

Duke Hospital's Little Red Schoolhouse

Did you know that Duke Hospital boasts its own school? Late in 1959 Mrs. Carol Rosenberg (our charming, blue-smocked schoolmarm) and Dr. Susan Dees, professor of pediatrics, began working on an exciting idea—a school for pediatric patients. By January 1960 the school was functioning under the auspices of the Department of Pediatrics with a United Medical Research Foundation grant for one year, and funds from Miss Doris Duke for this year, and invaluable help from the Hospital Auxiliary.

Since January 1960 Mrs. Rosenberg has given over 120 children from 6 to 17 years of age over 1700 hours of instruction in grades 1 through 11. Most of her pupils are with her only a week or two, but her average daily census of 12 children usually includes several (notably burn and polio cases) children whom she has taught for many months. One 15 year old girl missed 5 months of regular school, but was right "up" with her class when discharged from Duke and Mrs. Rosenberg's care!

Pupils are referred to Mrs. Rosenberg by their physicians (with parental permission) as soon as they are well enough. Once a child is over the acute illness, hospital boredom and depression sets in. The school gives the children something to do to fill the gap between hospital and home environment. "I haven't yet found a patient who wasn't eager for schoolwork." The "blue lady" with her blue cart of books is a big treat on the wards. Teaching is done both at the bedside and in the pediatric playroom for ambulatory patients.

"Just enabling these children to keep abreast of their work is gratifying, but the real thrill for me," says Mrs. Rosenberg, "comes in helping a shy child with a specific problem they have been unable to understand in the crowded classroom situation. If I can send a young child home really



Mrs. Carol Rosenberg, "the blue lady," is a welcome visitor to the bedside of pediatric patient, Jackie Phillips. The In-Teaching program helps children return to school up with, or sometimes ahead of, their classmates.

understanding how to 'borrow' and 'carry' for the first time, I feel I've really helped a lot."

A pediatrician recently told Carol Rosenberg, "I want you to know that what you're doing for the children here is as good as any medicine

that we have." With such enthusiasm from doctors, patients, parents and teachers back home the Little Red Schoolhouse is likely to become a permanent part of the scene at Duke Hospital, provided permanent financial support can be found.

What People Are Saying

One of our employees writes, "I will never be able to thank everyone at Duke Hospital (from the upper staff to the maids and orderlies) for all the kind things they did for me while I was there. Lord help us if ever we lose that 'personal touch.' It certainly helped me pull thru a horrible time."

And here's a note to our parking lot policeman, N. H. Carpenter, that probably made up for many episodes of unpleasantness which are usually the policeman's lot. Mr. Carpenter recently found a dollar bill lying in the parking lot. He put it in his uniform pocket, intending to turn it in at the hospital. By the end of the day the dollar was forgotten and stayed in his pocket for some time until a very forlorn couple returned from the hospital to the parking lot. They had just previously asked him direc-

tions to the clinic. Mr. Carpenter asked if they had found the clinic. "Yes," they said, "but we didn't know you needed a dollar to be seen in the clinic." They were going to turn around and return home to Castilia, N. C. Mr. Carpenter remembered his dollar and gave it to them so that their trip would not be a wasted one. They insisted on having his address so that they could return the money. He reluctantly gave it to them after explaining the dollar was not even his. Some time later Mr. Carpenter received this note with a dollar bill enclosed. "We want to thank you very kindly for your help at Duke Hospital on Friday, February 17, 1961. Without you we do not know what we would have done. We send you your dollar. Me and my wife will never forget you and the kindness you gave us. Thanks again."