

York graduate students run 'Get-Together' program for kids

By CAROL BRUNT

Each Saturday about 20 local kids get together with some York graduate students for a day of activities.

The Saturday Get-Together, a program for children aged 4-13, provides swimming, arts and crafts, and discussion on a "theme" for the

day. Ofer Arad and Ron Ballentine, both graduate students and coordinators of the program, supervise the day's activities. The Get-Together is funded partially this year by Bethune College Student Council and the CYSF.

From its onset in 1980, the underlying aim of the program has been "to form a community of people that care for and look after each other

irregardless of their race, abilities or economic background," says Ballentine.

The majority of kids come from the Jane-Finch area. However, the handicapped children involved in the program are from other parts of Metro. The fee for participating is \$20 per child each month, but according to

Ballentine, the group "is not pushing for the fee." Also, this is the first year the coordinators of the program have received any kind of payment.

"We've basically given the children a value system," says Ballentine, in explaining the kids' demonstrated caring attitudes toward one another. The program has attempted "to transfer authority onto the children themselves to exert peer pressure," says Ballentine. He adds that the children set their own rules of authority.

Donna Bracewell and Kathy Milligan, both special education students at York, founded the program.

The group started with two handicapped kids and spread by word of mouth into an integrated program as the children's families and friends joined. Bracewell now runs the 1000 Cranes School, a full-time integrated school modified from the Saturday Get-Together.

The Get-Together program also has a summer run from July to August, five days a week. The activities in the summer program also include weekly field trips and overnight camping. The cost of the summer session is \$200 per month, but donations have enabled the cost to be waived for some parents. There's also some financial support from the government.

"The parents love the program because the kids have a good time," says Ballentine.



Ron Ballantine and another councillor with some of the 20 children enrolled in the Saturday Get-Together Program.

By LILY CONTENTO

The elections in El Salvador are undemocratic and illegitimate, according to journalist Dennis Gruending in a talk in the McLaughlin Master's Dining Room last Wednesday.

Prior to the final count, the elections (which took place on Sunday) indicated a toss-up between front runners Jose Napoleón Duarte, of the counter left Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and Roberto D'Abuisson, but neither candidate won the majority required for election. There have been no official results as *Excalibur* went to press, but Salvadorian officials have said a run-off vote will be necessary.

"None of the parties of the left were able to participate in the 1982 elections," said Gruending, and this year, "the left cannot participate again."

A video-documentary titled *Ballots . . . or Bullets?* was shown and a lecture and discussion period followed.

"How is it possible in this war-torn country, for truly democratic elections to take place?" queried the video narrator. The documentary emphasized the National Guard's demand that all citizens vote. Threats of murder and job dismissal were made by the National Guard against any individual who abstained from voting.

Gruending spoke of the possible gerrymandering that took place during the last election in El Salvador, claiming some of the right wing parties have admitted the elections results were tampered with.

Gruending also mentioned the 500,000 refugees in El Salvador that won't be allowed to vote, causing the election to be an inadequate reflection of public opinion, he said.

He also warned the McLaughlin audience to be cautious in their interpretation of the material that will be released by the media in the days to come. "Thirty-five journalists were on a death list that was published during the 1982 election campaign," he said.

Elections in El Salvador called unfair by journalist

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