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## Jesuits aid boat family

by Sylvia Kaptein

The influx of Vietnamese refugees into Canada, such as the "Boat People" who made headline news with their sad story, has not stopped.

The Jesuit Fathers of Canadian Martyrs Parish, assisted by a committee in Ward One, are sponsoring the move of a Vietnamese family to Halifax. The family consists of a mother, a father, and three children, ages six, four, and two.

Three Fathers of the Parish have agreed to share the expenses which consist of renting an apartment, food, clothing and other upkeep of the family for one year.

According to Betty MacDonald, a friend of the Fathers who is in the sponsoring group, if the family's supporting member, usually the father, finds work before the end of the year, his income will also help to support his

family.

The sponsoring group, which, besides the three fathers, consists of eight or nine volunteer laypersons, do much more for the family than just provide financial aid.

MacDonald said they have already found an apartment for the family and are in the process of trying to find second-hand bedding and furniture to furnish it. The group also has to look after such details as applying for MSI for the family.

After the family arrives, the sponsors are responsible for seeing that they get enrolled in English school and get registered at Manpower. The sponsors must also teach them such everyday things as how to shop in a supermarket and how to use the bus system.

The flight to Canada is initially paid for by the Canadian government said MacDonald. However, the

Vietnamese families are responsible for this cost and must pay back the money as soon as they are able.

The father of the family that will be coming to Halifax served in the Vietnamese Navy. If possible, he would like to get a job in the Canadian Coast Guard.

At present, the family is waiting in a refugee camp in the Philippines. Various complications have prevented Immigration from pinning down the exact date of their arrival in Canada, but MacDonald said they should be here by the end of April. The sponsoring group will likely not be notified until four or five days before their arrival.

In the meantime, the sponsoring group is desperately looking for furniture and bedding for the apartment. Anyone who can donate some is asked to phone 422-2400, 422-3339, or 422-6245 as soon as possible for pick-up.

## New laws for disabled

by Brenda Nichols

New legislation has been proposed by the Provincial government which is intended to assist the handicapped persons in our society.

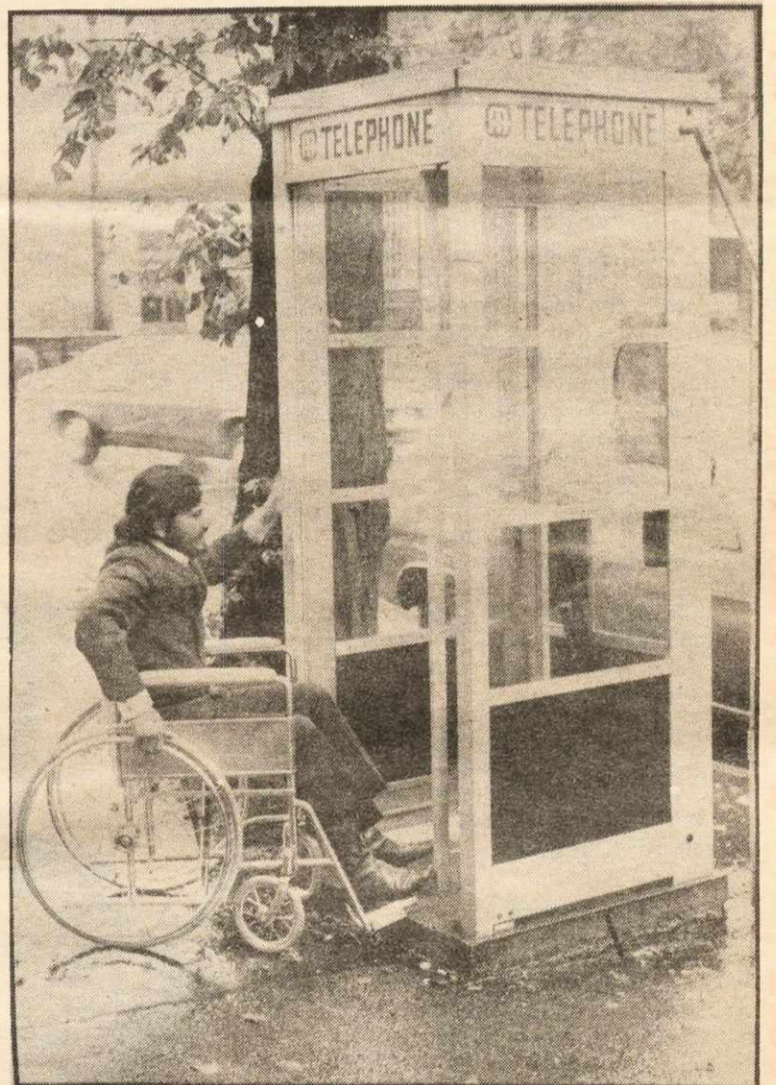
The problems of the physically disabled are often overlooked and their cries unheard or ignored. How many physically able people stop and think about how fortunate they are to have a healthy body; rather it is taken for granted.

Gerald Lawrence, Minister of Public Works, introduced on February 29, 1980 a bill which requires the installation of washroom doorways in apartment buildings constructed in Nova Scotia to be wide enough to provide access by physically handicapped persons in wheelchairs. After January 1, 1981, the width of the doorways must not be less than 32 inches.

Following this bill, the Honorable Ken Streach, Minister in charge of the Human Rights Act, introduced legislation for the purpose of prohibiting discrimination of the physically handicapped. Presently, discrimination of the physically disabled is only prohibited in the area of employment.

Amendments to the Human Rights Act will extend the protection against discrimination to areas of accommodation, services, and other facilities provided to the general public. For example, a physically disabled person cannot be refused taxi services.

An elevator and ramps have been installed in Province House to allow the physically handicapped access to the public gallery. An elevator will also be installed in the Provincial Building in Sydney this year. Other measures include



eliminating the 8% hospital tax on the purchase of motor vehicles for the handicapped.

The efforts of the Provincial Government are greatly appreciated by the physically handicapped. As one young girl says "I never realized how much the needs of the handicapped are ignored until I became one myself after a car accident. It is really a pain not being able to go into stores or restaurants because of my wheelchair. Handicapped people are citizens too!"

The Government also intends to co-ordinate government services and programs that pertain to the physically and mentally handicapped in the province. This will help identify job opportunities in the Civil Service for handicapped citizens.

The Premier said that "These are initial measures designed to assist those in society who are less fortunate." Let's not forget that the physically handicapped have rights too!