



STUDENT TUTORS — Sandy DeVic, Bentley, and Janice Emans, Redford High, are two of 13 Village United Presbyterian Church teenagers

tutoring in Detroit's inner city. Here they start their group on a balloon art project.

STORY AND PICTURES:
Dennis L. Pajot, Redford Editor



SPECIAL HELP from a very special person, Chris Morse of RU, is sought by this bright-eyed girl, who has voluntarily attended the after-school sessions at Williams School.



SPORTS FUN — Steve Hanson of RU is gleefully pounced on during a game of basketball. Roughhousing is a marvelous ice breaker.



BANKING STUDIES — Julie Eddy of RU hit upon the idea of showing the youngsters how to make entries in a bank book, something they're not likely to have learned since few parents in the Williams School area have much money.



"WE'VE NEVER done that before" is almost sure to stimulate Carolyn Brown, tutor from Bentley High, into an idea for the following week's session. One week it was cake icing, with the students icing their own cake and taking it home to their mothers. Here it's oil coloring.



WATCHING FOR SUBURBAN FRIENDS, this youngster avidly awaits the Wednesday afternoon class, knowing her white tutors will have prepared a fun project.

Teen Power

Redford, Livonia Youngsters Teach Inner City Kids---Everyone Learns

If a certain group of black youngsters in Detroit's inner city is touched by violence this summer, 13 white teenagers from this area are likely to cry.

Black and white have met on very special, happy and productive terms the past year-and-a-half. The local teenagers travel one day a week from their suburban neighborhoods to the ghetto on a tutoring project.

Originally, the older white youths gave intensive academic help to younger children who were having trouble in school and who only incidentally happened to be black.

That was in December of 1966. The following summer, Detroit exploded. The school to which 14 suburbanites had been going was in a hard-hit area at Mt. Elliott and Garfield.

Two gutted homes still stand across the street from Williams School, which is a fort-like structure squeezed into a half block area with a narrow lawn across the front and concrete courts in back.

During the summer crisis, many of the same youthful tutors joined in riot relief through their church — Village United Presbyterian in Redford Township.

THEIR CHURCH Christian activities director, Donald M. (Hoppy) Hanson, started the tutoring project the previous December. A stint as emergency substitute teacher at Williams School has shown him the need.

The teens took it from there. Devoting an afternoon a week this past year have been Diane Bryant, Carolyn Brown, and Sandy DeVic, all of Bentley High School; Mary Gray, Chris Morse, Julie Eddy, Steve Hanson and Ginny Simmons, all of Redford Union; and Janet Emans, Fred Bonjour, Bonnie Bonjour and Don Wilde of Redford High.

One of the first year's cadre, Pat Wood, a Thurston graduate, continued throughout this year — traveling on his own from studies at Wayne State University to meet the group at Williams School.

He is just one of the teenagers, also, who have given serious thought to a vocation of service to disadvantaged youth.

THESE TEENS BECAME learners as well as teachers.

"They're just like us," said one of the teenage girls, summed up very candidly what all the tutors expressed in halting words and avid deeds.

Most of the youths had a difficult time relating their experiences in terms of black and white.

After eight months for most of them and a year and a half for some, they seemed to have forgotten color in their earnestness to be useful to "people" in need.

The need has been strikingly apparent to them.

The teenagers found the most valuable thing they could offer was individual attention, a proof that somebody cared.

FEW OF THE WILLIAMS School youngsters, who attended the hour-after-school sessions voluntarily, lacked natural ability. Most suffered, instead, from problems that have become cliches since the national focus on poverty and depressed environments.

One girl would never talk. She had been withdrawn in regular school classes and with the teens. But she came regularly. The teens found she had vigorously bleeding teeth. They brought it to the attention of school officials, and corrective steps were begun.

A 10-year-old boy of whom the tutors had grown quite fond dropped out in May. They learned that he had moved to another district to live with relatives. His mother had been stomped to death in front of him by his stepfather in a quarrel over money.

Mrs. Sue Eddy, a Redford parent who helps Hanson's chauffeur the tutors each Wednesday, noticed the school's prize athlete catch baseballs, shake off his glove and throw the ball with the same hand.

The tutors presented him a left hander's glove the next week. They converted a reluctant pupil into an avid ally.

One girl responded only one day when the teenage girls decided to have a music session. She played the piano, haltingly but passably. At first she wouldn't admit she had a piano at home. Later she revealed she had taught herself how to play. It was her only emotional outlet.

Others of the youngsters have yet to be "reached."

"THE MOST VALUABLE thing I've learned," said one of the teenagers, "is that these kids want to learn and want to better themselves."

Bettering themselves includes attending church in a building built for that purpose. It means seeing more than a narrow strip of grass. It means, to many, a first ride in a private automobile.

When the tutors brought their charges to Village United Presbyterian Church the first time, for a Christmas party, the edifice fascinated them.

The second time, for a spring party, the broad stretches of grass on Glenhurst Golf Course across the street amazed them.

Riding in the Eddy and Hanson autos was a new thrill. Usually boisterous, they entered the cars in quiet anticipation and then rode in awe through greater Detroit and into the suburbs.

Soon the Williams School children will get a first in their lives. They'll be taken to Kensington Metropolitan Park for a walk in the nature trails and playground and picnicking.

WHAT ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "well-fare attitude"?

"Well, when we brought them to the church for the Christmas party, some had money and offered to pay for their meal," the teenagers said.

Conversational difficulties, which Hanson found prevalent, stem from a lack of knowledge that most people think is old hat. For instance, he said, the children didn't know rabbits and horses in pictures; they had never had a story read to them; they had seldom talked with adults.

As an outgrowth of the Village United Presbyterian church project, other agencies may attempt similar people-to-people efforts.

"A lot of kids have been questioning our youngsters," said Hanson.

A similar effort has been made by a Redford group known as "New Christian Minstrels," who lend a hand in the youth program of an inner city church.

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