

Ag Men pledges help handicapped girl with exercises

By Kathy Stokebrand

Ag Men pledges are volunteering to help a physically handicapped three-year-old girl with her exercise patterns.

Serena Reeves, daughter of Bob and Mary Reeves of Lincoln, has trouble walking, running and with her coordination, Mrs. Reeves said. She also walks on the top of the ball of her toes.

Mrs. Reeves said that she and her husband thought something was physically wrong with Serena right after she was born. However, their doctors began to investigate Serena's problem only about a year ago.

They are not aware of the exact cause of Serena's physical handicap but Mrs. Reeves said part of the problem might be related to Serena's brain and part might be heredity.

The exercise pattern requires three people to help Serena. Serena lies face down on a table and in a rhythmic motion, Mrs. Reeves turns the girl's head from side to side. Each time her head turns, one of the two

volunteers (one is on each side of Serena) lifts her leg up to a right angle and brings her arm on that side around to her back simultaneously. The right arm and leg and left arm and leg movements are done alternately with each turn of Serena's head.

Mrs. Reeves said Serena has been doing this pattern of exercises since the end of July. The exercises were developed at an institute in Philadelphia that deals with treatment of physical handicaps related to brain injuries.

They are intended to strengthen Serena's tendons and to train her brain to coordinate her motions to crawl correctly. It is hoped that eventually she will be able to walk correctly.

Mrs. Reeves said Serena has improved greatly in the last four months.

Serena does other exercises besides the pattern the Ag Men pledges help her with. These include a combination of creeping and crawling for half mile a day.

Mrs. Reeves said Serena is usually willing to do her exercises although she sometimes has to be coaxed. Mrs.

Reeves often plays games or tells stories to Serena while she is exercising.

Mrs. Reeves said the Ag Men pledges are "great". "I think Serena likes them, although she sometimes gives them static when they come."

The pattern must be done 10 times a day for five minutes with 30 minute intervals. The Ag Men pledges help from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mrs. Reeves has had neighbors, a lady from the church, friends, and even a man who was laid off work for a month, help Serena with her exercises.

When the Reeves were having trouble finding someone to help out with the afternoon patterns, a neighbor suggested the Ag Men and Mrs. Reeves contacted them. The 23 pledges voted to do the project on a voluntary basis.

Pledge Educator Mike Drake said two pledges go over to the Reeves' home, a block from the fraternity house, on Tuesday through Friday afternoons.



Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka
Serena Reeves works on exercises designed to help improve her coordination, which is hampered by a physical handicap.

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A	B	O	V	E	L	Y	R	A	E	R	S	E
R	E	L	A	X	E	N	T	R	A	N	C	E
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R	O	P	Y	D	I	S	C	S	A	X	E	
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H	I	G	H	W	A	T	E	R	I	L	I	A
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D	E	E	R	E	N	T	O	E	A	S	E	S

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