

All it takes is love

...and love is Doris Rufener

By CAROL KEOCHEKIAN

Love, it's been said, makes the world go 'round. And, it's this same kind of love plus an extra measure of dedication, that keeps Doris

Rufener returning to Camarillo State Hospital week after week, month after month and year after year.

For the past ten years, the attractive red-head, whose blue eyes sparkle when she speaks of

her volunteer work, has donated more than a thousand hours to talk, help teach and just plain lavish her love on emotionally disturbed children at Camarillo State Hospital.

Mental health chairman for

Westlake Women's Club, Mrs. Rufener has been directing the group's philanthropic activities toward assisting the mentally disturbed. Above and beyond Mrs. Rufener's weekly visits to the hospital, the club has adopted

a cottage of boys ages 10-14 at the facility and gives them monthly parties and provides for their other needs.

Just recently, the chairman reports, the women's club donated \$300 to buy drapes for the cottage's day room. The local group also supplies a monthly fee for the boys' merit fund. The youngsters earn points based on their behavior and are rewarded with money from the fund which they may spend in the canteen, she explained.

Doris is enthusiastic as she talks about "her special friend", a 12-year-old boy to whom she pays weekly visits to at the hospital. For about a year-and-a-half, Mrs. Rufener has been taking special gifts to the boy and bringing him home when allowed. He spent Easter vacation with her family and looks forward to his next extended stay.

Westlake Women's Club, the mental health chairman informs, provides all the boys, some 20 in number, with clothing and sweet treats. On Halloween the women brought the boys to Westlake for trick or treat, culminating the evening with a party of cider and donuts. "I would like to do more of that," she said thoughtfully.

Mrs. Rufener began her volunteer work at Camarillo State Hospital as a member of the Woodland Hills Woman's Club. After moving to Westlake about seven years ago she continued her visitations on an independent basis until the Westlake Women's Club started its program two years ago.

Always centering her activity around children, Mrs. Rufener worked as a teacher's aide for three years at the hospital school. She is very impressed with the staff at Camarillo and does not see the state facility as "a dead-end road".

"They have (referring to the

staff) an active program geared toward curing those children." Her on-site observations have shown that the staff is composed of "very well-trained, dedicated young people. I have seen many boys that have been discharged." Doris told the story of one boy, who had been discharged and served in the Army. On returning to the hospital for a visit, he recognized her. "They do great things with them," she went on to praise the staff. "They really do."

In a soft voice, melodic with the strains of Southern heritage, Doris describes one of the touching moments in her volunteer work. "It was last fall," she began, "pouring rain. We almost all drowned going from the car to the cottage. The boys were so happy to see us. 'We didn't think you would come,' they said. 'Other volunteers don't come when it rains.'"

Although time-consuming and sometimes unpleasant, working with these children, according to Mrs. Rufener, has its reward in being so greatly needed and appreciated. "You get a thousand kisses," she laughs. "It's a wonder," she mused, "that I'm not always sick with the germs that are passed around. The good Lord must be taking care of me. I've only had one cold since we've

been in California."

Wife of Kenneth, a retired colonel of the Strat Command, and mother Karen, a student at State University, Doris, who's immersed in UCLA, Doris has lived in areas of the United States since her 1946 marriage.

She met her future husband in New Guinea while stationed with the World War II. Fate brought them together again in the states after the war. After assignment to several different countries, Lt. Colonel Rufener was stationed in Southern California. The family has since.

Correspondent Westlake Women's Club has also been a member of the Ventura County Wives Association. Her major part of her time is spent at the hospital.

Her reason for volunteering is "because of the need, to realize I'm doing something for Doris and the other children."



A lot to give

Despite her busy schedule as volunteer for emotionally disturbed children, Doris Rufener has time to give at home as well, where she works in the garden among her other hobbies. (News-Chronicle Photo by Carol Keochekian.)

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