



Sacred Heart Church

Owasco Starts Tutoring

By MARY ANN GINNERTY
Auburn Correspondent

Owasco — Three cribs, the sound of toddlers at play, Iowa Standardized Reading Tests, concern, and hidden talents of parishioners, all add up to a tutoring program at Sacred Heart School here.

The program doesn't have a formal name, but it's tackling a formidable job with consultation available from a parishioner, Mrs. Eileen Crane, supervisor of student teaching at the State University at Cortland.

The need for a tutoring program came to the fore when a cut in funding under Title 1 eliminated the position of the teacher's aide who had been working with students needing individual help improving reading skills.

Mrs. Crane was the first to respond to the church bulletin announcement that tutors were needed. She explained, "Like Topsy, the tutoring program idea just sort of grew. I volunteered, thinking I could help a couple of youngsters. First one, then another parishioner spoke up and now there are more than 40 students and 20 tutors and nursery volunteers involved."

Volunteers include young mothers, retired teachers, several professional men, and housewives with patience and ability to work with a child over a long period of time. This is in addition to women who possess the specific training for testing, diagnosis, and consultative roles.

The nursery school setup is considered a key to the success of the tutoring program because the care of the workers' own children is important. The nursery has enabled young mothers to volunteer their time, confident that their infants and preschoolers were being well cared for in the nursery in the rectory basement, supervised by women from the parish.

This project is staffed by volunteers, but it is not hit and miss. Two women with specialized training in the area of corrective reading were among the first to volunteer. Thus, testing could be administered to all the fourth through eighth graders, and to young students referred by teachers. Help is available to those one and two years behind grade level in reading. Testing is repeated periodically to plot progress and detect potential reading difficulties before they develop into full blown problems.

As Mrs. Crane explained, "Testing is important as we must diagnose difficulties before we can prescribe corrective work. The most common problems we deal with are those of comprehension, building vocabulary, and developing concepts. Various methods of tutoring are suggested, based on the child's individual needs which are determined by his teacher and the volunteer reading consultant, and carried out by the assigned tutor."

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Elected to the Catholic Family Center Board of Directors are John J. Pettigrass as president; Miss Anne Falvey, vice president; Leonard Greene, treasurer.

Continuing on the board of directors of the Family Service Agency are Alem Smith, president; Christopher DePalma, secretary.

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