

Cultural Arts Will Be Open Sat. Beginning Dec. 2

The Cultural Arts Center at 417 Walnut Street will be open Saturdays beginning December 2.

A schedule of 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. will be observed on that day. The Center opens at 9 a.m. Monday through Friday, with activities for school students being conducted primarily from 4 to 8 p.m., when it closes.

Director of this Model Cities project, Thurman DuBose, says casting for a new play will be held in mid-December. A cast of about a dozen youngsters will be chosen at that time.

Regular courses in drama, crafts, and music are given free of charge to all Model Neighborhood residents up to young adulthood by the Cultural Arts project.

Blind Adults Get Free Course

Braille Class Result Of County-Wide Effort

Betty Austin conducts fingers across white pages and teaches them to read.

Ms. Austin, a resident of Clara Cox Apartments, is the teacher in a unique community effort in Guilford County to teach blind adults the reading and writing techniques of braille.

The project is coordinated by the Guilford County Department of Social Services. Ms. Austin, herself totally blind, is paid by Guilford Technical Institute to teach two courses — one in High Point, at the office of Concentrated Social Services, a Model Cities agency; and one in Greensboro, at West Market Street United Methodist Church.

Textbooks for the two courses were provided by District 31-D Lions.

To the knowledge of the three social workers for the blind in the Social Services Department, this county-wide effort is the first of its kind to teach braille to adults.

"We're hoping it will snowball," says Donna Bauch of the High Point office. "Later on, we want to be able to teach both the sighted and the blind." Ms. Bauch, Connie Weadon and Madge Davis have co-sponsored the project through the department.

At present there are eight who attend the course at the Model Cities agency, which also provides transportation to and from class. It is held Monday through Thursday from 2 until 4 p.m.

The class of ten at West Market Street Church meets Monday and Friday from 10 a.m. until noon. Enrollment is limited to about 10 for each class.

FREE INSTRUCTION

Instruction and books are free. The course, termed by Ms. Austin as accelerated, began October 9. Additions to the class, however, may begin at any time and proceed at their own pace.

A High Point native, Ms. Austin is a graduate of Winston-Salem State University, and taught in elementary school for six years before losing her sight in 1964. Since that time she learned braille at the Lighthouse in New York City and has completed some graduate courses in special education at New York University.

When she returned to High Point she decided she wanted to share her knowledge of braille — a system of raised dots on a page — with her fellow blind adults.

"It's something blind people need, and it's most beneficial," she says. "I want to continue to help others to

learn . . . Braille is not easy, but once you learn it, you feel very proud."

When her students complete her course, she promises, they will be able to read anything available in braille from the local public libraries or from Raleigh's lending library for the blind.

She describes her students as "alert, energetic, genuinely interested, sensitive, and talented."

AGES VARY

All have lost their vision in adulthood. Some are totally blind, while others are considered legally blind. The majority of those from High Point are residents of the Model Cities target area. The students range in age from early twenties to late eighties.

Matthew Hargrove of 318 Fourth Street is 87. A cook by profession, he has been blind nine years. Gus Balem of 1834-B Willard Street, a former truck driver, hopes that braille will enable him to get another job.

A former furniture office worker, Martin McMahan of 824 Cedrow Avenue, has missed reading since he lost

his sight in January. A knowledge of braille will make it possible for him to fulfill his dream of setting up his own business. The class in High Point also enables him to stay at home to learn the technique, rather than having to go out of town.

GTI 'DELIGHTED'

Wayne C. Eller of GTI's Adult Education Department said his institution was "tickled to death" to offer the course. "We were particularly impressed with Ms. Austin and delighted to work with a person of this calibre who has so much to offer those in need of her services," he said.

Eller continued that GTI is "more than happy to offer courses of like nature in other areas of special interest, such as those for the deaf. We want to make this braille class and others of similar nature a continuous thing.

"The only way we have of knowing what the interest is, is for people to tell us. They only have to indicate they want it, and we're more than happy to cooperate."



BETTY AUSTIN with GUS BALEM (foreground) and MARTIN McMAHAN (back).

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High Point, North Carolina 27260

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