

# Happiness is . . .

## At St. Joseph's Villa

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Having someone care is the fulfillment of one of the basic needs of every human being. This is only one aspect of the services offered by St. Joseph's Villa of Rochester, a group care setting under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

If you were to drive down Dewey Avenue just beyond Stone Road, you would pass a small one-story frame building completely unnoticed. A little further along you would pass two stone pillars—the entrance to the Villa. You would see several lovely brick buildings and children playing in the yard. Many have wondered and asked about this. It always seems so peaceful and quiet as you drive past. But this quiet unobtrusive appearance gives little evidence of the work being accomplished.

If you were to drive in to the Villa grounds you would be amazed and exclaim as so many others have: "We had no idea it was like this."

The small frame building readily seen from Dewey Avenue is the Villa School. A small Spanish-style Chapel would catch your eye as you drive along the road. There are five brick buildings called "cottages." Here under the care of

a Sister cottage mother, the children live and work and play. Further down the road is the Social Service Building. The Social Service Department consists of a casework supervisor, social workers, a part-time psychiatrist and a psychologist, a recreation director, and a group worker.

A new Administration-Infirmir Building has been erected to provide offices adequate to carry on the many functions required in the directing of such an institution as this. The Infirmary provides a nurses office, examining room, and beds for those children requiring special medical attention.

A first impression of the Villa is that it resembles a modern college campus with its many individual buildings. The physical setting is excellent but does not tell the whole story.

The "Villa Story" begins and ends with children. From the moment application is made until the child's discharge, the staff meets the child's needs and plans for the child as the corporate interest of the entire staff.

Application for Villa placement comes through Catholic Family Center from various

sources, such as Child Welfare and Family Agencies, Child Guidance Clinics, Family Court, Schools, and private sources. At the Villa the Case is assigned to a social worker for a diagnostic living room where they play or watch T.V. A large dining area affords ample room for tables for four children, each where they enjoy well-balanced, home-cooked meals. The children sleep in bedrooms of two or four beds, each child having his own chest of drawers and locker. This gives them a feeling of belonging.

Each cottage is run on an individual basis and is a separate unit. This enables the cottage mother to give more personal and individualized attention to the more severely disturbed children who cannot as yet function in a larger group.

The children are under the spiritual direction of Father Hanna, the Chaplain. In the Chapel the children gain the spiritual strength to carry on and bear their problems. They are eager enthusiasts and participate to the fullest in the new liturgy. They often stop in the chapel on their way to or from school. A visit with Father Hanna always leaves the child much richer and happier.

The cottage setting provides the child with a quiet home-like atmosphere. The children are under the supervision of a cottage mother and a teacher. The cottage mother is assisted by a

cook, a housekeeper, and a seamstress who go over and above what is asked of them in their work in caring for the children. In these cottages there is a spacious living room where they play or watch T.V. A large dining area affords ample room for tables for four children, each where they enjoy well-balanced, home-cooked meals. The children sleep in bedrooms of two or four beds, each child having his own chest of drawers and locker. This gives them a feeling of belonging.

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participation in St. Ann's program. This is accomplished through the use of all the services of St. Ann's, with special stress on physical therapy and occupational and recreational therapy. Evidence of the fruits of therapy is seen in the fact that in 1965, 66 patients recovered sufficiently to return to the community. The emphasis on temporary convalescent care in 1965 the largest number of patients discharged from St. Ann's length of stay of one to three months. It is indeed gratifying to see Mrs. K. who suffered a partial paralysis from a stroke, return to her family of four children after learning how to walk again and how to manipulate one handed devices.

Contrary to many people's beliefs, a home for the aging is not necessarily depressing and dull. There is rarely a dull moment at St. Ann's. Where else could you see wheelchair dancers dancing around — or one of our gentlemen scooting by in his motorized wheelchair. The residents, remarks, very often quite witty, perk up the day, not only for the other residents but for the workers as well.

In order to carry out St. Ann's goals for her 345 residents, there are 290 employees and an annual budget of approximately two million dollars. The services of caseworkers from the Catholic Family Center are also needed since they handle the intake work. And such agencies as Visiting Nurse Service, Home Care, and Meals on Wheels work with St. Ann's in post discharge care.

St. Ann's also uses the services of Medical Motor Service and the Red Cross who handle transportation for special treatment appointments and entertainment events in the city since they feel it is important that older people go out into the community and participate in its affairs. For example, it increases their purpose of being when residents go out to vote, and it gives them a great joy when they attend a concert at the Eastman Theater or the circus at the War Memorial. (Such as the 88 year old Mrs. M who beamed all over when she saw the circus for the first time.)

It is easy to see that St. Ann's believes that old age is a time to grow and be happy — a time to make the later years count.

The facilities of St. Ann's Home include the latest in medical and physical care. The resident doctors and the occupational and physio-therapists are, as one would expect, kept rather busy. Father Leo Lynch administers to the spiritual needs of his "parish," and he conducts services in what he refers to as the most beautiful church in the diocese.

The cheerful atmosphere of the modern dining room makes it easier for the residents to engage in conversation with one another, and this makes them more cheerful, too. Certainly, the lounge parties on Wednesday are well received.

Visiting is so important to all the residents, but especially to those who are bed-ridden. The staff who care for the patients try to spend a minute or two as often as possible throughout the day. And even other patients will come in to pass the time of day.