

PROVIDES VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Camp Oakland Offers Hope To High School Drop-Outs

By MARY BAHN
Staff Writer

More than 100 boys in the past three years have approached a 20-acre farm with gently rolling hills between Oxford and Lake Orion with suspicion, fear—and hope in their hearts.

A roughly-carved sign, spelling out "Camp Oakland," greets the teenager, who is usually sporting a duck-tail haircut, jeans and a look of defiant resignation.

He is the high school drop-out between the ages of 15 and 17, who is too old to be placed in the fifth grade school level where his qualifications, and too young and unskilled to find work.

HE IS HERE, through the orders of the Oakland County Juvenile Court, to attend the county's first free vocational training school for drop-outs at Camp Oakland's winter work camp.

A warm, but casual greeting is given the boy by Bill Matus, the crew-cut camp director. He has the quiet understanding of a college dormitory counselor backed by 10 years' experience with the County Juvenile Home and a degree in psychology and sociology.

The boy is first shown to his new home, a steel-trussed frame building built by his new roommates, which

includes a large lounge and dining and living quarters for 16 youths. Large white colonial pillars trim the long front porch which looks out onto neatly-mowed lawns, newly-installed sidewalks and a growing garden.

IF THE NEW tenant arrived during daytime hours, the dorm would be deserted except for "Mac" Clement, the bearded cook and housemother. The boys would either be in classrooms for remedial reading and special academic schooling or in shop training.

If he arrived at night, the boys would either be working on hobbies in the papery shop, hewing in town, cutting wood for the fireplace or reading special vocabulary teenage books.

A trip to the auto mechanics shop, also built by the boys, is next on the agenda for the new resident.

INSIDE, EIGHT to 10 boys are tearing apart motors, learning body repair work, fixing lawn mowers and tractors and lubricating cars with \$2,500 worth of equipment donated by residents. Working beside them is Gale Schafer, an auto mechanic with 25 years experience from Lake Orion.

"You won't be a professional mechanic when you leave us, but you'll know how to do an honest day's work. We'll teach you respon-

sibility so you won't be taking three days sick leave each week," Matus tells the boy.

"In your classroom, you'll be learning how to fill out forms, read instructions, anything that will help you in your daily job experiences."

The equipment has helped develop the program into something worthwhile, believes Matus.

"Previously, the camp's efforts at obtaining employment for the youths were largely unsuccessful because they had no vocational skills. They were spending their time chopping wood, building and maintaining the camp and keeping up the garden, but it didn't help them get jobs."

IF THE BOY isn't interested in auto mechanics, a trip to the maintenance shop is in order.

This is where the boys learn carpentry by building their own

homes, plumbing by installing a bathroom for a teacher's room, and cement work by constructing a maze of sidewalks.

Instructor Ralph Shell of Lake Orion also teaches them to repair screws, fix the boats the boys sail on Handsome Lake and build and grade their own and the county's roads. In their schooling, they learn how to measure correctly and read a slide rule.

"ONE OF THE secrets of this program's success," said Matus, "is the staff. We couldn't do it without people who are interested in kids."

The winter camp, modeled after the old Civilian Conservation Corps, has no bars on its windows although the boys have been "in trouble" for such crimes as assault or breaking and entering.

"There's no way we could hold you if you wanted to run, but there is nothing to run from here," Matus tells the new boy.

"We want to train you to be a man. If you want to run from us, you will run the rest of your life."

DISHIE THE low and understanding, Matus said there have been eight runaways. "But the vast majority leave us after five months or a year and live successfully at home, join the service or get responsible jobs."

"This is better than just a trade school," said Matus.

"How the boys get individual attention because we take a small number, while at the same time a county caseworker works out problems in their family."

After they are initially adjusted, the boys are allowed to visit their

home every week end to become adjusted to living with their family again.

Matus said that Ingham County is using the winter camp program as a model for their own project.

"DARLAND County gave Camp Oakland an initial grant of \$10,000 while it has now grown to \$25,000-\$30,000 yearly. Private individuals have invested \$60,000-\$70,000 in the program.

"We are unique among American camps because we are supported by both public and private funds.

"The federal government has been talking about school drop-outs for years. Here in Oakland County we are doing something about it."



FREE RIDE to Downtown Birmingham Stores
For Details See Page 1, Sec BB



RELAXING IN THE LOUNGE BEFORE 'LIGHTS OUT' The boys enjoy their own hobbies after their day of work is done.

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EXAMINING THE NEW ENGINE This donation made the winter camp program a working success.

8-F THE BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC October 15, 1964

Foundation to Sell On NATO Force Christmas Cards

Christmas card ordering time is here again, according to Mrs. Iveling Schiap, Michigan Cancer Foundation's South Oakland County Christmas card chairman.

Mrs. Schiap, 19222 Dorset, Southfield, announces the availability of two different cards this year, one gold and one white. Donations for the cards help the Foundation's fight against cancer through research, education and service. The cards may be imprinted to order if desired.

Michigan Cancer Foundation cards may be seen and ordered at the South Oakland Unit office at 1730 Coolidge, Berkeley, or by contacting Mrs. Schiap.



This man in the striped nightshirt is Jim Schmidt. He has his arms full of distinctive imported toast racks, and phonograph records with some great college and fraternity song hits. He is all ready for the Marathon Sale at Hawthorne Electric this weekend. You see, they're actually giving these things away to folks just for coming in and helping them to stay awake. And they're practically giving away G.E. appliances, TV, and Stereo too.

See page 1, Sec. F for the incredible details!

Now! '65 Chevrolet



'65 Chevrolet Impala Sport Coupe—with new Sweep-line roof.

If what you see moves you, wait'll you take the wheel
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One look at those longer, wider lines tells you it's the kind of car you just couldn't buy before without getting into the higher price brackets. But one drive will tell you a lot more.

When you take the wheel of that clean-cut Impala Sport Coupe above, for example, you've got your kind of engine going for you. There's an even half dozen available this year—anything you name from a quieter 6 to a V8 with the authority of 400 hp.

And the road feels like satin because our engineers came up with a new Full Coil suspension system, teamed it with a Wide-stance

design, and made our famous Jet-smooth ride even smoother and more stable.

On top of that, you've got the kind of space and comfort you'd expect to pay a lot more than a Chevrolet price for. And the kind of elegance, too. Like the look of fine walnut on the Impala's stylish new instrument panel. The rich combination of brocade and deep-grained vinyl upholsteries. The tailored wall panels under the frameless curved windows. And the beauty of Body by Fisher craftsmanship.

Beginning to feel like it's your kind of car? There'll be no doubt about it when you drive the real thing at your dealer's.

See 5 beautiful shapes for '65—Chevrolet, Chevelle, Chevy II, Corvair & Corvette—at your dealer's