Farmington Observer

suburban life

Loraine McClish editor/477-5450

Thursday, August 19, 1982 O&E

'Old is something we all are getting'

Her goal is helping people enjoy the age they are

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

Fifty years ago, four out of every 100 Americans were more than 65 year old. Today 10 out of 100 are 65 or older.

"Old is something we all are getting," is the way Barbara Majoros says it, "so we should all be learning how to deal with it."

Learning to age successfully is the forte of the social worker/teacher who returns to Oakland Community College (OCC) this fall to lead sessions on the biological, physical, sociological and psychological aspects of aging.

"I want to stimulate interest in the field of gerontology, change the attitudes and feelings toward aging and help individuals deal with their own aging and the aged who are close to them," she said.

She stated her goal as "helping people enjoy the age they are and to become considerate of all other ages.

"I set out to foster wholesome attitudes on aging and I've done just that," she said of the students she's had in OCC classes for the past two years.

MAJOROS BECAME interested in the aging process when she was working toward her mental health degree and was assigned to a nursing home for a work-study period.

"I was green as grass, but I knew there had to be more than that for the residents," she said. "I just knew that those conditions did not have to be. There had to be more than just staring out the window."

Majoros now works in her own 'Home Enviornment Therapy Program,' visiting the elderly who are living with their adult children, stimulating new interests or re-activating latent interests to combat the staring-out-of-the-window syndrome.

> ***'We learn why grandma is complaining all the time and we learn how crazy it is to remain 39 through seven years of birthdays.'***
>
> ***—Barbara Majoros social work technician***

"This is a tailo- made-to-the-individual program, but when grandma wins, everybody wins. The whole family wins once grandma is self-actualized," Majoros said.

"The ideal is for the elderly or disabled to contribute sufficiently to family activities and demand less of the others so that the guilt, stress and physical strain are reduced to a tolerable level for all.

"They are still capable of participating to some degree in the world around them. They are not ready to be put on the shelf," she said of those she counsels in their home.

With loss of physical health, loss of acquaintances, loss of being needed and productive, "The elderly can soon view themselves as a deficit, a burden," Majoros said. "But these feelings can be reversed."

IN HER CLASSES at OCC, Majoros uses films, slides, music, guest speakers, role playing and simulated games to place the phenomenon of aging on an understandable level.

"Everybody gets vaseline rubbed on their eye glasses in one session," the Farmington Hills resident said. "We assimilate a family breakfast with everyone taking any other age except the age they are to discover the communication gap we create.

"Everyone experiences life in a retirement home, loss of hearing and loss of decision-making powers," she said.

"But most of all we discover how to compensate for all of the above and we wind up realizing how our attitudes on aging can affect us and affect the feelings of others.

"We learn why grandma is complaining all the time and we learn how crazy it is to remain 39 through seven years of birthdays."

Majoros said the age range of her students has run from 18 to 72.

"The younger ones come because they are thinking about a career in gerontology," she said. "My course covers every aspect of the degree course and it gives an idea of what to expect in the credit course."

But learning to cope with just the fact of aging is what draws most of her students.

"They learn to handle looking into their own mirror and they learn to understand their parents, their physically handicapped spouses, children and elderly relatives.

"Maybe most beneficial of all is that the class helps to relieve the guilt in what I call the tug-of-war syndrome we play among the gnerations," she said.

THE EIGHT WEEK non-credit course runs from 9-11 a.m. Tuesdays, beginning Sept. 14 on Orchard Ridge Campus.

Because of the popularity of the course on the local campus, Majoros has been asked to repeat the class on the Highland Lakes campus this fall.

Majoros has also led classes for Monroe Community College on aging gracefully and issues concerning older women. She is available for lecturing and leading workshops locally on request.

Registration for her fall class is made by calling the Orchard Ridge Campus, 476-9400.

Majoros will take inquiries about her Home Environment Therapy Program for the elderly and disabled at her office in Quakertown Medical Center, 661-1654.

SANDI HORNE/photographer

Barbara Majoros, who works with the elderly in their homes to bring about better relationships within the entire family, takes her expertise into the classroom. In her course at OCC, she helps her students deal with their attitudes and feelings about their own aging and the aging of those who are close to them.

SCAMP

A kid's program keeps on growing

By Jeanne Whittaker
staff writer

WHEN A COACH stands before any high-school or junior-high-age group of students, he can be expected to know all the rules governing the games the students will be playing.

But when coach Mike Fedio greeted his special group of students last June, the tall, lanky Lahser High School basketball coach had to admit this group was cause to shake his head.

"It was obvious it would be me who would do the learning," the affable coach said last week at field-day exercises marking the close of the '82 session of the SCAMP camp at West Hills Junior High School.

Fedio said he got into the program for handicapped children, ages 3-25, because "I didn't have anything else planned for the summer, and this seemed like a good program." It has been an experience he won't soon forget.

For the past six weeks Fedio was one of the 125 staff members, assistants and volunteers who provided a 2-1 ratio for 250 children who attended the 14-year-old camp.

"SCAMP began as a camp for the hearing impaired," said hearing specialist Paul Schimmick, who has directed the camp for the past three years. During the regular school year Schimmick is director of the hearing-impaired program at Lahser High School.

According to SCAMP staff, the camp is the case of a good idea that grew.

"Every year a greater number of physically impaired children seek enrollment," said staff member Carol Swazey. SCAMPers, as the campers call themselves, include mentally impaired as long as they are educable and trainable, the learning disabled, emotionally impaired, speech handicapped, and physically or otherwise health impaired between the ages of 3 and 25.

And although the camp is conducted by the Bloomfield Hills School District, it is open to any child from Oakland County or the surrounding communities, including Detroit and Grosse Pointe, or wherever there is someone to provide them with transportation, Swazey said.

During the six-week camp, campers attend four daily 9 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. sessions each week. For many, the program of swimming, arts and crafts, athletics, music therapy, outdoor education, and camping is the first such experience they have ever known. The camp also provides the children with an academic setting that maintains and reinforces skills they acquired during the regular school year.

SAID SWAZEY, where the camp was once financed through a combination of state aid, tuition and donations, because of changes in the state-aid formula SCAMP has to depend on the $250-per-child tuition and private donations.

"At least a half of the students are on some form of scholarship," she added. Special guests at Thursday's field-day exercises, she added, were members of the Elks Club, which provides one-quarter of the camp's total budget.

As field day got under way, happy SCAMPers were free to play under supportive scrutiny at adjacent Walnut Lake beach. That caught the attention of Elks Michigan director Milt McKay. The Albion resident was smiling as he watched the exhuberant children splashing in the water or building sand castles with counselors and volunteers.

The Elks, said McKay, "are not interested in providing parents with a vacation." But, he explained, the Elks will assist programs, such as SCAMP, where children receive therapy as part of the program.

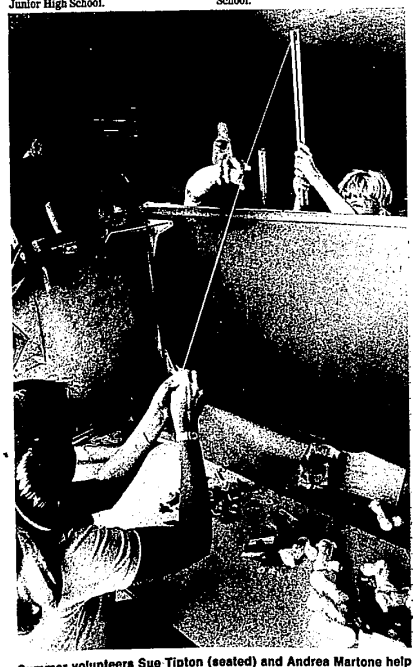
"We go across the board where the needs of the children are concerned," he said. "We helped 648 kids last year and spent $328,000 on such things as wheelchairs, surgery, this and the diabetic camp." While he talked counselors and SCAMPers were busy inside the building preparing a luncheon of hamburgers, homemade potato salad, and huge, sticky donuts for their guests.

THE PRESENCE of therapy in the program is reminiscent of the case of the wise parent who knows what is good for the child but lets the child think that it's fun anyway. During the field day, physically impaired children, strapped in orthokinetic wheelchairs that can be folded into car seats, were as much a part of the games and activities as those whose handicaps are mental and perceptual.

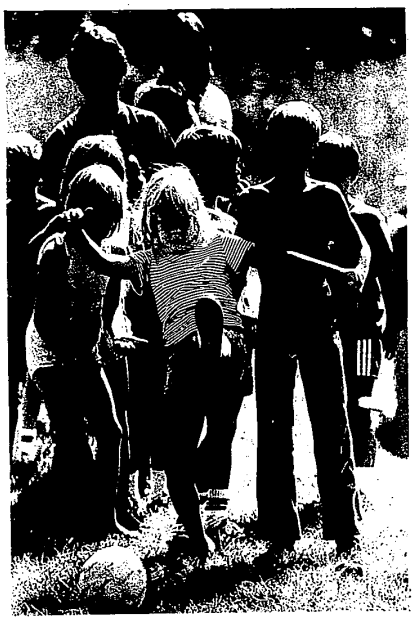
Mini SCAMPers, ages 3-8, dissolved in giggles as they watched each other race into the arms of counselors and volunteers, who helped them bounce on balloons till they popped. Midi SCAMPers, ages 9-12, cheered each other on during a volleyball-kicking race. Several Maxi SCAMPers, such as Robert Werney, 18, of Southfield, proudly showed off VIT hats, representing that they are volunteers in training.

Though fun, each outdoor activity, like the speech-therapy sessions, and special-education activities in the Academic Room which were going on simultaneously indoors, are designed to stretch the children's minds and bodies to the extent of each child's ability.

Staff photos by Dick Kelley



Summer volunteers Sue Tipton (seated) and Andrea Martone help each child taking part in the festival "Fishing Pool" become a winner. Along with academic and physical improvement, camp staff work to build each child's self-esteem.



Though it was the last field day that the children would share together for this year, youngsters participating in the organized play were so intent on winning points and certificates there was little time for sadness.

With extra love and constant attention, many exceptional children experienced their first taste of camp life during the six-week program in Bloomfield Hills.