

Trinity Church interacts with Participation House

by Jennifer Barr

Participation is a house that necessity built for handicapped adults and participating in Participation House is what a group of Acton residents are doing.

Led by the Reverend Chuck Beaton, members of Trinity United Church are finding themselves becoming more and more wrapped up in the activities of North America's first residence for the physically handicapped.

This past Sunday saw a group of 37 Actonites board Clarence Denny's Bluebird bus and settle down for the long trip to Markham on the other side of Toronto. Their object was to participate (you'll find that word a lot in this story) in a worship service led by Reverend Beaton, enhanced by the Trinity choir accompanied by George Elliott. After the service a tour of the residence, visits with the young handicapped people, and a light supper followed.

This interaction between the two communities has been going on for as long as Mr. Beaton has been minister of Trinity, nearly three years.

Previous to his Acton ministry, when he was stationed in Markham, Chuck Beaton found himself very much in the middle of the inauguration of Participation House. He became Chaplain for the 6th Markham Rover crew, which consisted of Participation House Residents, and grew to love his charges as much as they loved him.

Unwilling to sever relations with PH when they moved to Acton, the Beatons continued to visit, "dragging" people with them, according to Chuck.

Participation House residents come out to Trinity every June for worship and a picnic.

Church members no longer have to be "dragged" but have developed sound friendships among the handicapped.



GEORGE ELLIOTT looks for a place to sit down on the bus load of Trinity Church members going to visit Participation House, a residence for handicapped adults in Markham. Dr. Elliott is Trinity music director and led Trinity Choir in singing for PH residents.

Quilting patterns are discussed, gifts are exchanged, music is recorded and taped for enthusiasts.

The whole Beaton family is involved, Jean just as enthusiastic as her husband and older daughter Kathryn spent a week assisting at PH last semester as part of her total immersion course at Acton High School.

First in North America

Participation House was started nine years ago by a group of parents of Cerebral palsied young adults. At that time it was a sad fact there was no place in the whole of North America for severely handicapped people over the age of 18.

There are schools and institutions for children but parents of the disabled were faced with a terrible decision when their child became an adult. They could continue to care for their adult-sized offspring, often too heavy to lift and needing almost total care, or the young person could be institutionalized in anything from hospitals for the chronically ill to homes for the elderly.

The need for a residence for such handicapped was very apparent.

With the help of a donation of ten acres of land in Markham, the enthusiastic leadership of comedian Johnny Wayne, who is now on the board of governors of PH, a million dollars was raised to build the house.

Parents, business people, celebrities like Wayne and Bobby Hull, plus the Ontario government, help keep it going. Now that PH has proved itself so successful, provincial grants account for 80 per cent of the funding.

An outgrowth of the residence in Markham has been the starting of residences in Hamilton, Brantford, a workshop in Windsor and a residence near completion in Ottawa.

Thirty-eight physically handicapped people from the cerebral palsied, to those with muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis, live full time at PH and there is room for eight as visitors while their parents go on holiday. Another 75 are bussed in to the workshop and recreation facilities daily.

A staff of 66 care for the young people who are so severely handicapped they would not survive without care.

Activities range from swimming, physical therapy and jobs to music, dancing, crafts and social evenings.

Jobs include stamp sorting, packaging nuts and bolts, plant raising and quilting. Two young couples have fallen in love and married within the residence.

Architecturally beautiful, PH blends open spaces, soft colors, comfortable furniture with private rooms, parlors, and recreation areas. Gardens and spacious lawns are an open invitation to outdoor activities.

People plus

But the people are what makes PH so special—the happy, cheerful, uninhibited people who delight in visitors of all kinds. Encouraged with firm matter-of-factness to do as much as possible for themselves, these people do indeed participate in the running of their own house.

Confidence and ability are improved by contact with other handicapped people and encouraging assistants. Able to have some control over their lives and some choice of activity, the residents flourish under a degree of independence.

Acton residents flourish, too. Trinity church members who have come in contact with PH residents find their lives enriched with good friends.

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Free Press Family Page



HEY! THAT'S ME! Danny Staves of Acton admires a portrait of himself which won his mother Donna first prize in one of the Milton Fair's photography competitions. Mrs. Staves was top point winner in the arts-crafts section this year.

Ladies' Aid meets to discuss party reception

Opening the meeting of Knox Ladies' Aid on Tuesday, September 26 with a poem "Glory", Mrs. Harry Murray presided over the business portion.

Plans were made for a birthday party and a wedding reception which will be held in the Dr. Stewart Hall during the month of October.

During the devotional part of the program Mrs. W. J. McIntyre read the scripture lesson and prayer was given

by Mrs. Griffin Sprowl. Two readings were enjoyed when given by Mrs. D.S. Morrison, "why worry" and "Prayer for Growing Older".

Mrs. Murray introduced a contest and Mrs. Morrison was the winner. Mrs. J. Berry was honored on her birthday being in the month.

A bounteous lunch was served by the committee and all enjoyed fellowship over a cup of tea.

Refresher for nurses

The Halton Lung Association is providing a "Refresher Course in Respiratory Diseases" for registered nurses in Halton.

Representatives from the four Halton hospitals, the VON and Public Health with the assistance of Dr. R.W.T.

Haddon, Medical Advisor to the Halton Lung Association, have planned the seminar to take place at the Holiday Inn in Oakville on Oct. 9.

This program is sponsored in the community through support of the Christmas Seal campaign.

Special mass for dead Pope

A special mass was celebrated in St. Joseph's church last Sunday morning for Pope John Paul I who died in his sleep Friday morning after only 34 days as head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Pope John Paul was the shortest-reigning Pope in recent history. The shortest reign was back in 700 A.D. when one Pope died only three days after being named.

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