

Care for kids aged 1-17

Home shelters needy

By ROBIN LINN

There is a special house near the center of downtown Bryan. It looks like any other house on the block, in an older neighborhood. It's a white two-story with neatly cut yard, surrounded by trees. It has high ceilings, creaky stairs, large-paned windows, and a personality that newer tract houses don't seem to have. This house is different from other houses on the block. It is a house for forgotten children.

Julie lives in Brazos County. She has been sexually abused by her father since she was 9. At 14 she began by talking to friends at school that something was very wrong. It bothered her. Her grades began to drop, and through discussions with her teacher, she finally revealed the situation at home. Julie was removed from her home and placed in the special house with other children who had been abused and neglected. She was given hot meals, friendship, and a chance to recover from her traumatic family life by a program known as Sheltering Arms and a woman known to her as Auntie Ruth.

Rev. Warren Barnes, the man responsible for the house and the running of Twin City Mission, never introduced me to Julie. He says she stayed there. In 1977, there were 101 reported deaths from child abuse in Texas. More than 42,000 suspected abuse and neglect cases were filed, 8,700 victims of which had to be removed temporarily from the home. All but 1,000 were returned to their homes, the rest were placed in adoptive homes, according to a newsletter published by the Austin headquarters of the Department of Human Resources.

Sheltering Arms in the form of the old house provides a home for children aged 1 to 17. The house is a product of concerned citizens in the Bryan-College Station Area who saw need for a shelter for abused, abandoned and runaway children, said Barnes.

Before the house was opened in May of 1975, some children spent the night in jail because there was no other place for them to stay, even though they are not juvenile delinquents. If possible, the child was placed in a home of a volunteer family or a welfare case worker's home, he said.

Ruth, a product of the 60s' activism, is an energetic person who

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reminds you of the rhyme about the old woman who lived in a shoe. Ruth is the housemother, meal-cooker, diaper-changer, counselor and friend for all the children who enter the house. She also takes care of her own two children, 4-year-old Jenny and 1-year-old Tiffany. Ruth, who is in her thirties, lives with her children in the house full time. Ruth's philosophy on children — "If you have to take care of two children, you might as well take care of ten."

The shelter has handled more than 200 abused, neglected and runaway children since it opened in 1975. On the average, six children a month stay at the home, but it has housed 33 during the first four months of 1978. The house can handle as many as 13 children at one time.

Auntie Ruth (she doesn't allow them to call her mother) says her main job is helping the child to gain a self-image and build back trust. When they first arrive, they are often distrustful of adults, she says.

"It's like a child who is scared when lost in a supermarket, only much worse," she said. "They go through the shock of being separated from the parent and no matter how badly abused, they assume the guilt for leaving and want to go back."

Adjusting to a new environment is hard for the children. Being tucked into bed and given their first good-night kiss helps to relax many of the children. Ruth says some of them climb out of bed and sleep on the floor because it is where they have always slept. But not all the children come from poor families, but the majority do.

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Development of the home was a needed step in Brazos County because it allows the children to live and talk to children who have come from similar situations, and it helps them get over the feeling of rejection by other schoolmates, she says.

It is an important intermediate step in the child's recovery. They can stay there a maximum of 30 days, and then they must return to a foster family or their original home if the family situation has improved to the qualifications of the case worker.

Sitting in the living room with Tiffany on her knee, surrounded by hanging baskets, Ruth explains the purpose and effect she hopes to produce in the children who come here. "I don't claim to work miracles — what I hope to do is create an environment for the children that allows them to cope," she said. Often, what is hardest to cure are the unseen scars. Refusing to give love can create a permanent psychological scar. (Tiffany burps her milk on mom's dress.) Learning to deal with a range of problems is part of the job, she said.

As Ruth puts it, this work is a chance for her to channel her past activism into something useful. "In the 60s we spent most of our work screaming from the outside; this job is a chance for me to work within the system," she said.

The housemother enjoys her work. She says it is a part of her. Unlike a nine to five job, she lives it.

Children are brought to her at any hour, and the house is open 24 hours a day.

People often ask me — why did you get into this work? It's because I am sure I belong here," she said. It takes more than saying 'I love children,' it goes further than love, it takes a sacrifice on the individual's part."

Although the house is clean and well painted, funding is always a problem. The program is funded in part by the state, and some help comes from contributors. With inflation and rising utility bills, Rev. Barnes noted that it is often hard to cover costs. He said few contributions come from the community. He attributes this to the perception that the government provides adequate funding, not because of community apathy. A donation of \$8,000 was willed by a Texas A&M University professor for the development of a permanent foster home.

Barnes noted that he would like to start a permanent home providing full time foster care for children, instead of sending them to individual's homes. He said state laws are moving away from large institutional homes with hundreds of children because the closeness and interaction children need is lost.

Ruth has seen many children come and go in her year as housemother at Sheltering Arms. Do any come back? None have yet. "I just hope someone will remember that their big white house helped to change them. Maybe they will want to help those who are here when they return. I know the memories of the stay here will be good; I make sure they are."

Vance and Dayan clash over fighters

By United Press International Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan clashed publicly Sunday over the wisdom of providing two of Israel's historic Arab enemies with U.S. jet fighters. The two appeared on separate network programs.

Vance said the \$4.8 billion package deal is necessary to maintain U.S. ties to the moderate Arab governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Dayan said the United States is simply supplying arms that can one day be used against Israel. "In any way," Dayan said, "you would be walking in the Russian shoes in the Middle East, preparing... the Arab countries for the next war against Israel by supplying them with American warplanes."

But Vance, who urged congressional approval of the package, views Saudi Arabia as "a force for moderation in the Middle East." He said the United States has a commitment to the oil-exporting giant to "meet their needs in this regard." "If we were now not to go forward with that, I think we would seriously jeopardize our relationship, not only with Saudi Arabia, but with the moderate countries in the area as well."

Dayan, interviewed in New York by ABC's Barbara Walters on "Issues and Answers," questioned Saudi motives by referring to an interview in a French newspaper 10 days ago that quoted Saudi Crown Prince Fahd as saying his army is not only preparing "to defend the kingdom, but to get involved anywhere, wherever our national duty requests."

"That is the object of their arming their forces," Dayan said, "not only to defend Saudi Arabia but to be

involved in all of the Arab wars — and one of them might be against Israel."

There has been considerable opposition expressed in Congress to the sale of 60 F-15 jet fighters to Saudi Arabia. Other elements of the White House plan call for sale of 75 F-16 and 15 F-15 jet fighters to Israel and 50 F-5s to Egypt.

But there has also been opposition to what is seen by some as heavy-handed Israeli interference in the conduct of U.S. business.

Dayan defended his position, acknowledging that "as far as you're concerned, it's business. But these are killing machines, not washing machines, and who are they going to use those killing machines against?"

Interviewed on CBS' "Face the Nation" in Washington, Vance said that while President Carter has agreed to permit Congress to address each element of the sale separately, the administration believes the three elements "are reinforcing"—each one needs the other two.

Each house of Congress must, in the next two months, vote the sale down, if it is to be rejected. If only one house votes against the deal, it automatically goes through.

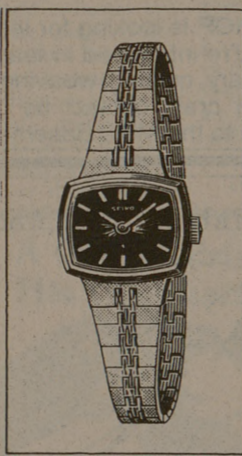
Appearing on NBC's "Meet the Press," two Kennedy and Johnson administration officials, former Secretary of State Dean Rusk and former Under Secretary of State George Ball, strongly backed the proposed jet sale to Saudi Arabia.

"I think it would be a major mistake if we were to deny the F-15s to Saudi Arabia," said Ball. "I think this is a litmus test of our relationship with them."

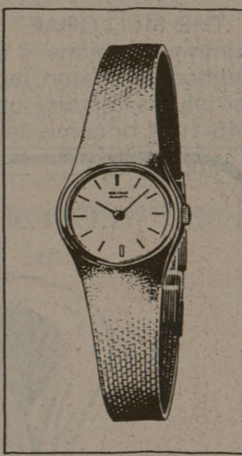


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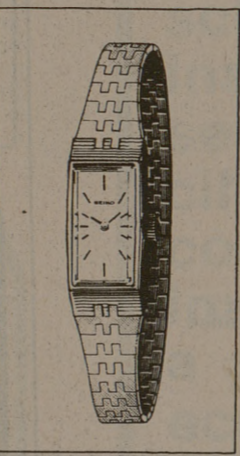
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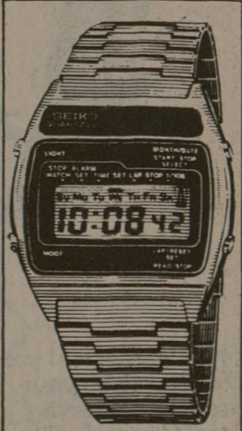
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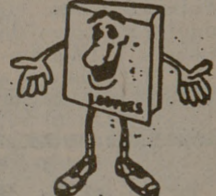
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