Enrollment Spirals Upward As Acadia Parish Adults Trek To Day And Night Schoolrooms

By JOSEPH MASSA
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CROWLEY — There's a new look in education at the Crowley Church Point elementary school. By day, some 170 children pour through the classrooms and corridors, gathering up knowledge in the process.

At night, some 555 adults pour through these same areas and for the same objective — knowledge. The situation is a unique one, obviously, since there are now more adults than children enrolled in the school.

The adults are taking part in adult education classes, sponsored by the School Board and designed to elevate the literacy standing of parish residents. The parish program began February 1 and is proving extremely successful in reaching the people who need to be reached.

When the program began, Acadia had 14 adult basic education classes with a total enrollment of 286 adults.

Two months later, at the end of March, there were classes and 1,054 students. This is an increase of 279 percent.

"The enrollment is increasing daily," says George Bertrand, who is on loan from the State Department of Education to conduct the adult education program in the parish.

Community Effect

Bertrand feels that the program has resulted in a total community effect, not only in the parish level of the people. "People are coming in now, and they're getting to the streets," he says.

Pointing out that the educational project is an "adult attack on adult illiteracy," Bertrand says almost 50 percent of Acadia adults are illiterate, at the present time. Less than 25 percent of those are enrolled in adult basic classes, he adds.

The Acadia adult education program was initiated at the state level by William Dodd, state superintendent of education, and Jim Knott, state director of adult education. It was decided that one parish be selected as a "pilot parish" to determine how much could be done in organizing adult basic education classes with sufficient funds.

A project of this nature has never before been attempted, Bertrand says, because of lack of funds. However, it was determined at the state level that funds from Title II, Part B, of the Economic Opportunity Act were sufficient to allow for this type of operation.

Acadia was assigned the project after being selected from among several other parishes. The average age is 43, and the age range extends from 21 to 61 years.

The women are mostly housewives, while the basic education drive is taken up by those who attend school in the area.

Through the schools, this involves the distribution of circulars to parents through their school children. The circulars are delivered to all adult basic education drives. The women are mostly housewives.

Among the subjects taken up at a typical classroom session are reading, spelling and writing. Lectures on health and citizenship also are given. Most of the work assigned to students is done in workbooks and the teacher assigns each student a task to perform in a day class.

So far, the program has been extremely successful, according to Bertrand. The teacher assigns each student a task to perform in a day class. The teacher assigns each student a task to perform in a day class and he or she goes around to see how each is faring.

"There's also no sense of competition among my students," says Mrs. Lena D. Wilson, who teaches a day class of 15 at Church Point High School.

"They can take their time on any assignment, there's no need to rush," she main.

The program was initiated at the early part of the school year. Bertrand states that the development is definitely on a month's leave, but he believes that the development is definitely under these circumstances.

The number of students has increased from 21 to 61 years. The number of students has increased from 21 to 61 years.
Ineans Bertrand. Adults students were recruited who is the project, but according to these adult guidance of these adult charge of operations. The superintendent and his men also are eligible for this Department of Education. The program were developed by documenting the recruiting phase of this part of the program is on men. The Acadia board has appointed a guidance counselor to assist in vocational guidance of these adult students. She is Mrs. B. Thibodeaux, who is the guidance counselor frame house is used for the class in Branch. At present, there are 67 day students.

Night classes are held in the various elementary and high schools, where space is plentiful after the school children vacate the premises in the late afternoon. There are 58 night classes with an enrollment of 967. Twenty-two of these classes are in Crowley, 14 in Church Point, nine in Rayne and the remainder in rural towns.

Bertrand estimates that the current adult enrollment is about 60 per cent male, 40 per cent female. Also, the enrollment is about evenly split between Negro and white.

The adult education program has become widespread in the parish that two school buses are used at night to transport adult students to class, and to return them to their homes.

Of the thousand or more students, the average age is 40 years, with a range of 21 to 61 years. A project of this nature has never before been attempted, according to Bertrand, because of the lack of funds. However, it was determined at the state level that funds from Title II, Part B, has become so widespread in the parish that two school buses are used at night to transport adult students to class, and to return them to their homes.

Tack on adult illiteracy, Bertrand says, almost 50 per cent of the adult population is the ideal conditions for an all-out adult basic education drive. Factors in the determination of whether to proceed with the program included the low number of Negro and white. The adult education program has become widespread in the parish that two school buses are used at night to transport adult students to class, and to return them to their homes.

The women are mostly housewives and children are (coincidentally) in school. The men are mostly farmers or residents of rural areas who are being given a basic education for a purpose: to learn a skill. The local school board is cooperating with the federal government in that once an adult is provided with enough basic education, is transferred to a trade school (at the expense of the federal government) where he can become employed by leaving a trade or skill. From an adult basic education class, a person - no matter how old - can learn to use mechanics, welding, upholstery or any of a myriad of occupational skills. Women also are eligible for this program, although the emphasis on men is important.

The Acadia board has appointed a guidance counselor to assist in vocational guidance of these adult students. She is Mrs. B. Thibodeaux, who is the guidance counselor for the school. Staff members are selecting several means in recruiting adults for the project, according to Bertrand, 70 per cent of all adults students were recruited.