

**A  
SPECTRUM  
OF  
POSSIBILITIES**

**LAGUARDIA CONTINUING EDUCATION 1984-1985**

# COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

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## PROGRAM FOR DEAF ADULTS

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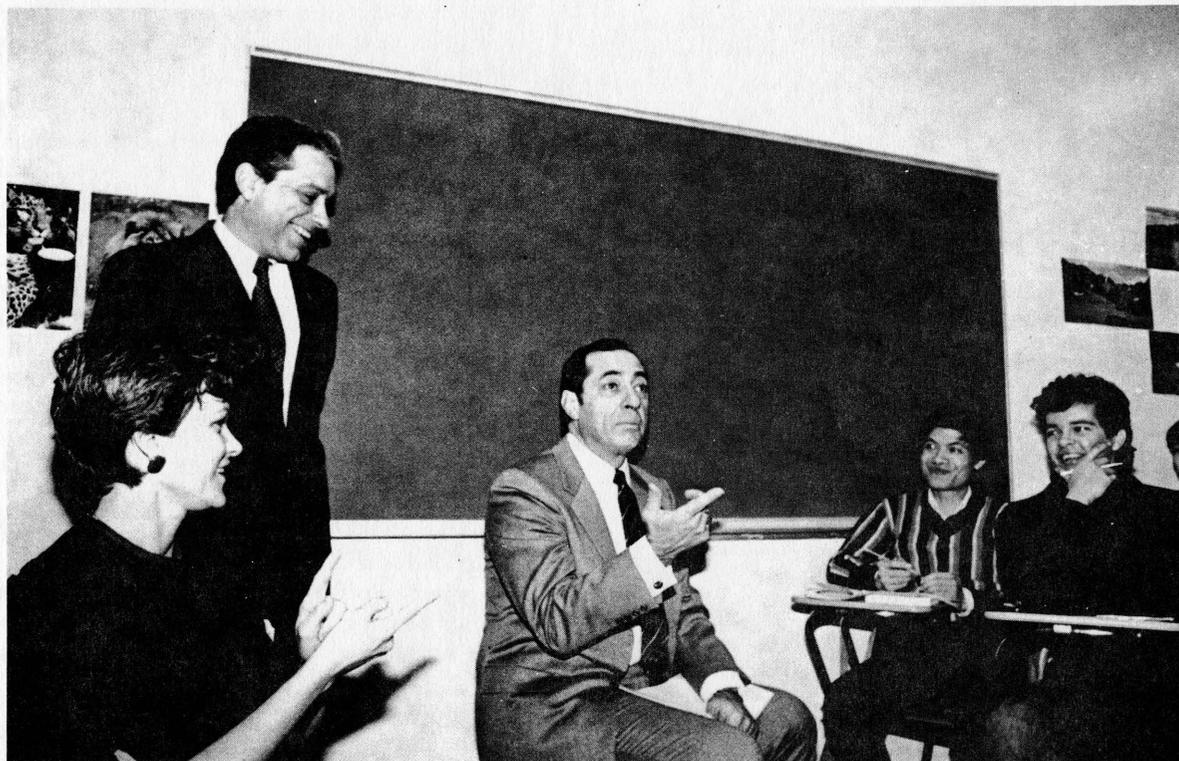
The past year was in several respects a significant one for the Division's Program for Deaf Adults. First of all, the program celebrated its tenth anniversary, no mean feat at a time when shifting educational priorities make the future of even the most commendable programs hard to predict. 1984-85 was also the year that the full impact of the rubella epidemic of the early 1960's began to be felt, with LaGuardia's deaf student population tripling in the last twelve months.

One of the high points of the tenth anniversary celebration was Governor Mario Cuomo's visit to the program in March 1985. The governor visited various credit and non-credit classes, including an

American Sign Language session in which he compared the expressiveness of the Italian language with some of the ASL signs to which he was being introduced. He also met with the program's deaf and hearing impaired students, and pledged \$125,000 from his executive budget for LaGuardia's program, which is, as Governor Cuomo noted, the largest education program for the deaf in New York City.

When LaGuardia developed the Program for Deaf Adults in 1975, educational opportunities for the adult deaf population beyond traditional secondary education were virtually unavailable in the New York City area. This was especially the case in Adult Basic Education, academic skills development and career preparation. Since then PDA has provided direct and indirect service to over 5000 deaf and hearing impaired individuals. It has served an advocacy role as well, bringing the educational needs of deaf adults before the general public through conferences, in-service seminars and newspaper articles.

The program is also remarkable for the diversity that it encompasses. Deaf education is an area that is



often riddled with factionalism, but visitors who come from as far away as London to observe PDA would never know it: LaGuardia lip reading and oral language skills are integrated with American Sign Language. The needs and possibilities of the individual learner determine which combination is most appropriate. The program also combines separate classes for language development with interpreter-supported mainstreaming into the regular college curriculum as soon as the student is ready. The student body itself is remarkably diverse—students from a whole range of ethnic backgrounds, and with varied communication styles, can be seen talking and laughing enthusiastically in the cafeteria most evenings before six o'clock classes. The program has made significant progress toward developing a staff with similarly diverse backgrounds, and continues to work toward this objective.

The majority of the professional staff of the program are deaf and all are fluent in American Sign Language. PDA provides outreach services (on and off campus) in the areas of orientation workshops, technical assistance, consultation and referral. Examples of outreach include an "Orientation to College Programs for Deaf Adults" which is offered to federal employees, students in various programs at the Board of Education, public library staff, and local colleges.

### **ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Because the number of deaf adults and young people eligible for higher education continues to increase, the non-credit Guided Independent Study for Deaf Adults Program (GIS) has once again offered eight levels of instruction this year, and more than 90 students per quarter participated in these classes. Two levels of ESL are also available to assist the estimated 15 foreign students per quarter who enroll to learn English and enhance their signing skills. Four Adult Basic Education/High School Equivalency levels enable non-credit students to improve their reading and math skills, and approximately 10 students passed the high school equivalency exam this year. Classes in college preparation and college study skills serve students with high school diplomas who desire additional academic preparation to insure success in college.

A number of students have continued from this program into the college credit program at LaGuardia. In Winter Quarter 1985 30 deaf students were enrolled as credit students. The college supports deaf students with a number of positive provisions. For example, the Writing Center makes available tutors who are able to sign, and the Communication Skills Department, in cooperation with the Division of Continuing Education, offers a special credit reading course for deaf students, taught by a signing linguistics specialist.

The Program for Deaf Adults also offered non-credit business and community service courses in Microcomputers, Driver's Education and American Sign Language.

### **TRAINING PROGRAMS**

This year PDA continued two training programs for the deaf community which had been piloted in 1983-1984. In part this effort reflects the growing perception that vocational training can effectively be provided in the community college setting. This is particularly appropriate for deaf students, many of whom do not gain marketable skills in secondary school.

#### **WORD PROCESSING FOR DEAF ADULTS**

The second round of Word Processing for Deaf Adults began in January 1985, once again with the aim of helping deaf adults to gain access to word processing job opportunities. Students participate in eight months of training, conducted twice a week in the evening, and involving keyboarding skills, word processing, increased vocabulary skills, career preparation, and personal development. A supervised internship arranged for students prior to job placement is an important part of the program. Word Processing for Deaf Adults was funded through the Vocational Education Act by the New York State Education Department.

#### **JTPA SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR DEAF YOUTH**

This program offers current deaf high school students or recent graduates training in one of three areas: clerical and office skills, word processing, and

## **INTEGRATED SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THE LEARNING DISABLED**

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In January 1985 the Division of Continuing Education and CASE Institute for Research and Development in Occupational Education of the CUNY Graduate School launched a new experimental program for learning disabled young adults who are unable to earn a high school diploma and who want to improve their basic skills, develop work skills and obtain a job. The first cycle of the three year Integrated Skills Program ran from January through August 1985, and attracted 28 young adults, ages 17 through 22.

food preparation. With the assistance of an academic instructor and job developer, both of whom sign, and supported by several part-time teachers, the program this year provided 23 students with marketable skills attained through a variety of activities: academic instruction (particularly English skills development), career education, three month internships supplemented by seminars, and job preparation followed by job placement. This program is funded jointly by the New York State Department of Education and the New York State Department of Employment in cooperation with the Private Industry Council.

The premise of the new program is that many learning disabled young adults at the end of their public school experience would choose additional training for employment and independent living if appropriate training were available to them. The first cycle of the program provided twenty-one weeks of basic



skill training combined with office/clerical skills training, interpersonal skills training (including interviewing), career counseling and a work/study experience on campus. This was followed by an eight week unpaid internship in a work environment. Students were also allowed to use the extra curricular facilities of the college on their own time, and to enroll in non-degree vocational or GED courses at the college.

Plans for the second cycle, to begin in fall 1985, include further integration of basic skills instruction into the clerical and food service components of the course, as well as integration of tutoring directly into the classroom situation. In addition, paid, off-campus work-study situations will be developed to help students begin getting acclimated to the "real world" work environment as early as possible in the program. Emphasis will be placed upon recruiting June 1985 high school leavers, and students referred by advocacy groups to the program.

The program, which was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, aims to develop a field tested community college vocational training program for learning disabled young adults which can be successfully adopted by community colleges in other parts of the country.

## **PROGRAMS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED ADULTS**

Fern Khan, Director  
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The Division, in collaboration with the Association for the Help of Retarded Children (AHRC), has offered during the past two years a series of continuing education courses for mentally retarded adults on Saturdays. This year the program offered courses in Reading and Language Arts, with curricular topics organized to help students develop skills for everyday living. Approximately fifteen students enrolled each quarter, and response to the courses from teachers, parents, and students alike has been enthusiastic.

## **TYPING FOR THE HANDICAPPED**

Fern Khan, Director  
Jack Heller, Master Teacher  
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This free Saturday morning program offers instruction in typing as well as in reading, math, computer skills and American Sign Language to approximately 35 students each quarter. The program is under the direction of Jack Heller, a nationally recognized leader in education for the disabled, and serves a student group which ranges from the mildly to the severely handicapped. Persons who are blind, hearing impaired, emotionally disturbed, autistic, cerebral palsied and victims of stroke, from ages 6 to 70, have participated in the program.

Typing for the Handicapped has been generously supported by the Parents Association for the Handicapped (PATH), under the leadership of Mollie Polanski. The Association, which has secured donations of computers, software, and auxiliary units in the past this year has raised funds to purchase a printer to extend the program's computer system. This equipment is especially critical for the program because its curriculum is based on Jack Heller's book *Typing for the Handicapped* which utilizes the capacity of the computer to generate instructional modules tailored to the needs of individuals with a wide range of disabilities.

Through individualized instruction, students acquire a range of academic, interpersonal, and job related skills. The overriding principle of the program is respect for the dignity of each, regardless of disability. In 1984-85, as an aid to personal development, weekly "rap sessions" were conducted under the leadership of psychologists and counselors associated with the program. Progress has been demonstrated consistently as a result of program participation, with eight students placed in jobs during the past year. The program is jointly funded by the Board of Education and LaGuardia Community College.

## THE COLLEGE FOR CHILDREN

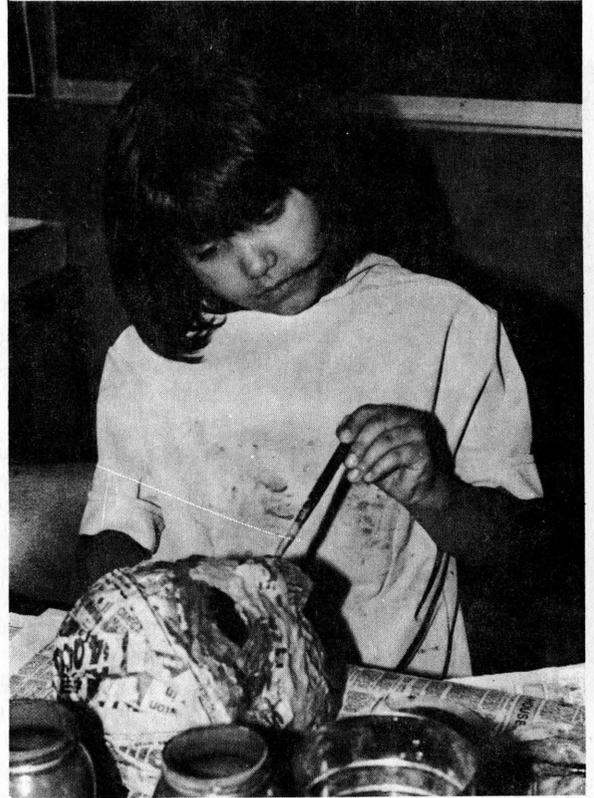
Frances Z. Lee, Coordinator  
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The College for Children was developed to meet the needs of parents and children aged 4-14 who live in western Queens. In 1980, the Division conducted a needs assessment of the surrounding community in order to plan programs directly responsive to the needs of local families. The results indicated that community children lacked opportunities for skill enrichment and recreational activities. Since the spring of 1982 the College for Children has offered a Saturday program providing skills enrichment, exposure to the cultural arts, and physical education opportunities. In addition, the College for Children stresses family involvement in children's education.

This year more than 850 children registered in the College for Children throughout the four quarters, and over twenty different courses were offered, ranging from Reading and Math Tutorials, Computers, and Headstart on Reading for Five Year Olds, to Dance, the Martial Arts, and Breakdance/Pop Workshop. Because of the high proportion of students returning each quarter, intermediate level courses have been developed in Typing, the Martial Arts and Computers so that students can build upon foundation skills. In addition a new, larger computer room has been developed for the students' use, thus enabling the College for Children to accept a larger enrollment in computer classes.

The College for Children's commitment to the special needs of homeless children has also continued during 1984-1985. After a conference on the needs of hotel children in Queens which was conducted by the College in 1984, the College for Children began opening places in its classes for children housed with their families at the Travelers Motel in East Elmhurst, and this practice has continued. In the summer of 1985 a special swim program for homeless children will be conducted by the College for Children at the Bulova School in Woodside.

Further program development in the College for



Children includes courses designed to respond to the needs of deaf and hearing impaired children whose parents are involved in the Division's Program for Deaf Adults. "Exploring N.Y.C.," a summer program for deaf and hearing impaired children will take place on six Saturdays in July and August, and will introduce the children to new and interesting places in the city through a combination of classroom activities, films and field trips. Teachers skilled in communicating with deaf children will lead the sessions, and further classes for deaf children are being planned for later in the year. Finally, the College for Children is in the process of arranging with the Institute for Art and Urban Resources (P.S. 1), for students to study with some of the distinguished artists whose studios will be located at P.S. 1 in the coming year.

## THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Brenda Wiggins, Acting Director  
626-8520

In 1984-1985 the Women's Program continued to be an important resource within the College for mature women returning to school. The typical Women's Program participant is between 30 and 50 years of age, and attends classes part time for the first quarter or two of study. A support system of counseling, specialized workshops and social functions bring women together as they undertake beginning college study.

The Women's Program also placed considerable emphasis this year on offering non-credit courses and workshops, many of them focused on career and personal development, areas of ongoing interest for many women. Holistic health, assertiveness training, stress reduction, time management and "The Promotable Woman" all were offered on campus as well as at local community sites and businesses. Plans are being developed to bring more of these workshops for women directly to the workplace in the coming year.

Over 170 women and men came together in early June to take part in the third annual Third World Women's Conference, a regular Women's Program feature. This year's theme, "Economic Empowerment for the 1990's: A Challenge for Third World Women" attracted representatives from over a dozen area businesses as well as distinguished speakers and facilitators from a number of human service organizations, corporations and professional groups across the city.

employers but have advanced to new job titles because of their new word processing and computer application skills. The program was funded through the Vocational Education Act by the New York State Education Department.

*"For me, working with the Women's Program this year has been very gratifying—offering experiences for women who are returning to school, working to improve women's lives, and really seeing that happen. In the Office Automation Program, for example, we've seen any number of women who have*



*gained not only in their skills but in their self-esteem, their self-awareness. They begin to get in touch with who they are and what they can do. They identify a career path for themselves and really start accomplishing their goals. This is what the empowerment of women is all about. Their growth is fantastic."*

Brenda Wiggins  
Acting Director  
The Women's Program

### OFFICE AUTOMATION TRAINING PROGRAM

Claudia Iredell, Coordinator

Another Women's Program effort, the Office Automation Project, provides women from a wide variety of backgrounds and life situations with an opportunity to retrain and thus compete for better positions in offices and other organizations which use the newer, more sophisticated automated office equipment. In 1984-85 fifty-one women attended classes one night a week and all day Saturday to obtain training in specific office skills including word processing, data base use and electronic accounting practices on microcomputers. Graduates of the one year certificate program have obtained excellent positions using their newly acquired skills in major private corporations. Others have remained with their on-going

# THE VETERANS PROGRAM

Samuel Farrell II, Director  
626-5536

The Veterans Program at LaGuardia Community College is one of the oldest veterans' programs on the East Coast. Firsts funded through the Veterans Upward Bound Program in 1972, the program has been providing educational diagnosis, counseling, tutoring, and classroom instruction to veterans of U.S. military service since that time. 1985 is in many ways a particularly good year to recognize the program, since, as the tenth anniversary of ending of the war in Vietnam, it has been a time for many Americans to remember our veterans, especially those who served in southeast Asia.

A portion of the Veterans Program curriculum this year was built around a number of whole group workshops which were of interest to all students. These workshops included topics such as earth science, graphs and charts, human relations, and the most common grammatical errors encountered in students' writing. Tutorial work and learning laboratory activities, as well as individualized learning modules were then related to these whole group experiences, thus providing students not only with academic support, but also with interpersonal and group support.

The Veterans Program continues to offer both full-time and part-time instruction to students from noon to 9:00 PM Monday to Friday, with part-time students accommodated in either afternoon or evening programs. Through a refined intake testing system, students' academic strengths are pinpointed and students are scheduled for the appropriate level of preparation in each subject area. A multileveled preparation program in grammar/writing and in algebra/computational skills areas continues to be available to program participants. Students once again received instruction on four different levels, Basic Literacy, Pre-GED, GED Prep and College Prep. 124 veterans received instruction during 1984-85, and of the 37 who were tested for a General Equivalency Diploma, 31 passed. Finally, the program continues to pool its expertise in basic literacy with the LaGuardia ABE program to achieve a bank of reading materials to serve students with a wide variety of reading disabilities.

Because 1989 will mark the end of available educational benefits for ex-servicemen who served during the Vietnam era, LaGuardia's Veterans Program will in the future be making renewed efforts to encourage veterans, and particularly Vietnam veterans, to enroll in this program and to take the first step toward improving their opportunities through education. To this end, the program will continue during the coming year to improve the services it offers veterans and to devise even more effective educational methods to support student/veterans as they work to secure the education to which they are entitled.

"I remember realizing for the first time that I didn't like myself. I felt as though I had turned into a nobody; I felt alone and empty inside. . . . As time went on, I began feeling like I wanted to jump off a bridge . . . as though I had no control over my life. Before it became too late to do anything about it, I enrolled in the Veterans Program at LaGuardia in hopes of finding the answers to my problem.

"I started reading books. At first reading was difficult for me, and I had to use the dictionary quite often. After a few days went by though, I suddenly realized that education was indeed the answer to my problem. . . . My motivation came alive like never before. My life was turning around for me. My confusion began to fade slowly but surely. I began feeling good about myself."

From "The Answer" by Freddie Ambrose, student, in *Spectrum*, the Magazine of the Veterans Program at LaGuardia Community College