

Help wanted to assist county youth program

By Kelly S. Brown
Reporter

Help wanted: Need people 21 and older to spend two to four hours a week exposing children to a positive world.

"Too many youths today have limited horizons," said Joy Sneed, head of Expanding Horizons, a volunteer program set up by the Brazos County Juvenile Services Department.

"They don't see the possibilities beyond their neighborhood or school. They can't. They don't know what's out there because they've never been shown."

"The program is designed to show them (the possibilities) by opening doors and expanding the horizons of children, ages 10-17, who have made mistakes and have been in trouble with the law."

The program seeks to give children positive role models.

"Children learn from watching," Sneed said. "For many, the only thing they've seen is poverty, so when they see a pimp or drug dealer flashing around money, they think that is the only way they can succeed. They are in dire need of positive adult role models..."

"That is where the college community comes in. They help the program greatly, but we need more of them."

Big brother-big sister volunteers are needed to show the children more of the community and help with schoolwork, Sneed said.

"The only requirements are that

the volunteer be at least 21 years old and able to devote at least two to four hours a week for a minimum of six months," she said.

Some of the big brothers-big sisters show children the Texas A&M campus or take them to movies, games, plays, museums or just listen to music, Sneed said.

"The time spent with the children is what is important," she said. "One big brother took his boy to the top of Rudder Tower to look out over the campus and found out the boy had never been in an elevator."

Dr. Paul Kingery, a professor of community health education, is a big brother in the program.

"If people could open up a few hours a week to help the children they will also be helping themselves," Kingery said. "In the program you're put in a situation you have never been in before and you get a new perspective on life while in the program."

Kingery requires some of his classes to work for a health-related agency in the county, like the Juvenile Services Department, and then write a paper about the experience.

"When I read their papers, they are all telling me they did very good about the work they felt," Kingery said. "Not only are the children's horizons expanded but the volunteers have their own horizons expanded as well."

Volunteers also have the opportunity to work in detention at the courthouse, where support is provided to the juveniles in secure custody. A volunteer can be an educa-

tion aide, helping the teacher either a 9 a.m.-11 a.m. or 2 p.m.-5 p.m. session, Monday through Friday. Volunteers assist with meals, playing games or just providing a listening ear.

Creativity is welcomed in the attention center.

Sneed said: "If you have an interest like photography — we're open to suggestions — then you can share it with the kids."

"Being a volunteer is not as easy and you have to be faithful."

"You're making a commitment. The kids that you will come and spend two or four hours a week with them. The children sometimes ask us why we play with them."

Dallas firm may request FDIC help

DALLAS (AP) — After trying to raise money from private investors, MCorp officials also are considering using cash from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. to recapitalize the bank-holding company, a newspaper reported.

If MCorp took such action, it would indicate a shift in the attitude of chairman Gene H. Bishop, who said at a recent meeting that he hoped to raise money from private sources and not involve regulators, *The Dallas Morning News* reported Tuesday.

MCorp has sold various affiliated operations, including data processing and credit card units. Citing unnamed banking sources, the newspaper reported that the holding company may seek additional asset disposals and likely will continue to press for private funds on its own.

Bishop, through a spokesman, said, "We are continuing to pursue all alternatives for raising new capital."

MCorp would not comment directly on possible FDIC involvement, and the federal agency had no comment regarding MCorp.

Bishop, in an Aug. 1 letter to stockholders, mentioned a "growing perception that private capital for Texas banks may be available only in combination with some form of public sector investment."

Calls to Bishop by the AP were not immediately returned.

MCorp officials have said they are confident the company can remain afloat indefinitely and is not under immediate pressure to turn to the FDIC. But, sources said, growing loan problems and commitments of federal money to other Texas bank bailouts have convinced Bishop public assistance is necessary to raise private capital.

MCorp has been trying since last spring to raise at least \$200 million in new capital without government assistance, but Bishop has said that effort has been hindered by adverse publicity about Texas banks.

Incentives credited in Corps grade rise

By Marcena Fadal
Staff Writer

What goes up must come down. But suppose we're talking about grades.

Can it be that what is down has to go up?

That's what the Texas A&M Corp of Cadets is trying to figure out.

Corp Commander Todd Reichert said the Corps average has increased to an all-time record of 2.534 in the spring due to a few changes and incentives.

"We have added an extra call-to-quarters," Reichert said. Besides the regular call-to-quarters, last spring we added an extra 10 hours of study a week.

The freshmen and sophomores can sign up for 10 hours whenever they feel like it, but not during regular call-to-quarters.

This has brought good results.

Call-to-quarters is a three-hour study period from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., Sunday through Thursday for freshmen and sophomores.

A grade report which they fill out themselves is also posted on the wall, Reichert added.

"They write out their test grades, mid-terms and finals to remind them how they are doing," he said.

Another way to improve the scholastic average of each outfit is for each to have its own mentor, otherwise known as a faculty adviser.

"This is not new among the Corps," Reichert said. "A faculty adviser is attached to each outfit and what he does is helps, advises and really gets involved with the outfits. I think it is something that can help us."

Reichert said the Corps asks for volunteers to fill these positions but most have been advisers for many years.

Scholarships also are available as incentives.

"We have the Sul Ross Scholarship which goes to incoming freshmen and sophomores," Reichert said. "There are 197 at present... funded by former students and efforts of the Corps Development Council."

He said there is no minimum and the recipients are those with high GPAs who are involved in, extracurricular activities.

Either those enrolled or in contact with the University are eligible.

"The ROTC also offers its own scholarships, and they have different requirements," Reichert added.

Reichert said that a member goes on Corps scholastic probation if his average falls below a 2.0.

The member then has one semester to bring the average up or be released from the Corps until it is brought up.

Reichert said the Corps is expecting approximately 750 new cadets this fall.

If there's live bomb around this sergeant will defuse it

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Why would a soldier want to defuse bombs instead of type letters, cook breakfast or drive a truck?

"They told me I could make \$55 more a month, which was a 50 percent increase," said Army Master Sgt. Stephen King. "And there'd be no KP or guard duty the rest of the time I'd be in the service. So I took it."

What the Army didn't tell King, now a 19-year career soldier, was that he would have to learn to defuse about 60,000 types of military explosives.

That's not including homemade bombs, which he described as "up to the imagination of the person" building them.

"That's why we don't want to talk about anything we do to defeat devices," said King, who was drafted into service.

His business card is about as secretive as he is.

"Explosives Are Our Business" and "When in Doubt, Call," the card reads. There's a phone number listed, but no name.

King said his staff of six enlisted men and one officer are on duty 24 hours a day. They answer calls in a 44-county area and assist Army teams in other states.

Only police or federal agencies can call the Explosives Ordnance Department, or EOD, for assistance.

About half of the calls are to pick up war souvenirs, such as World War II grenades people find in relatives' homes while settling estates.

Or, like the World War II Japanese mortar shell they found recently in Punxsutawney.

His men tape grenade handles in place so the pin doesn't fall out, and take the devices back to the impact area to explode them.

Old dynamite used to blow up tree stumps is another problem EOD faces. Army regulations prevent EOD soldiers from destroying commercial explosives on post, but the technicians can help remove the devices, King said.

"Commercial explosives, like somebody finds in an old shed or back yard, could have been there for 15 years," he said. "But all of a sudden, it's a big problem and has to be handled today."

One source said the EOD technicians also check buildings for explosives before political figures arrive. King would only say that his group assists the Secret Service in the protection of the president, vice president and presidential candidates.

King said the technicians have above-average intelligence and good manual dexterity.

Recruits attend a nine-week preliminary ordnance school at Redstone, Ala., where they learn to assist EOD technicians. They work for 12 to 18 months as apprentices for an EOD attachment.

The EOD company commander decides whether the recruit should be allowed to attend an additional 19-week training course, qualified him as an EOD technician.

Sgt. Eric Crawford, an EOD technician, said:

"It's kind of like a weeding process for the units before they learn if it's the quality of soldier the community wants. It's a close-knit group."

King said a number of misconceptions exist about the unit's soldiers. "A lot of people think we just go around like a fire department," he said. "But first we're still an Army soldier. We've got as much equipment to maintain as a 100-man company."

The technicians also lecture police and fire departments, school and hospital staffs on how to handle bomb threats.

Sgt. Duane J. Cole, another technician, said:

"The teaching helps so much it can save us a lot of driving time."

But they can't reach everyone, said.

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