

Head Start helps disadvantaged

Bryan project has 'long way to go'

By STEVE LEE
Battalion staff

David's family is poor. And yet, there are many kids his age who are not as fortunate.

He is 3 years old and he goes to school each day. He is given free medical and dental attention and the school provides him with two free meals. He plays on a large playground, the kind that kids dream about. And most important, he is subjected to schooling that many kids don't experience until kindergarten.

David is one of the few disadvantaged pre-school children in Texas who is given the opportunity to enjoy the Head Start program offered by the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The government can only serve 18 percent of the "total need" in Texas, according to Mike Arredondo, community representative of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, HEW. This means that 82 percent of all children who come from disadvantaged families can't be served by the program due to lack of funds.

And locally, it may first appear that the Bryan Independent School District isn't doing its share to help overcome the problem. After all, the A&M Consolidated Independent School District, about one-third the size of the Bryan district,

has a nine-month program while Bryan's is only an eight-week summer program.

There is another nine-month program offered in Bryan by the Brazos Valley Community Action Agency.

But Dr. H.R. Burnett, assistant superintendent at Consol and coordinator of funds for both Consol and B.I.S.D., is quick to defend the B.I.S.D. program.

"They (the B.I.S.D.) feel like they can serve more students this way," Burnett said.

Indeed, Bryan serves considerably more children than the Consol and Brazos Valley centers combined. The B.I.S.D. expects 275 students to enroll this summer. The Consol program currently admits 80 students and Brazos Valley serves about 51.

"If they went to a nine-month program, they could serve only about 60 students with the money they have," Burnett said.

Burnett directs traffic for the flow of funds to both the local districts. Consol, known as the grantee agency, applies for the funds and gives Bryan a certain portion. This fiscal year, which begins this month, Consol receives \$153,648, of which \$68,983 is given to Bryan, the delegate agency.

Claudia Bures, elementary arts and language supervisor at Bryan and coordinator of last summer's

Head Start program, said the district has "not identified a need" for a nine-month program.

She said Bryan holds full class-day kindergarten classes, while Consol holds half-day classes. She said this goes beyond what the state requires of the district and tends to make up for the lack of a nine-month Head Start program.

Dr. Wesley K. Summers, Bryan school superintendent, justified the summer program by saying Head Start programs in general were originally intended to be summer sessions anyway. He said when Consol applied for the nine-month program, Bryan decided to stay with the summer classes.

Also, he said as long as there are other agencies in the area, such as the Brazos Valley center, there is no need for a nine-month program. He said it is permissible for children to participate in the other programs before coming to the one at Bryan.

Julie Legett, education coordinator with the Brazos Valley program, said in some cases services have been duplicated between that program and the Bryan summer program. She said on occasion a child who has already been through physical examinations at Brazos Valley will go through them again at Bryan. The funds received by the Brazos Valley branch are not included in those received by Consol and Bryan each year.

"We've tried not to let that happen," he said. "We had hoped that wouldn't happen. If a child comes to Bryan from another center, we want all his records. We don't want to duplicate. We ask that we swap information."

Does the summer curriculum match up with the nine-month programs in the area? Is there a difference in the purpose? There appears to be a difference in scope and purpose.

For example, the Consol and

Brazos Valley programs intend for the child to enter at age 3 and spend two years in the program. Bryan officials indicate that the child should enter at age 5 and that one eight-week summer orientation is enough time.

"A lot of our (Consol's) goals wouldn't fit an eight-week program," Burnett said. However, Bryan stresses certain needs.

"The most important purpose of our program (Bryan's) is to provide health and medical needs for disadvantaged kids entering kindergarten," Bures said.

"Some families just cannot afford doctors," he said. "This is the most important factor of the Bryan program."

But while medical needs may be the most important, a "major thrust" of the Bryan program is to associate the child with teachers and other children to condition him for kindergarten, said Edward Aycox, a counselor at Jones Elementary School who will be the coordinator for this summer's program at Henderson Elementary. He said the program teaches the child to get along with people other than parents.

Although the program is an orientation for kindergarten, Aycox says "we don't try to make it just pre-kindergarten." He said the Bryan program is a condensed version of the nine-month programs.

The center teaches social skills, like sharing and group participation, aside from emphasizing medical and health needs, he said. The program is "not over structured," and allows the child to learn on his own, aside from direct instruction, he said.

Bures said a typical day at the Bryan center begins with breakfast at 8 a.m. After a flag raising ceremony, the children are divided up into groups for circle discussions with teachers. They discuss various subjects, ranging from the weather to personal hygiene. Bures said this gives the child a chance to see and

appreciate himself as having self worth.

Next, the kids are allowed to spend some time in their area of interest in the classroom, be it building blocks, science, art or playing house. Teachers then lead the children in games, such as "red rover."

Later on comes a snack, then story time. Teachers identify the value of books by reading stories to the children. After a full lunch, the kids are taught to brush their teeth and allowed to rest a bit. But they jump back up and participate in active singing games, where they react to music. At 1 p.m., they are dismissed.

This daily schedule is strikingly similar to the ones at the two nine-month centers. But although the curriculum is similar, don't look for the Bryan program to conform any further. There are no intentions, at present, to broaden the program to nine months.

Aycox says the present program is adequate.

"I haven't given that (program expansion) any consideration," he said.

Summers feels a nine-month program wouldn't be feasible. And again, Burnett agrees.

"You would be talking about a lot of money," he said. "There are 15 certified teachers and 15 aides. You'd have to pay teachers' salaries for a year, and also meals. It would be about \$350,000."

"I grant you that there is a need for another agency," he said, "but I don't know where it could come from."

At HEW, Arredondo said that when the cost of living went up in 1978, the department received additional funding to go toward expanding Head Start programs. But, he said, there is still not enough to go around. Consol happened to apply for the funds at the right time — when dollars were available.

It is for this reason that programs are subject to yearly visits by the HEW for evaluation. As the grantee agency, Consol is responsible for seeing that Bryan complies with all guidelines.

Arredondo indicated that it is not unusual for a school district the size of Bryan's to have a summer program, instead of the nine-month. He said there is no correlation between the size of the school district and size of Head Start programs. There are currently 25 summer programs in the state.

Does Arredondo ever get discouraged with the fact that HEW can only serve 18 percent of the total need?

"Sure," he said. "But there are constraints in all programs."

He said now there are only about 150 of 254 counties in Texas that have Head Start programs.

"We still have a long way to go."

what's up at A&M

Wednesday

THEATER ARTS PROGRAM: "Equus" will be shown at 8 p.m. tonight through April 14 and April 18-21. Tickets are \$2 for students and \$3 for others.

EASTER EGG HUNT: The Aggie Players have hidden easter eggs around campus. Find one today and you will win a free ticket to Equus.

JUDGING CONTEST: The Saddle and Sirlain Club will sponsor a Spring Judging Contest at 5 p.m. today and Thursday in the Animal Science Pavilion.

OPAS: The Brazos Valley Children's Symphony Concert will be at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium.

ENGLISH SOCIETY: Officer elections will be held at 6:30 p.m. in Room 510, Rudder Tower.

GONZALES COUNTY HOMETOWN CLUB: Will meet at 7 p.m. in Room 607, Rudder Tower.

SMITH COUNTY HOMETOWN CLUB: Will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Willowick I Apartments party room. For more information call 845-6452.

HILLEL CLUB: Will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Foundation Building at 800 Jersey St.

BETA ALPHA PSI: Will have a meeting at 7 p.m. in the Treble Apartments. Beer, cokes and chips will be served and all members and pledges should attend.

CLASS OF '79: Tickets for the Senior Bash, Banquet and Ring Dance are available at the Rudder Box Office.

SPEECH: Texas Monthly's associate editor, John Bloom, will speak at 7:30 p.m. in Room 229, MSC.

SWIM TEAM: The men's and women's teams will swim in the A.A.U. Nationals in Los Angeles today through Thursday.

CEPHEID VARIABLE: Dr. Glendon Weir will speak at 8 p.m. in Room 504, Rudder Tower.

AGGIE CINEMA: "The Robe," will be shown at 8 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

Thursday

CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST: Ray Anderson will speak "Responding to the Faithfulness of God" at 7 p.m. in Room 300, Rudder Tower.

GREAT ISSUES: James Estelle Jr., director of the Texas Department of Corrections, will speak on "Texas Prisons: How Good?" at 12:30 p.m. in Room 601, Rudder Tower.

JUDGING CONTEST: The Saddle and Sirlain Club continues a Spring Judging Contest at 5 p.m. today in the Animal Science Pavilion.

TEXAS AGGIE BAND SENIORS: Will be inducted into an association of former bandmen at a barbecue at the A&M Consolidated Middle School cafeteria. For reservations call 845-1031.

"NAME THE ORGANIZATION CONTEST": The Off-Campus Student Association and Hassle Free are merging into one organization. Those who have a name for the new organization should submit their entries to the Off-Campus center in the MSC building today. Prizes include certificates to Pelican's Wharf and Last National Bank.

OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT ASSOCIATION: There will be an apartment managers get-together from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Room 145, MSC. All students who wish to meet and talk to apartment managers are welcome.

TAMU FENCING CLUB: Will meet at 7:45 p.m. in Room 201, Rollie White Coliseum.

TAMU ROADRUNNERS: Will meet at 5:30 p.m. at G. Rollie White Coliseum for a weekly 1-, 3- and 5-mile runs after a short business meeting.

TENNIS TEAM: The women's team will play TCU in Ft. Worth.

SOFTBALL TEAM: The women's team will play Sam Houston State here at 6 p.m.

Friday

AGGIE QUARTERHORSE SHOW: Will begin at 8 a.m. today at tomorrow at the Equestrian Center on FM 2818.

BASEBALL TEAM: The men's team will play SMU at 3 p.m. in Olson Field.

TENNIS TEAM: The men's team will play Arkansas here at 10 p.m.

SWIM TEAMS: The men and women's teams will swim in the A.A.U. Nationals in Los Angeles, California.

AGGIE CINEMA: "Heroes," starring Henry Winkler and Sally Field, will be shown at 8 and 10 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

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- Friday ... Deluxe seafood platter — 1 piece of fish, 2 fried shrimp, 2 fried crab rolls, tartar sauce, hush puppies, french fries and creamy cole slaw ... \$2.89
- Saturday ... One-fourth chicken with barbecue sauce served with hot potato salad and baked beans ... \$1.89

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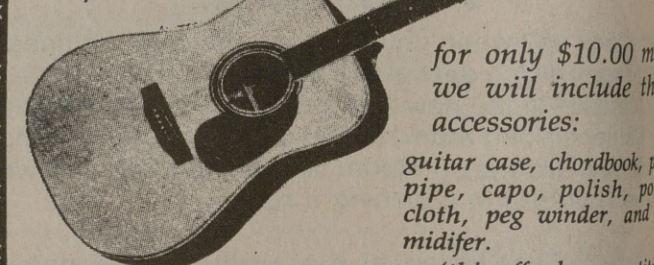
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