



ART THERAPY — Nearly all the young adult patients at Northville State Mental Hospital

participate in art classes. The owl montage is one of many this girl has made.



SHOP SCENE — New equipment in a machine shop gives young men in the hospital's H

Building a chance to work out creative projects.



HAPPINESS IS SONG — At a program for staff and visitors recently, this quintet sang out lustily on numbers like "God Bless America" and "Climb Every Mountain." Another patient provided percussion effects, and Mrs. June Raad, a Michigan State University student interning at the hospital, was at the piano.

# A World Comes Alive

## Young Adult Patients Respond To Own Group, Classes, Show

BY MARGARET MILLER  
Women's Editor

"Happiness Is" was the program's title. Teens sang in twosomes and threesomes and bigger groups. Several stepped out a dance they had created. A guitarist played and sang. A small instrumental combo performed. Girls modeled dresses they had made for themselves. The room where the program was held was bright with the teens' art work.

The scene could almost have been a talent show in any of the high schools that dot this area.

But it wasn't. It was the young adult building of the Northville State Hospital for the mentally ill.

AND THE KIDS, REALLY not so different from the ones that fill school corridors, all were patients in the hospital. Most of them are described as suffering from chronic mental illness.

A year ago, many spent most of their time in locked rooms, taking little interest in any of the world around them.

But on the day of their program they announced some real accomplishments proudly to Northville staff and guests who came to visit.

What happened in that year? A lot—and it exemplifies the sort of change that means new hope for many victims of mental illness.

Let Dr. K. C. Nair, head of the young adult unit at Northville since March of this year, describe the new developments.

"A year ago," Dr. Nair reports, "there were 260 patients in H Building, present location of the young adult unit. Their ages ranged from 15 to 60 years of age, and the building was a maximum security unit."

"It was decided that the patients in their teens and early twenties should be separate from the others."

So, in a series of several moves, older patients were moved out of the building—some to other parts of the hospital, some to nursing homes, some to their families.

Left in H Building were 40 patients, and they were moved to men's and women's wings of 30 persons each. Other parts of the unit, which previously housed more patients, were given over to the next big innovation, a school for the patients.

ART CLASSES previously had been given in the hospital's Activities Therapy Building, and they were moved to H Building. Added were remedial reading classes, home economics for the girls and shop for the boys, and recreation therapy, which is mainly music.



H BUILDING CHIEF — Dr. K. C. Nair has headed the unit for young adults since last March and supervised the recent changes.

Another major advance came in the size of the staff. By June of this year, there were 32 staff members in the ward, a staff-patient ratio of 1 to 1.85.

"That is the best in the hospital," said Dr. Nair. "The ideal ratio for psychiatric work is 1 to 1, and the closer you can get, the more chance there is for progress."

The changes moved along, gradually but steadily.

At first, teachers went to the patients' rooms to escort them to classes. Now the young men and women move freely through the building and keep track of their own schedules.

Mrs. Gretchen Benedict, who came in June as home economics and remedial reading teacher, started the girls on three-arm-hole dresses—simple patterns to foster the feeling of accomplishment.

Soon some were doing more complicated sewing, and next they will be trying cooking skills as more equipment is installed.

In the shop classes, instructor Bob Hayes has had the boys putting bright coats of paint on recreation rooms and corridors. They also have installed equipment and made foot lockers for their rooms. Class projects range from cutting boards to cocktail tables.

The art teacher, Mrs. Shirley Ford, has hung dozens of the paintings of her students through the whole area.

THE PHYSICAL AND occupational changes are great, but to Dr. Nair and his staff they are far overshadowed by the new spirit in the kids themselves.

"The biggest improvement," said the director, "is in the level of functioning. Most of these patients used to be extremely withdrawn. They had no interest in even keeping themselves clean, and their behavior was often mischievous and aggressive."

"The change has been unbelievable."

Mrs. Jean Oates, chief nurse for H Building, put it another way.

"I've been in psychiatric nursing since 1942," she said. "I worked with patients before the days of tranquilizers and I've used tranquilizers with them."

"Now, for the first time, I see progress. We expect some successes here."

The talent program that culminated the first few months of change was drawing to a close. The atmosphere was charged with emotion, especially for some of the staff members closely involved.

"Happiness is also the act of sharing," announced one of the young patients, inviting guests to have refreshments.

Her face showed she had found a bit of sharing and living, and not by bread alone.

**Oct.**

<b>MONDAY</b> <b>14</b>	DALHATION CLUB Meeting in Community Room, 7:30 p.m. VISIT PARKER'S APPLE CIDER BOOTH (Crowley Court)
<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>15</b>	LADIES' DAY, Cinema I, free coffee, 9:30; free movie 10 a.m., plus prizes, including a milk stealer from Sears. WEIGHT WATCHERS, Community Room 12:15 p.m.
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>16</b>	COLONIAL SENIOR CITIZENS, Community Room, 12 Noon. NORWEGIAN ELK HOUND MEETING, 7:30, Community Room.
<b>THURSDAY</b> <b>17</b>	BEGINNING LIVONIA MALL BIRTHDAY PARTY! Thursday: FASHION SHOW, 4 p.m. APPLE BOBBING, 3-5-6:45 p.m. FORTUNE TELLER, 6:30 to 9 p.m.
<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>18</b>	Friday: FASHION SHOW, 7 p.m. APPLE BOBBING, 3-5-6:45 p.m. FORTUNE TELLER, 6:30 to 9 p.m.
<b>SATURDAY</b> <b>19</b>	Saturday: KIDDIE SHOW, 6:45 p.m. APPLE BOBBING, 3-5-6:45 p.m. FORTUNE TELLER, 6:30 to 9 p.m. VISIT APPLE CIDER BOOTH — OPEN ALL WEEK IN MALL! —

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7 MILE AT MIDDLEBURY

SELF-ESTEEM IS A DRESS COMPLETED — Mrs. Gretchen Benedict, home economics instructor, looked on as two of her girls showed the creations they sewed at a fashion show that was part of the program.