



Directions Newsletter

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

Volume 14

Third Quarter, FY 1988

No. 3

Temple grant finances MH facility

With the assistance of a \$355,000 grant from the T.L.L. Temple Foundation, Deep East Texas Regional MHMR will open a Lufkin-based facility to help meet the region's growing need for residential services for the mentally ill.

At its January meeting, MHMR's Board of Trustees used \$225,000 of the Temple Foundation grant to purchase the old Wilson McKewen Rehabilitation Center in Lufkin.

Sandy Skelton, director of MHMR's residential services, said the remaining \$130,000 in grant money will be used to renovate and equip the facility. The renovated facility will be staffed by MHMR professionals 24-hours a day and will accommodate 15 adults in need of temporary or long-term residential care. The program will serve residents throughout MHMR's 13-county service area.

Annon Card, director and past president of the Wilson McKewen Center, credited Arthur Temple, chairman of the T.L.L. Temple Foundation, with initiating the transaction.

"Mr. Temple suggested we find a nonprofit, charitable organization that could put the old building to good use," Mr. Card explained. "He



State Treasurer Ann Richards admires a sunflower pod as Jasper/Newton MHMR Service Director John Wilson leads her on a tour of the center's new facility. (See story, Page 2.)

(See Temple, last page.)

Jasper MHMR's 'house of hope' opens

In the keynote address at the grand opening ceremony for MHMR's George E. Gee Building in Jasper, State Treasurer Ann Richards aptly described the new facility as "a house of hope."

An estimated 250 people turned

out for the January 15 ceremony that featured speeches by representatives of the various state, county and community entities responsible for making the new facility a reality.

In addition to Richards, guest speakers included Jasper County

Judge Richard West and Jasper Independent School District Superintendent Arthur Kees. Jasper County officials are credited with obtaining the \$250,000 federal grant that funded construction of the facility. The building was erected on Jasper ISD property.

"You've constructed here a house of hope, a house of courage and a place where the fire of the spirit is going to be tended and is going to burn brightly," Richards said. "In this place, healing will occur and human beings will flourish and grow. It (the facility) will pay this community back a thousand fold in the... lives that it enriches."

Richards closed her speech by paying tribute to George E. Gee and Kathy Fillyaw Lockhart. The new facility was named in memory of Gee, 14-year representative for Jasper county on MHMR's Board of Trustees. The facility's community room was named in memory of Lockhart, a five-year employee of the Jasper/Newton MHMR Center.



Bob Dickson (right), executive director of the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, is interviewed by KTRV-TV during a January tour of MHMR's new alcohol and substance abuse treatment facility. Dickson described the program, which was awarded a \$296,000 TCADA grant, as "uniquely sophisticated." The grand opening for Peavy Switch Farm will be held May 5.

Board members welcome new Jasper-Newton trustee

Jasper and Newton county commissioners have appointed Bobbie Morgan to fill the vacancy left on MHMR's Board of Trustees upon the recent death of long-time board member and Jasper County representative George E. Gee.

Mrs. Morgan has been a volunteer with MHMR since the agency was formed in 1974. She served as chairman of the Jasper MHMR Advisory Council for six years and was a five-year member of the Kirbyville Mental Health Association. She is currently chairman of the Newton MHMR Advisory Council.

Through her involvement in these support organizations, Mrs. Morgan has been instrumental in finding locations for MHMR facilities in the Jasper/Newton area and for garnering community support for agency programs.

"Mrs. Morgan has helped our agency tremendously as a volunteer," Executive Director Jim McDermott, Ph.D., said. "She has been a vocal advocate of our services; she has actively sought donations from local churches, businesses and community members; and she has taken the time to educate area residents about mental health and mental



Bobbie Morgan

retardation issues.

"As a volunteer she has been a valuable asset to our organization, and we are confident that her membership on the Board of Trustees will also be a valuable asset."



RESPITE CARE SERVICES: Keeping

At 5 months of age, something went wrong. Tyson's body—wracked with more than 50 massive seizures each day—was fighting an unknown intruder. The cause of the seizures was obscure. The effects, however, were very evident and very frightening.

His body would become rigid, his back would arch and his tiny arms would be thrown wide open. Doctors could not stop the seizures.

"We took Tyson to a pediatric neurological center in Houston and, after running tests, they called us in and told us, 'Your child is going to be severely retarded and there's nothing we can do about it,'" his mother recalls.

This blond-haired, fair-skinned child's odyssey began eleven years ago. He is diagnosed as both mentally retarded and autistic. Watching him wander the perimeters of his family's living room, touching objects and making clicking noises with his tongue, it is hard to imagine the family upheaval this one young child represents.

How do parents cope with a child who cannot express his needs verbally? A child who sleeps no more than three hours a night yet needs constant supervision when awake? A child who, in unexplainable fits of frustration, has used his head to break windows and put holes in the wall?

For Tyson's family, part of the answer has been respite care, a service provided by Deep East Texas Regional Mental Health Mental Retardation Services.

"Caretakers sometimes need qualified substitutes to give them a break from the physical and emotional strain of caring for a mentally retarded or developmentally disabled family member," Danna Kerbo, coordinator of MHMR's Respite Care Services program, said. "We're here to give family members a

chance to catch their breath and to lend emotional support."

Kerbo stressed that services are available in all counties served by MHMR and for individuals of all ages, not just for families with young children. As parents get older, especially if they begin experiencing medical problems, the daily care of a mentally handicapped adult can become overwhelming, she said.

Tyson lives at home with his mother and stepfather (Brenda and Ed Jones), two sisters and a brother. Respite care allows the family time to participate in church activities, take in a movie, go out to eat and attend football games — simple things that aren't always so simple when you have a handicapped family member.

"I wouldn't say our lives revolve around Tyson," Mrs. Jones said, "but they are structured around him. Autistic children need a lot of structure so we follow a daily schedule as far as meals, baths, homework and bedtime. Nothing is done on the spur of the moment.

"Respite care gives us an opportunity to break away from our daily schedule and just relax. Ed and I think it's a necessity to spend time with just each other, to get away for a weekend once in awhile."

For three years, between the ages of 7 and 10, Tyson did not live at home. He spent two years at Brenham State School and a year at a private residential facility for autistic children.

Mrs. Jones believes some children are best served by state schools. But not always.

"In our case, we're happiest when Tyson is home," she said. "If we had had respite care services, just some kind of help, we never would have placed him in the state school.

"This program is a rarity in any area, especially in a

How do you cope with a family member who cannot express his needs verbally, who sleeps no more than three hours a night but requires constant supervision and who, in unexplainable fits of frustration, has used his head to break windows and put holes in the wall? For the Joneses, part of the answer is MHMR's Respite Care Services. (Ed and Brenda Jones are pictured at left with their son, Tyson.)

families together

rural area," Mrs. Jones said. "Respite care has improved the quality of Tyson's life, the quality of life for our whole family."

MHMR's Lufkin-based respite care program opened in November 1986. Currently the program provides relief for more than 40 families, but there is plenty of room for expansion.

"The only thing limiting the number of families we can serve is the number of hourly employees available in certain areas," Kerbo said. "We're constantly looking for people with the patience and skills needed in this line of work."

Respite services are provided at the family's home or at the program's 24-hour residential facility in Lufkin. Fees for both in-home and residential services are established on a case-by-case basis.

Respite care services are extended to persons deemed developmentally disabled due to mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy or other health impairments, Kerbo said. Eligibility for services must be established by a certified diagnosis and evaluation team, another service which can be provided by MHMR.

Kerbo, who has a master's degree in guidance and counseling, a psychological associate's certificate and eight years experience working in the mental retardation field, emphasized that the program is "not just a baby-sitting service".

Staff members receive training and on-going instruction in direct-care techniques, she said. Registered nurses, social workers and psychologists also provide inter-agency consultation for members of the respite staff.

Over the years, Tyson's seizures have reduced in severity and frequency and are effectively controlled with medication. Some aspects of his behavior have been modified so that he now sleeps almost eight hours a night, feeds himself, adheres to a toileting schedule and is learning to express himself in less physical ways.

"It's still tough," his mother said. "I don't want to give the impression that everything runs smoothly all the time. It's hard. But as a family, we're happier when Tyson is home. When he wasn't here something was missing."



Tyson, who is diagnosed as both autistic and mentally retarded, tackles some puzzles while his sister watches. (Photos contributed by Bill Jones.)

News from around the region:

Shelby open house

Shelby MHMR's December 16th open house was a big success as 100 people turned out to view the facility and chat with employees and clients.

The open house also provided an opportunity to show off a halfway house bedroom that was redecorated courtesy of Shelby County MHMR Auxiliary members. The auxiliary provided bedspreads, hand-crocheted afghans, reading lamps, wall decorations and chairs to redecorate a room that houses four female halfway house residents.

Refreshments at the open house were supplied by the Shelby County MHMR Advisory Council, with special help from President John Griffin who prepared most of the goodies himself.



Shelby County MHMR Auxiliary President Jean Minor (left) and Advisory Council President John Griffin pitched in to make the Shelby Open House a success.

Celebrities

MHMR Board Member Nancy Speck earned mention in Texas Monthly's December 1987 issue as one of Texas' most powerful women.

Speck, whom the magazine described as East Texas' "linchpin" for mental health, was right up there with Governor Clements' wife, Rita; State Senator Eddie Bernice Johnson of Dallas; and State Treasurer Ann Richards.

To quote Texas Monthly: "Nancy Speck, university administrator, Nacogdoches. Immediate past president of Texas Chamber of Commerce; on state economic policy commission. Linchpin in East Texas for mental health, economic development."

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Joseph W. McCulley, MHMR's director of special services, was recently granted nominee status in the American College of Healthcare Executives. The college, a Chicago-based international professional society, represents more than 20,000 health care executives.

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Barbara Holcomb, MHMR Infant Intervention service director, has been selected to serve on a newly organized committee of the Education Service Center Region VI.

The 11-member Early Childhood Transition Guidelines Committee is charged with designing procedures that will aid children and their parents in the transition from Early Childhood Intervention programs to the public school system.

The committee has 1½ years to develop the guidelines that will be presented for voluntary use by public schools not only in the 15-county, Region VI service area but throughout the state.

Generous dancers

A Christmas dance hosted by the Kirbyville MHMR Sheltered Workshop benefited 60 needy families in the area.

Approximately 175 people attended the dance and donated canned goods which were presented to the Kirbyville Emptying Stocking Fund, Workshop Service Director Sally Navarre Macon said.

The dance, held at the Bleakwood Elementary School gymnasium, drew clients, staff and volunteers from Hardin, Jasper, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine and Shelby counties. Volunteer Terry Jo Glenn, who solicited donations for the party from more than 30 Kirbyville and Newton merchants, deserves special thanks for her contributions, Macon said.

Client Rights

Any client, relative of a client or representative of a client who has a complaint, comment or suggestion regarding the confidentiality of records, 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.

Copies of Deep East Texas MHMR's operating policies and procedures may be reviewed at Central Administration, 4101 South Medford Drive, Lufkin, Texas.

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 protections 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
Deep East Texas MHMR Services
4101 S. Medford Drive
Lufkin, Texas 75901-5699
Sheryl Gribble, Editor

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Kay named top employee

Lavern Kay, community service assistant at MHMR's Kirbyville Sheltered Workshop, was selected Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of fiscal year 1988.

Kay, a three year employee of the agency, received high praise from Sally Navarre Macon, Kirbyville Sheltered Workshop Service Director.

"I can always depend on Lavern to go that extra mile," Macon said. "She's always available to help out with any activities that we have on the weekends or at nights, and she never complains."

Most importantly, Kay has the ability to relate well to the people served by the workshop and to their family members, Macon said.

"I can always depend on Lavern to do a good job," Macon said. "I wish every MHMR Center had a Lavern, but since there's only one, I'm glad I've got her."



Lavern Kay

Temple

(continued from page 1)

said the Temple Foundation would be willing to award a grant to this organization to cover the purchase of the facility. In this way, two different charitable organizations would benefit."

Skelton, too, praised the Foundation's generosity in initiating and funding this transaction.

"Some of our area's mentally ill are unable to obtain the basic necessities of life such as nutritional food, safe and clean living environments, medical services and stable social relationships," he said. The services we will be able to offer as a direct result of the Temple foundation's generosity will significantly improve the quality of life for many of these individuals."

The facility will provide residents with room and board as well as social adjustment training, medication counseling, recreation, occupational therapy and prevocational training.

"Without the foundation's financial assistance, this need could not have been addressed for several years," Skelton said.

In an emergency,
call our toll-free Crisis Line:
1-800-392-8343