

Men volunteers needed for Y-Pal program

Y-PALS from Page 1

Gaither said attempts will be made during Y-Pal Week this year to get more men interested in the program.

"We have more women volunteering than men. We haven't reached men as effectively in the past," she said. A volunteer can choose a boy or a girl for a pal, but young boys usually wait three to six months for a match while most girls find Y-Pals immediately.

A volunteer makes the final decision on a Y-Pal, depending on how much of a challenge they're looking for. There are

various problems a child in the program could have, but the main one appears to be a lack of self-esteem, Gaither said.

"Often in low income and divorced families a parent doesn't have a lot of time to give a child, and the children sometimes don't get along well with kids at school because they don't have self-respect. We want to let them know they're special, and their schools tell us that they notice children being much more responsive in class as they participate in the Y-Pals program," she said.



Two children play in the sand-box at the Ruth Staples Lab on East Campus.

All-season experimental play area

A playground for all children

By Jody Beem
Staff Reporter

The Angeline Anderson Children's Garden is experimental, accessible to the handicapped and provides a learning environment. It also happens to be fun, said the acting director of Ruth Staples Lab.

"The children love it and are very creative with it," Kim Townley said.

The children's garden is the new playground being developed at the Ruth Staples Lab on East Campus. The lab, a day care center for children up to 6 years old, teaches college students about child development.

Townley said the playground is totally accessible to the handicapped and is completely usable in Nebraska's climate.

The extreme climate conditions in the state can be hard on young children, Townley said. In the summer the playground has many shady areas and water for children to play in, she said. In the fall children can play under an overhang. Finally, she said, in the winter the children can play in the garden's solarium.

The outside area is almost half done, Townley said, and when completed, it will have cost \$250,000. The cost of the solarium, the last project, hasn't been figured, she said. Townley said all the funding comes from sources outside the university.

"When it's done it's going to be real nice," she said.

Townley said the solarium will provide insulation for the building, and will heat itself.

The playground also provides play areas for children in wheelchairs and blind children, Townley said. The sandbox is built with high sides so a child in a wheelchair could sit beside the box and play in the sand. She said the playground also has tricycles that can be powered by hands instead of legs.

The wall surrounding the play area will be textured, Townley said. Some areas will be smooth, others rough. Stained glass, artwork and chimes also will be placed along the wall to help children expand their hearing and touching senses, she said.

A nature area also is planned in the playground, she said. The area could have a tricycle path, Townley said, but otherwise it will contain grass and plants. The area will be fenced so it can contain a visiting cow or sheep, she said. The ground may be used as a vegetable garden, she said, or as an area for children to dig in the dirt.

"Playing in the dirt is a completely different experience than digging in the sand," Townley said. "It's hard to get mudpies to stick together when you're digging in the sand."

The Herb Society will help plan an herb garden for the children, she said. The children can grow the herbs and put them in foods. She said the garden will have plants with leaves that smell

like chocolate, mint or lemon when they're crushed.

The playground also will contain a fire pit, to teach children about fire safety, Townley said. They can roast marshmallows and hotdogs to show the good side of fire, she said, but they also will learn that fire destroys things.

"We tell children no, no, no, but we don't show them why," Townley said. "Words are abstract and can't help the children see why fire is bad."

The fire pit will be built between the sand and the water area, she said, to teach children how to put out fires.

The playground will also have a creek running through it, Townley said, and a water slide and water pools. Fountains and a water wheel are planned for the pools, Townley said, and the kids can control the water flow to these objects.

The playground has no traditional models of equipment, she said. Items are experimental and designed for more than one use. Even the materials used to make the equipment are experimental, she said.

The play area is made of pressed pine that is guaranteed for 40 years, Townley said. Some areas are made of shredded tires bonded together, she said, and the paint is the same kind as used on submarines.

The soft sculptures that will hang in the playground also will be of experimental materials, she said. It will be a colorful matting that is resistant to wet and cold, she said.

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Who's News

UNL adviser Ann Kopera has received a national award for outstanding achievement in providing academic counsel to students.

Kopera, coordinator of advising in UNL's College of Arts and Sciences, received a certificate of merit award during the National Academic Advising

Association's Conference in Kansas City.

Thomas Laging, architecture professor at UNL, was asked to suggest development strategies for an eight-block area in downtown Boise, Idaho. Laging is a member of a committee formed by the American Institute of Architecture

to provide assistance in regional and urban design.

Dan F. Howard, art professor at UNL, has been awarded \$500 for the best painting in a show at the Hastings College Art Gallery. Howard's prize-winning oil painting is titled "Mystiks" Sweet Communion."

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