

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE: WORKING TOWARD "BARRIER FREE COMMUNITIES FOR DISABLED PERSONS ACROSS ONTARIO"

AWARENESS

We in the W.I. are surely conscious of the significance of the "torchbearer". From the days of the ancient Greeks the flaming torch has been borne across land and sea to herald the onset of athletic competition by the youth of the world. The "Torchbearer is understood to be one who lights the way".

We have a challenge in this year 1981, it is the year of the disabled person — a 12-month in depth probe of methods to improve their lot and sharpen public awareness of their existence. Key issues will be employment, transportation, access to buildings and intergration of the disabled into society's mainstream.

An analogy of the torch can be drawn here. The voices of our pioneers always forging ahead and caring for people, challenging us to carry the struggle against apathy and lack of recognition, to find ways to "better light the way."

We are accepting a challenge to carefully examine and record what has been accomplished these past months and to plan for the continuance of the task until we have accomplished the goal.

OXFORD NORTH DISTRICT

Some of the WI members are most familiar with Muscular Dystrophy and Cerebral Palsy, because members of their families are affected. It is more than fitting that great plans are taking shape during this IYDP.

Woodingford Lodge, Woodstock has a therapeutic pool, four feet deep which allows patients who can walk or out-patients with a Doctor's certificate to use the pool. However, wheel chair patients haven't a chance, unless they have friends who can lift them in and out of the pool.

The Auxiliary have investigated the possibility of purchasing an automatic lift with an extra arm. Not only will the patient be lifted in and out of the pool, but also will be moved around while in the water.

The total project will cost approximately \$7,580. WI's are interested and contributions are starting to come in. The Women's Institutes will receive recognition in the form of a plaque on the equipment.

SUBDIVISION 12

Wellington Districts have come up with the theme "The Year of the Disabled From Barriers to Byways". The roll call "Look beyond the handicap and see the person". A special day is planned for the Fall for the disabled.

Halton County have as their theme "Consider the Disabled" with a roll call, "Help them to help themselves".

An ActiVan has been purchased through the efforts of a local group. The Council agreed to sanction an ActiVan Advisory Committee to make the service eligible for provincial funding. The \$27,000 needed to purchase and provide operating costs has been met by donations and grants, however, another \$18,000 is still required to keep the project going for another year.

The public and organizations are being urged to assist.

Be a big wheel

Try your hand at getting around in a wheelchair, up ramps, through doors, around an obstacle course. It's the International Year of the Disabled, so now's your chance to find out just how much strength and skill many people must use every day.



WHO IS REALLY DISABLED?

The Board Directors viewed a 22 minute film called "A Different Approach", which looks at an imaginary recruitment drive for hiring the handicapped.

A startling conclusion is reached, everyone is handicapped in one way or another. Some wear glasses, some are bald, some are paralyzed from the waist down — and everyone hangs suspended just one accident away from a very serious handicap. It could happen tomorrow, it could never happen. Every day, we all take our chances.

It provokes us to ironically question who's really handicapped — the physically disabled or those around them who treat them that way.

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

"In 1981 . . . we hope that all citizens of Ontario will come to better appreciate that disabled people have the same needs as everyone else and recognize that disabled citizens are equally capable of making important contributions to society".

Sponsored by the United Nations, the goal for 1981 is "Full Participation and Equality" for more than 450 million disabled people around the world. In Ontario, approximately 10 percent of the total population — more than 800,000 people are disabled.

CHESTERVILLE WI, DUNDAS DISTRICT had a guest speaker, Miss Claudette Pilon of the Family Counseling Centre, Cornwall, talk about the handicapped. She made it clear that a handicapped person rejects pity and wants to be accepted into society wholeheartedly.

A variety of programs acceptable to all handicapped persons have been planned for the three United Counties.

Carolyn McLatchie, a handicapped person, gave a very moving and interesting account of her life, how she copes, and feels she has become an integral part of society.