

york gazette

Volume 12, Number 13
December 11, 1981

York's Mainstreaming Project is a Model For Integrating Handicapped Children

"For many of us it's very encouraging to see a university community like York provide top-notch service to the community," remarks Jacques Pelletier, director of the National Institute on Mental Retardation (NIMR), in reference to the Saturday-Get-Together program that integrates handicapped children with their "normal" peers.

The mainstreaming project started the fall of 1979, and last summer it was attempted on a daily basis bringing together 25 children — one-third of them "labelled" (i.e. retarded, deaf, cerebral palsied, learning disabled) and two-thirds so-called "normal" children — who were supervised by five dedicated young student teachers. The Get-Together continues in its former once-a-week format.

Very few programs of this nature exist in North America, says special education professor Marsha Forest, who supervises it. The program is the brainchild of Prof. Forest, education student Donna Bracewell, and part-time lecturer and former Director of the Centre for Handicapped Students, Judy Snow.

The first hint of the project's success came from the kids themselves and their parents. As reported in the *Gazette* of April 24, 1981, the children emerged from a passive state and formed a strong, vibrant community; the parents thought it a raging success; and the initiators said none of them knew it was going to be so good.



A group at Get-Together

Then, in August, when the summer project was well under way, Toronto Star columnist Michele Landsberg wrote: "I've never seen a school where the children are so kind, so at ease with each other and their teachers. Most impressively, the chil-

dren genuinely seemed to value each other for the human qualities that lie deeper than slurred speech or withered limbs . . . Summer Get-Together is crucially important right now, because Ontario is moving inexorably towards more 'mainstreaming' of handicapped kids into public school classes. But mainstreaming is just a cruel hoax, another word for dumping, if it isn't accompanied by the kind of extra staff, energy, moral support and sensitivity that made Summer-Get-Together such a human triumph. . ."

Indeed, the concept is being picked up across the country, as Prof. Forest demonstrates with the mail she's receiving. "It's spiralling out," says Prof. Forest, who's been invited to the University of Wisconsin to spend a couple days with Dr. Lou Brown, *(continued on p. 2)*

Campaign Has Raised \$4.3 Million

MANUFACTURERS LIFE INSURANCE DONATES \$50,000 TO ACADEMIC/BUSINESS SERIES

The Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. has donated \$50,000 for the Academic/Business Seminar Series — precisely the amount required by the Faculty of Administrative Studies for this campaign project which seeks to promote greater contact and exchange of ideas between academic researchers and business practitioners.

A limited number of academics and practitioners will be invited to a series of seminars over a five-year period to discuss prepared commentaries on previously circulated research papers, and assess the practicability, applications and implications of the research.

The Faculty recognizes a need for practitioners, particularly those among con-

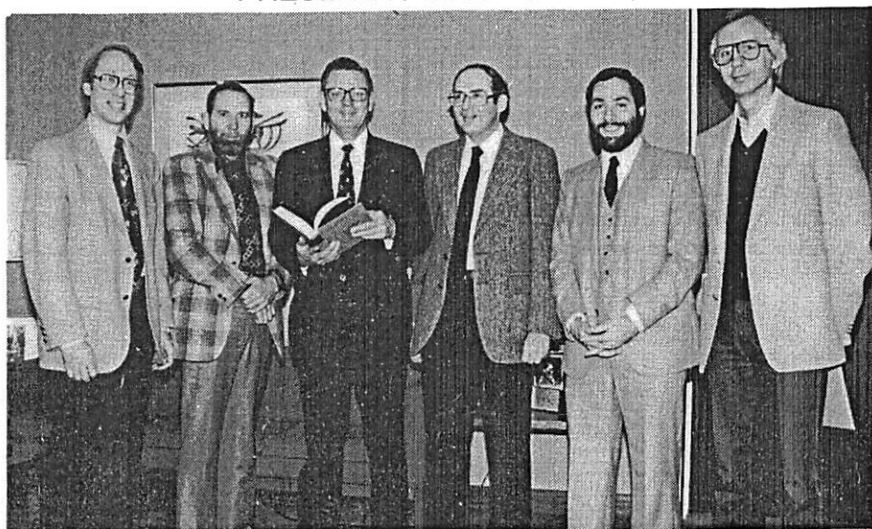
sulting firms, to have a greater opportunity to influence the type of research that's going on, and to benefit from research findings in such areas as: policies for developing relationships among industry associations, business and government to encourage national strategic planning; planning techniques to incorporate the growing and changing influences of social pressures; and current issues as they apply to specific industries (for instance, the effect of trade and tariff policies on the Canadian textile industry).

In recognition of the Manufacturers Life Insurance Co., the series will be named "The Manulife Business Seminar".

INSIDE:

- Trichy Sankaran, p. 2
- Canadian Annual Review, p. 2
- Career Program, p. 2
- Ontario-Quebec Exchange, p. 3
- Research, p. 3
- Comment, p. 4

CANADIAN ANNUAL REVIEW PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT MACDONALD



The 1979 Canadian Annual Review of Politics and Public Affairs was presented to President H. Ian Macdonald last month. Pictured above from left to right are: political science professors David Leyton-Brown and Rod Byers, President Macdonald, political science professor Fred Fletcher, PhD student in political science Donald Wallace, and economics professor Fred Lazar. Prof. Byers is editor of the Review, while the others contribute major articles.

The book has been published annually since 1960 and, according to Prof. Byers, it's "really the only publication of its kind that gives an overview of political and economic affairs in Canada on a continuing basis". The book's preface states that the Canadian Annual Review has become an indispensable reference book for all concerned directly or indirectly with Canadian public affairs, offering both a concise, convenient record of the year's events and a responsible appraisal of important developments. Published by the University of Toronto Press, it can be ordered through the York Bookstore.

Mainstreaming (continued from p. 1)

a leading special educator in the field of integration. Other invitations include a talk at the World Congress on Mental Retardation to be held at the York campus next August; the conference organizers (members of the Faculty of Environmental Studies) plan to use the project as a model program to illustrate integration. In addition, representatives of Get-Together have been invited to speak at elementary and high schools.

In a passionate 14-page statement entitled "Reflections on a New Kind of School", Prof. Forest describes the dynamics of Get-Together: "At the beginning of October 1980, we stressed that our Saturday program was a model to illustrate that handicapped and non-handicapped children could learn together. By the end of August 1981, we had changed our focus. We were running an exciting experimental school that incidentally had handicapped and non-handicapped children involved. It was a given that in an ideal educational model no devalued child would be excluded. Indeed, they would be sought out, for we do terrible things to 'normal' children by never exposing them to the vast diversity that exists in any society." (The 14-page statement was published in The Canadian Jour-

nal on Mental Retardation.)

Recently, Prof. Forest received a \$4,000 research grant from the NIMR, which has opened the way to hiring a first full-time staff member to teach and do research for the project. Support is also evident in the York community; for example, Bethune College has offered the use of its facilities for next summer. And plans are under way to add a fine arts component to the program that will include music, theatre and dance. Finally, the waiting list of applicants to get into Get-Together is growing.

About his expectations for the project, Jacques Pelletier of NIMR states: "I would be content if we could solidify it and make it a more official university project — if she (Prof. Forest) could get more official support from York to get it more prestige that it needs for research." He adds, "What Marsha is telling us is that integration is good, but what we need now are hard data and techniques to demonstrate to school systems that integration does work."

The possibility of a large grant to support research on the mainstreaming project is pending. For more information on Get-Together, contact Prof. Marsha Forest at 667-6303.

Honours and Items of Interest

Trichy Sankaran, professor of music, has been awarded the title of King of Rhythm in recognition of the eminent position achieved in the field and in appreciation of the services rendered in promoting Carnatic Music in North America. The title was bestowed by the Bharathi Kala Manram on behalf of all the Carnatic Music fans in Canada.

Faculty of Education and Career Centre Present Career Program

At a time when high-level job search know-how is essential for students wishing an edge in an increasingly competitive job market, the Faculty of Education and the York Career Centre have joined forces to present a program of career orientation for education students, established teachers, and interested members of the community. For the last three years the career series has aimed to respond to the need for practical information regarding the job market and specific requirements for prospective employees in the field of education. A survey of last year's graduating class indicated that 88.5 percent of the respondents were successful in obtaining positions in education.

Another Faculty and one department are also in the planning stages of creating career programs unique to their disciplines.

"Our motivation was primarily that a need was recognized to have formal co-operation between ourselves and the Faculty in order to have an informative and well-rounded program," says Jayne Greene-Black, a career counsellor with the Centre. A committee of representatives from the Faculty of Education, the Career Centre, and the student body provided input into the design of a series that would meet the particular needs of a group of students entering a highly professional field with a fluctuating market.

Drawing on people in the field of education and other areas where skills acquired in teacher training are applicable, three sessions were held this fall on Resumé Writing, Surviving the First Year of Teaching, and Alternative Careers in Business or Industry. In the new year they will present a seminar on Interview Techniques on January 19, and Continuing Your Education on February 23 with a panel from York's Department of Continuing Education and other Faculties of the University. Later sessions will be announced in the near future.

*This is the last scheduled Gazette until
January 15. We wish you all a joyous holiday.*