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## Retarded children benefit from Newman project

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is so-called normal member of a report on a project carried out by the campus Newman Community last year with retarded children. The writer, a member of the group involved in the project, wished to remain anonymous.

Over an eight week period from rectly! January to March of 1976, some twelve members of the UNB-STU Newman Community participated in a project with six mentally retarded children from a group. home in Fredericton.

There were two main goals set for the group. The first (and most successful) was to outreach and understand better the mentally retarded, which in effect would ter each week, a reflection period help us learn more about by our helpers enabled us to ourselves. A second, more aca- understand the children's behavior demic goal was an attempt to gain better in the light of their past an overview of the bureaucratic history, and our relationship with structures and services offered to them. the Mentally Retarded in New Brunswick.

As means of obtaining the first house parents and also with two goal, an expansion of a previously members of its board of directors. existing program of weekly recreation with such children from was undertaken. Such a home is finances and the other, admissions. much like a foster home but offers The board chairman runs the symptoms of vitamin and bone a group living experience with meetings and is also in charge of deficiencies, screen for PKU's other handicapped.

volunteers to meet with the house operational budget of the home and brain damage) and give IQ tests. It

society"). We also learned more of the children's history from the group home parents. Most had been institutional hospitals previously. Some were not mentally retarded at all but had severe emotional problems that had been both diagnosed and treated incor-

Saturday morning outings over these weeks included playing hockey, skating and games in the gym plus attendance at a basketball game. On Tuesday

evenings, an organized evening of card games and dancing for the older children, followed by refreshments was held at the Fredericton Kinsmen Centre. Af-

To learn more about Norman House itself, we talked with the Firstly, this board consists of about twenty people, also sub-divided

parents and children. The latter's children's allowances as well as is puzzling why this is done so late initial shyness of strangers soon reports to the government on such in a child's life gave way to trust (a quality not matters. Most importantly, the often demonstrated by "the group home parents give the daily between 10 and 15 years and having

care to the children in a truly family atmosphere.

The board was instrumental in the creation of Norman House two years ago. Some of its many committee tasks were selecting a house for purchase, choosing suitable house parents, working out a budget and setting criteria for admissions. Since then it has maintained a low profile, though it may be necessary from time to time for it to act on the latter two responsibilities.

In general, our second goal of gaining an overview of mental health structures and services was not satisfactorily accomplished. Much published information from the Departments of Health and Social Services was obtained and presented at meetings but not thoroughly discussed. Therefore, only a mention of some of the institutions available to the mentally handicapped will be made. There are many of these, depending upon the needs of the 1 percent of new Brunswickers who

are mentally retarded. A Junior Rehabilitation Centre in the province examines the health the Norman House group home into two committees: one handling of some children entering the first grade. Doctors there check for public relations. The director has (waste products in urine which in The first step was to take newer as her duties the formation of the high concentrations can cause

Special schools for those children

IQ's from 50 to 70, and workshops Newman Community plans to for those older mildly retarded continue its program of recreaadolescents, and adults are tional activities with the Norman provided. Family living environ- House children. We also hope to ments for children include foster, hold educational seminars, one of natural parent and group homes. which will be on Mental Retarda-(There are eight group homes for tion, bringing in outside speakers. mentally retarded in N.B.) The Finally, encouragement of more institution providing assessment, family and student participation observation and treatment pro- will be urged. This is one way to try grams for children up to 16 years of to live the Social Gospel and it is age with mental and-or physical fun as well. handicaps is the William F.

Roberts Hospital School. Mirimichi Rehabilitation Centre details. (SUB, Room 33). provides social and vocational training so that they can contribute as adults to society. Finally, for those very severely retarded and senile (aged) patients, the Jordon Memorial Home in River Glade provides care and where possible Brunswick today worth considerrehabilitation.

The above mentioned are the more important government ser- students (example is Jack Mbiza vices provided for such individ- episode) uals. Perhaps in the future, an 2. College students compelled to assessment of their effectiveness drink for entertainment at social based on care-relationships with functions those mentally handicapped can be made.

A common conclusion from our students at STU. experiences with these children 4. Assembly line education where was that we learned of our own feelings toward them. At first we of the status quo. felt a bit condescending in 'helping 5. Lack of concern about housing. such wounded people but later 6. came to realize that they had much to share with us and soon their handicap was forgotten.

For the immediate future, the rehabilitation.

Anyone interested in working

with retarded children is invited to For those over 16 (and consid- contact any member of the ered 'trainable' for a trade) the Campus Ministry team for more

## APPENDIX

Here are some problems in New ing by students:

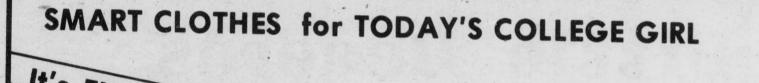
1. Lack of contact with foreign

3. Lack of contact and animosities between native and non-native

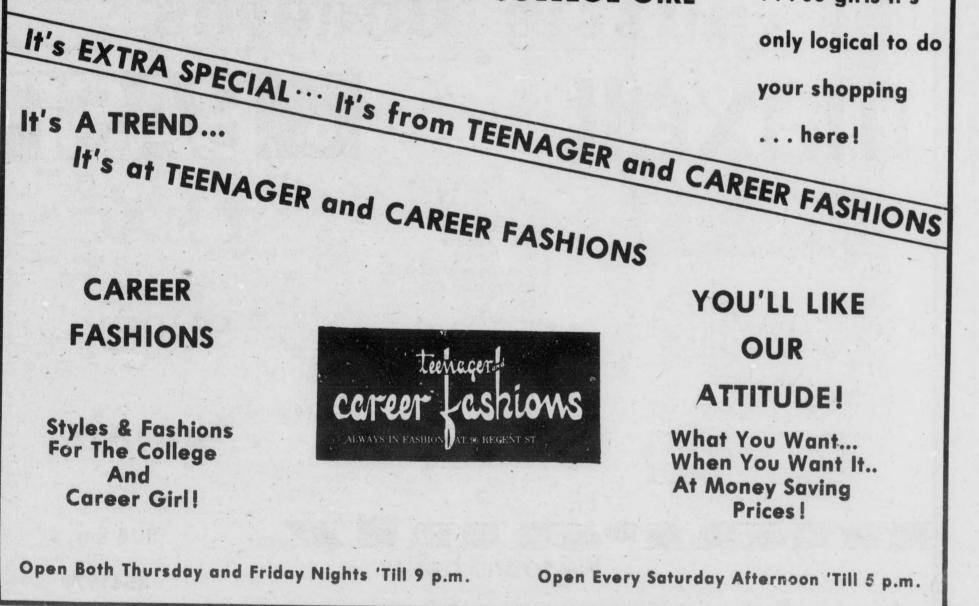
we become non-critical members

Inept penal system in York County. (mirrors all of Western Society)

7. Fallacy of Training School



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