

Seniors share experiences from Shared Life projects

During the last two weeks in February, the Seniors embarked on a different sort of learning experience -- the Senior Shared Life. During that time, each Senior worked at one of the 150 possible sites with elderly, mentally retarded, handicapped, or children. To shed some light on the subject, here are some reflections from the seasons.

by Dave Herrmann

My experience was very different from what I had expected. About all I knew was that I would be working with pre-school age children. What I learned was that the place I would be working at is actually a school for pre-schoolers.

Head Start is a government-funded program for children of needy families in the surrounding neighborhood. The school day is very regular and structured, and it is by no means a play school or a day care center. These children spend the majority of the time doing work, both individually and in a group led by one of the teachers.

My first day in class was exciting. First of all, the whole idea of such a structured program for such young kids was new to me. And I was amazed by the way the children acted in class. I found that they showed great respect and attention to the teachers, Kitt and Gerry, and that they all knew exactly what was expected of them (which I felt was a lot). Whenever a child did something unacceptable or failed to do something expected, Kitt or Gerry merely asked him, "What do

you need to do now?" and the child always answered correctly and politely and proceeded to do what he was supposed to.

The kids reacted very strongly to me. Kitt says that this is because they are not used to having a man in the classroom. Also, many of them do not have fathers living with them at home. This sad reality made me want to give them as much love and affection as I possibly could.

The children certainly gave me a lot of love and affection. Everybody was always begging me to let them sit on my lap and sit next to them during lunch and group time. I've never before experienced so much sincere, loving attention. They are so sweet and innocent, and there is so much that I can give to them. I immediately realized what a powerful effect I had on these kids. They watched and recorded my every move. I wanted desperately to set a good example for them and to help them learn. It made me feel so important and needed to know that I was so special to them.

I was already in love with the kids after the first day of class, and now at the end of my two weeks I feel truly attached to them. My hopes for their futures are great, and I want to try and help them further along. This is why I have decided to continue with the program, going back at least once a week after school. Kitt and Gerry can always use my help. And besides, I just can't leave for good. I would simply miss the kids too much.

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Engelhart discusses drug abuse

by Dennis Bednar

The Guidance Department sponsored an all-school workshop on alcohol use and abuse which was held on Feb. 6. The highlight of the day was the talk given to each individual class of the student body by Mr. Chuck Engelhart, a nationally recognized speaker on the subject of chemical dependency.

For about two years, the Guidance Department, headed by Ms. Chris McGuire, discussed what could be done for parents and students about the issue of alcohol awareness. "Last year, we had a workshop for parents," Ms. McGuire said, "but only 25 people showed up. Is the issue of alcoholism too threatening? Does it hit too close to home?"

Student Workshop Successful

Although the parent workshop was not successful, the student workshop was. Mr. Engelhart gave a different talk for each age group, stressing different points. To the freshmen, he stated how kids their age sneak booze from their parents, while to the seniors, he said how students, who are about to start college, worry about doing well and turn to alcohol. Later in the day, there was an open session in room 121 where students and faculty could ask Mr. Engelhart any questions on anything specific they wanted to know about chemical dependency.

The day after the workshop, a Guidance Department questionnaire was sent out to all the student body to find out if anyone would be interested in an alcohol awareness group.

Many students wanted an awareness group with more information on alcohol and alcohol-related problems. Others wanted a group for stu-

dents in families with alcohol or other drug problems.

"The Guidance Department's fourth quarter priority is to respond to the students with alcohol problems in the family," said Ms. McGuire. "Next year's priority will be to respond to the students who want an alcohol awareness and education group."

More students have been coming in for drop-in counseling with problems concerning alcoholism ever since the alcohol awareness day. Ms. McGuire said, "The group setting helps the student find out that other kids have the same problem. At Marquette, students have the idea that all families are perfect, but the group setting helps them find out that they are not the only ones with problems."

Rise in Alcoholism

Since drinking is becoming more and more common in the high school experience, there is a rise in the number of adolescent alcoholics. Kids start drinking in seventh and eighth grade, but why? The reason is because advertising and adults tend to glamorize drinking. Concerning drinking, adults do not give good role models and tend to turn their backs to the issue. Some parents even have the attitude that as long as their child is only drinking and not taking drugs, the situation is just fine and there is nothing to worry about.

What Kind of Help Can I Get?

If an alcoholic student wants to get help, he can go to the Guidance Department. A counselor will then contact the student's parents, but the counselor needs the permission of the student to do so. The student and

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of a check, it would be given as some concrete object, filling an immediate need of the school.

There are strong hopes that there will be a lot of student support for this event. If more tickets are sold, more balloons will go up and the party for Fr. Doran will be larger. Of course, Seniors are asked to take the lead in the Project, since it is for their class. However, a commitment from all classes will be needed for the rally to be a success. Perhaps we can all get as much spirit as Freshman Eugene Jerome, who encourages everyone to go "onward and upward!"

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agreement on this point, however, as other students felt these methods were complicated and lengthy. As Chris Manfrin expounds in hyperbole, "The notetaking methods they teach you are so extravagant, you'd be writing for days."

It is obvious from my findings that the results of the SENSE course vary tremendously from student to student. Success seems to depend largely upon individual commitment to it. Judging from the general consensus, however, SENSE has certainly been a positive and helpful program at Marquette and will most likely be back next year.

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either group sessions, family sessions, or individual sessions, whichever one suits the student best.

If an alcoholic wants to stop being an alcoholic, the earlier the intervention into the problem, the better the success. The road to success is not an easy one, but with more alcohol awareness days like the one sponsored by the Guidance Department, the road is made a lot smoother.



—photo by Bob Splude

Senior Kurt Fels helps one of his students with a jigsaw puzzle.

Senior Shared Life (Continued from page 1)

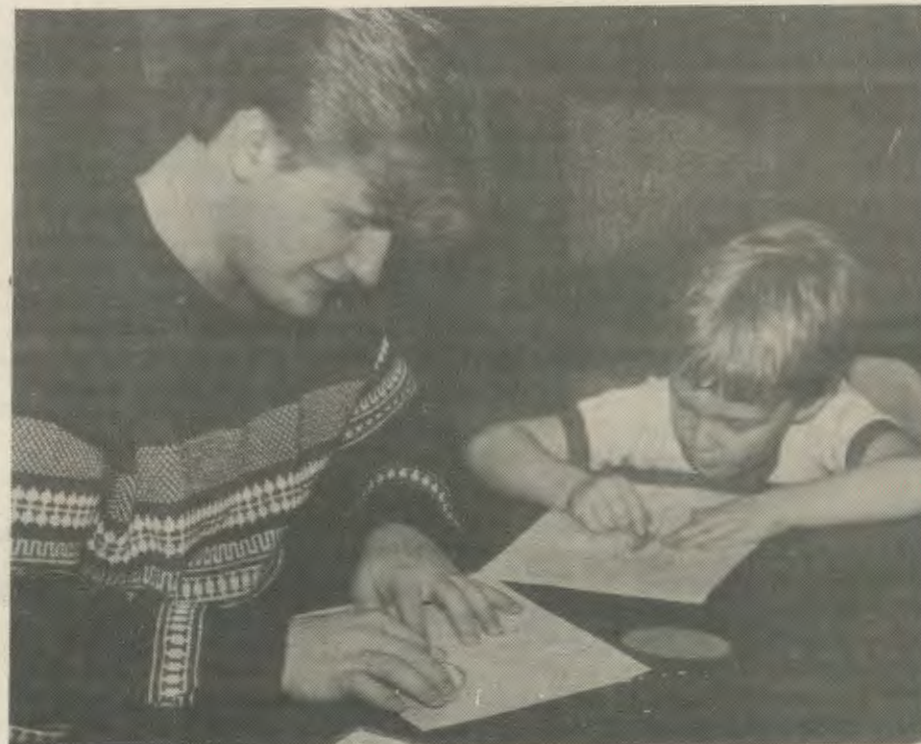
by Andy Siewert

During my two weeks at the Southern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled in Union Grove, I learned a lot. I learned that when you buy your own food, it becomes quite expensive. I learned that I will never want to live in a city where everyone bowls during the winter and pitches horseshoes in the summer. I have learned that 5:45 occurs twice each day. I learned that I am capable of making the worst spaghetti I have ever eaten. Most importantly, I learned to respect and understand the troubles of the mentally ill.

I worked my first week at the center in a place called Unit B. This is the unit where the most profoundly retarded residents live. After the initial tour, I

was quite apprehensive about working there. I had never seen so many emotionally disturbed people in my life. It was very awkward working with people in their 20s and 30s who are at the intellectual level of a two-year-old or less. These people looked different to me and did weird things, but by the end of the first week, I had grown used to them and had even grown attached to some of these people. Perhaps my biggest lesson is the realization that the mentally retarded are indeed people.

I know I will not miss seeing the sunrise every morning, the swinging town of Union Grove or eating my own cooking. I will, however, miss the people there, workers and residents alike. It has been an enlightening experience that I will never forget.



—photo by Bob Splude

Senior Mike Starszak shows one of his pupils how to say within the lines during the Shared Life project.