

Boy's Village

a study by
Don McKay



The day school, to be opened in 1968, will accommodate 40 children who live in the community.

The emotionally disturbed child lives alienated in a world of turmoil. Mass media have made violence and upset every day occurrences in the lives of all children, but the emotionally disturbed child can find no escape, since he himself is a centre of mental turmoil and confusion. He shows his feelings towards his disappointing life in many ways such as violence and aggression or by becoming a pool of silence refusing contact with the world around him.

Boy's Village, a multi-faceted treatment centre for emotionally disturbed boys, has developed as an excellent educational and research centre in an effort to provide a completely versatile approach to fulfill the needs of the disturbed child.

The agency provides a child guidance clinic, a day school a residence program, a group home, a specialized foster home, a day camp, family counselling, a home care program, a school consultation program, as well as a research department which was developed under the guidance of York's Dr. Frederick Elkin. Each area is staffed by a team of well trained personnel from many clinical approaches. A typical treatment team may include a psychiatrist, social workers, and child care workers.

The most important aspect of any Village project is the child. Although this is a rational approach, it is surprisingly unique. Many children's treatment centres seem to have greater concerns for the welfare and problems of the staff than they do for the problems of the child.

The first program instituted by the Village was the residence program. A new residence for eleven boys has been open since 1966. The boys are severely disturbed and cannot cope with their own homes or foster homes. The boys attend local schools. A consistent daily plan is prepared for each boy and this plan is carried out by a psychiatrist, case workers, child care workers and a few volunteers who assist in recreation programmes. The residence employs two students (one from York) who are responsible for night supervision. Many of the volunteers are students as well. A crucial element of the success of the treatment is a continuing informal staff education program. Staff members

have a continual opportunity to consult with senior staff for discussion of the children and the treatment methods. On a more formal basis the Village has offered field training for students from teaching bodies such as Guelph University, Ryerson, Waterloo-Lutheran and the Provincial Institutes of Trades.

Boys, having completed residential treatment but unsuited for placement in regular foster homes are given after-care in the Boy's Village Group Home. Under the direction of highly qualified foster parents it offers a permanent stable home for four boys until they reach adulthood.

Along similar lines the Village supervises a specialized foster home that has facilities to provide a family setting for four boys. Both these homes employ relief workers who are students.

Day School

The day school is designed for the treatment of children who cannot function in a normal school system, because of behaviour problems. The treatment team headed by a psychiatrist includes caseworkers, teachers, and child care workers. The school follows the academic program of the North York Board. Presently housed in portables, the school will soon move

to a new building near the residence on Shepard Ave.

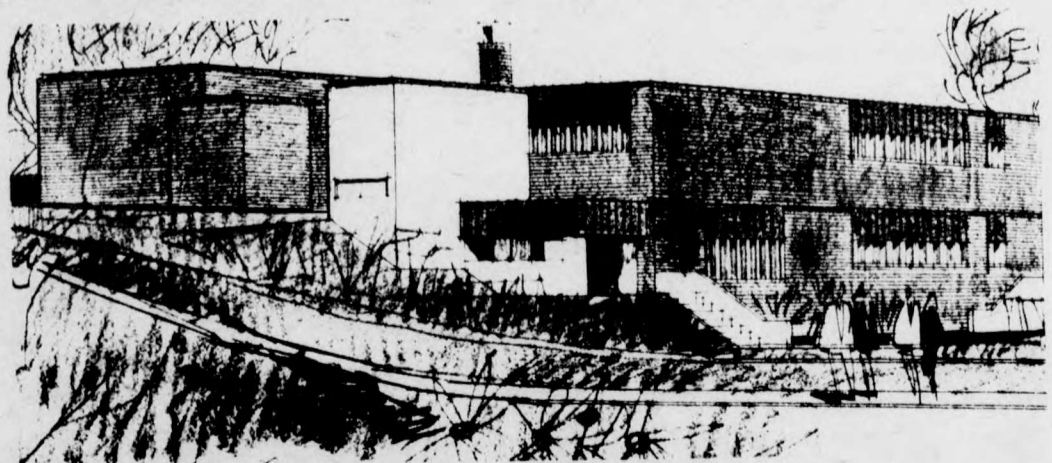
In conjunction with three local schools the Village has organized a program to assist boys and girls with emotional problems within a regular classroom. The child's teacher will be given information on the handling of the child in the classroom and often referrals to other Boy's Village programs or other community agencies result from the school consultation.

A day camp is used as an assessment instrument by the Village and other agencies wanting to find out more about a child and his problems. The needs of some day school boys are met during the summer at the camp also. Assessment is carried out in the framework of a typical camp program. The camp, directed by the child guidance clinic, is staffed by a social worker, student counsellors, and child care workers. In addition as many as six elementary school teachers, take an active role in the camp as part of a course designed to give them insight into detecting and handling the disturbed child in their classroom.

Boy's Village serves the community as an educational and treatment centre, but most important it is a source of understanding and guidance for children lost in today's turmoil.

Don McKay is a third-year Founders student.

photo by Toronto Daily Star.



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