on the body politic question-

able to reach groups they feel are underrepresented in the mainstream press.

Only two of these papers are dailies: El Nuevo Herald, the nation's second largest Spanish-language paper with 84,200 copies, and Diario las Americas, circulation 68,600. Most are weekly, biweekly or monthly and, if their budget is tiny and the staff is a lone reporter who is also editor

Sex-plaintiff couple remain in custody

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the crash. Pilot Thomas Hayashi, who was believed to have survived the crash about 40 miles south of Key West, told investigators that his passenger was a man and woman in their late 20s.

Boy drowns at family gathering

Tragedy is the second in a series of deaths during same week

BY LILA ARZUA
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Another family party ended in tragedy Sunday when a 3-year-old boy drowned in a pool at a plantation in Kendall, the second in a series of deaths during the same week.

Brandon Rodriguez was pronounced dead at 4:58 p.m. at a hospital, where he was rushed after being pulled out of his aunt's backyard pool at 4401 SW 94th St., Miami County police said.

Surrounded by family members celebrating a grandmother's birthday, Brandon, along with about 10 youngsters, had been frolicking in the pool, police said. At 4 p.m., his mother, Vivian Serrano, noticed the boy