

HINTS FROM A SOCIAL WORKER

BEAT THE NEWCOMER'S BLUES

A transplanted flower needs extra care and attention.

So do transplanted people.

Adolescents, for instance, find a change of environment particularly difficult. "They have problems enough to begin with," comments Kay Woods, social worker in Livonia school district. "The added burden of having to adjust to a new peer group brings a good deal of added pressure."

Often, fighting is the way to become accepted into a group of little boys. "The non-fighter may have some rough going," says Miss Woods.

When parents are attuned to their children and aware of the problems they may be experiencing as newcomers, the entire period of adjustment can be much smoother, counsels Miss Woods.

AND WHAT OF parents? They, too, are confronted by some major and even startling changes.

"What happens to the mother affects the whole family," continues Miss Woods. "If the mother adjusts to her new environment in a confident, positive way, then the children are apt to do so, too."

Miss Woods has seen families from different regions of the country, where the climate and local speech patterns are different than they are in Observ-

erland, who often feel especially strange.

"Keep reaching out," she advises. "You'll find a responsive chord eventually. Reach out to the other person. You may find yourself touching someone in greater need than yourself."

Contact your local school for advice on how to get involved with others. Many people have found a whole new world of activity within their PTA groups.

BUT IF PTA isn't quite your bag, your school can put you in touch with other types of groups.

Involved in the southern portions of the Livonia school district, Miss Woods has been active in helping to establish extra hour activities for people in the Ford, Perrinville and Nankin Mills school areas.

One result of her efforts is an electronics club made up of fourth, fifth and sixth grade boys who have found a constructive way to busy themselves as well as developing new skills and knowledge. The class is taught by volunteer parents.

"There is a need all through our district for more of this kind of involvement," points out Miss Wood. Parents who wish to contribute -- and who may possess a special interest or talent in anything from nature lore to

music -- are advised to contact their nearest school.

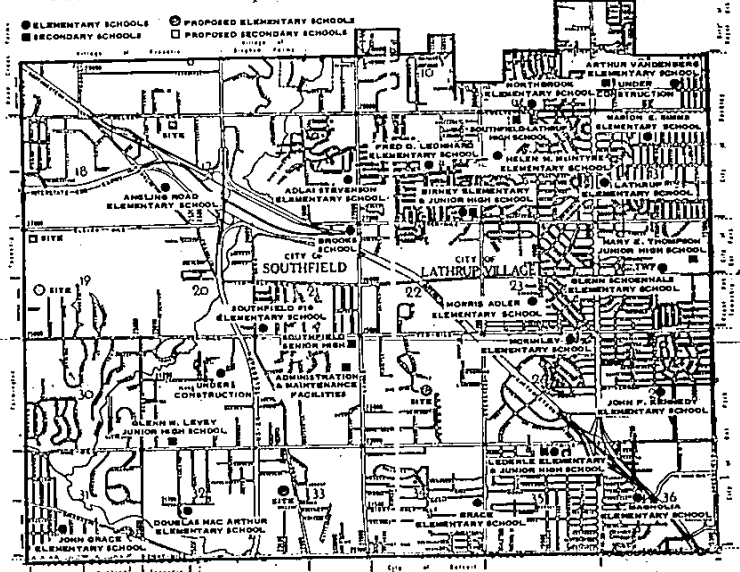
The advantages of such involvement are two-fold: the children are enriched and so, too, are their parents.

"There is a hue and cry throughout our country for involvement, but there is a great deal of fear and indif-

ference, too, of the kind that enables people to stand by and watch passively while someone else is being murdered," states Miss Woods.

"When we know people we lose our fear as well as our indifference. We're all so interrelated. We all have the same needs and there is something unique in all of us."

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