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VISUAL AID VOLUNTEERS INC.—Steve Feldman opens contributions to Visual Aid Volunteers Inc., from the Garland Civitan Club. Feldman is Civitan Club president. Receiving the contribution is Mrs. H. P. Shirley, volunteer president, left, and Mrs.

Paul E. Boggs, treasurer. The recently formed group has the aim of aiding the education of blind and partially sighted children in Garland schools. (Photo by Dick Nalley).

Garland School Pioneers In Blind Student Project

By **CLAY NAPIER**, County Editor

GARLAND—The little boy in the front row squinted intently at the teacher through thick glasses. He could barely see.

In the row next to him, a little girl did not look at the teacher at all. But she listened better than the others. She strained all her senses to learn. She could not see at all.

The rest of the kids in the class have normal sight.

You might expect the little boy and girl with visual trouble to find it impossible to compete in a classroom of boys and girls who can see the blackboard and every gesture the teacher makes.

IT ISN'T necessarily so.

Not for a group of blind and partially sighted children in Garland, at least. They're not satisfied to be pushed further behind their wall of darkness by being set aside in special classes.

They're determined to keep in touch with the real world by attending regular classes with the non-handicapped kids.

And they're doing all right, according to a spokesman for a pioneering educational program for blind and partially blind children started about two years ago in the Garland school system.

This week, the kids got a big boost in the organization of Visual Aid Volunteers, Inc., which counts 25 charter members. Organized at the Freeman School, the group says its purpose is "to assist the school in every possible way with the education and training of blind and partially sighted children in Garland."

The organization has a nine-member board of directors composed of Mrs. J. Y. Taylor, Jack G. Smith, Stephen D. Feldman, Mrs. Sue Van Duser, Mrs. ~~Kathryn Shirley~~, Mrs.

J. W. Burg, Mrs. Paul E. Boggs, Mrs. Robert E. Tarpley and Miss Carol Riggs.

MRS. SHIRLEY is president of the group; Mrs. Boggs, treasurer. Mrs. Tarpley and Mrs. Burg will handle the secretarial duties.

Mrs. Van Duser represents the PTA Council, and Miss Riggs is the special projects administrator of the school system.

Members of the new organization will perform such duties as transcribing textbooks into Braille or into larger type, operate recording machines, help raise money, recruit additional volunteers to help the youths, etc.

THEY ALSO are asking for contributions from civic groups, organizations and private individuals to buy Braille Writers, large-type typewriters, tape recorders, sound reproducers and other equipment.

Right now, the emphasis is on recruiting more volunteers.

All Garland and area residents who can devote some time to volunteer work for the organization are urged to send their names and addresses to Visual Aid Volunteers, Inc., P.O. Box 15, Garland.

The organization's bylaws grant voting membership to anyone who will pledge to work at least 50 hours per year on the group's projects.

It goes without saying that the blind kids must work harder, much harder, to keep pace with their classmates. To compensate for the darkness, they must push constantly to fully develop such senses as hearing, smell, touch and instinct.

THEY MUST get special help, too, in the form of training and instruction from a teacher trained for that purpose, and in the form of special equipment to assist them in learning.

Local Women Organize New Club Named VAV

"Visual Aid Volunteers" was the name chosen by the group of local citizens for their organization aiding the visually handicapped children of Garland. The group has been studying braille writing and transcribing for several months under the direction of Miss Carol Riggs, itinerant teacher of the blind and partially sighted in the Garland Public Schools.

The meeting was held Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. Vernon Hurst. The officers elected for the program are Mrs. H. P. Shirley, president, Mrs. R. E. Tarpley, recording secretary, Mrs. J. W. Burg, materials secretary, Mrs. Paul Boggs, treasurer.

Plans were discussed on ways of

interesting more people in this worth while effort, as the need for school texts in braille increases with the educational advance of our visually handicapped children. There are many facets of the help needed, in addition to the writing and transcribing of braille, such as arts and crafts and recreation geared to the visually handicapped.

The Garland Civitan Club, as well as the local P-TA council has shown great interest in this project. Persons interested in volunteering time and service by becoming part of this organization are urged to contact Mrs. H. P. Shirley, BR 6-567, Mrs. Vernon Hurst, BR 6-633, Mrs. Tarpley, BR 8-8219.