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# Good Neighbor Helps Others

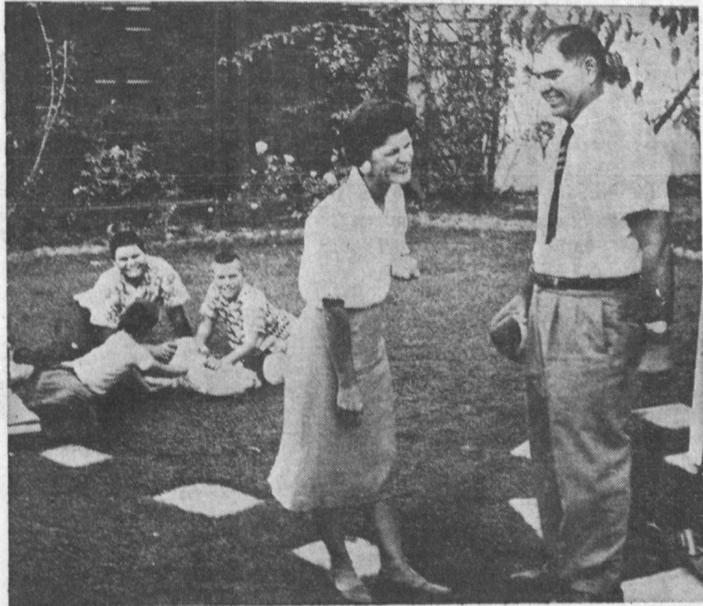
The title Attendance Counselor may strike the old timer as a euphemism for vice principal in charge of woodshed and hickory stick. Not at all. This attendance counselor has to use his head, his instincts, and emotions, or he'll go back to chasing football players as a coach, which often sounds to him like a fine idea.

Cliff Graybehl of North High School is kind and considerate enough to be the YMCA's Good Neighbor of 1959, and formidable enough to tree a bear if he ever blew his top. He has not been known to do so yet.

Cliff, who lives at 1122 Maple Ave. with his wife and three boys, is the last of the original Torrance High coaching staff. When he departed the army in 1946, he attended college in Santa Barbara, obtained a phys-ed job at Torrance High, and transferred to USC, where he won his MA. He became varsity coach at Torrance High and remained until 1954 when he transferred to North High to be phys-ed instructor and coach.

After two years he went into the office as counselor, first on half-time. The school was being populated at such a rate that the incumbent attendance adviser was forced to diffuse her attention over a tremendous area. Cliff soon found himself a full-time counselor, concentrating on absences and tardiness.

Every youngster is a different challenge, Cliff has discovered. Some conditions are quite transparent, as, for example, if a student consistently cuts French class but is prompt and attentive to all others. It requires but little spade work to substan-



HOME'S LIKE THIS—Cliff Graybehl and his sons Robert, 13; Howard, 10; and Steven, wife hash over the day after a round of ball. The boys romp with family dog, Whitey.

tiate the obvious presumption that French is not for this guy or gal.

Logically enough, although the concept would jolt the old grad, Cliff tries to alter the school to fit the student whenever possible. After all, who else is the school to serve?

"In extreme circumstances, we hold continued meetings among teachers, the student, teacher committees, and parents right down to the bitter end. Suspension is only invoked as the very last resort," Graybehl told The Press.

The chief watchword is immediacy: hit the minor infraction now and ferret out the implications before it becomes a major issue.

Every student being different, every project is different.

"We'll be very patient with the youngster who is slow on the mental draw," Cliff explained, "but in the case of a sharp operator who is conscious of what

he's doing—and continues anyway—we might bust him fast."

Often the only reason for suspending a student is to get his parents in for a visit. Some dads and mothers seem indisposed to go to the school for a conference, either because they haven't time or are reluctant to expose themselves to friction.

But the whole operation generally resolves into a triangle, the school, the parents, and the student. The more cooperation from the parents, the easier the result all round.

Cliff's chief job entails late-comers and truants. He calls a student on the first tardy report, just in case there is a fire to be put out. Although he interviewed nearly 70 percent of the student body last year, the problems fall into about 2 percent of the enrollment.

There are many causes for attendance deviation, Cliff noted, and a vital part of his endeavor is seeing to it that a schedule of classes is worked out to permit the student to be graduated.

He sees no sense in depriving anyone of a diploma simply because the individual has a disinclination—or downright aversion—to a certain subject. That is where the theory of fitting the school to the student applies.

Although the effect of his assignment may be that of a disciplinarian, his chief tools are counseling, recommending, and above all—understanding.

Cliff's first love—athletics—never has taken leave of his personality, so he satisfies his longing for the ball field by refereeing junior-college and high-school football and basketball on weekends. He invariably takes his own kids along.

What with serving on the YMCA committee and conducting one-shot basketball and football clinics, his days are full.

## Letters

LETTERS  
EDITOR  
THE PRESS

The Columbia Association for Retarded Children has changed its name to the Southwest Association for Retarded Children and articles of incorporation have been sent to Sacramento.

In September the El Camino Kwanan Club hosted the Scout units sponsored by the association and the Columbia PTA to lunch and a day of miniature golf at Rancho golf course and driving range. An enjoyable time was had by all.

Parents who are interested in the future welfare of their retarded children are invited to our meeting at 7 p. m. Friday at Lawndale Community Center, 14701 Burin Ave., Lawndale, one block west of Hawthorne Blvd. at 147th St.

HAROLD M. McBRIDE, Pres. Southwest Association for Retarded Children

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