

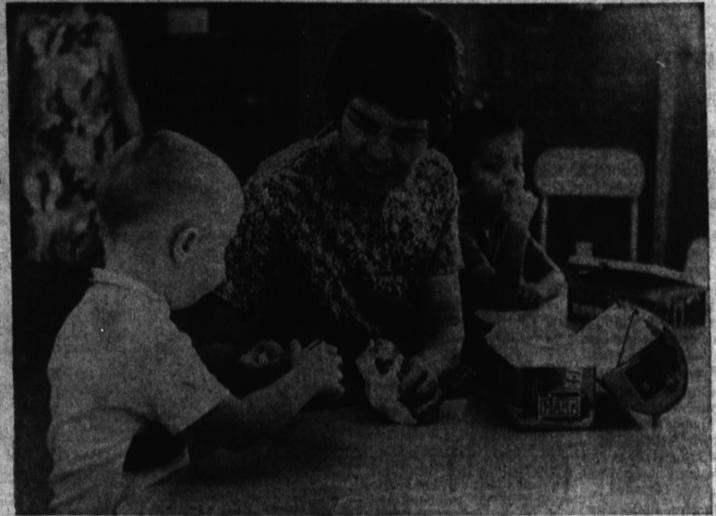
Area Retarded--Forgotten No Longer



DREAM COMES TRUE

Two new brick buildings at 13515 S. Vermont are nearing completion and will be dedicated next month. They represent seven years of determined efforts on the part of parents and friends of mentally retarded children in the South Bay. Standing in

front of one of the new buildings, which will house six classrooms, is Mrs. Joan Merkling, who drives 150 miles a day, transporting children to and from school. Mrs. Merkling is also an assistant teacher.



LUNCH TIME IS HAPPY TIME

The new facility built by the Southwest Association for the Retarded has a cheerful dining area and a completely equipped new kitchen. Here a teacher, Mrs. Mona Compton, assists the youngsters with lunch.

Community Opens Heart to Retarded, Lends Aid To Association's Program

Termed "forgotten" just a few short years ago, the mentally retarded of the South Bay-Centinel area are "forgotten no longer," due to the efforts of a group of militant and determined parents, who banded together to form the Garden Valley Association for Retarded Children.

Seven years ago, these parents headed by Mmes. Ruth Stiers, Lillian Stern and Gwynn White, who had tried every avenue to secure help for retarded boys and girls, meeting a dead-end at every turning, secured a hearing from Paul Coates, who invited them to appear on his television show. While waiting in the anteroom, Mrs. Stiers found a \$2 bill. She picked it up and said "This is the beginning of our Parent Organization." From this beginning, aided by generous friends and organizations in the South Bay, the program of the present training center has progressed.

Today at 13515 S. Vermont stand two brick buildings, in the process of being furnished to house six classrooms for the children who cannot fit into programs in the public school systems. Financed entirely by the parents and community, NO TAX FUNDS of any kind have gone into this project.

At the beginning of 1967, the Garden Valley Association for Mentally Retarded and the Southwest Association for Retarded Children merged, thereby offering services to the mentally retarded from the cradle to the grave.

More than 200 groups of varying sizes have assisted in many ways over the years. Among the organizations lending aid to the project have been the Torrance Junior Woman's Club, Auxiliary to the Torrance Fire Department, West Torrance Lions, El Camino Kiwanis, Las Vecinas Woman's Club, Victor Woman's Club of Torrance, Eta Mu Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha sorority, Torrance Elks Club, Ladies of the Elks, and the Torrance Sertoma Club.

With the merger of the two organizations, services are furnished to the retarded in the area from Slauson south to Pacific

Coast Hwy. and Avalon Blvd. west to the beaches.

Pre-school, primary and intermediate training classes are conducted at the Garden Valley Training Center, 13515 S. Vermont. The children are transported from the Wilmington-Lomita area north to Inglewood. Mrs. Holly, principal, bases her program on three Rs, relaxation, routine and repetition. Services are given to 40 severely retarded children. An activity center is planned for the older retardates, who cannot achieve academic goals, or who cannot qualify for a productive workshop routine.

The Association maintains the Lancaster Center at the St. Cross Episcopal Church for mentally retarded over the age of 18 who cannot qualify for the contract work done in the PAR Workshop, also maintained by the association. The PAR Workshop has more than 50 trainees in a pre-employment training program, from which it hopes to place many in private industry.

In addition, the group of parents made possible the establishment of the Regional Development Center in El Segundo by contributing \$4,000 to defray initial housing costs.

Friendship parties are held twice a month for the older retardates at the Columbia School, as well as bowling parties every Saturday morning. The group has been able to secure the cooperation of the Parks and Recreation Dept. in establishing a program at Lennox Park on Wednesday. The unit also sponsors a complete scouting program for both boys and girls.

The ambitious program now in force and the augmentation planned for the future is largely financed by the operation of two Value Village stores, one at 1261 Sartori Ave., Torrance, in conjunction with the financial support from donor groups.

Forgotten no longer, the program of the Southwest Association for Retarded Children is designed to "keep the mentally retarded in his own community where he can live with some meaning other than being the taxpayers' burden."

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PHOTOS BY HAL FISHER

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MODERN KITCHEN FACILITY

For the more than 40 youngsters attending the Gardena Training Center, hot lunches can now be provided in the completely equipped new kitchen. Mrs. Lenore Watters, teacher, is using the new stove to warm milk.



CLASS IN DRAWING

Mrs. Ruth Holly, principal at the Training Center, bases her program for these handicapped youngsters on a new set of the three Rs, relaxation, routine and repetition. These two youngsters, seated at new desks, are enjoying a class in drawing.



ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

In the business department of the new school there are case records of each student on file. Mrs. Ruth Holly, principal, looks up a case record of one of the students for a discussion with Mrs. Frances Burke, president of the Southwest Association for Retarded Children.



LEARNING IS DOING

A modern new process in teaching personal hygiene to the mentally retarded is used at the training center. The lessons in cleanliness are recorded and played to the youngsters, who go through the motions during the playing. In class are two boys who demonstrate scrubbing the face and body as the lesson is given.