

Emergency Services Centre - 3333

University

Offers help with Opportunities for Youth projects

Institute looks to stronger ties with York

More than 600,000 Canadians are retarded — three per cent of the population.

Behind cardiac disease, arthritis and possibly cancer, retardation is the most common health problem anywhere according to the World Health Organization.

Many of those afflicted are not identified because they are "borderline cases"; most identified have traditionally been shut behind closed doors away from the eyes of an embarrassed society.

So it may not be surprising that York has the most active group in the country combatting the effects of retardation — and hardly anyone on campus knows it exists.

Just off Keele Street by the Physical Plant Workshops sits the National Institute on Mental Retardation. Opened in May 1970, largely through grants from Kinsmen groups across the country, the building houses the technical and research arm of the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded.

Work on concrete projects

The staff of 50 concentrates on concrete projects designed to help the retardate find his way back into the community, away from the hospital or closet he's traditionally been in.

"Our primary responsibility," says Howard Richardson, assistant director of the Institute, "is to bridge the gap between the theoretical world of research and the applied world (outside the classroom)."

"We're dealing with applied projects here — not studying the inner microbes that cause toxic damage (to brain cells). Our job is to pull all the stuff together and make it available to groups across the country."

More than 75 per cent of those retarded are only "mildly" so according to Richardson, and capable of keeping themselves in the community, at least partially.

He mentioned one group of students he taught in Wisconsin for a year. He gets regular phone calls from some of them and at least half are now working and have families.

"Societal attitudes are changing ... because of positive information about mental retardation. The baggy pants era is gone, and people are beginning to realize that not everyone afflicted is obese or drools at the mouth."

So the Institute designs and evaluates programs ranging from development of manpower trained in work with retardates to physical fitness and recreation.

Last June, Toronto hosted the first Canadian Special Olympics that drew 2,000 retarded children from across the country — largely through the efforts of the Institute staff. The result was a lot of fun for participants and massive publicity that helped generate interest in the problems of retardation among the general public.

Travel exchange program

The same project group under Henry Botchford is now winding up a year-long travel exchange program that has seen 140 children travel across the country, visiting families for two weeks and bringing their new friends home for similar stays.

Both projects were largely carried out by volunteer groups, with ideas and funding resulting from staff efforts at the Institute.

Botchford said in an interview this week most specific projects are financed by government agencies, although administrative costs and many continuing programs are funded by donations from private individuals or organizations.

The parent Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded, now 15 years old, co-ordinates the work of 350 local and nine provincial associations across the country. Each year, all these groups launch fund-raising campaigns to help foster program development and understanding for mentally retarded people.

Designed to promote the welfare of the retardate and his family, these organizations are composed almost exclusively of volunteers from all walks of life. Many government officials work with the groups in advisory capacities.

Massive amounts of money are needed to serve the afflicted people. In a survey conducted of local organizations last year, the groups estimated they would need a minimum of \$40 million annually to continue to help the retardates and their families that are now being served.

This money is "not all available."

First allied institute

When York opened the Steeles



The Kinsmen National Institute for Mental Retardation, a research and technical centre opened on campus in May 1970 as the first "allied institute", is moving toward closer contact with

University members. Staff are now offering assistance to any student(s) wishing to design a project based on mental retardation for an Opportunities for Youth grant this summer.

campus, land was set aside for allied institutes like NIMR. So far it's the only one to take advantage of the space — on a 50-year lease at \$1 per year.

A spokesman for the Department of Campus Planning said Tuesday the "land is reserved for this type of thing, and we'll consider others if approached. But at the moment nobody's on our doorstep."

Aside from the expertise the Institute brings to the campus, it also houses a library regarded as one of the best in Canada, if not North America, on mental retardation.

Used by students from York, Ryerson, and other schools, it has 5000 holdings including video tapes and virtually all English-language periodicals on the topic.

Institute members expect the relationship with York to grow as programs at both places develop.

Several professors from the University are working developing programs, and a group of dance students studied dance therapy with the Institute.

Richardson said: "We located here because of the university affiliation. We look forward to more cross appointments with the faculty and (greater use of our resources by students)."

"And it's not only the Psychology Department we want to develop relations with, but also sociology, physical education, anthropology, law..."

Help with OFY projects

One of the offers the Institute is now making to York students is assistance to those wishing to apply for an Opportunities for Youth grant in some area related to mental retardation.

"We can't submit projects ourselves," according to Botchford, "and we'd like to provide back-up aid to students, to help them develop projects and write submissions."

Ideas, he said, can range from research papers to work with special groups, setting up day camps and helping with community service outlets. And he added support from the Institute might be "an ace in the hole" when projects are being judged. "It's sort of a national level advocacy, if you will."

So the staff is still settling into its new environment on campus and beginning to actively seek closer relations with the York community. They stress their willingness to help any students doing papers or research on mental retardation.

For assistance with Opportunities For Youth projects in particular, people should call Henry Botchford at 630-9611.



Some members of the Institute staff meeting in one of five studio labs linked by a series of one-way mirrors. Built as teaching units, the labs permit observation of discussion and teaching methods in work with retarded children.

Odds & Sodds

Final Gerstein lecture

Dr. Ernest Sirluck, President of the University of Manitoba, will give the final Gerstein Lecture of the current series tomorrow at 8:30 pm in the Moot Court Room, Osgoode Hall. Dr. Sirluck will speak on *The Neutrality of the University: Institution and Discipline*.

This year's Gerstein Lectures are focusing on the theme Nationalism and the University.

Quote of the week

Men will bear almost any evil rather than go through the awful pain of thinking, of really thinking, and thinking for themselves, and then of following to the end the results of their thought.

— G.M. Wrong, speech, Canadian Club, Ottawa, December 8, 1916.

Psych. Services programs

Psychological Services will offer weight reduction and stop smoking programs if there is sufficient demand from the York Community. For further information call 635-2304 or drop in to Room 145A, Behavioural Science Building.

Winters Casino Night

Winters College Council is sponsoring its second "Casino Night", Friday, February 4 at 7:30 p.m. in Winters College Dining Hall. There will be gambling, a licenced pub, live entertainment and pizza — admission is 75 cents. Proceeds from the evening are going to the Inner City Angels, an organization helping underprivileged children in Toronto.

Book exhibition

An exhibition of books from the press of Thomas Bird Mosher, (1852-

1923), first American publisher to be influenced by the work of William Morris in reviving an interest in fine printing, is now in the display cases on the third floor of the Scott Library, outside Room 305.

Senate Committee on University Services

The Senate Committee on University Services requests comments or suggestions from members of the York community on the adequacy of such services as the Bookstore, food services, parking, transportation, residences, Central Square and Physical Plant. Submissions should be sent to the committee c/o the Senate Office, S945, the Ross Building.