

for primary, secondary grades

Patients Learn in Duke 'School Room'



READING—Thomas Ashley, a patient on McDowell ward, reads one of his lessons while hospital teacher Mrs. Corinne DeMarcus holds his book.



WRITING—Douglas McCray, a patient on Howland ward, puts down his answers to questions asked by hospital elementary teacher Mrs. Dale Seldon.



ARITHMETIC—Donald Burnett, a patient on McDowell ward, practices some algebra problems with the aid of Mrs. Linda Lane, a hospital teacher.

Most teachers are used to having a number of students who would rather be outside playing than sitting in a classroom.

But students of three Durham city school teachers are just the opposite. They look forward to each day's lesson with unusual interest and enthusiasm.

The students are patients at Duke University Medical Center and the teachers are there to keep the students up-to-date on school work while they are in the hospital.

"When children are hospitalized for a long period of time," one of the teachers commented, "they enjoy the challenges and novelty school work can provide as a contrast to hospital routine. They feel that school is a link to the normal world back home."

One boy, confined in isolation because of a contagious disease, refused to talk to doctors and nurses. He soon agreed to see the hospital teacher, however, since he felt that if he could go to school, he was getting better.

The Durham city school system provides one elementary and two secondary teachers for pediatric and adolescent patients. Head teacher is Mrs. Linda Lane. The number of children they instruct on any one day can vary from as many as 35 down to 10 or occasionally even fewer.

When a school-age patient is admitted to the hospital and is expected to remain for at least a week, a teacher contacts the patient's school to check on what courses his class is studying and where they are in the textbooks.

Using texts the student has brought along or state-recommended books supplied by the Durham city schools, the teachers plan a separate program of course work for each patient. Mrs. Corinne DeMarcus, one of the high school teachers, commented that only once has she had two students in the same grade using the same textbook and studying the same section at the same time.

"Each child we teach is a specialized case, not only in the type of lessons he is studying but also to the extent of the effect of his disease on physical and mental ability," Mrs. Dale Seldon, the elementary teacher, said.

All three teachers stick to the academic subjects in their lesson plans for

patients. Elementary school children get a 30-40-minute lesson each day if their condition permits. High school students are taught in longer sessions and those who are able to do it are assigned homework.

If the student is hospitalized for as long as a few weeks, tests are given and grades sent to his home school. The teachers emphasized that students work at their own pace.

The three teachers agree that their most rewarding experiences come from hearing of the progress of their students after they leave the hospital and return to their regular school. "One of the boys went back home and made the honor role," one teacher said proudly.

Teachers at Duke see patients who have a wide variety of organic diseases, who have emotional or psychiatric problems, or who have been involved in accidents. In addition, teachers aid blind and mentally retarded patients to keep up with their former activities.

Duke's hospital teachers call a number of wards their home base. The hospital administration recently provided a conference room on Matas ward for use as a classroom for ambulatory students of the "Duke school."

The Duke Hospital Auxiliary provides smocks for the teachers and school supplies for the students. The auxiliary and the Episcopal Student Center have also provided books for a roving library cart for the children.

"The hospital has been very cooperative," one of the teachers said, "and we really enjoy working with the people who work on the wards."

Dr. Whalen Elected

Dr. Robert E. Whalen, associate professor of medicine, has assumed office as president of the Southern Section, American Federation for Clinical Research.

He began his term as president at the group's annual meeting in New Orleans in early February.

The meeting was held in conjunction with that of the Southern Society for Clinical Investigation. Outgoing president of that group was Dr. Herbert O. Sieker, professor of medicine at Duke.

Membership of the two organizations totals approximately 5,000.