

Volunteer Seeks Moms For 'Bucket Brigade'

FARMINGTON Catch it early and a child's problem may be only a "drop in the bucket," according to the motto of a new elementary school volunteer program called the "Bucket Brigade."

The volunteer workers in the group or "Brigades" were formed to help elementary school youngsters overcome any problems that may interfere with their academic achievement.

"Even something as minor as tying a shoe can keep them from doing their best in school," said Mrs. Florence Sharpe, implementer of the program in Farmington Public Schools.

She remembered one little boy whose problem was exactly that. Embarrassment from not knowing how to tie his shoes kept him from participating in school activities until a few special training sessions alleviated the difficulty.

MRS. SHARPE, or "Dinghy" as she is known to friends throughout the school district, said the "Bucket Brigade" program is patterned after a similar program in Hazel Park schools initiated and created by colleague, Mrs. Barbara Thomson.

Mrs. Thomson presented the program to the Michigan Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. Their representatives took the idea to Ted Cuno, director of special education for Farmington Schools, who introduced it to principals and members of the school district.

Enthusiastic Dinghy, a veteran of Farmington Schools' teaching staff for many years, said the program is designed to nip learning problems in the bud for kindergartners through second graders, getting aid to children as soon as they begin to fall behind their classmates.

"Teachers can't give help on a one-to-one basis," she said, "but volunteers can. My job is to teach them how to teach through the Bucket Brigade material."

Dinghy said parents will not teach their own children, they'll be assigned to other children. "I want volunteers who like children," she emphasized, "be they mothers, fathers, ex-teachers, or kids in high schools."

Inside each perky green plastic bucket are several learning tools, including alphabet flash cards, numeral flash cards, playing cards with pennies and nickels attached to teach counting and numeral grouping, colorful clothespins to teach colors, numberness and directionality, letter eye charts to teach tracking, plus a whole variety of standard reading, writing and arithmetic paraphernalia. Each bucket full of material costs about \$3 and is compiled by the volunteers from household supplies.

"Everything in that bucket can be used in a thousand ways," said Dinghy, "so that the student learns through a play-type activity." She added that no child wants to admit to a learning problem. Instead he will come up with new behaviors to cover up and the situation will only deteriorate.

The referral at last goes to a volunteer brigadier who programs (trains) with Dinghy and schedules to help the child two to three times a week with the approval of the school principal. The number of tutoring weeks varies with each child, taking from two to 10 weeks or more depending on the problem.

Orientation of volunteer brigadiers is held as soon as the referrals begin to accumulate. Dinghy goes through a teaching manual and demonstrates all the materials in the bucket at each orientation.

SPACE For tutoring will be worked out with the principal; for example, screens in the hall can be used when no room is available.

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Under the act, a five member, autonomous county library board would be created with members holding five year terms.

"We don't need this added fragmentation of central responsibility," Barakat asserted. "We'd be creating a headless monster with too many arms going in too many directions and with no authority over our existing contract with the Wayne County system."

"Local libraries cannot be compelled to join or cancel their existing contract. The board would be of no value to the county."

By establishing a county system under the 1917 law, some officials feel the county would have better representation on pending legislation to form state library regions.

UNDER the legislation, counties with a population of 600,000 or more can set up their own regions. Oakland could receive \$1 per capita or \$900,000 in state aid. The bill is at least one year away from being considered for passage.

William Mainland (D-Milford) said \$40,000 in unexpended penal fines could go by default to the state if a county library board is not created. He called Act 138 a "back-up measure" and pointed out there is no assurance legislation setting up regions will be enacted into law.

A county library would provide services to various institutions and outlying districts, he said. "We wouldn't be creating a financial monster," Mainland said. "Wayne County is constantly changing and library arrangements could be reversed. A county library would give representatives equal status in negotiations with Wayne, and commissioners would have to give budget approval."

Mrs. Mary Dearborn (R-Birmingham) said Oakland County is the only county not under Act 138. "The \$100,000 Lillenthal Research and Development report recommends a county board," she said.

"Oakland County will be divided if we don't take leadership. All but two communities want Oakland County to remain intact through a regional plan. We'll have a stronger voice in regulating the system if we go under Act 138."

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TEACHING HOW TO TEACH is Mrs. Florence Sharpe's job as implementer of the "Bucket Brigade." Here Mrs. Sharpe (right) shows Brigadier Marion Fuller what to do with some of the materials found in the bucket. (Evert photo)

No County Library, Board Decides

By JACKIE KLEIN

Oakland County will not go into the library business, it was decided by a 16-8 vote of the Board of Commissioners Thursday.

After a public hearing last month, a poll of 28 community librarians indicated less than half a dozen favored establishment of a county library under Public Act 138.

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JOHN FAUCHER, Farmington resident and group operating superintendent for Sears, Roebuck & Co., has been appointed 1971 Torch Drive group chairman to direct campaign solicitations of major retail outlets in the Wayne-Oakland-Macomb area. He joined Sears in 1956, became merchandise manager in the Detroit group office in 1960, and promoted to his present position in 1969.

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