

Thursday, February 4, 1982

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Tots get an assist from teacher Debra Allen for the peanut butter cookies that will be snacks for the day. The bakers are Reed Wills, Colin Cox and Justin Cox.

Nursery turns day center to accommodate all comers

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

Debra Allen says she is nearly convinced that one of the biggest needs in the West Bloomfield-Farmington-Birmingham area is a day-care center for infants or toddlers.

Mrs. Allen backs up the speculation with conversations she's had with mothers of preschoolers since she came into the area a few months ago.

Mrs. Allen heads the staff of the Church of Our Savior Day Care and Nursery, sometimes known as COOS Nursery, located in the church at 6655 Middlebelt Road.

The nursery that turned day-care center late in 1981 under Mrs. Allen's directorship, it now offers a host of options aimed at filling the needs of full-time workers or those who need a day or a few hours away from the concerns of child care.

COOS NURSERY is now in operation from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for 2½- to 6-year-old children.

The nursery has also accepted older children for after-school care.

She is working sometimes 11 hours a day now, she said, "with arms out in many directions, pursuing any number of ways to go. Our aim is to reach the community's need."

"We have beautiful rooms and equipment; 13 acres of ground with wildlife and a fenced play area; a lot of space and a lot of volunteers from the church body."

COOS Nursery shares that space now with a recently opened day-care center for older adults, another manifestation of the church's outreach philosophy to fill the needs of the community.

"We've been sharing snack time with

the seniors this past couple of weeks," Mrs. Allen said. "It's a fun enrichment thing for us to do and stimulating for both factions."

"We just had a cooking activity, appropriate for both groups. Music is another thing we can share in the future. I even think we have a few foster-grandparent relationships started."

"This (sharing) was not a planned thing. It just happened and the interaction between the kids and the seniors has been a beautiful thing to watch."

MRS. ALLEN earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in speech and language pathology from Central Michigan University.

She has worked for a county medical care facility in Mt. Pleasant and worked with the mentally impaired in Caro, in Michigan's thumb area. She has taught youngsters in remedial classes and preschoolers with severe handicaps.

"I've worked with people from 2 to 80 years of age and all of them with problems. So the little ones I'm seeing now are the super stars of my career and they keep me on my toes."

Her job at COOS is one of both director and core teacher, determining what the curriculum will be, as well as restructuring the nursery and its hours to accommodate parents.

"The first thing I did about that was to advertise our new hours," Mrs. Allen said, "which brought my first batch of phone calls."

That advertisement read "Church of Our Savior Day Care Center and Nursery," a phrase Mrs. Allen said evoked some misunderstanding. "A lot of women mistook the word nursery to mean

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Debra Allen is teacher as well as director of Church of Our Savior Nursery that turned day care center with 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. hours for the working mother.

Staff photos by John Stano



Colin Cox practices his "va-roooooommm" for an animated song about cars and trucks youngsters learned this week.



JOHN STANO/staff photographer

Nursery teacher Ariene Grant coaxes Reed Wills to get into the spirit of a wake-up song which tots sing to begin their day.