

Action Center granted a last-minute reprieve

By Teresa A. Parsons

To the adults who frequent it, the Action Center for the Disabled is more a club than a program. To the staff, it's more a lifestyle than a job.

But the center was almost lost to both groups last week.

Because its funding had run out, the Action Center's doors were scheduled to close, at least temporarily, on Saturday, April 19.

It was the agonized reactions of clients and staff rather than dollars and cents that measured the center's actual worth.

Two weeks ago when he wrote termination notices for the staff, William Privett, Catholic Charities' director of the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry, told the center's director, Adele Carlson, that it was one of the hardest things he had ever done.

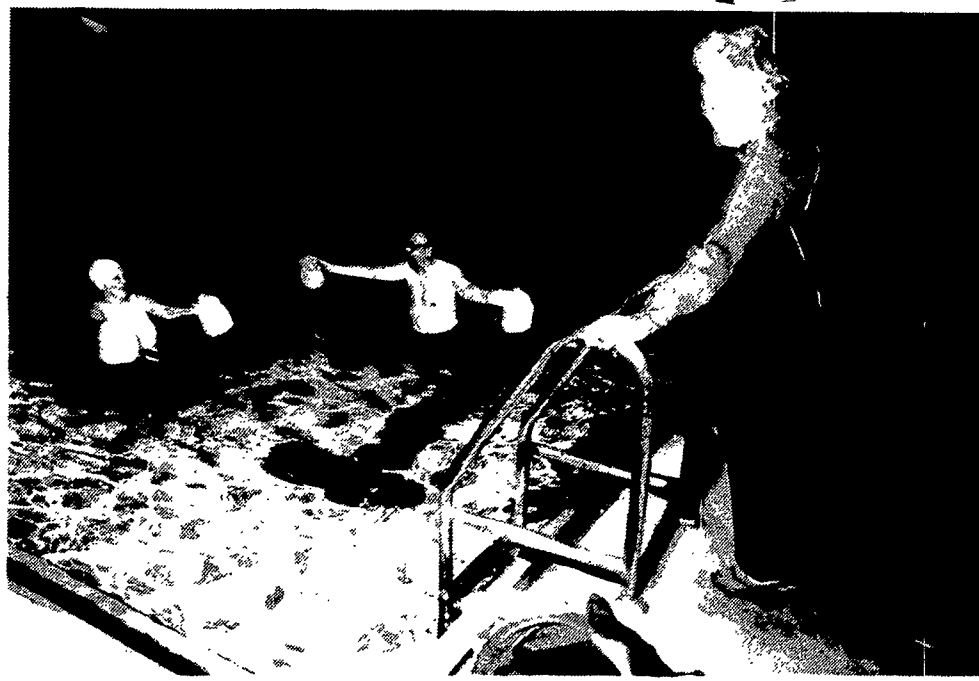
"I finally told him he had to do it in fairness to the staff," Carlson recalled.

She spent hours on the phone reassuring people that every option was being explored. She spent hours more trying to place people who use the center. "One hundred and eighteen people depend on us, and I spent 12 hours one day last week on the phone trying to place people," she said. "I came up with a big zero."

All the fear turned to relief when, for the third year in a row, State Assemblyman Roger J. Robach bailed the Action Center out with the promise of a \$25,000 grant from the state Office of Mental Health.

"It's taxpayers' money well spent," Robach said. "People who are handicapped need recreation like everyone else. I've always had a special interest in programs that help the handicapped. They deserve a chance in life just like anybody else."

Administered by Catholic Charities' Genesee Valley office, the Action Center is also funded by the Easter Seal Society of Monroe County and gets some money from diocesan Catholic Charities. The City of Rochester Department of Recreation,



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Swimming is said to be the ideal exercise — particularly for those who can tolerate a limited amount of physical stress. Ruth Transue (on land) has developed an aquatic exercise regimen which has had at least a small part in maintaining the good health Genevieve and Leo Gauck will celebrate along with their upcoming 50th anniversary.

meanwhile, grants the program free use of the Edgerton Recreation Center and other city recreation facilities.

The state grant will not be available until July 1, 1986. But with the prospect of that money ahead, the Diocese of Rochester extended the center a no-interest loan.

So the crisis is averted — for now. Unless a funding source is found in the meantime, the center will face a double-sized deficit next year.

Carlson views the center's fiscal emergencies philosophically, but not without emotion. "It's nobody's fault," she said. "It's been this way right along. We're not dealing with goals or objectives, we're not

structured. This is recreation for its own sake."

Little human service funding is available for the recreation programs like the Action Center. In general, adult recreation is not mentioned in the same breath as such basic needs as food, clothing or shelter.

Ninety percent of the money that is available goes to children's recreation programs, according to Carlson.

Even less funding is available for programs that don't target a specific group of disabled people.

School systems provide disabled persons up to the age of 21 with free recreational

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AQUINAS INSTITUTE THEN AND NOW



Ironically, Aquinas had a drama club before it had a football team. In April 1926, *Pals First* became the first play produced in the spacious auditorium of the new school on Dewey Avenue. It would be five more years before Aquinas would have a varsity football team. Throughout the years, however, both activities have thrived, and many plays and musicals at the school have benefited from the talent and agility of football players who also enjoyed acting.

In 1940 a radical innovation occurred: girls were invited to take the female roles in Aquinas productions. Until that time, boys played all the parts. (The all-male production of *Macbeth* in 1930 must have been a particularly interesting production.) For the past three and a half years, our shows have been graced with the presence of Aquinas girls, who match the talent and beauty of their predecessors from Nazareth, Mercy, and St. Agnes.

Recently our productions have benefited greatly from a new computerized lighting board as well as an advanced sound system. This past summer the former weight room was converted into a costume room with capacity for three thousand costumes as well as areas for sewing and ironing.

Membership in the drama club is open to all students, and in recent years freshmen as well as upper classmen have received leading roles in some of our shows. The drama club is also affiliated with such professional organizations as The American Theatre Association and The New York State Theatre Education Association. A new course in Dramatics which will include both acting and technical theatre is being planned for the near future.

Next week, Aquinas will present its 60th anniversary show, *Godspell*. This musical is a celebration in song and dance of God's good story as it is found in St. Matthew's gospel. With simplicity and joy it communicates the positive message of hope and salvation which Jesus came to bring all people, including sinners. We are especially happy to present this musical as part of Aquinas' 60th anniversary celebrations because it speaks eloquently of the values our school stands for: love, joy, growth, and forgiveness. Performances of *Godspell* will take place in the school auditorium on Friday and Saturday, May 2 & 3; 9 & 10 at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$3.50; \$2.50 for senior citizens. There is no reserved seating, and tickets may be purchased at the door. We hope that you will be able to share the joy of this production with us.

Paid for by Aquinas Institute.

Another triumph over fear and physical limitations



Ruth Transue

Transue was always active in swimming and other sports.

As a result of a heart condition, the Action Center opened in 1980, a YMCA recreational program. Transue had not been swimming for several years, but she had to. So she began to come to the Action Center with her. "They gradually dragged away one by one," she said.

Nowadays, she has as many as eight disabled persons per class, three days a week. For people whose activities are limited by such ailments as a heart condition, exercising in the water is a safe, gentle way to keep fit.

For those confined to wheelchairs, swimming offers the rare opportunity to "get up and move" again.

"It's a thrill to lift a person from a wheelchair into the water and hear their excitement when they say, 'I can walk!'" Transue said.

"I like my job," she added.

loved it," she recalled.

Swimming has always been important to her as well and the results are evident in her youthful appearance and vitality. During the years before she "retired,"

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