

# Marathon helps handicapped

By Helen Risenhoover

Impressed by alumnus Jim Hayes' 205-mile wheelchair push from Austin to Arlington in June, contributors sent approximately \$12,000 to the Arlington Handicapped Association.

People in cities as far away as Tyler and Temple donated money, and one six-year-old Arlington girl gave the contents of her piggy bank — four quarters — to Hayes and the association which faces a drastic budget cut.

"We're looking at a 44.6% budget decrease if the Texas Department of Human Services stops funding our independent living program," said Randee Dewey, AHA's executive director.

The \$12,000 collected so far is only about one-fourth of the total needed to keep the program afloat if state aid is completely shut off.

Directed by Glenda Mims, the independent living program helps 14 handicapped adults who are in school or working and on their way to achieving independence. The clients, ranging in age from 23 to 42, live in the same apartment complex in Arlington. One attendant is assigned to three clients.

"The average cost to the association per day for each handicapped person from Sept. '84 to Sept. '86 was \$20," Mims said. "This compares with \$40 to \$60 a day to keep that person in a nursing home at taxpayer's expense."

The importance of a program which helps handicapped people try to achieve independence spurred Hayes to complete his marathon 25-hour, 53-minute wheelchair push despite unexpected setbacks.

The first occurred outside Austin follow-



Jim Hayes

ing a send-off from Gov. Mark White. Police stopped Hayes and his caravan because the governor's office failed to complete necessary paperwork allowing Hayes to proceed.

Permission secured finally, Hayes resumed the trip with his crew of six accompanying him in two vans.

Hayes, who holds national titles in the 100 and 400 meter wheelchair run and the world record in the 400 meter mixed relay, stopped at intervals on the way to Waco to drink fruit juice made with distilled water, black coffee and Ensure, a liquid protein. Crew members poured water on his head

and shoulders frequently and rubbed his elbows with ice to ease tendonitis.

He arrived in Waco 12 hours after leaving Austin.

After sleeping for several hours at the VA Hospital in Waco, Hayes and his crew started toward Arlington; however, the pain in his fingers, wrists and elbows became intense.

In Hillsboro, crew member and occupational therapist Terry Robinson rebandaged Hayes' hands in an effort to alleviate the pain.

"I was afraid that Terry might not be able to find a way to rebandage that would compensate for the pain," Hayes said. "I thought I might have to give up and ride the rest of the way in one of the vans."

Rebandaging allowed Hayes to push the rims of his sprint wheelchair with his palms although the tendonitis in his elbows and soreness in his wrists continued to make using his fingers on the rims difficult.

By the time he reached the outskirts of Arlington at 6:10 a.m. June 25, he had worn the leather completely off the palm of both gloves. He also had large blisters on each hand when he arrived at UTA's Maverick Stadium parking lot to take part in opening ceremonies of the Sixth National Veterans Wheelchair Games which were held in Texas for the first time.

"The \$12,000 is less than we hoped for, but you can't put a dollar amount on Jim's efforts," Dewey said. "He created a great deal of awareness on the part of the public as to the capabilities of the handicapped, and that was one of his goals too."