

Down's syndrome parents learn not to give up hope

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

Joey is seven now. He goes to kindergarten and Sunday school. He plays with other children, and he learns. And that's terrific because Joey is one of thousands of children affected by Down's Syndrome.

The syndrome, commonly known as Mongolism, is caused by a mix-up in the chromosomes. Too few or too many create a child whose eyes are almond shaped, whose fingers are short and whose mind is not and never will be fully developed.

Fortunately, the chromosome mix-up doesn't destroy the laughter and love that is synonymous with children. Nor does it totally destroy learning capabilities.

TWENTY YEARS ago Joey would have been classified as retarded. Instead of growing up in his Rochester home, he would have been institutionalized. And he probably would have died before reaching maturity.

Now medical advances have increased the life span of mongoloid children and academic achievements help Down's Syndrome children reach some degree of normality.

At the Mongoloid Achievement Center (MAC) in Troy, children

learn. They don't learn fast, but they don't spend wasted hours playing or passing time. They read, understand and comprehend.

Last year, Joey was a MAC student. And according to his mother, made remarkable progress. This year his parents could neither find nor afford transportation to and from school. But Joey continues to learn and remember.

And remembering is a great asset.

According to Marjorie Buresh, MAC director, mongoloid children have an IQ of less than 50. However, "They have terrific memories and that should be working for them. We try to get all their assets going for them."

"Mongoloid children are usually classified as trainable," she added. "And they are too often trained just to do play activities and minimal self-care. But if they are given a chance to learn academics, they can."

INDIVIDUAL TEACHING is the key. Youngsters are worked with in a one-to-one situation. They go at their own pace. Thereby avoiding frustration, which is their downfall.

"They can keep on learning as long as they aren't frustrated," said Ms. Buresh. "You must moti-

vate them in a way they comprehend. They learn gradually at their pace."

In spite of achievements, the children will never be self-sufficient or possessors of good judgment.

"They could be self-sufficient insofar as their needs are little," said Ms. Buresh. "If they work in a sheltered set up they are ok."

"BUT THEY will always lack judgment," she added. "If we could place judgment there, they would be normal. Parents cannot leave these children alone. They'd let strangers in the house or accept a ride from strangers."

That lack of judgment is the parents' greatest fear.

Joey's mother said, "The parents' greatest worry is the future. That's what we always worry about. You worry about dying and leaving them."

Ms. Buresh said MAC hopes to set up a home for orphaned children. "Our aim right now is to have a house and be able to provide a live-in situation for these children. There has to be a place for these children who are outliving their parents."

Also, Ms. Buresh believes such a home would provide the love these children need.

At home, Joey gets all the love he needs and wants. His parents, though recognizing his problems, stress his good points. And according to his mother, he has many.

"HE'S HANDSOME and beautiful. These children thrive on love and they give more than they get. Parents of these children resent the word retarded and we don't like the word Mongolism, we prefer Down's Syndrome. But the things they can do, they do very well. They can do so much more than people think they can. They have great possibilities."

Joey is not as severely affected by the syndrome as some children. His speech is good and the tell-tale signs of almond eyes and stubby fingers are minimal. "We are very lucky. Our son is very healthy. He just doesn't have much wrong with him."

"The greatest thing I want to stress to parents is don't despair and don't give them up, ever," she added.

"They don't belong in institutions. I felt in my own heart everything was going to be all right. Maybe all mothers feel that way. You have to be an optimist. You never stop fighting and you never stop trying."

Firemen to explain need for tax hike

Both Bingham Farms and Franklin residents are being encouraged to attend the annual meeting of the Franklin Volunteer Department at 8 p.m. Monday in the fire hall at Vincennes and Franklin Road.

Fire Commissioner William Albee and the other 35 volunteers will be answering questions regarding the May 6 ballot which will ask for a \$1.50 tax increase per \$1,000 assessed property valuation for fire protection.

The volunteer department serves both communities.

At the same time, Albee said, the residents can inspect the present equipment in the fire hall and inform themselves on the need to replace the 20-year-old tanker truck and lead pumper trucks.

The fire department has asked for the 1.5 mill annual tax, which will require a charter amendment to permit the increase above a three mill limit, in order to replace key equipment.

update equipment over a five year period.

The charter amendment and 1.5 mill request must pass by two thirds of the voters in order to be implemented.

The Franklin Volunteer Fire Department has operated on a voluntary-contribution program for

both villages for more than 40 years.

The approximately \$30,000 revenue donated by 72 percent of Franklin residents and 98 percent of Bingham residents is insufficient for current needs, Albee said.

Passage of the millage will eliminate the annual fund drive.

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Mr. and Mrs. John L. Emery of Southfield announce the engagement of their daughter, Joan Lucille, to Kirk Vogelei.

Parents of the future bridegroom are Mr. and Mrs. Robert Vogelei of Lathrup Village.

A winter wedding is planned. Miss Emery will graduate from Michigan State University school of nursing in June. Her fiancé is a senior at Ferris State College.

How sports build character

Years ago the immortal Knute Rockne silenced his critics after the Notre Dame team had lost a football game by saying, "We were building character out there today!"

This soon became a chant throughout the collegiate athletic world and any time team met defeat it was passed off with Rock's words, "We were building character."

But there is more truth than fiction in the remark - and a lot more than a humorous alibi for a defeat.

It was the late Gen. Douglas MacArthur, one of the greatest and most colorful of all American generals who once stated that the American battles were won on "the fields of athletic strife at West Point."

We got to discussing this character building high up in the press box in the Michigan Stadium recently while the annual spring game was being played and all agreed that many of the lessons learned on the gridiron carried into later life.

For instance there are two schools of thought among the top football coaches. You'll find a group, now headed by "Bo" Schembechler, the Michigan coach, who stresses defense on the theory that if you can stop the other team from scoring you won't suffer a defeat.

One of the greatest of this group was Fielding H. "Hurricane" Yost when he laid the foundation for the Michigan system.

He never wanted the Michigan team to have possession of the ball in its own territory and explained his theory one afternoon by saying, "It's silly trying to rush the ball in Ypsilanti when goal posts are in Ann Arbor." For this reason he always tried to develop a good punter - one who could kick the ball out of danger.

On the other hand, Rockne, one of football's greatest schemers, stressed offense. "You can't score if you don't have the ball, so we'll take it any place." More than that, he stressed the point that if every man did his job the team could score on every play.

Many of these lessons have been carried into every day life and the latest example is Vice President Gerald Ford, who played center for the Wolverines when Harry Kipke was at the helm.

In these days of turmoil in the nation's capital, Ford is in the thick of another battle and you'll note that most of his time, especially in public, is spent defending the administration. He's simply carrying on the theory that he was taught, one of the hallowed ground of old Ferry Field.

On the opposite side you can find any number of former Notre Dame stars who went on the offense as soon as they received their diplomas and made names for themselves in the business and political world.

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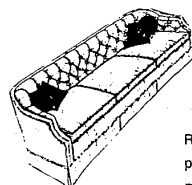
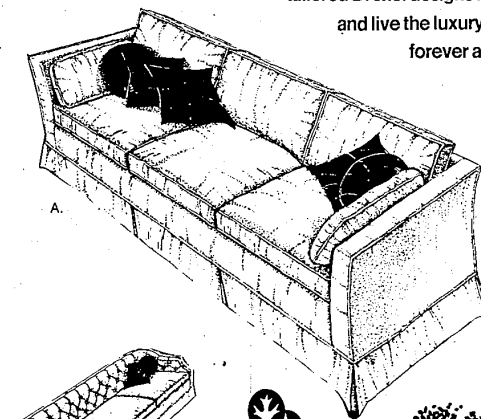
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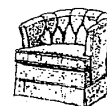


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