

Visual Aid Volunteers honored

Michael Hayslip, new president of Visual Aid Volunteers, told the members at the annual meeting April 18 that a special honorary trustee position has been created for Steve Feldman, who has been a trustee on VAV's board since VAV's beginning 27 years ago.

Feldman spends about half of the year in Florida and is unable to attend all board meetings.

Audra Hurst, acting president, directed reports which told of a variety of services provided for Garland children during the past year.

Funds were provided for:

- Two children in the infant program to enhance their feeding skills.

- Computer software for multiply handicapped students at Williams Elementary to encourage communication skills.

- A variety of adapted switches and toys to develop cause and effect relationships for children in the infant program. Several of these have become a part of the lending library which allows children to take home the same equipment that they have to use at the school. This is often the first opportunity for a severely impaired child to control a part of his environment.

- A pair of prosthetic devices to encourage weight bearing for a child in the infant program.

- A set of large picture cards to aid low vision students in the identification of common objects.

- College scholarships for two visually impaired seniors to be used as they wish, for equipment, tuition or books, to further their education.

- Conference registration fees to allow five professionals to attend a deaf/blind conference in Austin.

Other officers elected to serve with Hayslip are Suzanne Deford, vice president; Barbara Simmons, secretary; Charles Struwe, treasurer; Dennis Cherry, Charles Stokes

and Mrs. Hurst, 3-year trustees. Jimmy Rea is currently a 3-year trustee, and Gail Turner, the senior teacher for the visually impaired in GISD is also a board member.

Ina King, executive manager, reported on the production of the braille transcribers for the year. The year 1988 was the beginning of computer braille by VAV. In January, only two transcribers were learning the computer braille program. By the end of the year, 13 transcribers were proficient with the computer and had produced 452 volumes of braille in 23,733 braille pages. The totals manually produced and computer produced braille for the year were 758 volumes in 49,120 braille pages. This was approximately 50 percent of the total done in Texas for Texas public schools by five volunteer brailling organizations.

Mrs. King also said the four persons in the current braille class who will graduate in May will be the first braille class in the history of VAV which will have the entire class begin their first assignments on the computer.

Awards were presented to all volunteer transcribers who have reached a total of 1,000, 5,000, 10,000 or 20,000 braille pages during the past year.

Awards for 1,000 or more

braille pages went to Lois Foster, Jane Hooke, Jackie Hughes, LuAnn Martin, Betsy McBride, Lalitha Rajagopal and Jane Ramsey, who received VAV pins. Sue Haney received her 5,000 braille page plaque, and Lois Buchanan received a 10,000-braille page trophy. Ms. Haney was also eligible to receive the 10,000 braille-page trophy.

A special award of a quartz clock with engraved plaque was presented to Dennis Cherry, a computer consultant and technician who gave generously of his time to begin the braille computer program.

Gail Turner, a GISD teacher of the visually handicapped infant program, showed slides of the children learning skills such as mobility, eating by themselves, finger painting, interacting on the playground, playing with toys in the classroom, communicating with others and listening to special sounds. There were numerous pieces of special adaptive equipment for the handicapped child which VAV had provided for this program in the GISD.

Following the program, those attending looked at VAV scrapbooks and were served refreshments by Mrs. Hurst.

