



The merits of his latest drawing are discussed by Rodney Grayson [r.] with Chip Stem.

Migrant Program

Three R's: Reading, 'Riting, Receiving

The discovery that there were kids who couldn't read made a deep impression on volunteer Tony Ward, who has spearheaded the revival of a migrant reading program begun by VISTA volunteers.

However, he believes it is "presumptuous to assume we really made any progress" in the improvement of reading skills. The main gain has been that "they know we're concerned," said Ward, who describes his role as one of a "real friend."

Three years ago a VISTA group began a remedial reading tutoring program, held in the Fall and Spring for the migrant and formerly migrant children scattered throughout Wayne County. Together with the human development committee of St. Paul's Church in Webster, VISTA recruited 24 volunteers to become involved in a one-to-one relationship with 24 children in grades one through five.

After the phase-out of the VISTA program, tutoring was assumed by St. Paul's. Only local children attended since it was difficult to contact the

migrant children. This Fall, Ward screened area farmers and ran a tutoring program for 27 children, half of whom are migrants and half local.

Volunteers from the parish and from St. John Fisher College and Nazareth College gather the youngster for an hour every Saturday morning and "try to relate to the kids as friends."

"Sometimes things go haywire," laughed Ward, remembering the morning someone spilled all of the milk for lunch. The tutors take turns preparing the lunches.

The migrant children, who are often two or three grades behind their peers, receive individualized help. Volunteers can be seen sprawled in the school corridors playing tic-tac-toe, laughing with someone who has discovered the thrill of hearing his voice on tape, patiently teaching the rules of typing and listening to whatever the children want to talk about. Ward explained that different gadgets are used to get the kids interested in reading, listening and paying attention. "The kids have fun, that's why they come," he said.

What the volunteers have observed is a group of young children who are "enthusiastic about life." "There is no earthly reason why they should be," Ward commented as he reflected on the poor living conditions he has observed. Most of the parents are enthusiastic about sending their children to the program, although Ward has encountered one camp where no visitors are allowed.

One of the problems faced by Ward is a decrease in fellow parishioners' interest. "there is little support to expand the program," he said. "The same people are tired of carrying the load. We need people who care enough to be committed, rain or shine."

TEXT BY PAT PETRASKE
PHOTOS BY SUSAN MCKINNEY



Beaming at her Hall



Young hands painstakingly practice writing between