

# Retardation Figures Rise

November is National Mental Retardation Month. Mentally retarded persons are not mentally ill or deranged, they are people with a condition that impairs the individual's ability to learn and cope with the normal demands of life. There is no cure for mental retardation, and there are more than six million retarded individuals in the world today with a mentally retarded child being born every five minutes.

Mental retardation is often accompanied by other handicaps, such as speech and hearing impairments, seizures and emotional maladjustments. Most retarded individuals can profit from special training in such areas as behavioral control, self protection, language development and physical mobility. Moderately retarded persons show a rate of mental development about one-half the normal.

In the United States, more than 200,000 mentally retarded adults and children live in approximately 150 residential institutions. And 677,000 children are enrolled in special education programs for the retarded in public schools. However, only about 40 per cent of mentally retarded children needing special training are being reached by these special classes.

A group of Dallas-Fort Worth residents is now campaigning for a number of small residential centers in this area for the mentally retarded. There are more than 1,000 retarded persons in the Dallas-Fort Worth area waiting to enter state schools, such as the one at Denton which houses 1,700. Harold Cobb, who heads a committee of representatives from nine area associations for the retarded, said "A state institution tends to be dehumanizing, and we feel a smaller institution within the community would allow residents to lead a more normal life."

Local associations, such as the Teens Aid Retarded can always use volunteers who are willing to give of themselves to help individuals less lucky than they. The thing to remember is that mental retardation is a condition, not a disease. Because there is no known way to replace or repair intricate brain cells, there is no cure for the condition. There is for indifference to one's fellow man.