

Board Directors Behind Project

The 1981 FWIO Board Directors, concerned about the **International Year of the Disabled – 1981**, determined to urge W.I. Branch members throughout the Province to survey their local communities, with the thought in mind of improving and better understanding the basic needs and rights of citizens of our communities, especially the handicapped.

Indepth questionnaires were distributed, completed and returned to Board Directors, regarding accessibility to public buildings. Not all Branches used the survey, some obtained results by petitioning the local council to implement projects.

Special community meetings were held in conjunction with other Organizations. Many special projects were organized and money raised for specific needs.

This is a prime example of one person with an idea, (newly elected Board Director representing Subdivision #2, Mrs. Arnold Wilson), encouraging all to get involved in a task to make life easier for those not as fortunate. But, perhaps the most important result, because of Women's Institute encouragement, the community organizations have worked together to bring about change.

All Board Directors in the 32 Subdivisions heard from their Branches. Thirteen Subdivisions reported special results recorded by every single Branch. Eight Subdivisions heard from 90% of their Branches, ten had 70% reporting and only one had under 50% reporting.

Twenty-three Subdivisions reported surveying local buildings and one-quarter of the Board Directors reported that a survey of industries was conducted resulting in changes, such as desks at correct level, telephones, light switches and elevator controls lowered to within easy reach. Counters were reported lowered at Tuck Shops.

Speakers were included at many Branch meetings, keeping Branch members up-dated on resources available and how all of society can help.

Many approached their local Councils and action was taken to build ramps, eliminate curbs at crossing areas so those confined to wheel chairs could more easily cross the street.

A combined effort with other community Organizations resulted in the installation of elevators and chair lifts and the sponsoring of sports competitions. Costumes were made in one community, plus thousands of volunteers working toward the success of Jeux Canada Games last summer.

Toilet and washroom facilities were improved, chair lift and a pool lift installed. Additional support for the blind, such as sponsoring a blind person in the work force, encouraging the cutting of cassettes for a library. Walkers and wheel chairs were donated in some instances. Telethons and walkathons, bus trips, picnics, lending a hand to the deaf, were just a few of the projects W.I.'s were involved with.

Providing additional volunteers in Hospitals and Institutions, workshop assistance and deaf support, assisting handicapped children, all were part of the W.I. effort throughout the Province.

The Junior Women's Institutes have recognized the IYDP by a donation of four trophies for the Olympics for the Disabled, Ontario Championships in Windsor, in 1982.

To become involved is a way for W.I.'s to provide a higher profile in the community and still remain loyal to one of their objectives, "assisting people."

Mrs. Arnold Wilson, presented a summary of the W.I. activities at the Provincial Board meeting in April.



Seventeen Branches in **OXFORD NORTH DISTRICT** donated \$8000.00 for a pool lift at Woodingford Lodge, Woodstock, for further therapy to aid the handicapped. L-R standing – Mrs. Bert Drenth, District President; Mrs. D. H. Hart, Mrs. Marjorie Munnock, Multiple Sclerosis Society. Seated – Mrs. J. D. Hossack, District Life Member, Mrs. A. S. Pearson, past District Secretary-Treasurer. Both are residents of the home.



PINE GROVE W.I. SIMCOE EAST DISTRICT donated a wheel chair to the Orillia Square Shopping Mall, as their project for the IYDP. The money was raised through bake sales and bazaars.