

Retarded Children's School Gives Pupils Chance to Learn



Mrs. Mitchell helps with a puzzle



Rev. Christensen conducts workshop jobs.

A good example of the success being achieved with retarded children is seen right here in northern Halton County, where the Milton and District Association for Retarded Children is doing an astonishing job of daily training and care for 10 mentally retarded children. Their Sunshine School on Brown St., opposite Milton Arena, has five Milton, three Acton, one Trafalgar and one Esqueping students.

Sunshine School originated with a meeting of parents and interested Milton district citizens in February, 1955, when a committee was formed to organize a school. September 21 saw the opening of the new classroom, in the rear of the Milton town hall, with three pupils. Their teacher was Mrs. Pat Fitzgerald, assisted by Mrs. P. K. McWilliams.

At Christmastime, a short three months from their small beginning, the pupils entertained their parents and friends by demonstrating what they had been learning in school routine. They opened with prayer, repeated the days of the week, sang God Save the Queen, a hymn and a Christmas song and demonstrated table manners.

Early in 1956 the school increased from three to six pupils, and new quarters were set up in the basement of Emmanuel Baptist church in November. Shortly afterward, Mrs. Fitzgerald left town and Mrs. Jean Robertson was engaged to instruct the children in their daily morning classes. Mrs. Pat McGrath of Speyside and later Acton, followed her.

Rented Building
The 1957 officers of the association were faced with increased enrollment and the need, once again, of new quarters. A small four room building on Brown St., Milton, was rented and plans were made to equip the building. After a busy summer the executive had transformed it into two classrooms, a workshop, a kitchen and bathroom, complete with piano, desks, blackboards, shelves and a tumbling mat.

Rev. Mr. Christensen offered his services for an hour each week to teach the boys handicrafts with saw, hammer and planes. The Kintette Club of Milton offered to equip and maintain the kitchen facilities.

In June of that year, the principal's assistant, Mrs. G. Jeffers, was promoted to principal and Mrs. Jean Mitchell, also of Campbellville, was named assistant. Mrs. Robert Buckner of Acton also assisted, giving her time without remuneration to instruct the pupils in music and movement.

Full Day Classes
It was during this year that some pupils became of age to attend full day classes.

Since the fall of 1958, something new has been added to the pupils' instruction. One morning a week, they are given an hour's free ice time at the Milton Arena, to further their physical development and give the students some healthful recreation. As they began, only one child had ever donned the blades before. Now six are skating on their own and the progress of the others is a source of constant amazement to the parents and teachers.

Farm, Sports Activities
Another highlight of their instruction was a trip to the farm of one of the executive members, where the pupils expressed much interest in the animals and the care of them. They like sports, so it was a big occasion when wrestler Whipper Billy Watson paid a visit to the school and posed for pictures with the children.

Last year one of the girls attended Camp Belwood, the Guelph district fresh air camp for retarded children. This summer one of the boys enjoyed a happy holiday at Belwood. They visited a dairy and the fire hall, and appeared on the Kitchener TV station.

Last Remembrance Day, the

children paid a visit to the Cenotaph near the school where they viewed the monument, learned why it was erected, and said a prayer for the war dead. Their annual Christmas parties, when parents and friends are invited for a brief program presented by the pupils, is another outside activity when the students get a chance to show off their knowledge of the simple things they are capable of doing.

Singing is a joy to the pupils, and once a week Mrs. George Elliott comes to play the piano for a rousing sing-song of the hymns and the favorite tunes they love so well. The weekly workshop lessons are also fun for the children, who take such pride in being able to finish a simple chore to the satisfaction of their teachers.

None Could Read
Reading is a problem for some, but easy for others. If they begin classes at an early age (five is the minimum) they learn much easier than if they begin later, according to the principal. One student is now working on the grade two reader, while others are at grade one and pre-primer level. None could read when they entered the school, including one boy who spent five years in grade one at public school.

Measuring, telling time, identifying numbers, counting, dressing themselves, singing, tumbling, painting, memory work, handwork, cooking, learning health rules and many other simple things are drilled and re-drilled. One boy loves to tell guests what time it is. Others are working on flash cards in an effort to get them reading easier. One loves adding and subtracting, another with a misformed hand delights in tying his own shoe laces.

Memorize Psalms
One little girl could never dress herself, but she is learning. One boy can drive his father's car and tractor and works in a garage on weekends. One fellow couldn't speak understandably, but now has no trouble conversing. Some have memorized four psalms.

Their rhythm and movement classes are helping with co-ordination of body movements and concentration. They do not compete with others, but are given separate instruction in the various phases of classwork.

One boy, who is 23 but has the mind of a child, went to public school for several years but didn't even know any numbers when he joined the Sunshine School. Yet his handwork is beautiful.

Feign Accidents
Each one has been taught to give his own name and address and the name of their parents. They closely follow the work of the Junior Red Cross and dramatize first aid rules by having a pupil feign an accident while his associates care for him.

Here, in the words of their principal, is the case of just one of the 10 students: "We see a child of 10 years of age in 1955, starting at our Sunshine School. He had never been to school so he hadn't a pencil or a book. He had great difficulty in making even his family know what he said. He was a child alone in his little world. He was tense and drew into himself a great deal, so was difficult to teach."

Loves Music
"This child is as a new creature today. He is relaxed and very happy, he can talk with anyone and be understood, he has learned to read for his own protection and information, he can do simple counting and measuring, and tell time. He has learned about the people and things in his own community, and he has learned to use his hands in making things of paper, leather and plastic. In the workshop he is using a hammer and drill and saw. He loves music and rhythm and through these things has gained confidence and self control to the extent he can skate alone after two seasons of practice."

"Learning to do simple housework has made him a helper in the home. Learning social behaviour and manners is helping him to fit into his home and community life. "Has it been worthwhile?"

Well, it has been worthwhile. Many who saw the Sunshine School grow from three shy pupils to the present enrolment of happy friends will vouch for the value of the training they are receiving.

Expect More
The problem now, is that an increased enrolment is expected. The executive knows of many more retarded in Milton, Acton, Georgetown and the surrounding townships. The school cannot approach parents to enrol their children, but it is expected that more students will be voluntarily enrolled in the near future.

Just one instance is the case of a four-year-old north Burlington boy whose parents are so enthused they have already made application to enrol him in the school. He will be accepted on his fifth birthday next March.

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Glimmer of Hope

Plight of Retarded Child

"Your child is retarded. He has nothing to offer society and society has nothing to offer him," were the blunt words of a doctor to Donald's parents. But the truth did not come easily to Bill and Jean as they frantically grasped at the straws of hope and tried in vain to console each other.

However, despite numerous consultations with a dozen doctors and the spending of several thousand dollars, the diagnosis was still the same. At first they had no strength to face the reality, but finally they were forced to resign themselves to the fact.

Donald was retarded. There was nothing that could be done for him.

For Donald was born a retarded child in an age when a retarded child was a secret child, tucked away from the world in the confines of his family, or secreted in an institution to be forever unseen, but not forgotten.

And this could be the experience

of many parents. Retardation has over 70 known causes and research is turning up more causes daily. It could happen to any family, regardless of race, creed, color, financial status or background. It could happen today. Today, about three in every 100 children are in some degree mentally retarded.

Today, however, their outlook is somewhat brighter. Things are being done for them by a society that once shunned them.

1,600 Pupils

There are, in Ontario alone, 5,000 members in 60 associations connected with the Ontario Association for Retarded Children, which was founded in 1953. They operate 56 of Canada's 150 schools and conduct 1,600 pupils through daily lessons. One of these is the Milton and District Association for Retarded Children, with 10 pupils from the north of Halton County. There is also a new \$25,000 school opened recently at Burlington, and another school at Oakville for

pupils from the town and Trafalgar township. Others in the neighborhood may be found in South Peel, Brampton, Guelph and Hamilton.

Because pressure on the government to establish classes for these retarded children under the public schools system has not, to date, proven successful, each unit must support itself. Fortunately, the plight of these children has stirred up the warm hearts of many individuals and women's groups and service clubs, who have done inestimable community service with their volunteer donations and service. Public appeals for funds have also proven successful in recent years, but each association is still doing the minimum for the children.

Need Workshops

More money and more workers are needed to give the children the necessary treatment and rehabilitation. After they have outgrown school age, sheltered workshops are needed where retarded

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"Thy will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven".

"There but for the grace of GOD go I..."



These words of gratitude can be uttered by any father or mother with a normal youngster. The fact is, a mentally retarded child can be born to anyone... regardless of economic status, educational background, race, colour or religion. There are at least 70 known or suspected reasons for this condition that can occur before or during birth—or in early childhood. In Canada alone, 34 mentally retarded children are born every day. Give thanks that your child is normal by helping a great cause.

mentally retarded children CAN be helped!

VOLUNTEER VISITORS OF THE
KINSMEN CLUB OF MILTON
WILL BE CALLING AT YOUR DOOR
DECEMBER 3 and 4

When the visitor asks for your donation to this very worthwhile cause, please give generously. Your gift will further the work of the Milton and District Association for Retarded Children in North Halton County and a portion will be used to assist in the National research of the Ontario and Canadian associations.

"DON'T LET A RETARDED CHILD BECOME A DISCARDED CHILD"

Milton and District Association for Retarded Children



An "Investment in People"

Dear Neighbours:

It is indeed a privilege for me to be able to reach you all at this time and in this manner. It is also a privilege to be the President of your Milton and District Association for Retarded Children.

Your local association is doing the job you can read about in this paper, or that you can see for yourself if you visit the Sunshine School on Brown St., Milton. The task we have undertaken on your behalf has been neglected so completely that it can be honestly stated that more has been done for the mentally retarded in the past decade than was done in all previous recorded time.

We must have your financial support at this time to provide the necessary accommodation to train these citizens of ours... these citizens who have not been blessed, as you and I, with normal intelligence. It is just this simple, neighbour: IF YOU AND I DON'T DO IT, IT WON'T GET DONE.

We do not expect sufficient funds in our campaign to build suitable accommodation. That is why this year we wish to establish a sinking fund of at least \$10,000 towards next year's effort which will put us over the top.

We are not begging for your support—this is a community problem and we are giving you an opportunity to invest in people. Do you know of any better investment?

Please remember that Retarded Children Can Be Helped and We Can Help Them.

Sincerely,
G. G. ADDISON.



A chair helps with skating lessons.