

Speyside summer playground holds challenging rewards

C. of C.'s meeting

Summer at playground time for children everywhere. Parks and school grounds throughout the province are utilized by youngsters enjoying supervised recreation under organized leadership.

At Speyside school in Halton Hills, summer playground is something special for 24 district children who need a particular type of leadership. It is one where understanding and love must be applied with skill and patience. Leaders who head up the Speyside summer school activities, must really care about their young charges, "but," they say, "for every small amount of extra effort, our rewards are greater."

The Speyside program is sponsored by the towns of Halton Hills and Milton for the mentally retarded. By August 16 it will have had its six week run as it began July 9. Classes are divided into two week stints for three sessions. Some of those attending will have participated in all three; others two and four weeks, depending on family holiday plans.

Who applies
Mentally retarded, physically handicapped and/or children with behavior problems are included in the group where ages span from three years to 16, but where, to many of the children, age is only a birth-date statistic.

What makes qualified people more interested in applying themselves to working with retarded children as opposed to those who participate in regular playgrounds?

Jayne Telford of Acton is the playground supervisor who is working towards her Bachelor of Social Welfare. Her field of interest is working with retarded and physically handicapped children. "These kids are more interesting and more challenging," she says. Jayne sees the children she works with as having greater need and being responsive and fun to work with. "Of course it gets frustrating at times," she admits, but, watching her handle some of the school problems with good natured efficiency, it's apparent she has the required control. The kids cluster around their leaders, bestowing kisses and responding to the understanding the school provides with affectionate hugs and excitement.

Leaders
Working with Mrs. Telford at the Speyside school are four leaders—some of them showing high qualifications and interest in pursuing the field of counselling the retarded.

Sue Milne is 17. A Georgetown girl, Sue is delightful as she romps, plays, but gently disciplines her charges if they misbehave. She has a way with such children and makes the challenges seem simple and fun. Sue tells of having worked with the physically disabled last winter in Brampton, teaching sewing.

"These kids, now that I've been with them for a while, don't seem any different than others," she says sincerely. Children from three schools are involved in the Speyside program including those from the Georgetown Tinkerbell Nursery, and Sunshine school in Hornby with one of the children, a pupil from Sunnydale school in Guelph. With an average attendance of 18 the daily classes begin at ten o'clock in the morning and run until three in the afternoon.

Each leader is responsible for five children per week. They set up their own program for the complete five days, checking with supervisor Jayne on her go-ahead. Playground supervision incorporates school and home-training into the curriculum and includes helping with such menials as toilet training and feeding. Many of the children have intricate eating problems but the young workers handle the job with sensitivity and good-humored capability. Crafts, hikes, games, and sing-songs are all part of the regular events with special away-from-home trips organized as learning experiences which, for many of the children might never, otherwise, be presented.

Excursions
Every Friday is excursion day. Already the school has visited Ontario Place, the Rockwood park and the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto. "They love to push buttons and are fascinated by flashing lights," say the counsellors who enjoy seeing the elation of the children as they make their delight. Every Monday, weather permitting, is swim day when they have fun at the Acton wading pool.

Linda Sayers is another leader. Quiet, extremely dedicated, she has a tremendous feeling for the children on the program. Linda applied for the position from a newspaper ad and, although only 18 has already been working with retarded children. She began as a volunteer one day a week with the Tinkerbell nursery school and says she has always been interested in the field. "Now I enjoy myself," she says and tells how

she intends to take a residential counsellor course in college to pursue her interest. Jane Aggs, 16, of Limehouse is a proficient gymnast who has much to offer the children at the Speyside school. Besides her own special abilities Jane has considerable background with Y day camps which she takes into the program, applying her knowledge of leadership. She finds that, as well as the children learning from her, she too is learning what patience and understanding is all about.

Lorraine Hawes is 21. A Georgetown girl, she has qualifications to work with all kinds of children. Planning

on a career of high school guidance counselling, Lorraine has her B.A. in psychology and sees the Speyside children as individuals. She feels that people don't credit retarded children with having enough sense and feels they should be treated more as "Just ordinary people. Not as labels," she said. Sensitive to the needs of the youngsters Lorraine feels, "Nobody should be slotted but should be accepted for whatever abilities they possess, not for what books say," she said.

A former Western university student, Lorraine will be attending the Faculty of Education at Toronto university next year for her special-

ized course in counselling.

Volunteers
As well as leaders, several young volunteers also assist in the daily program. Some of the helpers have had previous experience working with retarded children through public school training.

Supervisor Jayne Telford would like to have had assistance from mothers whose experience with working with their own children would have been acceptable. "Even special experience in working with retarded children," she says and adds that, even though the course is almost finished, she would welcome any assistance from mature adults. Volunteers include Debbie

Chamberlain, 15 of Georgetown, who says she is interested in teaching nursery school eventually and working at Speyside this summer was an investigatory measure. "Now I like working with these children," she said.

Mary Kroes, 13 of Acton is also great with the children. She has enjoyed assisting with such children at the Tinkerbell school.

Barbara Ann Kulken of Acton is only ten. She wisely applies her interest in the children. With an older brother Danny, 12, who is one of the playground pupils, she artfully assists and says she likes being a sister of Danny.

Barbara Ann's mother, Jennie Kulken started the Tinkerbell school and her young daughter is tuned in and understands the need of love and compassion in working with the retarded.

Suzanne Paul, 13, of Speyside lives across from the school, she enjoys working with the slower children because, "They need more help than kids at other playgrounds," she says.

Geraldine Schompp, 14 of Acton is another volunteer along with Marie Milne, leader Sue's younger sister. Marie finds the work challenging and, although only 15, she has worked with deaf children. She applies her knowledge to one particular child whose only problem is that of being deaf. "I had him speaking," she said excitedly, and explained how she had been able to communicate with one young charge.

One boy
Two other young people are also special volunteers. Cathy Beeny, 16, of Georgetown could easily assist elsewhere but prefers working with the Speyside group. Cathy has a younger sister in the class and works well as an experienced leader assistant. She adapts to each situation because, for Cathy, such problems are ones she lives with.

Only one male volunteer is a 15 year old Speyside farm boy, Eric Hillenbrand. His mother saw an ad in the Acton paper and they discussed his applying. In the books of the kids at Speyside, he's tops. "They need an older boy to look up to," explains Sue Milne and tells how Eric gets along well with the children assisting in both mental and

meaningful parts of the rounded program. Eric hopes someday to become a mechanic but right now he has enjoyed his summer job working with children with problems. "I don't see any more that they are different," said Eric.

And go it goes. Those who become involved seem to build up a defense for the children who need to be accepted. "People stare when we take the children out because some of them are unusual," echo the leaders. They feel more exposure and acceptance from people could make things easier. "These kids are very sensitive to people's attitudes," said Sue who explains that many of the children enjoy the "now" of things but have short memory spans. "Usually they can't remember anything long enough to go home and talk about it," she said.

Jayne Telford herself, head supervisor of the program, how does she feel? Jayne has had experience in working with children in all fields. She has a special interest for the future in working with the type of children she has had at the Speyside school. "Basically, many of these children have a great deal of potential," she says.

Jayne feels that, with much patience and the right kind of stimulation and love, such potential could be developed. "All are not given the opportunity to reach their own potential," she said. The supervisor is delighted with the progress her staff have managed to attain at the summer school. She finds the children have responded beautifully to their care and

applauds her leaders for the tremendous job they have done and are doing. "They've been simply great," said Jayne enthusiastically, insisting that each one has brought some special ability into the group.

Sensitivity and being tuned-in on problems of the defenseless, are only some of the required qualities of those who work with retarded children. Summer playground in the ordinary sense stands for fun, development of athletic abilities, and co-ordinating game programs.

At Speyside school it is hard and arduous work for anyone who dares to apply. To those who do, it is, as the leaders themselves put it, "Fulfilling with reward being that of inner satisfaction of having helped others who can't help themselves."

The Regional Association of Chambers of Commerce met at the Milton Charles Hotel last Wednesday to discuss a regional promotion booklet. The association is considering entering into a contract with Windsor Publications to print the book. It will be paid for through advertising.

Committees have been set up by the association to establish a set of criteria for the new regional site to look into the establishment of a better business bureau and to promote the upcoming International Flowering Match to be held in Halton.

There are so many lakes in Canada that they have never been counted.

The Acton Free Press, Wed., August 7, 1974 7.



SUMMER SCHOOL AT SPEYSIDE is one where leaders and volunteer assistants work together daily to encourage, inspire and relate to approximately 18 retarded children in a program of crafts, games, sing-songs and field trips. Running from July 9 to August 16, total registration includes 24 district children, pupils of Tinkerbell Nursery school in Georgetown, Sunshine school in Hornby and one other from Sunnydale in Guelph.

Christian school

School's purpose? develop whole child

This coming September, the Georgetown District Christian School will again open its doors as a Community Christian School.

The school had its beginnings in 1957, when a group of concerned Christians formed a School Society with the intention of building an elementary school which would give their children a Christian education. This goal was reached in the year 1965 when a three classroom structure was opened with an

enrolment of 99 pupils and three fulltime teachers. Increased enrolment has since necessitated the addition of four more classrooms.

The school will have a staff of seven full-time as well as two part-time teachers this coming September. Enrolment expected is approximately 200 pupils. Parents who are in agreement with the purpose of the school; that is, to develop the whole child:

academically, emotionally and spiritually may enrol their children. The school is not connected to any one denomination, nor does it instruct in the dogma of any particular church body.

Control of school-finances, educational quality, staff appointments etc., lies entirely in the hands of a twelve man board, chosen out of the School Society's membership. Parents enrolling children and other Christians out of the community at large, bear the entire annual operating costs since no government grants for independent Christian schools are available in the Province of Ontario.



SCHOOL PRINCIPAL George Petrusma walks up and down the aisles of his grade eight class during his period as a teacher.

Rowdyism on Mill St.

A petition from Acton businessmen, protesting late night rowdyism on Mill Street, came to Halton Hills administration committee last week. Councillor Les Duby said the Acton O.P.P. were conducting a concentrated drive and conditions had improved considerably. Duby said there had been a problem with cars, motorcycles and loiterers.

The administration committee referred the petition to the O.P.P. and the Halton Regional Police Force.

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