

People-oriented experience

Keith Black, head of Geography at the high school, is the man involved with the operation of the student assistant program.

Mr. Black comments: Principal Dave Katz is a strong believer in student involvement. He called upon me and several other staff members to organize the Student Assistant Program and I must admit it has been a most pleasant and rewarding experience.

Co-operation key

Co-operation is the key to the success of the Student Involvement Program. The principals of the three Acton schools, their staffs and a hard working group of students see a need for "people-oriented experiences." With a desire to help others, a pilot group of grade 13 students initiated the Student Assistant Program in the elementary schools of the Acton community.

After Christmas grade 11 and grade 12 students will join the grade 13 ranks to make the program available to more people. As a result, a more meaningful contribution will be offered the Robert Little, M. Z. Bennett and Acton High Schools.

These involved students who made a personal sacrifice of their time to help other young people. They are to be congratulated for their interest and sincerity.

Both teachers, pupils enjoy young assistants



YOUNGSTERS HAVE been enjoying having teachers' assistants from the high school helping them with their work. The students "love them", one teacher enthused. Debbie Bould reads to an appreciative group at the M. Z. Bennett school. —(Photo by Sean Aherne)

By Barb Beier and Peggy Wheeler

Only one student from Acton High is involved in the student assistance program at Robert Little. Jane Watson is working with Mrs. R. Black who teaches grade one. Jane does an excellent job helping individual students and working with small groups. Activities performed by her include: testing and drilling word lists, listening to oral reading, helping with projects and assisting in physical education.

Work in harmony Mrs. Black states that this program is a valuable experience for the teacher, assistant and the children, each learning to work together in harmony. Mrs. Black says she is thrilled to have such a capable and most co-operative assistant come into her classroom. Mrs. Black believes that Acton's students become aware of different personalities

and differences in ability in this program. The children at Robert Little are delighted to have a "new teacher" take them to a corner or small room by themselves and work with them. They learn to respect another adult.

M. Z. Bennett Public School

Several students are participating in the student assistant program at M. Z. Bennett Public School. They work with the pupils in small groups, helping them and the teachers at the same time.

Mrs. Smith, the librarian at M. Z. Bennett, has four students assisting her at present. She prefers them to do the clerical work in the library; this enables her to help students find research material and books they are looking for. Mrs. Smith is pleased with the work the assistant students are performing for her. Apparently Julie Smith, Diane

Bonnette, Fiona Gidman, and Heather Strongtharm perform their duties well.

Mrs. Vadeika, a grade three teacher, says, "The children are very fond of the girl who comes in this room." That girl is Shirley Mitchell who helps the children in small groups. She assists them especially in preparing their school newspaper and does a good job.

When some of the children in Mrs. Vadeika's room were asked why they liked the student assistant, the unanimous answer was, "Because she helps us with the newspaper."

She's nice Mrs. Shean, who teaches grade three, has Debbie Bould helping her with the children. Debbie is well-liked by all grade three students and Mrs. Shean is very satisfied with the work she performs in the classroom. When asked how the children responded to the program, Mrs. Shean replied, "They get very excited when Debbie comes in, but they settle down to work quickly."

One grade three pupil told us, "Debbie is nice and she gets us farther in our notebook."

A second one said, "She helps us a lot and I really appreciate her and I like her when she helps us with our reading and that." Mrs. Shean's comment on the

success of this program is, "The students are enjoying it, and I am too."

Miss McKenzie, teaching grade two, is assisted by Lorrie Lefebvre. Lorrie helps the children with their reading and spelling. Miss McKenzie and the pupils are very pleased with the help they get from Lorrie. Miss McKenzie mentions that Acton's students are gaining confidence through this program, and she thinks this is very valuable.

Miss Blades, teaching grade one, has two students helping her with the children. They are Carol Masales and Mike Cooper. Carol and Mike are working with small groups of children, helping them, especially with their reading. The grade one pupils are delighted to receive individual attention. Miss Blades states, "This program is very helpful for the students coming in and the pupils in the classroom." Miss Blades believes that the student assistant program is very successful.

Mrs. Usher's assistants are Karen Ashby, Bonnie Garvin, and Jackie Lemon. Mrs. Usher, who is also a grade one teacher, is satisfied with the type of work the student assistants are performing. Her comment on how the children responded was, "They think they're great; they love them."

Project pleases principals

By Carol Patterson and Norine Noble

Yes, here is another pioneer project from Acton High this year. It also involves both of Acton's Public Schools. Students from the high school are aiding public school teachers by helping pupils in the classroom.

Mr. Keith Black, head of the Geography Department at the high school, has been directly involved with organizing the program. "It started off as a pilot project, limited to grade thirteen students," he explains. Now he sees the possibility of opening it up to grades eleven and twelve, also.

Responsibility

The student assistants accept this responsibility for one term, and, if they like, they can opt out at Christmas, when the teachers and organizers plan to evaluate the system.

Mr. Black listed many objectives for the program and summed up by saying it is, "a people oriented project, rather than a work oriented one."

Mr. E. Smith, principal of M. Z. Bennett Public School, finds the program "quite successful." His school is next door to the high school, and there fore he has the greater number of student assistants.

About six teachers and twelve

high school students are involved in the student assistance program at M. Z. Bennett. The students assisting during school hours are used in the classroom to help with reading groups and some individual reading problems. Those who help outside school hours work in the library. They learn skills such as shelf reading, Mr. Smith feels that now "some are quite enthused about this library work," although at first they might have been disappointed about not working in a classroom.

Last year

M. Z. Bennett actually began this type of program internally last year, with pupils from grades seven and eight. A few of them still help this year and fill in the gaps not covered by high school students.

At the present time, only teachers of grades one to five are getting this assistance. The program could be extended at a later date if more high school students were available.

No problems

When asked about difficulties which might have arisen in the early stages of this project, Mr. Smith replied, "None whatsoever." He feels that "the benefits are twofold." The high school students are a great help to the teachers and public school children, and the work is of benefit to high school students. Assistants can free the librarian or teacher so she can spend more time helping children — which is really the aim of the whole program — while the assistants themselves develop leadership and responsibility.

How do the student assistants feel about the program? "I like it," says Julie Smith. Julie works

during noon hours in the library workshop. She types and files cards, and generally learns library skills. Julie likes the system, and after Christmas she would like to work in a classroom.

Other students assisting in the library are Fiona Gidman, Heather Strongtharm, and Diane Bonnette. Working with Mrs. Usher, grade one, are Jackie Lemon, Karen Ashley and Bonnie Garvin. Miss Blades, another grade one teacher, has Carol Masales and Mike Cooper assisting her. Shirley Mitchell is working with Mrs. Vadeika, a grade three teacher at the public school. Miss McKenzie who teaches grade two has Lorrie Lefebvre helping her, and Mrs. Shean, a grade three teacher, has Debbie Bould for her student assistant.

The girls who go to M. Z. Bennett generally enjoy their work. They work with the public school pupils in groups, and would like to have a greater variety to help.

Mr. McKenzie, principal of Robert Little Public School, when asked how he first heard of this student assistance program replied, "Last year I worked in Halton County in a school organization program. I worked with Mr. Katz, several principals and other teachers who investigated parent help, student assistance, and even hiring students who hadn't been trained for teachers."

In order to find out if any of his staff were interested in the student assistance program, Mr. McKenzie conducted a survey throughout the school and found that his teachers were very

NOTES FROM ACTON HIGH

By Mary Ann Freuler

The high light of last week was a visit from the Theatre Hour Company last Tuesday. The company has visited our school before and everyone awaited their visit anxiously.

The members of the company are Gregson Winkfield, Don LeGros, Angela Fusco, Tina Boden, Richard Parington, Robert Haley and Tom Bentley Fisher.

Strictly Canadian

Their program was strictly Canadian this year. Their first act was called "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe" which proved to be a satire on the Canadian Indians. Although some students found it very amusing, others were moved by the performance.

During the introduction of their second act, they compared "Colors in the Dark" to searching in a toy box and pulling things out haphazardly.

Include songs

Songs were frequently sung throughout the performance through the inspiration of Gordon Lightfoot and Gilles Vigneault. Gregson Winkfield composed one of the numbers, the only one the Company sang twice in the performance.

The audience was invited to ask questions of the actors. These consisted mainly of the curiosity about training, schooling and wages.

A work shop was held in the afternoon for the benefit of the Creative Drama class and anyone else who was interested.

Friday movie

The movie "Doctor, You've Got to Be Kidding" was shown in the gym last Friday evening. It is hoped that more people will attend in the future. The Student Council extends thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Black for chaperoning and to all of the students who helped in some way. A special thanks to Ray Blythe for working the equipment.

Christmas spirit!

Our school is beginning to get into the Christmas spirit. Several grade 13 students have undertaken the task of a full Christmas program including a choir contest, a room decorating class and an assembly for the last day of school.

Dress up dance

The Christmas dance this year will be held Monday, Dec. 21. This will be a dress-up dance and music will be supplied by the Magic Circle.



THEATRE HOUR COMPANY
THEATRE HOUR GROUP entertained Acton District High students at a special assembly Tuesday, December 1. The group receive a grant from the Ontario Department of Education to travel throughout Ontario performing for students.

Hard workers in club

By Doline De Shales

Do you know what it is like to crawl out of bed at 8:30 in the morning after climbing in bed at 1:30 that night? Well, for me it's awfully hard, especially if it's a Saturday morning and you're going to school!

After groping my way throughout the house, I "Pulled" myself together and was ready to leave. Ten minutes later my girlfriend and I were at the school. But there was no one there. Just as we were about to leave (after we had nearly broken the door down), we were let in by Mrs. Fleischer, our Home Economics teacher. When we walked into the home ec. room, there were eight other "eager" and "bright-eyed" girls just willing to work the afternoon away. So for that afternoon, we worked constantly on our project and by the time that afternoon was over, we all had our crafts clenched in hand ready to finish at home.

So now, I suppose, that you are wondering why we were working at the school on a Saturday? Well, you see on Monday, December 14, from 7:30 to 9:30 at the Acton District High School, the members of the Home Economics Club are having a tea and bazaar in which we will be selling the crafts that the girls so diligently worked on.

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