

# Orientation meeting for volunteers at the Civic

The Civic Hospital held an orientation meeting for volunteers interested in working with stroke patients.

The hospital has a program where volunteers work with patients to help them recover their vocabulary, memory and muscles used to talk.

As well as volunteers, the meeting on Wednesday morning was attended by the families of stroke patients who are interested in helping their family member through therapy.

Each volunteer comes in only once a week, but the patient sees a different volunteer every day of the work week.

The hospital has an overload of stroke patients, right now and it is looking for more volunteers.

Emma Barron, the acting co-ordinator told some of the new volunteers about the program.

The volunteer uses objects and pictures and the patient is asked to identify them.

Barron said it is also important for the volunteer to know when to stop the work if a patient is tired or just to frustrated to carry on.

She explained that the volunteer program is a compliment to the professional staff. Their role is strictly defined to talking with the patient.

"What you are doing is

immeasurable," Barron said.

Kate Lloyd, a volunteer who has worked with the program for more than a year shared some of her experiences.

She estimated that on average the volunteer spends 20 minutes with the patient. When a patient has just suffered a stroke the volunteer spends five minutes.

Lloyd said the patients look forward to the volunteers visit and often when they don't want to work they just want to talk.

## Depressed

"Sometimes they are terribly depressed and they don't want to work. But we don't give up we may stop work and just chat. But by constantly going back to them each week the depression goes, sometimes just over night and they want to work. It is so rewarding, she added.

"If they don't have family, then they really look forward to the girls in pink," Lloyd said.

Jane Mottershead, is the part time speech therapist at the Civic. She talked to the volunteers about language defect. She said for some people it is very frustrating because they know the words they want to say they cannot remember them or communicate them.

Mottershead the best way to teach the volunteers was

by showing them how it was done.

One patient with a speech problem, came down to the new classroom and worked with Mottershead in front of the volunteers.

Objects were set on the table and Mottershead asked the patient to point to the object she named. Then the patient was asked to name objects the speech therapist picked up.

The volunteers sat up on the edge of their chair listening to the answers and watching how the exercise was conducted.

Ruth Grant, the director of nursing at the Civic said that stroke patients need time and the concentrated attention of someone working with them. "Nurses don't always have that time. They get interrupted or have to answer the bell."

The speech exercises and

therapy are also successful in helping the person regain the language skills.

"And they bring the outside life in," Grant said.

During the meeting, some of the volunteers told others of how delighted patients were if the volunteer brought in flowers from the garden or a favorite food.

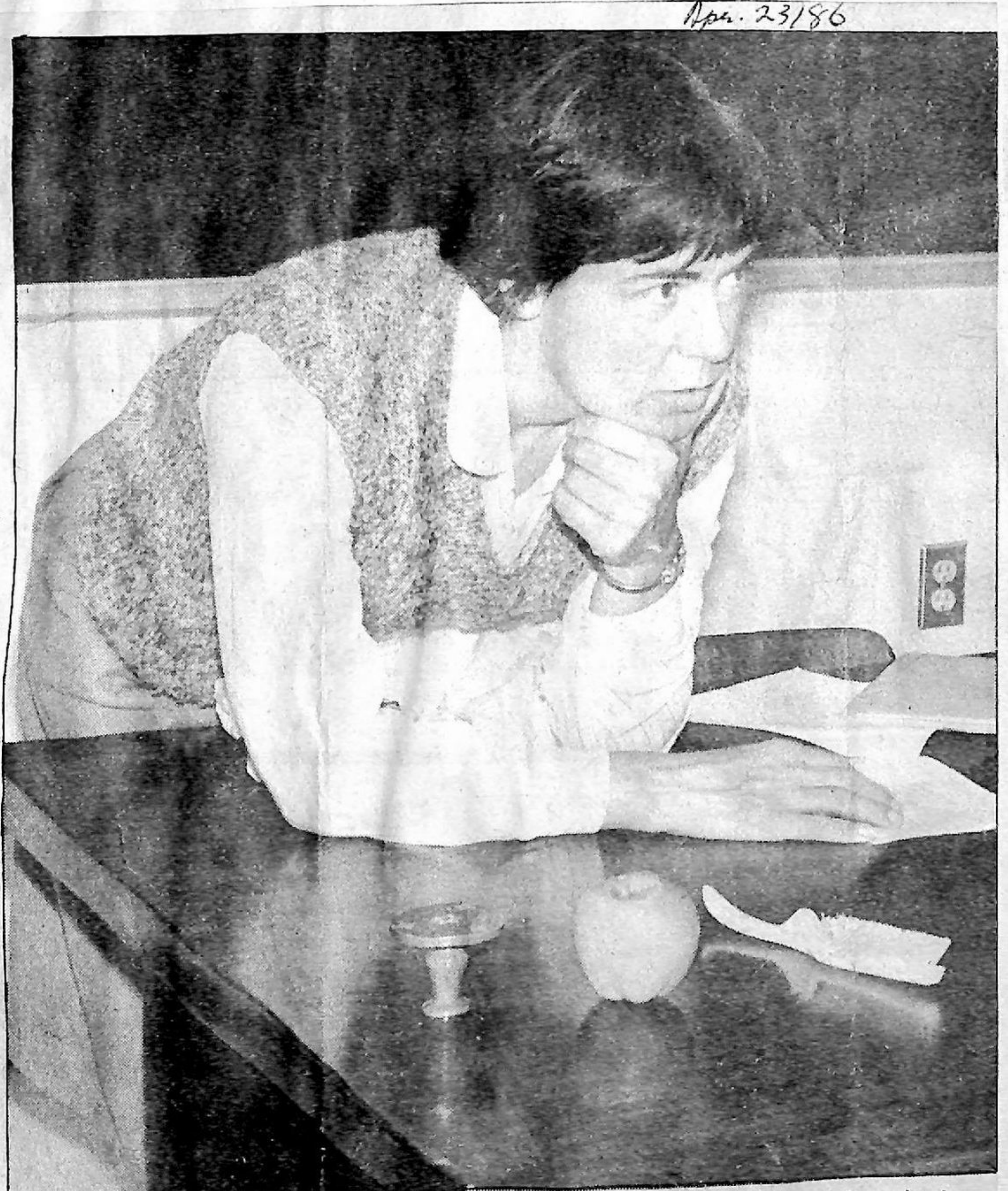
## Attention

The nursing director also added that the patients morale is lifted by looking forward to the volunteer's visit, the attention they get and the progress they make.

Grant also agreed that the patients were often frustrated and depressed. The volunteer has to cope with that and have communication skills that are developed to carry on a conversation when one person cannot talk.

Grant stressed that the volunteer's work is very important from both the patient and the hospital's point of view.

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer at the Pembroke Civic should call 735-6851 and leave your name and number.



Jane Mottershead, a speech therapist at the Pembroke Civic Hospital spoke to volunteers interested in working with stroke patients. She showed the volunteers some of the items she uses to help the patients identify and name objects.