

There are few keys to the world of autistic children

By JACKIE KLEIN

Tommy is in his own little world, and no one has the key to enter. Tommy is autistic. The three-year-old is suffering from a mental condition, causes unlearning, which interferes with normal learning in early life and blocks social and emotional development.

With an effective program, says Joan Risher, president of the Oakland County chapter of National Society of Autistic Children (NSAC), 80 per cent

of the children like Tommy will be institutionalized by the age of seven or eight.

Chapter members claim programs in which autistic children may be enrolled aren't designed to meet their specific needs. The state position paper on educational services for these handicapped youths agrees they are discriminated against and receive few community services. Mrs. Risher said:

"If projections are accurate, Tommy and others like him are far

from alone in their isolation," she said. "The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare claims there are four to five autistic individuals in a population of 10,000."

REALIZING these numbers, NSAC has an ongoing nationwide movement to identify, treat, and educate autistic children.

In early 1977, the society urged the Michigan State Board of Education to change the special education code to provide programs for autistic children.

"The board refused our changes," Mrs. Risher said, "but adopted a policy offering guidelines for education, diagnosis, placement and treatment programs for the autistic."

"The Oakland County chapter believes the intent of the policy has been misinterpreted. Many parents after years of costly searching for proper treatment for their children will end up physically and mentally exhausted. They'll have nowhere to turn except to a state institution."

The chapter is attempting to insure

that Oakland County schools offer programs to help autistic children. Mrs. Risher said. Parents of these children, she said, are painfully familiar with the phrases: "He doesn't fit our program," and "He's unable to benefit from our program."

Autistic behavior upsets other children in facilities shared with the mentally retarded or impaired, according to the policy of educators. Mrs. Risher said.

"THE PROGRAM offered through Oakland schools for the autistic places

these children with the emotionally impaired," Mrs. Risher said. "It doesn't offer a strictly autistic program."

The state special education code doesn't have a classification for autism but includes it in the severely emotionally impaired category.

If educational programs for the autistic aren't begun at an early age, Oakland County parents maintain, victims like Tommy may never have a chance to relate to the world around them.

Dealers begin training program

Most drivers have gone through the experience of having their car repaired and then having it returned to the dealer to have the work repeated because it wasn't done right in the first place.

Aware of the problem that is forcing motorists to go to the corner garage or service station, suburban auto dealers are preparing to use a national mechanics training program for a potential solution.

The dealers, representing auto agencies in western Wayne County and southern Oakland County, met recently to launch a program, the first in the state, sponsored by the National Auto Dealers Association.

The basis of the program is having persons with a high school diploma work 40 hours a week as an apprentice mechanic at the dealership and attend a nearby community college to get an associate degree in auto technology.

The training program covers three years, at which time the student will

be working as a journeyman mechanic, who now get from \$20,000 to \$23,000 for a 45-hour week, according to a dealer attending the luncheon sponsored by the NADA's associate degree apprenticeship program staff.

While the student is in the program, he gets 52 per cent of the wage of a journeyman mechanic and pays his own college tuition and book costs.

INITIATING THE search for a better way to get improved mechanics is Robert Gillow, owner of Action Olds, on Plymouth Road near Farmington Road in Livonia, who said that one of the big frustrations in any dealership is the happiness when a person buys a new car but experiences "negativism" when he tries to get satisfactory service afterward.

Another dealer commented that a problem now is when drivers use the dealer's service shop while the car is covered by the manufacturer's warranty but after it runs out shops around at other service garages.

Gillow likes the apprenticeship program "because the mechanic is better when he is treated better and this leads to better service" for the customers.

Taking part in the luncheon meeting and lending support to the program were dealers or service managers

from Action Olds, Penske Chevrolet in Southfield, Tamaroff Buick in Southfield, Crestwood Dodge in Garden City, Leo Adler Datsun in Farmington Hills, Erhard Motor Sales in Farmington, Holman Pontiac in Westland, Demmer Ford in Wayne, and Westwood Motors, Inkster.

Also taking part were John Graves, coordinator of the Livonia Area Industry-Education Council, a new agency which provides better job and employee information for companies and workers, and George West of the Livonia job service center of the Michigan Employment Service Commission, which will screen and give pretests to candidates for the apprenticeship program.

The persons accepted by dealers for the program will be enrolled at Schoolcraft College in Livonia which has expanded its auto technology program to handle the NADA program.

The college's registration deadline for the winter term is the first week in January, with classes to start in late January, but late registrations will be accepted.

The NADA program phone number has not been announced yet but it will be located in the industry-education council office in Livonia's Jefferson Community Center, 9501 Henry Ruff, near W. Chicago.



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LEGAL NOTICE

CITY OF SOUTHWFIELD
NOTICE OF TWO TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Southfield, Community Development Department, will hold two (2) technical workshops; one on Tuesday, January 3, 1978 and one on Thursday, January 5, 1978. The purpose of these workshops is to discuss, in detail, the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the function of the public hearings to be held by the Southfield Planning Commission and the City Council, and the activities that are eligible for funding under the guidelines developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is in regard to the preparation of the City's application for \$40,000 in federal funds during the fourth year of the Community Development Block Grant Program. At this time also, the dates for the public hearings will be available.

The first technical workshop will be held on January 3, 1978 at 8:00 p.m. in the multi-purpose room at John Grace Elementary School, 21039 Indian Trail, City of Southfield, County of Oakland, Michigan. The second technical workshop will be held on January 5, 1978 at 8:00 p.m. in the gymnasium of Simms Elementary School, 28501 Pierce, City of Southfield, County of Oakland, Michigan.

All interested people are encouraged to participate in these meetings. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Southfield Community Development Department at 26000 Evergreen Road or by calling 354-4962. The following activities are eligible for funding according to federal guidelines. This list is included as a guide to help interested citizens understand the kinds of programs that can be included in the City's Community Development Program: acquisition of real property; construction of public works facilities; development and implementation of code enforcement programs; clearance, demolition, removal and rehabilitation of buildings; projects to remove physical barriers that restrict the mobility of the handicapped; assistance payments to persons displaced by community development activities; selling, leasing or donating real property acquired as part of the community development program; providing public services, i.e., employment, crime prevention, child care, recreation, etc.; payment of local share of programs funded by other federal agencies; completing ongoing urban renewal projects; administrative costs incurred during the development and implementation of Community Block Grant Programs.

PAT FLANNERY
City Clerk

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