

Directions Newsletter

**Deep East Texas Regional Mental
Health Mental Retardation Services**

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No. 6

Hope Springs Eternal



One year after being destroyed by fire, the Jasper MHMR Center will be rebuilt.

See story, next page.

Substance abuse farm lands \$300,000 grant

In late April, MHMR's planned 48-bed alcohol and substance abuse treatment facility was awarded \$322,786 in federal funding.

MHMR's grant application for Peavy Switch Farm, prepared by farm Service Director Marty Walker and MHMR's Director of Residential Services Sandy Skelton, was ranked second in a field of 180 applications, Walker said.

Walker explained that rankings were based on the degree to which grants met criteria established by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

The grant, which will require 5 percent matching funds by MHMR, will assist in financing first-year operating costs for the facility's primary-care program.

The primary-care program is the first step on the road to recovery after a patient has been medically stabilized, Walker said.

"In this portion of the program, our heaviest emphasis is on therapy and education. Patients can remain in the primary-care program for up to 60 days."

The farm will also provide a detoxification unit and an array of therapeutic work services for clients.

Through work services, clients are allowed an opportunity to see their

Summer program to benefit youths

Peavy Switch Farm has not opened its doors yet, but the program's organizers are already hard at work. This summer, Service Director Marty Walker and Paul Jackson, the farm's community services director, will be implementing a summer program for disadvantaged youths.

The 10-week program, called "You Make the Choice," will aid Angelina County youths who are considered at risk of dropping out of school by in-

See "Summer", back page.

accomplishments and build feelings of self worth, Walker said. Clients will be responsible for various aspects of farm upkeep including kitchen work, laundry, building maintenance and farming.

Construction on Peavy Switch Farm begins this summer, with completion targeted for January.

The farm, located approximately seven miles southwest of Lufkin on Farm Road 2497, will be built on 80 acres of land donated by Temple-Eastex.

Construction will be funded through a \$1.8 million grant from the T.L.L. Temple Foundation.

Jasper center rebuilds from ashes

A new MHMR facility will soon rise out of the ashes of destruction.

In April 1986, fire destroyed one of three buildings comprising the Jasper County MHMR Center, but construction on a new, 6,000-square-foot building began in mid-May.

Construction of the new facility is funded through a \$250,000 grant from the Texas Department of Community Affairs' community development program.

The new building, which should be completed within six months, will provide the center with much needed space, Service Director John Wilson said. Approximately half the space will be used to house the center's sheltered workshop and a dual cafeteria/meeting room, Wilson



A client waters plants in Jasper MHMR's existing greenhouse. Recently begun construction at the center will include a new and larger greenhouse.

said. The center's administrative offices will also be located in the new building.

Once these offices and programs are moved to the new facility, Wilson anticipates an expansion of the center's client clubhouse and the addition of an exercise room in the currently existing building.

Also included in the construction will be a 1,400-square-foot greenhouse that will allow for expansion of The Growing Concern, the center's plant and herb business. By building this second, and larger, greenhouse, staff and clients will be able to increase their herb and bedding plant production to a wholesale scale, Wilson said.

The new building will be erected next to the center's existing facility on Farm to Market 777 northwest of Jasper.

Board gets new members; chairman honored

Members of MHMR's Board of Trustees have seen some changes in recent months.

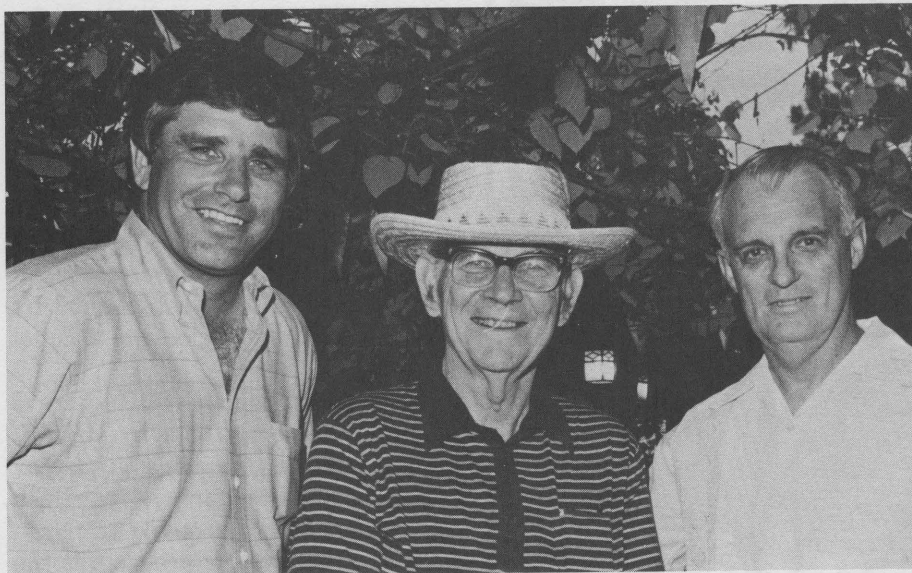
In April, Allen Sturrock, chairman of MHMR's Board of Trustees, announced his resignation as Tyler County judge. To the relief of administrators at MHMR, however, Sturrock will retain his chair on the Board of Trustees.

Sturrock, who served as Tyler County judge for the past 11 years, was lauded by his peers and constituents at a May 27 honorary dinner.

Other news includes the appointment of the board's newest member, Houston County Judge Charles English. English began his first term as county judge in January and was appointed to the MHMR Board of Trustees in February. He fills a vacancy left by former board member Agnes Rhoder.

English holds a bachelor's in business administration and a master's in education from Stephen F. Austin State University. Over the years, he has worked as a school administrator, teacher and construction worker.

Also new on the board is Beth



An honorary dinner for Allen Sturrock (center), chairman of MHMR's Board of Trustees, was held in May. Sturrock is flanked by MHMR's Executive Director Jim McDermott, Ph.D. (left) and Ray Hill, executive director of the Deep East Texas Council of Governments.

Brice of Nacogdoches. Brice is serving as the interim representative for Nacogdoches County during the temporary absence of board Vice Chairman Nancy Speck, Ph.D. Speck was recently named vice president of Stephen F. Austin State University's Office of University Advance-

ment, and new job duties required that she take a temporary leave of absence from the MHMR Board.

Brice is an attorney with W.Z. Weems Jr. and Associates of Nacogdoches and is also chairman of the citizens' support group for the Nacogdoches County MHMR Center.

IIP aids area tots

by Sheryl Taylor
Public Information Officer

When Sharon Yarbrough leaves for work in the morning she doesn't take a briefcase, she takes a toy box. Toys are the tools of her trade.

Yarbrough is one of 19 workers in Deep East Texas Mental Health Retardation Services' Infant Intervention Program. The program serves children from birth to 3 years of age who have or are suspected of having a significant developmental delay.

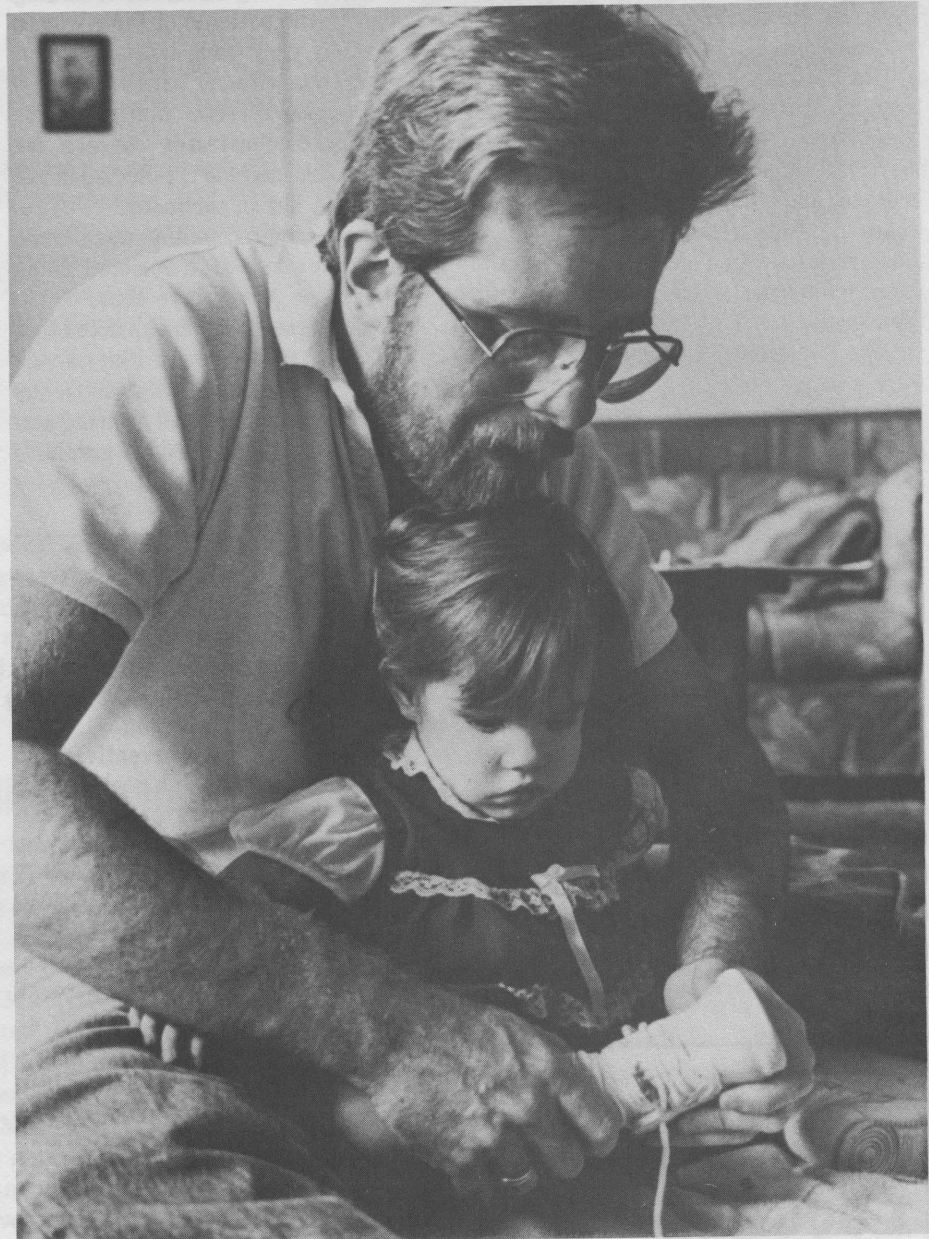
The children served by Yarbrough and her co-workers typically suffer on-going health or developmental problems—from a baby who suffered a stroke at birth to a child with Down's Syndrome. There are children with diseases longer than their names: Phenylketonuria, Craniosynostosis, Cytomegalovirus.

Marilyn Hankla, service director for several of MHMR's county Infant Intervention Programs, explained that developmentally delayed children exhibit, or are at risk of developing, a delay in one of the following skills: cognitive, motor, language, speech, social, emotional and self-help.

The sooner delays can be addressed, the better, Hankla said. Without intervention, such problems are often compounded, resulting in a need for more intensive and costly services later in life.

IIP workers help establish developmental goals for the children they serve, provide training and support for parents and, when appropriate, can arrange for children to receive speech and physical therapy.

MHMR's Infant Intervention Program is partially funded through a grant from the Early Childhood Intervention Council of Texas.



CLOSEUP: Intervention spells hope

After two operations, 3-year-old Barry Brasher looks just like other little boys his age except for a scar that runs from one ear, over the top of his head to the other. Barry has craniosynostosis, a word his mother has learned to spell from memory.

Craniosynostosis is the premature fusion of the bones in an infant's head. It results in abnormalities in skull shape and frequently causes mental retardation. Barry, however, is not retarded. As an infant he underwent surgery to correct the skull distortion, but as he grew the bones once again fused prematurely. The result was a misshapen skull that placed potentially-blinding pressure on his optic nerve and is suspected of causing his current speech problem.

Recent corrective surgery has proven beneficial for Barry. The surgery, coupled with speech therapy provided through MHMR's Infant Intervention Program, has resulted in a vast improvement in Barry's speech, his mother said.

Barry will remain in the Infant Intervention Program for several months as IIP worker Sharon Yarbrough monitors his post-surgery development.

Kate Davis has Down's Syndrome, a disorder typically associated with such physical and developmental features as congenital heart disease, mental retardation, small stature and decreased muscle tone. With the proper monitoring, training, stimulation and service coordination during the first four years of life, the developmental progress of many Down's Syndrome children can be enhanced, Marilyn Hankla, service director for IIP services in several counties, said.

Kate was enrolled in IIP at six weeks of age and her develop-



(Above) Tiffany Gates hugs a doll. (Lower left) Mark Taxter, IIP worker at the Nacogdoches County MHMR Center, helps Erica Smitt practice putting on and taking off her shoes. This is one of many self-help skills that Erica, who is visually impaired, is learning through the Infant Intervention Program. Robin Manresa, SFASU student, submitted this picture in a photo contest sponsored by the Nacogdoches MHMR Center. (Upper left) Barry Brasher thinks it's a game, but toys are the tools by which IIP workers monitor a child's developmental progress.

mental progress supports Hankla's contention that proper intervention can make a difference.

In fact, Kate has done so well that her parents and Hankla anticipate that with continued special instruction she will be able to attend kindergarten with other children her age.

With timely intervention, the debilitating effects of retardation can be minimized for many children. And for some, retardation can be prevented. Such is the case of 2-year-old Rebecca Whitton who was born with phenylketonuria, a genetic disorder characterized by the body's rejection of the amino acid phenylalanine.

When left untreated, PKU almost always leads to mental retardation. It is controlled through a rigid diet that either drastically reduces or eliminates phenylalanine intake.

For more than two years, IIP worker Elaine Hussey has worked with Becca and her family, her primary goal being to monitor Becca's diet. Today, at 2½ years of age, Becca consistently scores above her age level on mental tests. Her mother attributes part of this success to Hussey's work.

At birth, Tiffany Gates suffered a stroke that left her paralyzed on the left side of her body. Tiffany's resulting developmental problems soon overwhelmed her mother, and at two months of age Tiffany was enrolled in IIP.

The program has made it possible for Tiffany to receive speech and physical therapy. In addition, IIP worker Sharon Yarbrough enhances and monitors Tiffany's developmental progress and provides training and education for Tiffany's mother. She has had to work long and hard, but Tiffany has regained the use of her left arm and leg.

"Tiffany needs help and they (IIP workers) give her the best help I can even think of," Tiffany's mother said. "They are more than just people who work with my child. They're my friends. They help me find what's best for me and Tiffany."

Warren named MHMR Employee of Quarter



Debbie Warren

Debbie Warren, secretary at the Nacogdoches MHMR Center, has been selected as Deep East Texas MHMR's Employee of the Quarter.

Warren has been with the

agency for four years, and Nacogdoches MHMR Service Director Paul Jackson said that during this time she has proven to be an exemplary employee: innovative, hard-working and reliable.

At a potluck lunch in Warren's honor, Jackson and MHMR Director of Treatment Services George Patterson presented her with a framed certificate recognizing her achievement.

Warren performs secretarial, receptionist and bookkeeping functions for the center and has received consecutive above-average performance evaluations, Jackson said. Not the least of her accomplishments is the ability to relate well to staff, clients and visitors at the center.

"Debbie is a pleasure to be around," Jackson said. "All the staff join me in appreciating her and wishing her the very best."

Foster families sought for mentally retarded

There is a need that only you can fill. Deep East Texas MHMR's Foster Care Program is seeking individuals and couples willing to provide a home for mentally retarded children and adults.

"Being a foster parent is both rewarding and challenging," Carol Hamilton, MHMR's foster-care coordinator, said. "It means sharing your life with others."

"It does not matter if you are single or married, have other children, or work outside the home. What does matter is that you have the warmth, flexibility and love needed to care for mentally retarded adults and children."

Hamilton is seeking families in all 13 counties served by Deep East Texas MHMR. In order to ensure that clients will be living in safe and healthy environments, prospective foster families are screened, and their homes must meet specific safety requirements, Hamilton said.

The Foster Care Program pays a standard rate for each mentally retarded child or adult receiving care within your home.

"Our mentally retarded children and adults need patience, acceptance and understanding. They need someone to tend to their special needs," Hamilton added.

For more information on the Foster Care Program, call Carol Hamilton at (409) 639-1479.

Agency links with TDMHMR computer

In April, Deep East Texas MHMR went on-line with a new information system that will eventually connect TDMHMR's central computer to most community mental health and mental retardation centers in the state.

The CARE system, Client Assignment and REgistration, will provide several firsts for the TDMHMR system: a statewide client tracking system, an unduplicated client count, a direct connection between community MHMR centers and a continuing inventory of community-based residences.

CARE will identify the people TDMHMR is serving or has served in the past, what service they got and where they currently are in the system. It will also enable one provider to access any treatment a patient has received within the TDMHMR system in the past one to three years.



Getting the Word out

MHMR centers throughout Deep East Texas joined more than 600 other members of the National Council of Community Mental Health Centers to focus attention on May MHMR Month. One of the projects undertaken by the Nacogdoches County MHMR Advisory Board was the posting of this May MHMR Month billboard. The design was based on a logo created in May 1986 by Stephen F. Austin State University student Lisa Kennedy. The billboard was displayed with the financial assistance of Spradley Signs, and the Friends of Nacogdoches County MHMR.

Non-discrimination policy

Deep East Texas Regional MHMR Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap or age in admission or access to treatment or employment in its programs and activities.

Sanford Skelton, rights protection officer, has been designated to coordinate efforts to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulation, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Directions Newsletter
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Sheryl Taylor, Editor

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Pineywoods staff celebrates second year of operation

In May, staff at Pineywoods Regional Treatment Center, MHMR's Lufkin-based psychiatric hospital, received recognition for their outstanding work during the hospital's first two years of operation.

At the center's second annual Anniversary Party, hosted by MHMR's Board of Trustees and administrators, the Pineywoods staff was treated to an evening of food and music. In a short awards ceremony, employees were commended for their professional, caring and dedicated service to patients. Two special awards were also presented.

Carol Northcutt, director of the hospital's rehabilitative services department, received the Humanitarian Ser-

vice Award in recognition of outstanding services to the patients of Pineywoods.

"Carol is very conscientious about spending time with our patients," Pineywoods Service Director Mark Severns said. "She demonstrates concern for them, and this attitude is reflected in her work and in her department."

Also receiving recognition was Glenna Bolen. Pineywoods staff selected Bolen as Psychiatric Aide of the Year.

Charge Nurse Hazel Shaikh noted that Bolen, who has been with Pineywoods since its doors opened in May 1985, has consistently demonstrated a caring and supportive attitude toward the hospital's patients.

Client Rights

Any client, relative of a client or representative of a client who has a complaint, comment or suggestion regarding the health, safety, welfare or legal and human rights of a patient or client of this center is invited and urged to submit them in writing to:

Chairperson
 Public Responsibility Committee
 P.O. Box 935
 Lufkin, Texas 75901

The Public Responsibility Committee is an independent, impartial body. None of its members are employees of this center.

In an emergency
call the MHMR
Crisis Line:
1-800-392-8343

Summer

(Continued from Page 1)

creasing their English and math skills, improving self-worth attitudes, providing work training and supplying information on the detrimental effects of alcohol and substance abuse, Walker said.

"Basically this is a preventive program," she explained. "Our goal is to inhibit the dropout rate and increase employment opportunities for these 'at risk' youths."

Walker said the program's 15 participants, who are between the ages of 16 and 21, will spend 50 percent of their time in the classroom and 50 percent gaining job experience by working at Peavy Switch Farm.

"You Make the Choice" is a unique program developed by MHMR staff and is one of several summer youth programs administered by the Deep East Texas Council of Governments. These programs are funded through the Job Training Partnership Act.



Dressing Up

Kimberly Himes plays dress up at the Shelby County MHMR daycare center. In April, staff at the center held an open house during Week of the Young Child, a national observance that focuses on the needs of young children.

Gail Patterson, center, service director, explained that games and toys play an important role in a child's development.