

Bucket Brigade

Trouble shooting for the struggling student

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

Bucket Brigade, a volunteer tutoring program designed by Dinghy Sharp with its roots in the Farmington Public Schools, wound up its first decade of operation this week.

Since 1970, the unique system of supplemental teaching has been initiated in schools in every state of the union and is used in the schools for dependents of the armed services in 27 foreign countries.

Volunteers, 127 strong who worked with 427 youngsters this school year locally, took bows at a thank-you luncheon this week.

Some left with miniature gold buckets, a token of appreciation for work done in the one-to-one tutoring program. Some left with ceramic turtles, another symbol closely associated with the volunteers who sometimes stick their necks out to help a youngster who is traversing a rocky path on his way to academic progress.

"The emphasis is on immediate help," Mrs. Sharp said. "We reach the child before bad habits become set and before the child's self-image deteriorates. It is a program of prevention."

MRS. SHARP works as a full-time learning consultant for Farmington Public Schools, heads up the pre-school classes given in Fairview Early Childhood Center, oversees all the goings-on of the local Bucket Brigade and still finds time to read to a class of first graders.

Evenings and weekends she says she is "on call to talk about the bucket" and traveled 26,000 miles last year trouble-shooting for the youngster who might not make it without a little bit of extra push.

During the summer, Ruby Martin, a long-time volunteer, will continue to hold sway over Bucket Brigade's central office and library of materials now housed in Fairview, getting ready for next season.

It is from this office that volunteers go into the classrooms to meet with their charges, armed with their bucket filled with teaching aids and wearing their bucket-badges.



Dinghy Sharp says she is on call to talk about Bucket Brigade, any where and any time, and uses evenings and weekends to do just that in her zeal to help children become comfortable in the classroom. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

SINCE ITS inception Bucket Brigade has published a book on writing and another on language to be used by the volunteers for the child with a specific problem. Next to come off the press is a math book, which is being put together by Ms. Martin.

"It's an accumulation of 10 years of gimmicks," Ms. Martin said. "Everything we use here is a gimmick. We use teaching techniques that are tricks and games. And we can use the same game for a kindergarten that we use for a sixth grader, just by giving it a little higher degree of sophistication."

A great many of the gimmicks have either been innovated for a particular child, or the materials necessary to pull off the gimmicks have been donated or hand-created by the volunteers.

All of the materials used are inexpensive ones because Bucket Brigade has no budget. Donations come from the local PTAs but Mrs. Sharp banks on nothing and goes with what she has, money-wise.

Volunteer-wise, Bucket Brigade is in good shape.

The current group includes mothers who have been in the program since its onset, many whose children are out of school, a couple of grandmothers who live outside the district, some retired school teachers, and one airline stewardess who uses lay-over time in Detroit to work in Longacre School on Wednesday afternoons.

THE REQUISITES to join Bucket Brigade are summed up by what Mrs. Sharp calls her three C's: concern, consistency and commitment. Volunteers are recruited in September for a three-week training program and are expected to tutor for one-half hour twice a week with one child who has been identified by the classroom teacher as someone who could benefit from the program.

In all instances Mrs. Sharp acts as diagnostician. She then works out a method of instruction from her library of gimmicks. This is passed on to the teacher and the volunteer with a prepared bucketful of teaching aids designed to shore up the faltering area for the individual student.

Because Bucket Brigade is so highly individualized, its very nature inevitably encourages innovations and adaptations.

LARRY FREEDMAN, assistant superintendent of instruction for the Farmington Public Schools, was the recipient of a gold bucket this week, given, Mrs. Sharp said, "So you won't forget us." He replied that it was unlikely that he would forget.

"There are no new words to describe what we feel for you," he told the volunteers.

"It is impossible to provide more love in any other way than in the unique job you're doing, helping children be successful."



A library full of books, a van full of stuffed animals and the colorful bucket brimming over with gimmicks and games tailor-made for one child's special problem are the tools of the trade for Bucket Brigade volunteers. Veteran tutors Helen Single (left), Ruby Martin and Dolores Bruce surround the

cake that reads "Thank you volunteers" as the program wound up its 10th year. While others take a summer break, Ms. Martin begins the task of preparing for next September's session in Bucket Brigade's new central office located in Fairview Early Childhood Center. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Mt. Carmel Women's Guild funds hospital innovation

An innovative approach which uses a specially equipped mobile laboratory to prevent diabetes in a patient who must have his pancreas removed has been initiated at Mount Carmel Mercy Hospital.

The self-contained mobile unit, the first of its kind in the world, is funded by a \$200,000 pledge from the hospital's guild.

The launching of the entire Islet Cell Transplantation Program has provoked the hospital staff to liken the small but mighty guild to "the mouse that roared."

"They are less than 200 strong, yet they have managed to contribute more than 460,000 hours of service and raise almost three-quarters of a million dollars since they began some 21 years ago," said Tim Banister, speaking for the hospital staff.

"In 1979 alone, this organization managed to raise almost \$90,000 toward hospital programs, while providing more than 122,000 hours of service to the patients," he said.

The \$200,000 pledge for the islet cell mobile laboratory is the guild's most ambitious project to date.

MICHAEL J. MADDEN, president and chief executive officer at Mount Carmel, said, "What makes the service particularly unique is the fact that the mobile unit can move to locations throughout Michigan and Ohio without requiring the patient to leave his community or hospital."

"The pancreas is removed by the patient's own physicians and processed by the Mount Carmel transplant team on location."

Before the onset of the mobile unit, patients with chronic pancreas disease have had little option, other than surgical removal of the pancreas, to alleviate the pain and discomfort associated with the condition.

Luis H. Toledo-Pereyra, chief of transplantation and surgical research for the hospital in northwest Detroit, said, "In more than 80 percent of the patients who have the major portion of their pancreas removed, diabetes develops as a result of the loss of the insulin-producing islet cells located in the pancreas."

Using the specially equipped van, the Mount Carmel transplant team can process the surgically-removed pancreas of the patient, extracting the key islet cells for injection into the liver.

Two of the procedures have already been done since the van went into service in April.

Once the cells have been implanted in the liver, they are again producing insulin, helping prevent the onset of diabetes and the secondary conditions associated with diabetes, such as blindness and kidney failure.

MOUNT CARMEL Mercy Hospital Guild was organized by a small group of physicians' wives in 1959 and has an incredible list of accomplishments stemming from that time.

The guild's first gift was furniture to outfit a pediatric playroom for hospitalized children. Then, with the opening up of a gift shop, money gifts helped launch the hospital's first intensive care unit and in a very few years, a pledge paved the way to develop the hospital's Kidney Dialysis Center.

After that, members took on the job of raising more money for a pediatric intensive care unit, which provided a fetal monitoring machine for the obstetrics department.

In 1973, the guild took on another major project, a \$100,000 pledge for a Surgical Intensive Care Unit, and three years later pledged another \$200,000 to help open a new child psychiatry unit.

"Beside additional funding for the various intensive care units and the Children's Rehabilitation Center, a program to teach children how to overcome congenital and acquired handicaps," Banister said, "the guild began an art solicitation which yielded about 100 paintings and cerographs valued at \$100,000 from Michigan artist Max Shaye for display in the new north bed tower."

THE GUILD's most recent pledge for the islet program has made possible what is expected to be a medical breakthrough by way of a transplanted donated kidney and a portion of a pancreas into a 35-year-old diabetic patient.

The transplant was performed by Dr. Toledo. The patient had been a diabetic from age 15 and had lost the use of her kidneys.

"If the transplanted kidney and insulin-producing islet cells of the pancreas take," said Dr. Toledo, "it will mark the first time that both processes have been done at the same time using adult islet cells."

Although the donated kidney was accepted by the patient with little problem, the islet cell implantation from another donor still has the potential for failure since the procedure is still at the experimental stage.

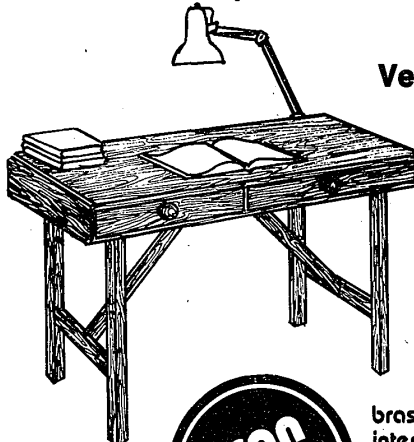
"But transplanting both organs from the same person, while treating the patient with ALG (an immunosuppressive drug still under investigation by the FDA) may be the key to the breakthrough," Dr. Toledo said.

"The impact such a small group of dedicated volunteers has had in shaping Mount Carmel services cannot be overemphasized," Banister said.

"From the comfort of a frightened child derives using the pediatric playroom to the strength families gain from the friendly presence of a pink-smocked guild member, truly the guild could be considered 'the mouse that roared.'"

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