



Wide World Photo

Mila Mulroney Meets the Poster Children

On Wednesday, Mrs. Mulroney went off on her own to Washington's Children's Hospital, a large, new, sunny building full of toys and children, joy and sadness. Mrs. Mulroney has a particular interest in cystic fibrosis and the first two children she met were the small girl and smaller boy who had posed for the American Cystic Fibrosis Foundation poster. The little girl was pretty and poised and the little boy a natural hambone.

Cystic fibrosis is a degenerative disease that affects the respiratory and digestive systems, and it is the leading hereditary killer of children and young adults in Canada and the United States.

Mrs. Mulroney showed the children the cystic fibrosis poster from Canada and gave them a short lesson in the pronunciation of the French names of the two children on it. The little girl repeated the names with a nice precision but the boy, who had been playing with small, hollow toy animals, lost interest, put one toy on each finger and waved them at the cameramen.

Mrs. Mulroney then joined a half dozen children ranging from two to ten, who were tamping clay into plastic molds. They were receiving treatment for various diseases and accidents. Most of them looked unimpaired but one very small girl was attached by a tube to a portable machine. Mrs. Mulroney

made a notable impression on a boy of about nine who had his arm in a cast and who, she said, reminded her of her own son, Benedict.

Mrs. Mulroney returned to her primary subject. She told reporters that two Canadian researchers have isolated the genetic marker for cystic fibrosis and there is reason to hope.

"It's only a matter of time," she said. "We're one grab away from finding a cure."

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