

Underprivileged Kids 'Bribed' To Learn

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (UPI)—Candy, Toys, Food. These are the "payoffs" experts are using in a project to motivate the culturally and economically deprived youngsters in one poverty pit here.

A team of young educators and psychologists from six states has adapted the reward system, based on behavior, to get children that are two to three years behind in school interested in learning.

The program, dubbed the "Northeast Children's Project" by its co-founders, Dr. Richard Schieffelin of the University of Kansas and Dr. Frank Girardeau, has entered its second year in an urban poverty area off the snaking Missouri River.

The neighborhood is similar to other Negro ghettos. There are the same dilapidated buildings, teen-agers huddled in front of a corner store, a sprinkling of government subsidized housing and a population relatively uneducated and poverty-stricken.

Kids Unexposed

"In such an environment," said Dr. Vance Hall, project coordinator, "children are not exposed to the proper motivation for education."

The project has resulted in remarkable improvement in the youths.

"I don't know of any other program in the country with this kind of results," Hall said. "All those that worked together in the remedial classes last year have had their grade average in school jump one point and tripled their output on an achievement test."

The difference has been the reward factor, the project team emphasized.

"If a student does well," says Dr. Girardeau, who adopted the system after working with retarded children, "he is given points

which can be used to buy candy, toys or food at one of our stores."

The project, geared to pre-school and elementary youngsters has been heavily subsidized by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

"The OEO wants an immediate return," said Ross Kopeland, associate director of the Child Research Bureau at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. "But we are interested in more than that. We want something for those kids now so they can help hundreds of children in the future."

The way to accomplish this is through research and long range planning, Kopeland and his colleagues emphasize.

"Our project is not to remain in this community forever," Dr. Girardeau says. "In five to ten years the people here will be able to take over for themselves. This is what we're pushing for."

The educators say the students are gradually learning that it pays to go to school. "In their home environments,

Hart noted, they are not exposed to this kind of motivation."

"What we're doing is—over a long period of time—changing their behavior which will in turn change the behavior of future generations," he said.

After 12 months of improvement by the youngsters, the educators look toward the future with enthusiasm. This year, with a federal-state grant of nearly \$140,000, the project is expected to include some 20 elementary school

children and slightly more than 25 pre-school youngsters, in addition to courses for parents.

The community has responded well after initial apprehension and the project team today has "overwhelming support."

Yet there are still problems—a drastic shortage of space and an acute need for additional money.

"We have a long way to go still," says Dr. Girardeau. "Last year we spent \$139,000

and this year it's expected to be slightly higher. Yet this is not much compared to what it costs the state to take care of

six habitual criminals and if we just save six youngsters from a life of crime it will be well worth it."

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ACROSS

- Mollusk
- Reach across
- Impel
- AA
- Make
- Verb form
- Cultivates
- Tantalum: sym.
- Small wheel
- Wading bird
- Color
- Native of Copenhagen
- Chef's specialty
- Floating masses of ice
- The Emerald Isle
- Against
- Twilled fabrics
- Hymn of praise
- Current
- Sell
- Devon river
- Locust
- Leave out
- Somitic deity
- Spoken
- Nocturnal birds
- Strong wind

DOWN

- Barton
- Dwells
- Hollywood name
- Pronoun
- Certain
- PDR or
- LEJ
- Moslem title
- Fabric for mosquito country
- Substance in shellac
- Thick string
- Relieves
- Pay attention
- Pretoria is its capital
- Stripe
- Glacier
- Puerto Rican
- sea-port
- Brim
- Big name in the spy game
- First of scene
- miracle
- Of the blood
- Banishment
- Encountered
- Building wings
- Bird cry
- Mouth
- King of Bashan

Yesterday's Answer

33. Encountered
36. Building wings
39. Bird cry
40. Mouth
42. King of Bashan

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