

# Special kids need sponsors

Sponsors are needed to help send local physically handicapped children to a special summer camp.

Began in 1977, Camp Gateway was designed to provide handicapped children with summer recreational activities. This year, the five-week camp will begin June 26 at Detroit Country Day School at Lahser and Thirteen Mile roads.

The camp is open to all physically handicapped children between the ages of six and 12. But not all children who would like to attend will be able to do so, says Andrea Ellis, a Southfield parent who is campaigning for camp sponsors.

"We've got the kids who would love to go," she said. "They just don't have the money to go. The tuition, unfortunately, keeps a lot of people from attending."

Camp Gateway costs \$75 a week for each student. Mrs. Ellis and other volunteers have sought and received contributions from some local organizations. But other groups and individuals are still needed to sponsor a youngster for a week or longer at the camp.

DIANE KROME of Southfield enrolled her daughter in the camp last summer and has since become a booster for the camp.

"There's so little available for these children," she said. "This is really the first thing of its kind in the area."

"There's no therapy. They just swim and have fun. They're supposed to have fun."

The Gateway day camp for moderately to severely physically handicapped young people is the result of an

idea Eugene and Nancy Reilly developed nine years ago while working at a Children's Aid Society summer camp for handicapped children.

Reilly, athletic director for Detroit Country Day, and his wife, a registered nurse and an instructor at Oakland Community College, took their plan to the Detroit Country Day school board. They received approval to begin the nonprofit camp and began last summer with six children and several counselors.

They introduced the youngsters to the wonders of water, woods, roller skates, hide and seek, puppet shows, a cafeteria lunch line and even a roller coaster-style water slide.

STAFFERS AT the camp are professional teachers, college students and junior counselors. About 15 volunteers in all are expected to work at the camp this summer.

Activities at the camp are expected to include swimming, arts and crafts, modified versions of softball, floor hockey and archery, music and such special events as treasure hunts, contests and talent shows.

Sessions cost \$75 for one week, \$140 for two weeks, \$210 for three weeks and \$285 more each additional week. The price includes lunches and a camp T-shirt.

Businesses, service groups, civic organizations and individuals may all sponsor a camper at Gateway. For more information about a camp sponsorship or about enrolling a child in the program, call Eugene Reilly at Detroit Country Day at 646-7717.

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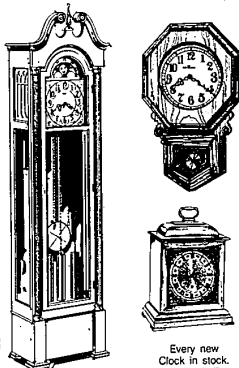
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