

Foster grandparents feel young again

Elderly paired with handicapped kids

United Press International
ATLANTA — Mrs. Massie Taplen, 68, drags herself out of bed before 4 a.m. five days a week so she can be at the Georgia Retardation Center in time to wake her two foster grandchildren for breakfast. Mrs. Taplen has six children, 17 grandchildren and two great-

grandchildren of her own, but says the two handicapped girls — who call her "mama" — represent one of the most important parts of her day. Mrs. Taplen is one of 400 elderly, low-income people paired with lonely, handicapped children in several facilities in Georgia's foster grandparent program.

The program — in its 13th year under the Georgia Office of Volunteer Services — matches low-income people over 60 with children who have "special or exceptional needs," Director Cassey Wilhelm said.

She said foster grandparents, who are paid an income supplement of \$6.40 a day for four hours of work five days a week, are based at several Georgia institutions where they provide companionship for emotionally, physically and mentally handicapped children.

Lattie Smith, 81, has been a foster grandparent for 11 years and said the relationship has rejuvenated her life.

"I think the program does more for the grandparents than the doctor

ever could," Mrs. Smith said. "I get up in morning and think, 'Oh, I don't want to do this.' But by the time I get down here, I feel great. I think it does more for the grandparents than the children."

Mrs. Taplen said her children tried to discourage her when she began the program six years ago, "but I said I think I can make it. I have faith in myself and faith in God. I had to have faith, and now I'm still making it."

Mrs. Taplen said some people did not "have the nerve to work with the children. You can't pity them. You have to work with them."

Cussie Mae Jackson, 73, said her foster grandson, who has been with her for the past two years,

could not talk when they first were paired.

"Within a year, he was speaking 23 words and singing 'Hey Bobba-ree-bop,'" she said.

Gordon Hill, 74, has been trekking to the center to visit a rambunctious small boy, who has called him "daddy" for more than two years.

Even though Hill has eight grandchildren and two sons, one still living with him, he became a foster grandparent because he wanted "to give love to someone who did not have it."

\$150 battle wins victory over red tape

United Press International
RIVERDALE, Mich. — The federal government's loss was the telephone company's gain, but Larry Brooks still thinks he won his battle against bureaucracy.

Brooks, 23, is unemployed and decided several months ago that his \$668.69 federal income tax refund was overdue. So he started making telephone calls from his mobile home near Riverdale in central Michigan town.

He called the Social Security Administration in Maryland, his congressman's office, then the Internal Revenue Service in Detroit and Washington, the Treasury Department and anywhere else that seemed logical.

"I got to thinking somebody has to be in charge," he said. "Then I called the White House. I got a woman in the comments department. She said she'd look into it."

In all, he made 20 long distance calls before striking it rich with a call to a Social Security office in Mount Pleasant, 12 miles away. It turned out he and another man had the same social security number, complicating the situation.

The check was forwarded, and Brooks got his money and, he said, a victory against red tape.

"I feel I've shown that the little man really can do something and get results," Brooks said.

"My wife doesn't agree. She says I lost because of the phone bill."

It came to \$150.



Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper

Wet Rat Patrol

The newest game on campus seems to be "Wet Rat Patrol." The object is to avoid looking like a drowned rat. These students have found only a partial solution. Players still may be called wet rats, even if they have umbrellas, upon discovery of a puddle too late.

Ex-ambassador has Viet papers

United Press International
WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Graham Martin, former U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, said Wednesday, he planned to give top-secret intelligence documents found in the trunk of his car, to the Lyndon B. Johnson Library.

The Washington Post has reported that the Justice Department is attempting to determine who owns the documents. The newspaper said the Justice Department has been considering whether to prosecute Martin under a seldom-used statute dealing with the misuse of classified documents.

The documents were discovered when Martin's car was stolen in Winston-Salem and later recovered just outside the city.

Martin, who is in Baptist Hospital recovering from lung surgery, said he hadn't talked to authorities since late last year when his car was recovered, and that he knew of no federal intent to prosecute him.

Martin said he wanted to give the papers to the LBJ Library at the University of Texas in Austin.

"I thought the historians might be able to do a better job at telling the story than has been done so far," he told the Washington Post.

The Post said the documents cover the entire span of major U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1963 to 1975. The documents apparently were taken from the Saigon Embassy where Martin served from July 1973 until the American evacuation April 30, 1975.

Police said Martin's car was reported stolen from the curb in front of his home Dec. 22 and was recovered on Christmas Day.

The documents were taken to the FBI office in Greensboro. Martin has said he regards all the papers as his personal possessions.

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