

## HISTORY

### CEREBRAL PALSY ASSOCIATION OF WINDSOR AND ESSEX COUNTY

In 1938, a curative workshop for handicapped adults and children was established in the old Red Cross building at the foot of Ouellette Avenue. The majority of those enrolled were cerebral palsied, and, *in* 1947, parents of the cerebral palsied formed a parents group.

In 1949, the parents group was instrumental in establishing academic classes for the handicapped in the Red Cross Building. The school, and curative workshop, moved into the new Red Cross Building, at 1226 Ouellette, in 1950 - the workshop having quarters on the main floor of the building. Lack of space forced the curative workshop to move to what is now Riverview Hospital, in 1953; and lack of space there forced another move in 1954. At that time, the group - still composed of children and adults - moved back to the Red Cross Building, this time to facilities in the basement, which had been partially finished by the local Easter Seal group (the Windsor Rotary Club). Also, *in* 1954, the parents group was incorporated under the present name.

By 1956, the group had been divided into a sheltered workshop for young adults, and special classes for pre-schoolers, with those enrolled receiving whatever therapies were available in the building (at various times this was physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy - at other times, only one or two of the three were available). There was no real change, then, for several years.

In 1966, a small inactive parents group elected a completely new, energetic, Board of Directors - and things began to happen. By June, 1966, the new Board had arranged for the donation of a small van, which was equipped by the Windsor Sertoma Club to serve as a bus. The bus was able to transport about 50% of the children and young adults, the rest being transported by cab and volunteer drivers.

In 1968, negotiations were begun with the Rehabilitation Foundation for the Disabled (March of Dimes) with a view to them taking over operation of the sheltered workshop. As it turned out, most of these young adults were "terminal" workshop employees and would never progress into industry, therefore not the type of worker March of Dimes used in their Workshops; however, March of Dimes did promise new Workshop quarters, rent free, for a 5 year term. With this in mind, the Board approached the Sertoma Club about renovating the basement of the Red Cross. During the summer of 1968, Sertoma paid to have the basement fully partitioned and air conditioned, and, in January, 1969 - after the 22 young adults moved to the new Workshop - the pre-school program expanded to take over the full facilities available in the basement of the Red Cross Building.

With the move to the suburbs by the Workshop, transportation became a real problem, and for over a year, more than fifty volunteer drivers provided transportation for the workers to and from the Workshop. In April, 1970, after more than a year of negotiating, a wheelchair bus - complete with wheelchair lift and removable seats - was delivered to the Workshop, having been purchased with funds from the Community Fund, a group of local industries, and the Provincial Government.

Currently, there are 42 enrolled at the Workshop, attending as many of the five working days as physical limitations permit. At the Workshop they help with sub- contract work (mostly sorting and packaging), woodwork, and some craft work. Each worker is paid according to effort and contribution, to the maximum of \$24 per month and transportation is provided for the majority of the workers.

There are 25 enrolled at the Children's Treatment Centre, attending as many of 7 half-days as physical limitations, age, maturity, etc., permit. At the Centre, they receive stimulation, socialization, and education-readiness, also occupational therapy (provided by CPA staff of two O.T.'s), physiotherapy (provided by the Red Cross) and speech therapy (provided by the Remedial Speech Association) - or as many of these therapies as the medical director prescribes. The CPA staff also includes a part-time social worker who works with families of the pre-schoolers and students, both individually and in groups.

The Red Cross School currently has 34 enrolled, and has four classes, which covers kindergarten through grade 9, with no more than ten children in any class. These students receive the same therapies, from the same sources, as the pre-schoolers, as prescribed by the same medical director.

In addition to the two major programs of the Association, there is also a Saturday swimming program which provides swimming instruction, therapy, and recreation for physically handicapped of all ages. The Association also maintains a loan cupboard to loan equipment to parents for use in their homes.

Administration of both programs is under supervision of the executive director who works directly with the Centre Department heads and Workshop Manager. The executive director works for the Board of Directors, and the Directors are elected by a very active parents group. The parents hold monthly meetings where they hear special speakers, see educational films, take part in discussion groups, etc.

Financial aid is received from the Ontario Hospital Services Commission (Children's Centre only), Dept. of Social and Family Services (Workshop only), and United Community Services of Greater Windsor, parents fees, and donations from various service clubs.

Current activities include efforts to establish a regional centre for physically handicapped children and a residence for physically handicapped adults, and to determine how best to cope with the constant growth of the Workshop.