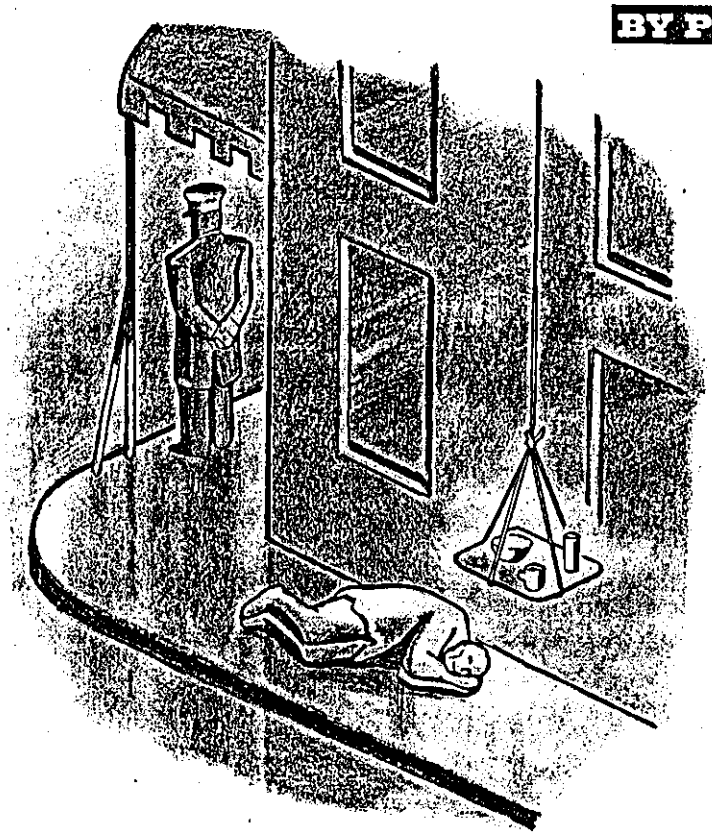
NEW YORK

HAD IT WITH PRIDE, COVETOUSNESS, LUST, ANGER, GLUTTONY, ENVY, AND SLOTH?

IT'S TIME TO START

DOING GOOD

BY PETE HAMILL



ONCE UPON A TIME, BEFORE THERE was history, some primitive man must have looked up from his fire and observed the approach of a stranger through the empty world. The first man was consuming the gains of a lucky hunt. He paused, saw hunger and fear in the eyes of the stranger, and was moved to something that resembled pity. Then he reached for a charred rib and handed it to the desperate stranger. In that moment, charity was born.

That instinct to help the luckless seems deeply embedded in the human experience. You need not believe in anything as blurry as "human nature" to recognize that although the poor are always with us, so are generosity and benevolence. The admonition to care for the weak and the unfortunate is built into all religions.

In the New Testament, Luke 6, Christians are told that they should "give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them."

This is echoed in the Koran: "For him that gives in charity and guards himself against evil and be-

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID SUTER

lieves in goodness, we shall smooth the path of salvation; but for him that neither gives nor takes and disbelieves in goodness, we shall smooth the path of affliction. When he breathes his last, his riches will not avail him." Most social, religious, and philosophical systems acknowledge that while some human beings seem always to be better off than others, their comparative strength also carries a responsibility to help the weak. This has always been true in America, particularly in New York.

Charity is not a concept without critics. The past fifteen years in New York have had more than their share of shattered liberal illusions; the extravagant goals and hopes of the sixties often gave way to no hope at all. As it became clear that decades of neglect and poverty would not be instantly erased by glib slogans, mere goodwill, or the construction of bureaucratic programs, many New Yorkers simply gave up the struggle to help the disadvantaged and retreated to the gray zone of the Big Chill.

The exhausted, cynical spirit of the seventies was most elegantly labeled by Tom Wolfe in this magazine as "the 'Me' Decade"; in turn, the I'm-all-right-Jack, I've-got-mine attitude became the philosophical engine of Reaganism. Many veterans of the upheavals of the sixties pulled back, to tend private gardens, to raise children, to build careers, to eat and live well, leaving such airy abstractions as charity to the indifferent hacks of the state.

"I just gave up, and I'm not ashamed of saying it," one old political friend told me not long ago. "I did everything I could in my day and then realized I really couldn't make any difference. I couldn't change the welfare system. I couldn't create a half-million jobs. I couldn't teach people how to get up in the morning, every day of the week, and go to work. I couldn't make dumb people smart. Most of all, I couldn't help people who wouldn't help themselves."

Such feelings have recurred throughout the history of charity. In New York, as elsewhere, cycles of great social involvement and reform are invariably followed by disillusion and cynicism; the ethos of John Lindsay gives way to that of Ed Koch, after a brief stop in the neutral ground of such men as poor Abe Beame.

In one decade, those who believe in charity and good works are praised as great New Yorkers, their names given to schools, foundations, museums, parks, and streets; in another decade, they are sneered at as bleeding hearts, do-gooders, uplifters, even as threats to the eternal order of things.

A large number of citizens always follow the spoor of fashion; they change politics, beliefs, passions, and social concern the way some people change clothes. And no matter what the current fashion, the poor do not go away.

Nevertheless, about $7.1 billion in government money is spent each year to help the needy in New York, about half of it coming from the city itself. This covers standard welfare, mental-health, and medical services, and care for neglected and abused children; food, clothing, and shelter for the homeless and day programs for children and the elderly.

The private sector adds over a billion in charitable donations, and hundreds of thousands of people do volunteer work for the approximately 2,500 nongovernment agencies that provide health and human-resource services in the city.

Of course, it isn't enough. But the warming idea of charity seems to be returning to American life after one of the more arctic intervals of the century. The young, who seemed to have lost even a primitive sense of responsibility for the grief of strangers, responded with enthusiasm, even passion, to Bob Geldof's Live Aid and Band Aid campaigns to feed the hungry in Africa. Willie Nelson's Farm Aid concert was less successful, but when drought ravaged the farms of the American South last summer, private citizens responded with free hay and other help.

What's more, the sight of thousands of homeless human beings on the streets of the nation's richest city has been a goad to New Yorkers, young and old, to do something. The plight of the inhabitants of the welfare hotels has inspired others to take some form of action, as criticism or protest.

The city and state are struggling with this flood of Reagan-era casualties (not unique to New York, as a visit to the Gulf Coast oil patch recently showed), and there is a growing understanding that the worst response of all is indifference.

But suspicion toward programmatic remedies remains healthy and formidable. One result is that many citizens are trying to help their fellow human beings in the most familiar way possible: with a direct helping hand. In this issue, you can read about some ways to help those who must depend upon the kindness of strangers.

THE SHAME OF THE CITIES

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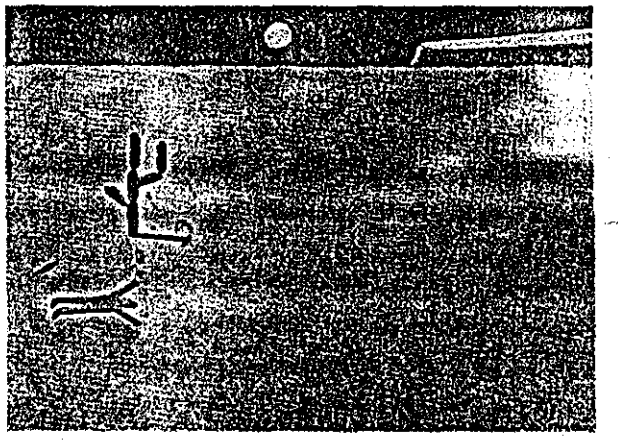


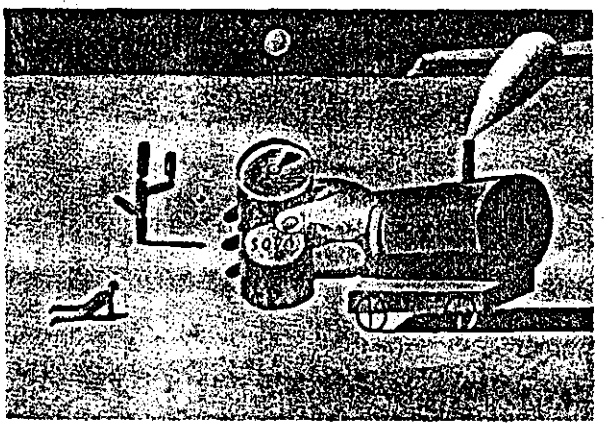
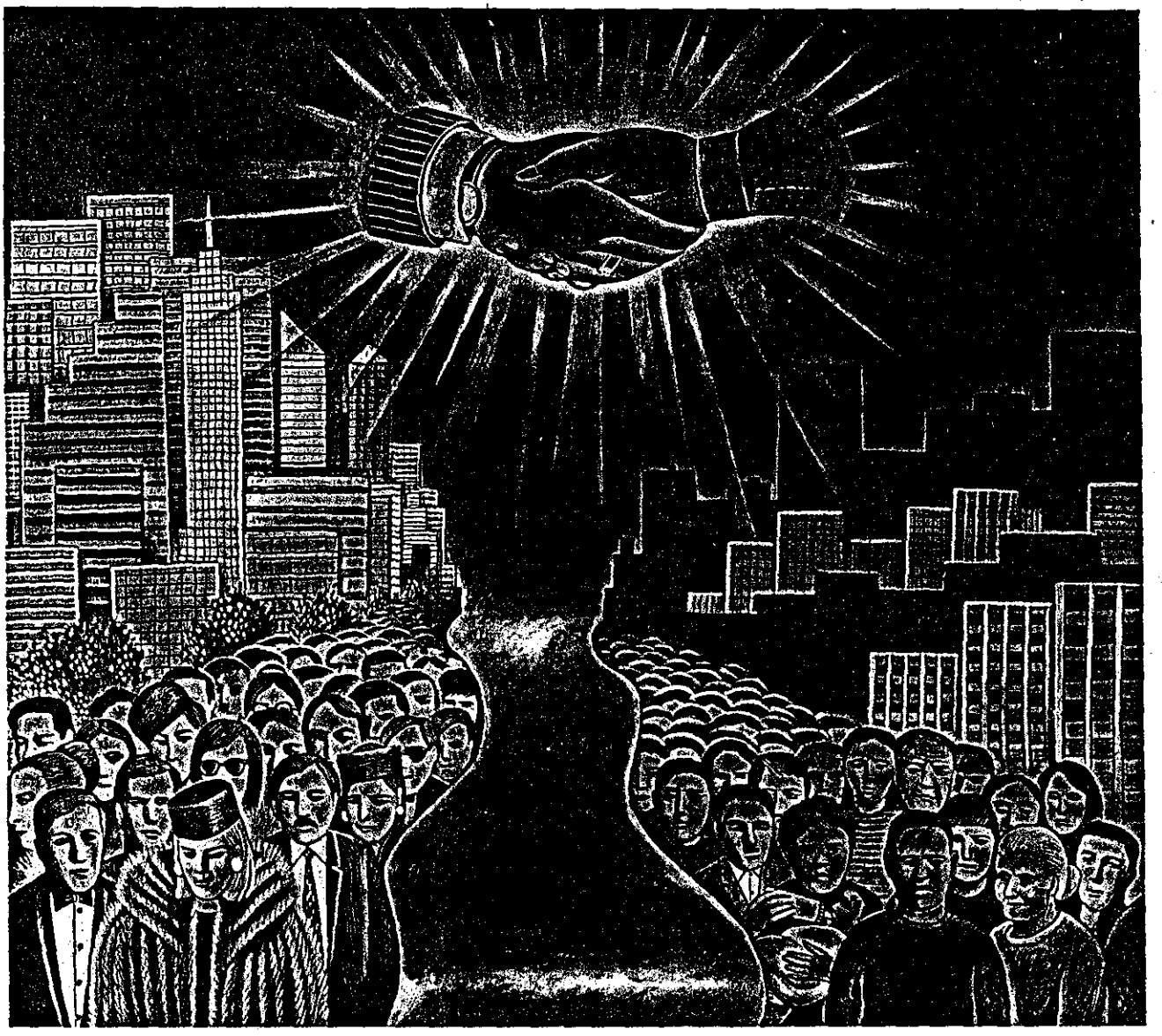


ILLUSTRATION BY MARIS BIS



HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

Some people have fallen into the parentheses of time and space, standing very still in the swirling crowd.

THE MODERN IDEA OF CHARITY ARRIVED IN AMERICA with the first Europeans. In 1630, when the Puritan John Winthrop sailed to New England to build his city on a hill, he preached "A Model of Christian Charity" (in which charity was a synonym for love). He said, in part, "We must not look only on our own things but also on the things of our brethren." From the beginning, the early colonists formed what were essentially mutual-assistance societies. They were serving God by exercising charity, but the notion was also in their self-interest. In a hostile environment, all were needed for the common enterprise.

To be sure, the Christian colonizers were not simple altruists. Many used charity as a moral cover for conquest; they would take the land from aborigines while insisting they were actually saving heathen souls. If in the process of converting pagans they also made small fortunes from beaver pelts, that was only further proof of the wisdom of God.

And from the beginning, charity and good works had goals beyond the simple act of doing good. Cotton Mather stated the hidden agenda of charity quite clearly. Doing good was not only an "incomparable pleasure" but was also "sound policy, a mild but effective instrument of social control."

Charity and its brother, philanthropy, have been used across the years not simply to maintain control of those receiving alms, but to prevent outraged citizens from moving in on the huge fortunes. This trick of economic survival (it goes back at least to the Medicis and probably to the Pharisees) was mastered in this country by the robber barons of the nineteenth century, then perfected by industrialists like Henry Ford. Alas, it was completely missed by most latter-day millionaires, thus depriving us of some wonderfully entertaining possibilities. There is, for example, no Meyer Lansky Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

But philanthropy and charity are not the same. Charity, in most cases, is given to the poor or unfortunate citizen. But, in the words of historian Robert H. Bremner, "the aim of philanthropy in its broadest sense is improvement in the quality of

ILLUSTRATION BY JOO CHUNG

human life. Whatever motives animate individual philanthropists, the purpose of philanthropy itself is to promote the welfare, happiness, and culture of mankind." Philanthropy serves the ages; charity, this evening's meal. It is easier to build a museum than to deal with the apparently intractable problem of poverty. And the temptation is always to blame the poor for their own plight.

Here again, Cotton Mather was there early. In his writings, he introduced another notion that has been central to the discussion of charity in America: the distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor. "The poor that can't work are objects for your liberality," he wrote. "But the poor that can work and won't, the best liberality to them is to make them." That is at the core of workfare schemes; this idea is built into the rage of those who must pay through taxes for welfare, and into the despair of those who receive it, knowing it can never be enough for a decent life. It is no accident that many proud citizens will say, with heat, "I don't want your charity." And from the days of the workhouse in eighteenth-century England to the fetid squalor of our welfare hotels, the charity case often is reduced to the meanest form of human existence.

As with so many other things in history, there was from the beginning an element of moral incoherence to the idea of charity. We were all God's children, the Christians said, but slavery was permissible; the kind slaveholder, the generous Indian-killer swiftly became figures in the American consciousness. And though charity was a form of honoring God, its practice was always selective. It was one thing to aid a down-and-out white European, another to extend generosity and humane values to someone with a darker skin. The Bible was too often preached at gunpoint, most strangers greeted with outright hostility.

The first Jews to arrive in New York, for example, experienced that confused Christian morality from the day they stepped off the boat. These were 23 men, women, and children who arrived in New Amsterdam in the late summer of 1654, destitute Sephardim who were fleeing an outbreak of anti-Semitism in Brazil. The Dutch were relatively liberal at home (there were seven Jews among the 167 stockholders of the Dutch West India Company, which owned New Amsterdam), but these first Jewish immigrants came up against the imposing figure of Peter Stuyvesant, the governor of the tiny colony at the Battery and a vicious anti-Semite. Stuyvesant immediately wrote to the Dutch West India Company, according to writer Milton Goldin (in his useful book *Why They Give*), demonstrating his Christian charity by demanding that the penniless Jews be expelled from New Amsterdam. The company at first agreed, then listened to the pleas of Dutch Jews and let the refugees stay. There were some conditions: Jews could not own stores, vote, trade with the Indians, hold office, buy property, or serve in the militia. Stuyvesant obviously intended to starve the Jews out of his little fiefdom. But as had happened so often before in Jewish history, the group banded together for its own welfare, worked around the restrictions, survived, prospered. And when later waves of Jewish immigrants came up the Narrows, there were institutions ready to serve them, outside and parallel to the larger Christian society.

That experience was to be repeated by other immigrant groups in a pattern that is now integral to the dynamics of New York. The Irish did it by organizing around the cities and counties from which they had come; they then formed larger, citywide societies, built up their power in the Roman Catholic church, entered politics, and finally took over Tammany Hall, which they held for almost 80 years. The Italians did the same (in the cases of most large-scale immigrant groups, there is a period when the group also dominates the city's crime). All were forced into mutual aid by the hostility of the society they encountered upon arrival. Today, Puerto Ricans, West Indians, Koreans, Dominicans, Chinese, Cubans, Vietnamese, and oth-

OFFERING A HELPING HAND

In spite of the currently fashionable ideologies of greed and selfishness, people continue to surprise us.

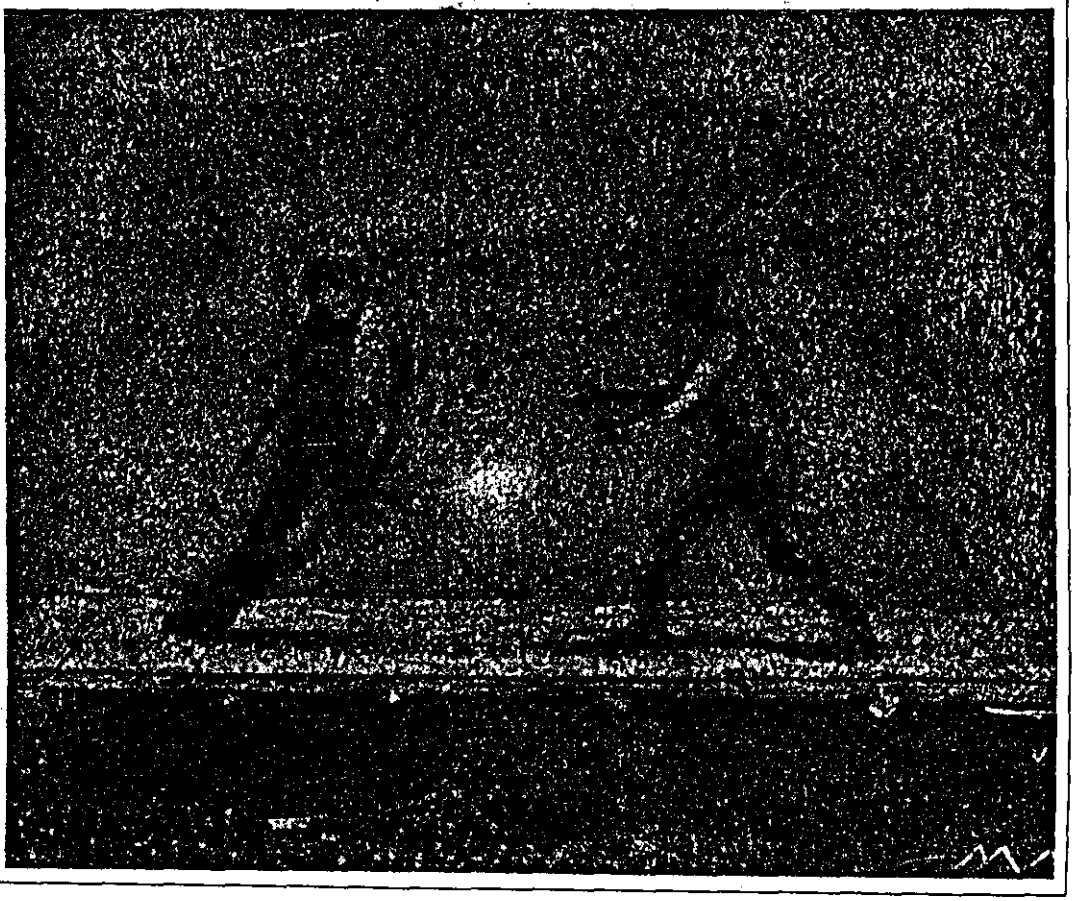


ILLUSTRATION BY MATT MAHURIN

ers have formed similar groups for the traditional American reason: to take care of their own kind.

But there are many others who have no such groups to join. They've fallen into parentheses of time and space, standing very still in the swirling crowd. Many are cut off from their families, sick with heartbreaking diseases, ashamed to admit vulnerability or failure, or adrift in the self-induced coma of drugs. Others—adults and children—are runaways, in flight from the intolerable, from responsibility, from reality itself. A growing number have committed the unforgivable sin of growing old. Some are psychiatric casualties of the city. A few are rummies or outright bums. Some are still fighting the first hours of the Tet offensive. A few are physically unable to work or play. They are among us. We see them every day. And there seem very few ways to help them without demeaning them. Or without questioning our own motives.

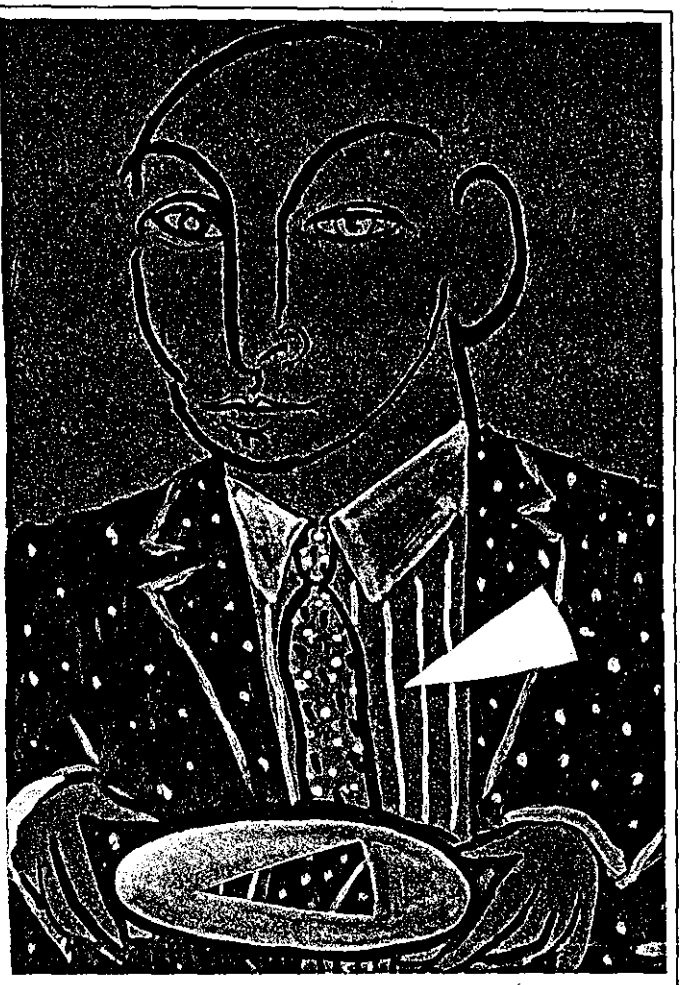
And yet, in spite of the apparent hopelessness, in spite of the currently fashionable ideologies of greed and selfishness, human beings still pause beside the fallen stranger and offer a hand, to help him rise to his feet. In spite of everything, human beings continue to surprise us.

GENERALLY, NEW YORKERS DON'T MAKE THE SAME mistakes again and again: Keep walking against a red light and you will end up under the Sixth Avenue bus. But there seems no end to human folly, and even in New York, the saga of programmatic stupidity seems impervious to criticism or scorn. Consider welfare. Most people now agree that one of the most terrible American mistakes was the institutionalizing of welfare. Conceived as temporary "relief" during the Great Depression, welfare soon became a permanent way of life in most American cities. From the left and from the right, the system is despised; most Americans believe that work should be as central to living as food and sex and sleep.

But welfare can't now be abandoned, because there is nothing to take its place. If anything, the hated system seems certain to expand, in a city with a 35 percent high-school dropout rate, where children are giving birth to children and nobody seems able to find the biological fathers of those new arrivals. Thousands of New Yorkers are heading for the twenty-first century with only the crudest ability to read and write. The signs, as the editorial writers might say, are ominous.

In some interpretations, the withdrawal of public assistance during the Reagan era is equally ominous. Yet the government's insistence that charity be returned to the private sector has helped awaken a sense of individual responsibility, something that in part evaporated during the height of the welfare state. Now, in the face of overwhelmingly bleak realities, some more fortunate New Yorkers are trying again to deal in a generous way with the luckless men and women with whom they share this city. It is futile, perhaps even unseemly, to question their motives. For some, it might be an obscure form of personal expiation; for others, a way of saying thanks to a city that made their lives possible. Some might consider this latest version of charity a form of enlightened self-interest, a means of stalling and smothering the possibilities of disastrous social upheaval. Some might simply want to add a sentence or two to the history of human decency.

In the end, motive doesn't matter. A number of people are practicing charity. And they do have certain things in common. The most important is a sense of limits. Not one of them talks about eradicating poverty. Such an ambition is too grandiose, too reminiscent of the War on Poverty and other American defeats of the recent past. These citizens are wary of ideologies, suspicious of abstractions. Their goals are more modest. You might not be able to end illiteracy, but if you teach one child to read, you have done something valuable with your time on earth. You might be unable to deal with public hysteria, homophobia; help one AIDS patient to die with dignity and you have added to the meaning of living. Help an old woman with her shopping, try to clean an empty lot, wean some kid off drugs, get another to stay in school: These are specific, local, practical tasks. They do not moan with the organ music of grand schemes. You can see the results. And all are worth doing.



If you teach one child to read, you have done something valuable.

THE GIFT OF GOOD INTENTIONS

In most cases, the new practitioners of charity have been tempered by experience. They know that the era of the federal government as Papa of Us All seems to be drawing to an end. They know that what starts out as a splendid idea in Washington often ends up in the Bronx wearing the cement face of the state; money for the poor is eaten by poverty racketeers, the poor once again defrauded by con men and hustlers. Cynicism is deepened; human lives continue to be wasted or lost.

But they do not agree that nothing can be done. In small, simple ways, they are returning to the origins of this most basic human impulse. Here comes a stranger (they say). His eyes are frightened. His hands and his stomach are empty. He is, in fact, simply an unlucky version of you, abroad in the chilly night. And realizing that, you must reach for something that will help him to live. You must reach toward the fire. You must invent again, as if for the first time, an idea called charity. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN MARYANSKI

How to HELP

A Guide to Volunteering

BY AVA PLAKINS

TOBY FINNEMAN, a copywriter and vice-president of the advertising firm Cunningham & Walsh, started reading to the blind at the Lighthouse three years ago. "I read textbooks or professional journals to people who need my eyes," she says. "Before I started, I was all puffed up with my own sense of charity. But once I began, I realized it's a *privilege* to give to someone without expecting anything in return. Especially because I'm single, I had the need to do something that wasn't just for myself.

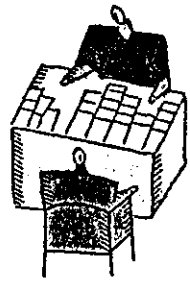
"So many New Yorkers are alone and living for themselves. You make your salary, you go to Bloomingdale's, you become like Imelda Marcos—all possessions and no purpose. Reaching out gives you a sense of purpose. People who volunteer are looking for something outside the small circle of their own wants and needs."

"It used to be that volunteers were do-gooders or people with a lot of time on their hands," says Patricia Olshan, co-director of the Yorkville Volunteer Center, a referral agency. "Now there are as many reasons for volunteering as there are volunteers." Some people are still motivated by altruism; others are bored with their jobs. Many just want to meet people. If there is anything common to the reasons for volunteering, it is probably that people need to feel needed. "That's especially true in New York, which attracts dreamers from other places," says Marcia Stein, executive director of Citymeals-on-Wheels. "Many of them have left behind families and friends, and they miss them. When you volunteer, you make an investment in the city, and it feels much more like home."

Whatever the volunteer's motive, agencies are really looking for only one thing: a sincere desire to help. Most agencies will screen prospective volunteers to make sure they have come to the right place. They will also train them to do whatever is necessary. Indeed, a volunteer should wonder about the importance of any skilled job that does not require screening or training. "It's a measure of how much respect the agency has for the client and for you, the volunteer," says Caroline Stewart, coordinator of volunteers for the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies.

If none of the jobs described here interest you, or if you have no idea what you want to do, make an appointment with one of the referral agencies listed. Many volunteers arrive at these agencies with nothing but motivation; the staffers know how to match the seekers with a job worth doing.

Keep in mind, too, that the following list is just a small sampling. There are thousands of helping agencies in this area, and no list can be exhaustive. Many smaller agencies that can use volunteers have not been included here because they lack the facilities and personnel to deal with a large number of phone calls. And those agencies that require any religious affiliation on the part of volunteers or recipients have been excluded.



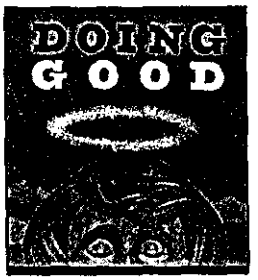
PLACES TO START: REFERRAL AGENCIES

ACCORDING TO EXECUTIVE director Winifred L. Brown, the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center (61 Chambers Street, 566-5950) is the largest volunteer clearinghouse on the East Coast. On any given day, it has a list of 10,000 job openings in nearly 5,000 public and private nonprofit agencies.

ILLUSTRATED BY PHILIPPE WEISBECKER

THE LIMITS OF KINDNESS

Those volunteers who work with the homeless know that they cannot solve the problem. But without their help, the homeless would be much worse off.



The center can place almost anyone in any kind of work. MVAC also serves as a broker for those who want to donate clothing, furniture, household items, but don't know how. "Many companies call us when they're redecorating their offices," says Brown. "You're sitting on an Avon Company couch, for instance." If your office gets extra theater tickets, books, or passes to the ball game, call MVAC. "We'll know exactly what to do with them," Brown says. MVAC itself can use volunteers, either for placing others or for special projects. For instance, the agency is now working on part two of *FAMIL*, a guidebook on what to do when a family member is arrested.

THE **Yorkville Volunteer Center** (356 East 88th Street, 427-5754) places volunteers with over 300 agencies in all boroughs of the city. "Very often, people who come in here don't know what they're interested in," says Patricia Olshan. "But after we talk to them a while, we get an idea what their interests are, and we go to our treasure chest of jobs and pull a few ideas out." The volunteer usually visits three or four agencies and chooses the one that suits him or her best.

United Way of Tri-State (99 PARK AVENUE, at 40th Street, 557-1059) is made up of 38 local United Way partners, each in touch with its own set of member groups. The Greater New York Fund, for instance, works with over 400 agencies; there are 1,700 agencies in the Tri-State group. United Way will pass volunteers on to one of its member groups or to another referral agency.

Catholic Charities (1011 FIRST AVENUE, at 55th Street) runs many helping programs. It is best to call each of them directly. The Holy Name Center for Homeless Men (18 Bleecker Street) is a drop-in center that provides homeless men with showers, food, and a mail center. Call Monsignor John Ahern (226-5848). For other work with the homeless, call Sister Karen Kunkel (431-9057). Women who would like to visit lonely people in hospitals or nursing homes should call May Garvin (371-1000) and ask about the work of the Ladies of Charity. The St. Vincent de Paul Society, organized at the parish level, makes home visits to the needy; call Vincent Reilly (755-8616). Teens and adults who would like to help in family and community anti-drug abuse activities can work in the "Drugs, Alcohol, Rehabilitate, Educate" program; call Father Terry Attridge (371-1000). Catholic Charities can also make good use of professionals. Two orthodontists, for instance, put braces on the teeth of a bunch of needy children.

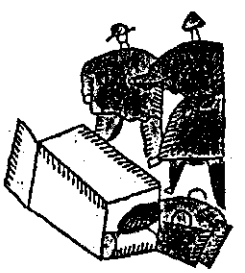
THE **Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies** (281 Park Avenue South, at 22nd Street, 777-4800), which works with about 800 agencies in the metropolitan area, can place any volunteer in a good position. "We spend up to an hour interviewing each person," says Rita Lambek, director of the department of training, education, and volunteer services.

"THERE IS PRACTICALLY NO HUMAN CONDITION for which we don't have a program," says Peggy Tishman, president of **UJA–Federation of Jewish Philanthropies** (130 East 59th Street, 753-2288). The Jewish Information Referral Service, hot line (753-2288 on weekdays), run by volunteers, can put you in touch with any of this group's 130 agencies, 29 community centers, and ten associated hospitals. People who want to work with children, the elderly, the homeless, immigrants—you name it—can be accommodated here. The federation also runs programs aimed at revitalizing old neighborhoods: Experts in finance, banking, law, and real estate are helping upgrade twenty declining neighborhoods across the city. Volunteers also clean and repair old synagogues that have fallen into disrepair as their congregations have aged.

CSS/RSVP/NYC (COMMUNITY SERVICE Society/Retired Senior Volunteer Program/New York City, 36 East 22nd Street, 614-5485) places volunteers over 60, but it does far more than that. "We check every placement out, we act as advocates for the elderly, and we provide accident insurance and transportation assistance to our volunteers," says director James Sugarman. Started twenty years ago on Staten Island, the group was so successful that the idea was expanded nationally in 1971 by ACTION, the federal volunteer agency. Now there are over 700 RSVP agencies across the country; the New York City chapter—with almost 10,000 volunteers in 800 locations in all five boroughs—is the largest.

This agency places elderly volunteers in a large number of settings, including high-school nurseries where teen mothers can leave their babies, and soup kitchens, shelters, and schools. It trains them to counsel hospital patients about their entitlements. It sends them to teach aerobics in senior centers. Also, through RSVP, seniors in nursing homes have knit many a warm hat for a homeless child. Perhaps best of all, though, RSVP keeps seniors involved in the community at a time when many feel that they are no longer needed. "One volunteer said to me, 'The more you live, the less you die,'" says Sugarman. "That's why they volunteer."

A SPECIALIZED PART OF THE MAYOR'S Voluntary Action Center, the **Second Careers Volunteer Program** (51 Chambers Street, Room 1215, 566-1808) places retired professionals, managers, and executives in interesting positions. The program is, of course, plugged into MVAC's incredible job bank.



THE HUNGRY AND THE HOMELESS

THE HUNGRY AND THE HOMELESS are the most visibly needy of all our neighbors. The volunteers who work with them know that the problem cannot easily be solved. But without volunteers, the homeless would be in far worse shape. "We're in the midst of a serious housing crisis," says Beth Gorrie, of the Coalition for the Homeless. "Obviously, the solution must come from government. But the participation of volunteers in this crisis is vital."

Donating Surplus Food

City Harvest (11 JOHN STREET, Room 503, 349-4004; ask for Jean Thomas) matches hungry people with surplus food. In nearly four years, this group has distributed enough food—

"These are the neediest children in the city," says Cletus Hudson, director of development for Children of Bellevue. "They need a friend."

all of which would otherwise have gone to waste—for more than 3.5 million meals. If you have any kind of food to spare (packaged, prepared, or fresh, in quantities from 5 to 50,000 pounds), this group will collect it for distribution to agencies feeding the hungry. To offer food, call daily from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. (ask for the dispatcher). Pickups are made from 7 A.M. to 5 P.M., later if necessary, Monday through Friday. If you call ahead, the group will pick up perishable food right after an event.

City Harvest will help volunteers set up a canned-food drive in an office, church, synagogue, or apartment building. When the bins are full, the volunteer calls the agency and it picks up the food. City Harvest collects year-round for the needy, who are fed at soup kitchens, shelters, and free-food pantries in all five boroughs.

HONEY (HELP OUR NEIGHBORS EAT Year-round, P.O. Box 1251, Murray Hill Station, New York, New York 10156-0605 call 683-8654 or 683-4624) collects nonperishable food for the poor—especially the elderly poor—who live in the Murray Hill area. Volunteer greeters pass out fliers at the local D'Agostino's (at 35th Street and Third Avenue) and encourage shoppers to donate one item to the agency's bin. Volunteers empty the bins daily and pack the food in boxes. D'Agostino's stores the boxes, and a local social-services agency picks them up and distributes them. Greeters need spend only an hour per week at the store, while bin-checkers should allot half an hour.

Food for Survival (THE HUNTS POINT Co-op Market, Building F, the Bronx, 991-4300; ask for Pamela Green) distributes bulk donations of all foods to the poor and needy—through food kitchens and pantries, senior centers, day-care centers, and shelters for the homeless, all around the city. Earlier this year, for instance, Food for Survival distributed over 100,000 pounds of spring lamb donated by the New Zealand Lamb Company. Donations needn't be so large, however; a case of food is fine. Food for Survival can use warehouse helpers to sort food and truck drivers to pick up and deliver it. Volunteers can make site visits with the staff to check on recipient groups. Photographers, writers, and editors can work on a quarterly newsletter. Finally, the group needs telephone-order clerks to take food orders over the phone. Right now, the group has only one phone, and the line is often busy.

VOLUNTEERING AT SOUP KITCHENS

EVERY MONTH, MORE THAN 425 soup kitchens and food pantries across the city provide about 1 million meals to hungry New Yorkers, according to Christina Walker, executive director of the **Food and Hunger Hotline** (17 Murray Street, fifth floor, 406-2300). Most of these, she adds, are single mothers and their children. The soup kitchens and food pantries are run by local churches, synagogues, and community groups in all neighborhoods. Some serve a specific meal on a specific day—Tuesday lunch, for instance—while others serve several meals a day, five days a week. Whatever the schedule, volunteers' responsibilities are usually similar: They arrive about an hour before the meal, usually a very simple one, is served. They prepare the food and set the table. Once the guests arrive, the volunteers serve the meal. Afterward, they clean up. The process takes no more than a couple of hours, and volunteers usually work only once a month.

In those kitchens that attract smaller groups, volunteers often have the chance to sit down and talk to the guests. "We're trying to offer friendship here," says Jane Bryan, coordinator of St. James's Church soup kitchen on the Upper East Side. "We don't want to just throw food at people. This church is our home, and we have invited these people inside."

To find the nearest kitchen or pantry, call either the Food and Hunger Hotline (between 9:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. weekdays) or the **New York City Coalition Against Hunger** (17 Murray Street, fourth floor, 349-8155). If you want to volunteer, call now; these small groups are overwhelmed with calls around Thanksgiving. The hot line itself can use volunteers for the phones.

Working at Shelters; Providing Aid to the Homeless

MOST NEW YORKERS KNOW BY now of the pioneering work done for the homeless by Robert Hayes, founder of the **Coalition for the Homeless** (105 East 22nd Street, 460-8110). In 1979, Hayes brought suit against Governor Carey and Mayor Koch and won homeless men the right to shelter. Four years later, he won the same guarantee for homeless women. But the problem is far from solved, of course. According to Beth Gorrie, there are now an estimated 60,000 homeless people in the city, 10,000 to 11,000 of them children in the city's family shelters. An estimated 100,000 more are on the brink of homelessness—doubled or tripled up in relatives' apartments and always vulnerable to being thrown out.

The coalition can use volunteers in two positions. Monitoring shelters, which takes no more than an hour a week, involves checking to see that there are enough clean blankets, pillows, and sheets and testing faucets, toilets, and showers. The coalition also needs volunteers for its Grand Central Feeding Program, which operates every night of the year. A Coalition van drives up to Grand Central station every night at 10 or 10:30. About 450 hungry people suddenly appear, waiting in line for a simple bag meal. Volunteers maintain order in the line and pass out the bags. This takes no more than half an hour.

Volunteers are urgently needed as overnight monitors at private shelters for the homeless. Most of these shelters are run the same way: Volunteers, who work in teams, arrive at the church or synagogue at around 7 or 8 P.M. A coordinator briefs them on supplies and procedures. Volunteers greet the homeless as they arrive, and together they set up cots and prepare a light evening snack. After serving the snack, they make sure that all is well—that guests have enough bedding or toothpaste, for instance—and socialize with the guests. At around eleven o'clock, guests and volunteers go to sleep. In the morning, the volunteers prepare a light breakfast—usually juice, coffee, and Danish—and

pack up the bedding. The homeless guests leave at around 7 A.M., and the volunteers put away the supplies and leave shortly after them. "You end up a little tired," says the Reverend John Stubbs of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, on East 90th Street. "But it's hardly overwhelming." Most shelters are happy to get volunteers who can work overnight once a month.

The virtue of these private shelters lies in their hospitality. The homeless are invariably referred to as guests, the volunteers as hosts. Because the groups are small—no more than ten to twenty—guests and hosts can talk to one another. And these guests are not walk-ins. They have been screened for cleanliness and health at a number of centers in the city or as they arrive at the shelters.

Partnership for the Homeless (208 WEST 13th Street, 807-6653) is the central referral agency for volunteers who would like to spend a night watch with the homeless but don't know where to go. This group coordinates more than 130 sheltering churches and synagogues in virtually all neighborhoods in all boroughs.

Coffee Pot (FIRST MORAVIAN CHURCH, 154 Lexington Avenue, at 30th Street, 683-4231), a soup kitchen and shelter for the homeless, is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week; 150 to 175 homeless men and women drop in every day. The church serves them breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and volunteers are always needed to help at mealtimes. No one actually sleeps overnight at First Moravian; the church screens these drop-in people before sending them off in small groups to churches and synagogues around Manhattan.

St. Bartholomew's Church (109 EAST 50th Street, 751-1616) runs four volunteer programs as part of its community ministry. The church serves breakfast to the hungry on Wednesdays and Sundays between 7:30 and 8:30 A.M. Volunteers (who work from 7 to 8:45 A.M.) prepare the meal and check to see if any of the guests need emergency attention; if they do, they are referred to another group at the church. Volunteers in a second program sort and help distribute clothing to needy men on Monday evenings from 5:45 to 7:30. Volunteers also staff the church's overnight shelter for ten homeless men and women. Working once or twice a month is fine. Also, volunteers can do errands for homebound old folks in the Outreach for the Elderly program.

THE Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter (211 East 81st Street, 249-3595) provides long-term shelter, food assistance, and counseling for the homeless. In January

1985, this group spent $833,014 (of the more than $1 million it had raised from community churches, synagogues, and others) for a six-story, 70-room walk-up building. In the neighborly, dignified spirit of this place, the residents are called tenants—"a normal word for a normal life," says president Anne Davidson. Volunteer sponsors visit a new tenant and introduce him or her to the neighborhood and to other tenants. Because the building does not yet have kitchen facilities, NCS runs lunch and dinner programs for the tenants. Volunteers make and bring in meals, serve them, and socialize with the tenants. NCS also runs a program out of a local church Monday through Friday that provides the homeless with emergency medical, social, and psychiatric services. Between 8:30 A.M. and 4:30 P.M., volunteers visit with these guests and organize workshops in crafts, music, exercise, etc. NCS can also put you in touch with soup kitchens and overnight shelters in the Lenox Hill area.

Project Dorot's HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION Program (316 West 95th Street, 666-2000) runs a small shelter for up to fourteen homeless older people. Volunteers help prepare and distribute dinner five nights a week.

THE Legal Action Center for the Homeless (P.O. Box 1161, New York, New York 10035, 831-2090) provides legal services to the homeless on an outreach basis—"which means we find them," says associate director Ed Abrahams. Volunteers spend a couple of hours at soup kitchens, finding out who needs help (with Social Security or Veterans Administration benefits, disputes with landlords). Other volunteers spend a few hours at the center following up on these cases. No legal background is necessary; the group will train you.

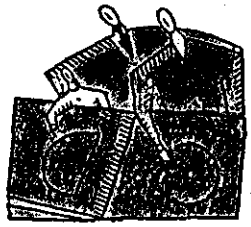
Volunteers of America (340 WEST 85TH Street; call Barbara Pitts, 873-2600). Those who would like to work with the homeless can do so at this group's Upper West Side Brandon Residence, which houses seventeen recovering alcoholic homeless men; the group's Wards Island city-funded shelter, which houses 816 men a day; or shelters on the Bowery and in Westchester. Anything will be appreciated—counseling, giving help in arts and crafts, providing companionship.

The VOA is also looking for literacy tutors to help teach the homeless to read. Tutors get ten hours of training, teach for 90 minutes a week, and are expected to work for at least six months.

The group is always looking for people who are willing to hire a homeless person, even temporarily, to do maintenance or other work.

Volunteers can also work in outreach teams, which go in groups of five to Port Authority and the World Trade Center to try to persuade the homeless to go to a shelter. The teams work most hours of the day and night. Finally, people who would like to be sidewalk Santas—collecting for the VOA—are screened and trained for the job.

THE CITY'S SOCIAL-SERVICES AGENCY, **the New York City Human Resources Administration** (51 Chambers Street; call Myrna Payne, 433-4909), needs volunteers who would like to help a homeless child in a public shelter with homework or arts and crafts, or just play games. Homeless adults need companionship, too. "We can use people with life skills," says Payne, the director of volunteer services. "Weekend and evening placements are fine. We need good listeners. Many of the people just need a friend." They can also use volunteers for the other HRA activities, including helping battered women and providing day care.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

RIGHT ON TOP OF THE OLYMPIA movie-theater marquee, on Broadway at 107th Street, sits the garden that children and volunteers at the Rheedlen Foundation (2770 Broadway, at 106th Street; call Kai Gallagher, 866-0700) have planted and nurtured. Milk cartons full of dirt and fertilizer have produced flowers and vegetables (even an ear of corn) for the truant children who are served here. Children who are staying out of school—often, the group has found, because of abuse or neglect at home—come to the center's six sites on the Upper West Side and in Harlem for help in reading, for a quiet place to do homework, for a chance to work on a computer, or simply to have fun. Volunteers are needed to pick up children and take them home, to tutor them in reading, or to play.

"You get so attached to the kids here," says Carol Ann Perkin, a free-lance writer. "All it takes is one hand to tug on your shirt one day and say, 'Hey, where were you last time?' and you're hooked." Afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays are ideal times for volunteers to work here.

THE Door—A Center of Alternatives (618 Avenue of the Americas, at 18th Street; call Sara Tomlinson, 744-6811) is a drop-in center for people twelve to twenty. The 600 young people who stop in here weekly—some of them homeless—can get medical, psychological, or educational help. They take classes in a wide range of arts, crafts, and sports. Young people eat dinner here (without charge) five nights a week.

Volunteers, who should be at least 23 years old, must make a substantial commitment. "This place works because the young people depend on the same adults being there and caring for them," says Tomlinson. Tutors are needed in math, English, and English as a second language—at least seven and a half hours per week. Sessions run from 6 to 8:30 P.M. and 6 to 11 P.M. Other counselors spend ten hours a week (from 6 to 11 P.M. on two nonconsecutive evenings) helping new Door members and assessing their needs. The center can use nurses and doctors for its clinic; gym assistants in basketball, soccer, tennis, and weight lifting; and creative and performing artists—especially musicians—to teach workshops.

Volunteer Services for Children (216 East 39th Street; call Ruth Sherlip or Grace McLean, 867-2220) runs two programs for underprivileged children. The reading program is for children from seven to fourteen; the Saturday Outing Program accepts children from eight to sixteen. (Each volunteer for the reading program can be matched with a particular child, who is tutored for one and a half hours each week.) VSC provides reading material, training, and on-site support by a teacher. Classes held in ten centers all over Manhattan run from 6 to 7:30 P.M. during the school year. You don't need teaching experience; you merely need to like children. "This is rewarding work," says coordinator Sherlip. "Children do improve."

The Saturday Outing Program is for children who are living in foster-care institutions. The only purpose: to give them a good time. VSC provides the bus and the itinerary, and each volunteer buys his child lunch—usually a fast-food burger and fries. Trips this year will be made to the Coney Island Aquarium, to Sleepy Hollow in Westchester, to a college-football game in New Jersey, upstate to Orange County for apple-picking, and to other locations. "Most of these children

get attention from people who are paid to watch them, but not from those who are doing it just because they want to," says executive director McLean. "It means a lot to them." All VSC volunteers must join the organization ($15 a year).

VOLUNTEERS AT THE East Harlem Tutorial Program (2050 Second Avenue, at 105th Street, 831-0650) can work weekday afternoons, evenings, or Saturday mornings to help children from second grade through high school improve their academic skills. Instruction is one-on-one, and volunteers are trained and assisted by on-site staff.

THE New York City School Volunteer Program (443 Park Avenue South, at 30th Street, 213-3370), operated under the aegis of the Board of Education, can place a volunteer in almost any neighborhood in the city. Tutors help children from kindergarten through high school during school hours (9 A.M. to 3 P.M. Monday through Friday). The agency prefers that volunteers work four hours a week—in two sessions—but is flexible. The program also trains volunteers to help high-school seniors choose and apply to colleges. This position is available on Saturdays and evenings, as well as during school hours.

THE Children's Aid Society (105 EAST 22nd Street, 949-4919) runs a total of six community centers in Manhattan and on Staten Island. After-school tutors are always needed; so are recreation aides and escorts for children and their families. During the summer, volunteers can help at the agency's Staten Island or Westchester camps for normal as well as developmentally disabled children. The group is also involved with the homeless children who live in midtown welfare hotels. Volunteers can help bring medical services, counseling, social work, and fun to these youngsters.

"I HAD A SHOT TODAY," SAID ONE LITTLE patient at Bellevue, "and I forgot to cry." Perhaps it was because a volunteer for the Children of Bellevue program (Bellevue Hospital Center, First Avenue at 27th Street; call Joan Dumont, 561-4858) held the child's hand. The children—some of whose parents cannot visit them—need to be played with; any sort of activity will do, from plain old attention and affection to mime, music, storytelling, or singing. Volunteers can work in the general pediatric ward, in the pediatric emergency room, or in the pediatric psychiatric area. A minimum of three hours per week is preferred, but the staff is flexible. "These are the neediest children in the city in a scary situation," says Cletus Hudson, director of development of Children of Bellevue. "They need a friend."

THE ELDERLY

THE PICTURE IS ALMOST TOO PAINful to contemplate: An elderly person, no longer able to walk, sits alone, sometimes hungry, in an apartment. Sadly, there are many such New Yorkers.

THE PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE many local Visiting Neighbors programs hope to alleviate the loneliness that so many elderly people face. "We're looking to form good old-fashioned relationships with people," says Cynthia Maurer, the group's community organizer. Once a week, volunteers visit neighbors matched to them by temperament and interests. In the Village Visiting Neighbors program, volunteers shop for or escort their elderly friends; in the others, volunteers generally just make friendly visits. "I've seen the talents and abilities of the volunteers really shine," says Maurer. "They are rewarded twice over for what they give: The neighbor is grateful, and the volunteers feel great about themselves too." Maurer will be glad to advise other neighborhood groups who want to establish similar organizations. To contact Village Visiting Neighbors, call 929-5869. For the other groups, leave a message at 255-5016. There are Visiting Neighbors groups in Chelsea, Clinton, the East Village, Gramercy Park, Midtown East (East 29th Street), and Southbridge (on Pearl Street); Bay Heights, Bensonhurst, and Park Slope, Brooklyn; Maspeth–Middle Village, Ridgewood-Glendale, and Ozone Park, Queens.

Project Dorot—THE WORD MEANS "GENerations" in Hebrew—was started ten years ago by a group of students at Columbia. Everything the agency (262 West 91st Street, 769-2850) does is intergenerational. Volunteers can be friendly visitors, making weekly one-hour visits to the homebound elderly living anywhere between 59th and 125th Streets, from Central Park West to the Hudson. The group has also started a kosher "Meals-on-Heels" program to serve the elderly. The volunteer picks up frozen meals at the center, takes them to the recipient's home, and then stays for a one-hour visit.

The group also runs the *saba-sasta* (Hebrew for "grandfather-grandmother") program, in which families "adopt" and visit an elderly person. Also, on three or four major Jewish holidays a year, volunteers deliver special holiday food to homebound elderly people. The delivery and visit require only about one and a half hours.

Although this group is primarily for the Jewish elderly, it is by no means restricted to them. Neither volunteers nor recipients need be Jewish, and anyone over sixteen is welcome.

SENIORS HELP SENIORS IN THE HEALTH Promotion Services program of the New York City Department for the Aging (280 Broadway, at Chambers Street, 577-1757). Project Stay Well trains senior-citizen volunteers in nutrition, stress reduction, accident prevention, and chair exercises. These volunteers then go to neighborhood senior centers, where they teach what they have learned to others. The Health Education and Monitoring Program teaches senior-citizen volunteers to take blood-pressure readings and do follow-up work, and sends them out to senior centers.

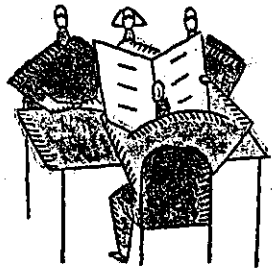
ADULT EDUCATION

THOSE WHO VOLUNTEER TO BE PART of the English in Action program (The English-Speaking Union, 16 East 69th Street; call Stephen Lytle, 734-9273) spend one to two hours a week helping immigrants and resident aliens learn English and how to adapt to American culture. Classes are held weekday mornings, afternoons, and evenings at fifteen convenient centers in the city. Volunteers must be native English speakers.

AN ESTIMATED 1 MILLION TO 1.5 MILLION New York City adults are functional illiterates. They read below the fifth-grade level and find the simplest daily tasks daunting. But over 600 a year conquer their shame and fear by taking the first step: calling Literacy Volunteers of New

York City (666 Broadway, at Bleecker Street, 475-5757) for help—and they are a highly motivated group. Tutors and students meet twice a week (one and a half hours per session) in eight convenient midtown, Wall Street, or Brooklyn locations. The students set their own goals, and tutors choose to work either one-on-one or in groups of two or three. A firm six-month commitment to this schedule is expected of both the volunteer and student. Volunteers are given an eight-session, 24-hour training course before they begin tutoring, and professional teachers are always on hand.

THE **New York Public Library Centers for Reading and Writing** (Manhattan, 799-4758; the Bronx, 220-6588; Staten Island, 718-816-1025) run literacy programs for adults in several branch libraries. Here, tutors help adults who read below the eighth-grade level to improve their reading and writing skills. Each of the branches is equipped with computers and easy-to-read books for adults. Tutors complete an 18-hour course, after which they are expected to teach for one and a half hours twice a week, for a total of at least 50 hours over a six-month period. Those who live in Queens or Brooklyn should check with their public libraries for similar programs.



THE HANDICAPPED

"THIS IS A CROSS-CULTURAL agency," says Joan Kuyper, director of volunteer services o the **Greater New York March of Dimes** (622 Third Avenue, at 41st Street, 922 1460, ext. 229). "Our mission is to pre vent over 3,000 types of birth defects, an these problems affect rich and poor." Volunteers can assist in the agency's WalkAmerica march, in April 1987. Fo this program, thousands of volunteer staff the checkpoints and administer mi nor first aid for the foot-weary. Volun teers can also take phone pledges durin the June 1987 telethon. Those who wis to get more involved can, after training speak to community groups about prena tal care, birth defects, and other impor tant topics.

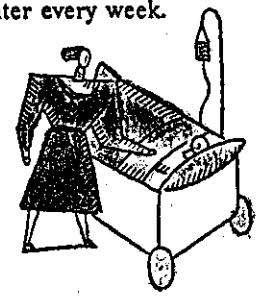
THE **Jewish Guild for the Blind** (15 WES 65th Street, 595-2000, ext. 217 or 218; cal Mary Arno) helps visually impaired peo

ple, including those who are also developmentally, physically, or mentally disabled. There are many opportunities for readers, tutors, teachers' aides, computer experts, guides, and interpreters in the guild's various programs for children and adults.

MOST OF THE PROGRAMS AT THE Lighthouse (the New York Association for the Blind, 111 East 59th Street; call Carol Robins, 355-2200) are aimed at adults who are visually impaired. Readers are needed at the Lighthouse to read on a one-to-one basis to students, professionals, and businesspeople in two-hour sessions once a week Monday through Friday, at all hours of the day from 10 A.M. to 9 P.M., and on Saturdays from ten to five. The only requirement is that volunteers be excellent sight readers and have stamina. Readers are needed to help professionals and students at their workplace during the day or evening. The agency needs people to assist in its leisure-education program for adults, which offers courses in sewing, photography, the manual and creative arts, bowling, and physical education. Visually impaired adults also need help doing such personal chores as balancing checkbooks, going to appointments, and choosing clothing.

People who want to work with children can join the Saturday Youth Program; those between 6 and 21 are taught creative writing, arts and crafts, swimming, weight lifting, and aerobics. Volunteers who wish to assist instructors must work on Saturdays (all day or half a day) from mid-September through June.

THE Lexington Center (30TH AVENUE and 75th Street, Jackson Heights, Queens; 718-899-8800, ext. 213) serves the hearing-impaired. Volunteers can work in the School for the Deaf, helping deaf infants, children, or adolescents. Volunteers must be able to give at least one full day—8:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.—to the center every week.



THE INFIRM

HOSPITALS HAVE BROADENED their programs to permit interested people to work in almost any department, from children's playroom to research lab to maternity ward. Some volunteers *prefer* to push carts

down corridors or type or work in the gift or thrift shops; but if you want to help on the front lines—in emergency rooms, in rape-crisis centers, or in abused-children programs—you'll be put to work.

JOAN DUMONT, DIRECTOR OF VOLunteer services at **Bellevue Hospital Center** (First Avenue at 27th Street, 561-4858), admits that "Bellevue has an image problem. People think it's where all the crazy people go," she says, "but like New York, it's a wonderful place, a terrible place, and everything in between." Volunteers in the emergency-services department—long known as a superb operation—make up stretchers, transport patients through the hospital, and give emotional support to patients and their families. Volunteers in the Interfaith Chaplaincy Program visit patients at bedside (sometimes accompanying the chaplains) or escort them to the hospital's three chapels. Meal companions help feed patients or just sit with them. Entertainers—singers, dancers, mimes, actors, musicians—are always welcome, even for only one performance. Volunteers are needed to give the staff vital assistance: Bellevue runs AIDS and Sexual Assault Victims Assistance (SAVA) programs. Those who work for SAVA are on call two evenings a month, ready to contact a rape survivor's family, lawyer, or doctor, or just to provide assistance. SAVA and AIDS volunteers are well trained and supervised.

Bellevue can always use interpreters, especially in Spanish and Chinese.

Lenox Hill Hospital (100 EAST 77TH Street, 439-2600) has just begun a newborn-infants program, in which volunteers help mother and child prepare to leave the hospital. There are limited openings in the emergency-room-liaison program, in which volunteers comfort patients and keep worried families informed about the status of their loved ones. Volunteers work a minimum of three consecutive hours during the day or two hours during evenings.

Prospective social workers might be interested in the PACE (Patient Assistance and Community Entitlements) program; in which volunteers give patients information about Medicare, Medicaid, and all other government benefits. They must work a minimum of six hours per week.

The hospital also offers interesting volunteer opportunities—especially for premed students—in the emergency room, recovery room, intensive-care, and cardiac-care rooms.

St. Vincent's Hospital (153 WEST 11TH Street, 790-8686) offers what director of volunteers Annette Gilpin calls "heavy-duty assignments" with terminally ill pa-

tients, those with cancer or AIDS, or those who have just survived a rape. Trained volunteers provide counseling, legal assistance, and basic emotional support. The hospital would like volunteers to work three hours during the evening or five hours during the day each week. (Those in the rape-crisis program are on call one night a month.) There are also less difficult assignments in the pediatric playroom, research laboratories, and admitting offices.

VOLUNTEERS ARE WELCOME AT **Mt. Sinai Medical Center** (98th to 102nd Street, Fifth to Madison Avenue, 650-6288) in virtually all patient-care areas, including general inpatient, physical therapy, maternal-and-child health, and the emergency room. The hospital also runs an adolescent-health unit and a rape-crisis-intervention program. The hospital asks volunteers to be on hand for at least four hours a week; scheduling is flexible.

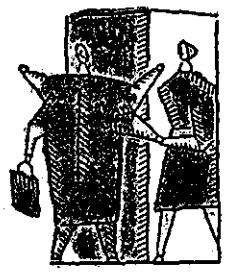
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, the Roosevelt Division (428 West 59th Street; call Virginia Crosby, 554-7151), trains volunteers to be patient advocates for those in the emergency room or in the general inpatient departments. Volunteers provide blankets and pillows to the patients' families and friends and make any necessary phone calls. The hospital also runs a visitor program for AIDS patients. This is emotionally difficult work, and volunteering once a week is considered a generous commitment. The hospital's St. Luke's Division (114th Street and Amsterdam Avenue; call Josefa Domingo, 870-6485) runs patient-advocate and AIDS-visiting programs as well as a rape-intervention program (volunteers are on call), a hospice program (volunteers visit the terminally ill in the hospital and at home), and a pediatric-outreach program. Most of the children in this last program are abused youngsters, and volunteers help by reminding their mothers of clinic appointments, immunizations, or other services for the child. Those who prefer less difficult assignments can be nurses' helpers in the general patient units. Baby-holders are also needed.

Montefiore Medical Center (111 EAST 210th Street, 920-4191), in conjunction with three other Bronx hospitals, operates the North Bronx Regional Child Protection Program to help abused children and their families. Volunteers work with the staff "to make sure that families don't

fall through the cracks in the system," says Margaret Webber, director of volunteer services. Volunteers can also staff the resource desk located outside the pediatric clinics. Volunteers for both positions are well trained; hours are flexible.

Volunteers can also work for the information and referral service, now in its thirteenth year; the volunteers are trained to counsel patients on problems with Medicare, Medicaid, landlords, and evictions. The job requires a once-a-week commitment.

These are not the only hospitals with worthwhile volunteer programs. Most hospitals near you will appreciate any help you can give.



MULTISERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

IF YOU WANT TO HELP A LOCAL BLOCK or community association—or even form a new one—call the Citizens Committee for New York City (3 West 29th Street, 684-6767). This group was founded by the late senator Jacob Javits in 1975, during the city's fiscal crisis, on the theory that New Yorkers are willing to pitch in and help themselves. The group helps more than 5,000 block and neighborhood associations all over the city address local problems, from improving a block's appearance to feeding its homeless, matching its teenagers with jobs, improving safety, cracking down on drugs and drug dealers, and more. On October 25, there will be a benefit for the Citizens Committee, and information will be provided about a variety of opportunities for volunteer work in the city.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A NURSE TO VOLunteer for the programs offered by the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (107 East 70th Street, 794-9200, ext. 872). High-school students, for instance, often help out in the layette program, which involves packing an infant's clothing for a destitute mother. This agency also runs a friendly-visitor program in Manhattan, Queens, and the Bronx for the homebound elderly. Volunteers in the hospice program visit people who are terminally ill, providing emotional support for the patient as well as his or her family. There is also a telephone-reassurance program; callers check that sick and elderly clients are taking their medicine.

THE VOLUNTEER GARDENING POSITIONS in the City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation (the Arsenal, Central Park; call Jill Mainelli, 360-1330) are no secret, but the agency's people-to-people programs are. The Parks Department runs the Playground for All Children—in Flushing Meadows—which is designed to be accessible to both able-bodied and handicapped youngsters. Volunteers play sports with the children or teach them arts and crafts. The Parks Department also runs a year-round sensitization program, in which volunteers use puppets to teach schoolchildren and local community groups about physical and mental disabilities. In addition, volunteers are welcome at after-school or Saturday recreation programs for homeless children in Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn to teach creative workshops.

REACH (Recreation, Education, Athletics, Creative Arts for the Handicapped) is a citywide program for developmentally disabled children and adults. Volunteers can teach anything useful during evenings or Saturday mornings. Classes are held in all five boroughs.

Those who prefer to work with the elderly can join the older-adult services, and help in recreational activities (dance, fitness, arts) at centers all over the city.

Also, volunteers can teach in the department's swimming and tennis programs. "People who volunteer for parks get a special joy, whether it's working with the land or with people," says Commissioner Henry Stern. "You're improving things for everybody."

IF YOU ARE WILLING TO INVEST EIGHTEEN or nineteen hours up front to learn, say, CPR, water safety, or first aid at the American Red Cross in Greater New York (150 Amsterdam Avenue, at 66th Street, 787-1000; specify which borough you'd like to work in), you can volunteer to teach these things to others. The Red Cross offers teaching opportunities in boating, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, CPR, water safety, swimming, home nursing, and AIDS home nursing. Youngsters who are at least eleven can volunteer to learn basic first aid and water safety, and then teach these skills to their peers.

The Red Cross can place a limited number of volunteers in its program to help homeless mothers and children at its hotel site on East 31st Street. Volunteers read stories and play games with the children. The agency can also place some volunteers interested in preparing the mothers for their high-school-equivalency diplomas.

Another program aimed at mothers and children is Operation Baby Track, in which volunteers talk to new mothers

about the importance of immunizing their babies against various diseases. Baby Track operates—days, evenings, and weekends—at many hospitals in all five boroughs.

The Red Cross runs a good disaster-services program. When a home is destroyed by fire or a flood, or when other disasters occur anywhere in the city, Red Cross volunteers respond. The program trains dispatchers (who staff the radios), field-workers (who register and comfort victims and assess damage), and canteen workers (who arrive on the scene with refreshments for the fire fighters, victims, and field-workers). Field- and canteen workers are on call for two days or nights per month; dispatchers work one eight-hour shift a month.

Many local chapters also have telephone-reassurance programs for the elderly and handicapped, and all could use drivers and phone workers in their blood-bank programs.

THE **Salvation Army** (132–136 WEST 14TH Street; call Mrs. Major Charles Coles at 807-4217) has a long tradition of caring for the poorest and neediest among us. Tutors are needed in all boroughs to teach children reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as piano and percussion, voice, and brass instruments. The League of Mercy visiting program goes to patients in hospitals and nursing homes and brings them small gifts at Christmastime. The Salvation Army runs homes for adolescent boys, girls, and retarded people in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, as well as eight day-care centers in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens. Those who love children can help with special education for the retarded or with basic skills for the rest. Volunteers are welcome at the adult rehabilitation centers for addicted people, who are generally alcoholic men and women.

Volunteers can also work in emergency-disaster teams, supplying canteen refreshments to fire fighters responding to plane crashes, fires, or other disasters. Finally, the Salvation Army can use sorters to go through donated clothing.

THE **New York City Department of Consumer Affairs** (80 Lafayette Street, 566-1692) has a bank of telephones that get about 150,000 complaints a year from irate consumers. Volunteers answer these phones and try to work out a resolution. Volunteers must take a rigorous 40-hour course in consumer law and pass

a written test. They must serve for at le: eight hours a week.

TOUGH CASES

THESE ARE THE JOBS THAT DEMAND A LOT of heart.

Gay Men's Health Crisis (254 WEST 18TH Street, 807-6572), formed in 1981, is now helping about 1,450 people with AIDS (they are called PWAs here). An additional 140 come in every month. (Most of the PWAs are gay men, but a growing number are intravenous-drug users, women, and children.) With numbers like these, GMHC always needs new volunteers, and it welcomes everyone, not just gay men. Indeed, about 10 percent of the group's volunteers are women, and "they react brilliantly," according to Kevin Madden, manager of volunteers (page 45). The group will provide training and support to anyone who wants to help. Most people put in eight to ten hours a week, but there is no minimum.

Those who want to work directly with PWAs can be crisis-intervention workers, who contact a PWA several times a week and provide emotional or other support, or buddies, who do the simple things that can make a tough life livable—making a sandwich for someone who cannot get out of bed, walking a dog, escorting someone to the doctor. GMHC has professional therapists on staff to help if a PWA's problems become overwhelming.

"Intake" volunteers interview a newly diagnosed PWA and take down important information about families and doctors. Volunteering lawyers help with wills, landlords, entitlements, and employment.

Those who do not wish to work directly with a PWA make significant contributions here. People with computer expertise can update lists; graphic artists and writers can work on the group's publications; speakers can talk to community groups about AIDS. The group can use volunteers to staff the hot line (807-6655), which operates from 10:30 A.M. to 9 P.M. weekdays and gets over 6,000 calls a month, 50 percent of which are from non-gay people.

EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT, Saint Peter's Lutheran Church (619 Lexington Avenue, at 54th Street; call Peter Avitabile, 935-

2200) serves a fancy sit-down dinner to about 40 PWAs and their loved ones. Volunteers prepare and serve the meal from 3:30 to 7 P.M. The church also runs a general store, where PWAs can pick up a week's worth of food or clothes free. (The clothing is needed because PWAs lose so much weight.) Drivers are needed to bring PWAs to the dinner, the store, or to the GMHC-sponsored stress-reduction workshops that precede the dinners.

ACCORDING TO RANDI GOLDSTEIN, M.S.W., director of the **New York City Alzheimer's Resource Center** (280 Broadway, at Chambers Street, Room 214, 577-7564), a patient can live with Alzheimer's for seven to fifteen years after the diagnosis. "It can totally bankrupt a family's resources, both financial and emotional," she says. "The patient can get to the point where he no longer recognizes his spouse or his children. It's more intense than other terminal diseases." This resource center can use retired or practicing lawyers to help families with public entitlements and benefits, estate planning, power of attorney, and conservatorship. Those who are knowledgeable about the disease might be interested in staffing the center's information-referral telephone line. Retired social workers, family therapists, and public-education professionals are always needed here.

THE **Brookdale Respite Program** (425 East 25th Street; call Susan Cohn at 481-4350) gives the families of Alzheimer's patients a much-needed break for three to four hours a week. Volunteers, supervised by professionals, sing, dance, play bingo or cards, reminisce, or just socialize with ten to twelve patients. The respite program is currently available at four locations—the Park Avenue Synagogue, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Our Lady of Angels Human Service Center, and Richmond Hill Senior Center—on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. In the fall, the program will expand to other locations in Brooklyn, Queens, and on the Upper West Side. No special skills are required; training is provided.

THE **International Center for the Disabled** (340 East 24th Street; call Barbara Knapp, 679-0100) also runs a program for those suffering from Alzheimer's or related disorders. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, clients report to

the center from 9 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. and work with several therapists. Volunteers can work either one-on-one or in small gatherings, running groups in art and music. The center requires a minimum of four hours per day at least one day a week.

"PSYCHOLOGICALLY, IT CAN BE OVERwhelming to be a patient here," says Jarene Frances Lee, director of volunteer resources at **Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center** (1275 York Avenue, at 68th Street, 794-5980). "All of the patients here have a serious disease—cancer—and it can be a very technological place. Volunteers are a bridge to normality for them." Many volunteers enjoy working in the adult-recreation area playing cards or doing crafts. One volunteer gives a weekly classical-piano concert. Others can cheer kids up in the children's playroom, which is stocked with toys, Ping-Pong tables, and games. (A separate room for teenagers has a drum set, video games, and posters of Madonna and Bruce Springsteen.)

Volunteers can also work in clinical areas. For the busy radiation-therapy area, the hospital has found that volunteers make excellent patient receptionists because they stay fresh; the people who enter here can use every bit of encouragement.

Those who have training in sciences are also welcome to work in the research laboratories of the Sloan-Kettering Institute. Most positions at the center require at least three hours a week.

WORKING AT A HOSPICE, SAYS BARBARA Rice, director of volunteers at **Cabrini Hospice** (227 East 19th Street, 725-6945), "is not for everybody." The 15 patients in the unit and the 60 at home all have six months or less to live. The goals of the hospice are to provide support to the patient and family, and to keep the patient at home if possible. Home visitors deliver medication to the house, talk to the patient and his family, and run errands. Inpatient volunteers help at mealtime, assist the staff with basic physical care, and talk to family members. Most volunteers are young working people; evenings and weekends are fine. A nine-session training course is required of all these volunteers, and the hospice asks for a minimum of three hours per week and a one-year commitment.

THE **Brooklyn Hospice** (4915 TENTH AVEnue, Brooklyn; call Patricia Santagata, CSW, 718-851-5900) can also use volunteers to make home or bereavement visits. Volunteers get sixteen hours of training. No particular skills are required. Volunteers cannot have suffered the loss of a loved one in the past year, however,

ıd they must be comfortable with si-
ıce and illness. Most of all, though,
ou must understand that what can
em like a very minimal contact to you
ın mean a lot to a patient or a family,"
ys Santagata, the director of volun-
ers. "Just your being there means so
uch to them."

HE **Manhattan Developmental Center** 5 Morton Street; call Debbie van Exel,)7-4817), a state residence for the men-ılly retarded and developmentally dis-ɔled, is home to about 200 adolescents nd adults, who range from moderately etarded to profoundly retarded with hysical disabilities as well. "There are ever enough volunteers to help us im-lement the program plans," says Mau-ice Halifi, director of the center. "For he more able, we need volunteers who an help teach assembling or packaging asks, how to work with wood or color ɔencils, or how to sew pot holders or uilts. Others, the more profoundly re-arded, have more basic needs. They ıeed help in learning how to manage heir behavior—how to be calm and tran-quil, how to dress, how to feed them-selves, how to brush their teeth or wash.

"Some people may not be able to work here," says Halifi. "This is not like work-ing in a hospital, with children who are adorable. Some of these people have a grown body and the mind of a child. Some cannot do anything for themselves. This is not easy work. But some people who go into it are enamored of it." Vol-unteers must be adult, and reliable.

BECAUSE MANY ABUSIVE PARENTS WERE themselves abused children, **SCAN** (Sus-pected Child Abuse and Neglect, 683-2522) focuses on parents more than on their kids. Volunteers are rigorously screened and must complete eight weeks of training, during which they learn about child abuse. If they are accepted, these parent aides are matched with a troubled family. No one says this is an easy job. "You are taking on an entire family loaded with many, many prob-lems," says Arlene Koeppel, executive director. And you must be "the wooer and the pursuer," according to volunteer Nancy Larsen. "Many of these parents have no skills in relationships at all. They're isolated and angry. They have no self-esteem. They've probably never trusted anyone. So you call and you call. It's give, give, give, and then give some more." ■