



### March of Dimes Walkathon

Glenn Hagan of the Rochester Zeniths championship basketball team poses with local March of Dimes poster child Christy Glenn to promote the upcoming 1981 Rochester WalkAmerica, scheduled to start at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 25, at Manhattan Square Park. Hagan, Zeniths co-chairman of the event, and other team members will join the crowd in the 30-kilometer walk to fight birth defects. Proceeds will benefit the Genesee Valley, Finger Lakes Chapter March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation. All who participate will be eligible for trophies and autographed Zeniths' basketballs. Registration forms are available at all Record Theatres, 7-11 Stores and Chemical Banks or by calling the March of Dimes at 385-1131.



# Advocacy: Helping People Help Themselves

By Michael Groden

First in a Series

Researching stories dealing with handicapped persons has shown that there are dozens of groups and agencies dedicated to helping the disabled with the many problems they face.

Some agencies provide monetary assistance, others sponsor physical or psychological rehabilitation programs, some provide simple human companionship.

Many times getting in touch with an agency or organization that can provide a needed service can be a problem, however. People with handicaps often don't know where to begin to find the assistance they may need to lead functional, productive lives.

This process can be especially frustrating for those with developmental disabilities, the mentally retarded and others afflicted with neurological impairments.

Monroe County Coordinating Group on Developmental Disabilities and Monroe County Youth Advocacy, Inc., two groups who work closely with the developmentally impaired, can provide an answer.

Both groups offer individual counseling and referral service to the developmentally handicapped.

The developmentally impaired are those people with disabilities "attributable to mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy or autism; it originates before a person attains age 18; it can be expected to continue

indefinitely; and it constitutes a substantial handicap to such a person's ability to function normally in society," according to a Coordinating Group brochure.

Marcia Summers, spokesperson for Coordinating Group, said that many individuals the agency handles "are multi-problem people," who are afflicted with more than one of the symptoms.

She added that 80 to 90 percent of the clients Coordinating Groups deals with are "mildly retarded." They are educable, for the most part, and capable of holding jobs and being self-sufficient, with some assistance.

Monroe County Coordinating Group's philosophy, Summers said, is "to look at things from the individual's point of view. We are looking out for the client and his or her needs; we try to find the most productive solution to that need," she said.

The organization also considers their role as one of "helper." "A client has definite rights and priorities in regard to housing, employment and social benefits. We try to clarify these needs and help the client attain them. They carry out their own advocacy," Summer said.

In addition to helping a client on an individual basis, Coordinating Group offers a large referral service. In its informational brochure Coordinating Group lists nearly 90 agencies and organizations that can be of assistance.

The agencies listed range from diagnosis and

evaluation of a handicap to recreational programs and religious education.

"If we can't help directly from this office," Summers said, "we can find the appropriate agency that can." Monroe County Coor-

inating Group on Developmental Disabilities is located in the Executive Office Building, 36 W. Main St. in Rochester. The telephone number is (716) 546-1700. Next week a report on Youth Advocacy, Inc.

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