

Guilford Family Planning

They Help Keep Baby A Miracle

"The birth of a baby is truly a miracle and can be one of the most exciting and wonderful experiences of a lifetime if it is wanted, and the circumstances are right to help love, nurture and cherish that child.

"The birth of an unwanted child can be a tragedy."

These are the words of Mrs. Mitzi Alexander, director of the Guilford County Family Planning Center.

She and her staff are in business to see that families prevent unwanted babies from being born.

The Family Planning Center was established in April by Model Cities Commission, Office of Economic Opportunity, and Health, Education and Welfare monies matched with funds from the Guilford County Health Department, which operates the agency.

Since its opening in July, Mrs. Alexander and her staff have served some 2,500 patients who are now on some form of birth control method or medical care.

Family planning's main office is at 208 Spring Street, Greensboro, near Greensboro College and Downtown Guilford College. In High Point it has had branch offices in Astor Dowdy Towers and the health department on Montlieu Avenue.

A central unit housing the staff, clinic rooms, interview rooms, and teaching area is being placed at High Point Memorial Hospital. Three full-time registered nurses, a licensed practical nurse, three aides from the Model Neighborhood, and a doctor will be at the unit to process patients.

The aides, who provide an outreach service, help with transportation, baby-sitting and the educational process.

A new addition to the family plan-

ning staff is a male outreach worker, Lawrence Blakeney. Mrs. Alexander said she had found some women whose husbands did not want them to come to Family Planning because they didn't understand what the service was all about.

Blakeney's job, she says, is "to work with husbands and also to work with teenage boys in some education for responsible living."

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

A voluntary service offered to all residents of Guilford County, including the Model Neighborhood of High

Point, Family Planning is for anyone who has no private physician or who for some reason cannot get private care. Low-income women, particularly, can find answers and medical help otherwise not available.

What happens when a woman comes to Family Planning for the first time?

After filling out a routine application, she is given a 30- to 45-minute class to review the reproductive system, how she gets pregnant, how to prevent pregnancy, different methods of birth control, and why it is good to plan her family.

Multi-Purpose Rec Centers Open For Use This Weekend

Six multi-purpose recreation areas within the Model Neighborhood are finally being opened this weekend.

The construction of these areas, made possible by Model Cities Commission funds, has been under way since June by the High Point Parks and Recreation Department.

Superintendent of Construction Alex Miller said many set-backs had occurred because of bad weather.

All six of the areas, asphalt courts which were fenced in during the construction period, are lighted and have markings for basketball, volleyball and shuffleboard. The lights may be turned on manually but shut off automatically at 11 p.m.

Playing equipment can be checked out at Washington Terrace, Hillside or Clara Cox Recreation Centers for the courts nearest them.

The building of these new recreation areas, some of which are former tot lots, is part of the Parks Department's overall plan for improving recreation facilities within the Model Neighborhood. Open-space projects — grassing open areas for aesthetic value — are also planned. One such open site, on Hines Street, has been completed.

The idea for the current multi-purpose center project originated in Model Cities' Recreation Task Force and was proposed to the Commission, who in turned contracted the city department.

Multi-purpose courts are located at Washington Terrace Park; Hillside Park on Vail Street; Goldston Park at the corner of S. Elm and Cassell Streets; and the corners of Vernon Place and Evans Street, Meredith Street and Furlough Avenue, and Pershing Street and Lake Avenue.

Afterward she is interviewed individually by a nurse about the method of contraceptive she is choosing. She then is weighed, given routine lab tests such as cancer smear and blood count, and is turned over to the doctor on duty.

The doctor gives her a complete examination, and if he finds there is no medical reason why she should not use the birth control method she has chosen, he will prescribe it. An intrauterine device (I.U.D.) is inserted if she wants it, or a two-month supply of birth control pills is given to her.

During the follow-up interview, a check-up is set up for six to eight weeks later. During that visit, a six-month supply of pills is given if no complications have arisen.

Although Family Planning does not provide abortion as part of its services, Mrs. Alexander says her staff can help put women on the right channel to get a legal abortion if they so desire.

A growing part of the family planning program is birth control through vasectomy. This simple operation on a male can be undergone in a doctor's office, leaving the man incapable of fathering children. Many women prefer this method, especially if they are unable to take birth control pills.

EASIER, CHEAPER

Mrs. Alexander said that the agency expects to "get into this area (of vasectomy) more and more, because it's easier and cheaper. But the family must be stable in order to consider it as an option."

Family planning is desirable, she stressed, for many obvious reasons. Babies conceived too close together endanger the health of both mother and child. "A newly-married couple may choose to wait to have their first child until they grow up themselves and have time together to build a good relationship and are ready both financially and emotionally to accept the responsibilities of parenthood," she suggested.

"Another couple may already have as many children as they want and care for responsibly. They may need help preventing further pregnancies."

Sexually active teenagers or unmarried women can get contraceptives, too. "We know we can't change their actions — nor is this our responsibility," says Mitzi Alexander. "What we can do is help them so that the results of their actions will not be unwanted children."

Weekly family planning clinics are held every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. The new unit at the local hospital will house the classes.

Mrs. Alexander and her staff don't preach; they educate.

"We have people who really like and relate well to people, regardless of what the circumstances of our patients may be. . . . The philosophy of our staff is one of helping people be responsible."



Happiness is a Tea Party

Pre-schoolers at Brooks Center of Developmental Day Care, Inc., mix learning with pleasure in their classroom. Here as one of their activities they decided to have a tea party and pretend to be grownups. At left Brent Carter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Carter of 712 S. Elm Street, poses a familiar "More!" to center director Mrs. Betty L. Jackson. Cathy Jones, daughter of Mrs. Mary Jones of 814 Martin Street, strikes a thoughtful pose at right beneath her very own wig. At the table in the center sit eight busy children. Twenty-six are enrolled at the center, located at Brooks United Methodist Church. (High Point Enterprise Photos by Art Richardson)