

Rec Programs Develop Skills

Occupational
 Therapies
 The
 University
 of Nebraska
 Medical Center

Recreation is an important and necessary component in everyone's life. For individuals with developmental disabilities, handicapping conditions or chronic illnesses, participation in recreational activities need to be a more and deliberate part of their lives.

Fortunately, recreational programs for these individuals are available in growing numbers to fulfill this very unique need, according to Brenda Winn, director of the Hattie B. Munroe Recreational Programs.

Although some recreational and leisure programs for special needs individuals were in place 20 years ago, they were conducted in residential facilities, Winn said. "Now, these individuals are in the community and, because of the need, these programs are, too."

Recreational programs can be divided into three main categories: Hospital settings for the chronically ill; residential settings; and community-based settings.

"Recreation and leisure programs are very important, especially for individuals with developmental disabilities," Winn said. "These children and adults need to spend free time in age-appropriate activities. These programs, while providing fun, also help develop leisure skills the participants will retain and use as adults. It's particularly important for children to learn age-appropriate, life-long skills."

For all individuals, recreational activities build or lead to "life" skills, Winn explained. Kickball, for instance, lays the groundwork for playing and understanding baseball; cooking builds cooperative group skills; art provides a base for other tactile activities and experiences.

While these skills are built gradually and naturally in children and adults who do not experience a disability or a handicap, leisure activities often need to be more consciously learned in a structured environment for individuals with special needs.



Camp Munroe participants learn canoeing.

The Hattie B. Munroe Recreational Programs are just one example of community-based programs that address the recreational and social needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and handicapping conditions. These programs, sponsored by the Hattie B. Munroe Foundation and Operating Boards, include a six-week summer day camp and after-school and Saturday sessions during the fall and winter months. Strong volunteer support provides a one-on-one ratio of high school and college helpers to participants, ages three to 21.

"Within the Hattie B. Recreational Programs, we have three goals," said Winn, who holds a master's degree from UNO in health, physical education and recreation with a specialization in therapeutic recreation. "Our goals are to provide a program of age-appropriate activities geared to the children and young adults in our programs; to provide student volunteers hands-on training and experience; and to provide respite time for families of individuals with handicaps, disabilities or chronic illness."

As in most recreational program settings, the Hattie B. Munroe programs have access to occupational and physi-

cal therapists, social workers, physicians, nurses and speech and educational specialists through the adjacent Meyer Children's Rehabilitation Institute of the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

"The Hattie B. Munroe programs and the others in this area fulfill a great need



Scooter games.

because Nebraska is very progressive in getting these individuals back into the community," Winn said. Other recreational and leisure programs in Omaha include:

- ★ City of Omaha Adaptive Recreation: Karen Johnson, 444-5935;
- ★ SPORT Program at UNO: Frank

Brasile, 554-2670;

- ★ Special Olympics: Margaret Mor-



Swimming is a favorite recreational activity for many individuals.

ford, 345-5414;

- ★ Camp COHOLO: Robin Freeman, 345-2491;

- ★ Camp Easter Seals: Joan Kinney, 571-2162;

- ★ Variety Club Ski Program: Brenda Winn, 559-5777.

For additional information regarding programs, volunteer opportunities or academic degrees in recreational therapy, contact Brenda Winn, Hattie B. Munroe Recreational Programs, 4420 Dewey Ave., Omaha, Neb., 68105; 402-559-5777.

The Voice

OF THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

Founded May 1987—Published Monthly

P.O. Box 34336, Omaha, NE 68134

5025 No. 103rd Ave.—Omaha, NE 68134

402-496-3536

Postmaster: Please send forms to the publisher. Address all correspondence, subscription orders and notifications of change of address to the same address. In case of typographical error in ad, the publisher must be notified in writing within 7 days. The Voice is liable only for the ad in which the error appears and only if that error materially alters the value of the ad.

PUBLISHER-EDITOR	DEE MARZORATI
MARKETING DIRECTOR	MARY ANNE CRONICAN
ADVERTISING SALES	TED J. MARZORATI
	SADIE BANKSTON
	JEANETTE GREVE
	SHERON MILLER
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR	JAMES A. McMAHON
	MARCIA BREDAR
SUBSCRIPTIONS	NIKOLE PIERCE
DISTRIBUTION	TED J. MARZORATI
	JOE CORIROSSI
SYSTEMS MANAGER	SCOTT MARZORATI
BUSINESS RELATIONS	NANCY KARSTENS
COMPOSITION/LAYOUT	SUE GERDTS