

THE OAKLAND COUNTY VOLUNTEER BUREAU, a program of the Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services, has weekly listings of volunteer opportunities. Information about these and other volunteer needs at more than 200 agencies may be obtained by calling the bureau at 642-7272. Any non-profit organization needing volunteer assistance may also call the bureau.

CRISIS COUNSELOR — Individuals 18 and older and empathetic, non-judgmental, constructive and open to supervision are needed by the Gateway Crisis Center in Madison Heights. Volunteers should be able to work 7-11p.m. Monday through Friday for a period of six months counseling crisis callers or drop-ins, providing information and referrals and doing paperwork and attending staff meetings. Training is provided.

MUSICIANS — Musicians looking for appreciative audiences may find them at the Hilton Convalescent Home in Ferndale. Visitors who can play string or reed instruments or sing are needed to visit bedridden patients. Volunteers must be 16 or older and able to devote two hours a week for three months. Reimbursement for transportation and child care costs is available.

GREEN THUMBS — Gardeners who can give half a day or more each week are needed by the Clinton Valley Center near Pontiac for horticulture therapy. Volunteers, who must be at least 18, work in the center's greenhouse or gardens.

volunteers



Pat Bordman



A mixing bowl, food coloring, corn starch and water are all the materials necessary to challenge your youngster's verbal and analytic skills. (Photo by Pat Bordman)

Like night and day

As different as night and day. That is how many parents describe the two children in their family. One, able to run and twist and turn, excels in all things physical. Usually dreaming, this child is also full of imagination and new ideas. The other child, highly verbal, seems to be forever talking. Methodical, logical, this child is the rational one, always ready with a step-by-step plan of action.

Not only are these differences apparent between children, they actually exist within each of us. Our brain is divided into two parts called hemispheres. The left hemisphere processes information related to reasoning and language. It controls the verbal and analytic and deals in symbols. The right hemisphere is concerned with spatial and visual information. It is imaginative, inventive, intuitive and artistic.

Both sides of the brain use complex and high-level ways of thinking and reasoning. Each side of the brain sees the world differently and takes in information independently. Fortunately, these perceptions are modified and balanced within the brain and a unified outlook results. However, the left side of the brain, which controls language, is quicker than the right side and tends to dominate. It sometimes blocks out the information processed by the right side of the brain. The more artistic hemisphere often has to wait until the left hemisphere is baffled to show off its traits. As a result, it is less exercised. We have to fool our brain, from time to time, into working at full capacity. Here's an April Fool's Day surprise project that will tease both sides of the brain.

IN A SMALL MIXING BOWL add food coloring to one half cup water. Then add one cup corn starch. Mix thoroughly. Have your child first look at the stuff and guess what it will feel like (the left hemisphere using verbal and analytic skills). Then have your child jab his finger quickly into the stuff. This will confuse the left hemisphere as the stuff does not feel as expected. It looks like liquid, but feels like solid.

Both hemispheres of the brain will, hopefully, be challenged. Curiosity will take over and a freer approach to this unusual mixture will result. Now, scoop out a spoonful of the stuff and roll it into a ball. Place it on a table or bottom of the dry sink. It seems to melt. If left unattended, the stuff begins to dry immediately and will become like powder. This surprise stuff washes off face, hands and clothes, goes down the drain without plugging and, once dry, can be vacuumed. No foul!

Patricia Bordman, a free-lance writer and photographer, has a master's degree in early childhood education. She has taught elementary school and conducted workshops and lectures. Mrs. Bordman welcomes suggestions and comments. Please write her c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspaper, 38251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

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