

Fall 1992

Kyric and Christopher ... Two examples of how Head Start makes a difference

Linda Littleton knew that her son Kyric's language skills weren't developing as fast as they should. "The doctors weren't interested in testing his hearing, but I knew there was a problem." Friends recommended that she send him to Head Start. "They said that Head Start would listen to me and make sure

"we wish he'd just be quiet."

In 1991, Head Start decided to try a method they hoped would better serve children like Christopher. In cooperation with Early Intervention (an organization that works with the families of preschoolers with special needs) they placed up to four such children in the

Head Start classroom in Aloha along with an extra aide to lend the help the teachers would need. Christopher was one of those children.

From the start, say Linda and Teresa, they were treated with respect. "Head Start accepted Christopher for who he

was," says Teresa, "that's their philosophy—you have to be open-minded. Some agencies treat you like a number. WCCAO never made me feel that way. I felt important; I never felt my opinion didn't count."

Each child is screened for potential health or learning problems that could have a long-term impact on their ability to function in school in the future. Parents are required to take the child for a physical and dental screening. "It took some pushing: I thought, he doesn't have any problems with his teeth, I'll take care of my kid's teeth when he has a problem," says Linda, "but they kept

asking me if I needed help paying for it, or if there were other problems. They helped me find a dentist who would accept my medical card."

Head Start serves the entire family, not just the preschooler. At the beginning of the year, every family is visited by a Family Service Worker. They assess the family's situation and develop a plan for the coming year, including identifying community resources that might be available to the family. The teachers play an active role as well, making at least five home visits throughout the year, and maintaining frequent contact. According to Linda, "Olga or Donna (Kyric's teachers) were always calling me to let me know special things Kyric had done during the day." "All of the staff were concerned that it be a positive experience for the whole family," adds Teresa. Even Christopher's 17 year old sister, Katie, agreed: "It felt like a family, everybody working together, giving and sharing. I felt comfortable there."

Linda made special mention of the anti-bias curriculum used at Head Start. "The children are taught to get involved, and that it's not just a matter of understanding, but also appreciation of differences. Every child has the right to be comfortable in his or her environment." Preschool is the time to start such an education, she feels. "It's when you can really can make an impact."

At Head Start, parent involvement is highly encouraged. Last year, both Linda and Teresa became involved in the Policy Council, an advisory group made up of Head Start parents. Both were positive about their experience, and both plan to continue this year, even though their children are no longer attending. "Policy Council is great. You don't have to just sit around and say 'tsk tsk' and com-

see *Kyric.... continued on page 8*



"Every child should have Head start" says Linda Littleton, pictured here with Dylan, 1, and Kyric 5.

he got tested." Kyric was enrolled in the Head Start site in West Hillsboro.

When Christopher started Head Start in September of 1991, he was hardly talking, and did not interact with other people. At the age of two and a half, Christopher was diagnosed as autistic, a condition which effects his ability to communicate and interact. "It was all babble, with a couple of words thrown in here and there. But I knew the intelligence was there, I could see it in his eyes," says his mother, Teresa Beasley. After a year in Head Start, Christopher is a loving, cheerful little boy who talks so much that sometimes, say his sisters,



Board Chair's Message Sherry Robinson

Focusing on our agenda: A challenge for the '90s

Executive Staff of Community Action Agencies have a twelve point Code of Ethics which shapes their conduct and services provided. This Code of Ethics has a direct impact on the Board of Directors. According to the code, the first priority is: "Recognizing that the chief function of a community action movement at all times is to serve the best interests of the poor, thereby serving the best interests of all people." WCCAO's mission is to provide the resources necessary not only to support the low income residents of Washington County, but, more importantly, to empower these citizens to support themselves and each other. WCCAO is currently making several changes which will enhance our ability to achieve our mission.

One change is to build a Multi-Service Center that will consolidate our programs and allow us to provide a more efficient and effective array of services. This summer, WCCAO sold its building in Aloha, bringing us one step closer to making the Multi-Service Center a reality. The proceeds from that sale will go toward the purchase of property and construction of the new center.

We have also changed the face of the

Board of Directors, increasing the number of voting members and lengthening the term of office for the Executive Board. These changes have given us the opportunity to increase Board participation and the stability needed to maintain our focus. To support this change, a Board retreat has been scheduled for the end of October so that Board members can reflect on their commitment, unify around common values, clarify roles, and identify the best ways to support the organization's mission and goals.

A third change is reflected in the way we are generating financial support from the community. Our major annual fundraising event, Mardi Gras, will change dramatically this year by becoming much bigger and better, thanks to the enthusiasm and wonderful planning capabilities of our co-chairs Gwen Brake and Sandy Miller. Leroy Bentley from GTE is serving as our honorary chair, giving our event an early boost as he diligently works to bring on sponsors. In addition, we have begun to make greater use of the time, energy, and expertise of local individuals and organizations to conduct fund-raisers on our behalf, thereby decreasing the direct cost

to WCCAO. One example is the annual golf tournament sponsored by the Hillsboro Sunrise Rotary Club, now in its second year.

As WCCAO changes its structure, its location, and the way it builds support, the staff and Board remain constantly vigilant of their primary function, that of serving families in need and keeping the surrounding community informed about issues affecting the poor in their area.

Recently we have been flooded with news of a number of major disasters around the world. It is easy to focus on these because we see them every day on television and in the newspaper. It is difficult to ignore the pain and suffering we see in Somalia, Romania, Bosnia, Los Angeles and South Florida.

In our attempt to reach out to those affected and to share our resources, let us not overlook those around us - our neighbors in Washington County who also have a desperate need for our support and services. It is more difficult to see, or even grasp the fact that more than 35 million U.S. citizens are living below the poverty line; 8.5 million are unemployed; and there are millions of others who are underemployed or who have given up looking for a job. These numbers represent people who live in our community and we must not forget that behind the numbers are real people whose suffering is compounded by hunger and malnutrition, domestic violence, alcoholism, child abuse, crime, and mental illness. These people need WCCAO and its resources.

As WCCAO continues to grow and change, we must continue to focus on *see Board Chair continued on page 7*

WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY **ACTION** ORGANIZATION

ACTION NEWS is the quarterly newsletter of the Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO), published by the WCCAO Administration, 451 S. First, Suite 700, Hillsboro, OR 97123. ACTION NEWS is coordinated by WCCAO staff member Pam Brown and is edited and designed by volunteer Alisa Corstorphine. (Please inform WCCAO of any address corrections.)

... People Helping People

The Washington County Community Action Organization (WCCAO) is a private, non-profit corporation providing a wide variety of services to the needy in Washington County, Oregon. Information on WCCAO programs is available from the following individuals:

WCCAO Administration (Jerralynn Ness, Executive Director)	648-6646
Client Services Dept. - Intake, Information & Referral	648-0829
Cheryl Hilbert, Director	648-6646
Heating Assistance (December - March)	640-8951
Neighborshare (Tigard, Tualatin, Sherwood)	639-0495
Child Development Dept. (Cathy Wise, Director)	648-6646
Housing & Energy Conservation Dept. (Leon Laptook, Director)	642-3236
Hunger & Transportation Dept. (Tom Caruso, Director)	642-3236
Resource Development Dept. (Pam Brown, Director)	648-6646
"Play It Again" Thrift Store	644-8956
Self-Sufficiency Dept. (Connie Sherrard, Manager)	648-8355

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Executive Director's Message Jerralynn Ness

Multi-Service center dream becoming reality

Well, it is finally beginning to happen. For many years we have dreamed of establishing a multi-service center for our community. A place that is accessible to all low income families, where they can receive the help they need and still maintain their dignity. A center that has all of WCCAO's programs under one roof so that we can improve our efficiency and effectiveness. A home that will work for us now and well into the future.

The allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds opened the door for our project. The sale of our Aloha Center has put the project in motion. It has also caused some disruption as we relocate our Aloha Center programs. By October 1, 1992, the Finance

and Housing and Energy Departments will move into our central office on First Street in Hillsboro. It will be crowded, but knowing that it is temporary will, hopefully, make it bearable for all. Our Tualatin Valley Food Center, if all goes as planned, will end up with a warehouse space and offices on Baseline in Hillsboro.

These are very exciting (as well as somewhat anxious and uncomfortable) times for our organization. Now we must proceed with acquiring the land we need and raising what seems like an enormous amount of money. And then, of course, there is the design and construction of our new center. We are still two years away, but it finally feels like the dream is becoming a reality.

Stewart Title leads the way in the fight against hunger

Stewart Title of Oregon took a bold lead with their campaign to end hunger this year. For every title and escrow order placed during the months of Janu-

**"after the holidays,
the hunger continues"**

ary, February and March, they pledged a cash donation to programs which serve Washington County's hungry. The campaign raised a total of \$17,020, which was split between WCCAO's Tualatin Valley Food Center and St. Vincent dePaul's Foodtrain.

Helping people remember that "after the holidays, the hunger continues" was a major theme of their campaign. Giving up a percentage of their commissions to support this fund-raiser, Stewart Title's employees have a genuine desire to give something back to the community, according to Bill Carter, President,

and Patricia Rose, Sales Representative.

This campaign had a positive impact for Stewart Title, as well. They report receiving many positive comments and letters from customers. While they annually budget for charitable donations to community organizations, this fund-raiser brought them special recognition from the

public and enhanced their reputation in the community.



Bill Carter and Patricia Rose, of Stewart Title of Oregon, hand over a check for the proceeds from their campaign to end hunger to Denise Harkness and Tom Caruso of the Tualatin Valley Food Center.

New child development center in Gaston to provide multiple services

Head Start is relocating its Gaston center into a new Child Development Center this fall. Thirty children will use the facility. Services provided will include before- and after-school care for students in the Gaston School, full day care for two-and-a-half to five year old, and preschool for three and four year old. In addition, 18 Gaston High School students will be able to take an elective

parent education class. Every day, they will spend one period with the children in the center and one period in class learning about child development and child care.

"Gaston was chosen by WCCAO for the site of this new program for several reasons: there was no child care center nearby (the closest one is in Forest Grove), the school district was interested in col-

laborating on such a project, and all of the Gaston Schools are located on the same property," says Cathy Wise, WCCAO's Head Start director.

The Center was made possible by a grant from the Oregon State Department of Education to the Gaston School District, and it is hoped that this program can be replicated elsewhere in the county.

Head Start supports family literacy

"Having books in the home and being read to promotes literacy," says Cathy Wise, WCCAO's Head Start Director. "For that reason, when Head Start received a one-time, \$3,500 grant

they had pizza parties or made the book distribution a part of their graduation festivities. Almost all of the parents were able to attend, and they were all encouraged to take an active role in build-



Francine Raften of KISN Radio and her husband, Eric Schmidt of KOIN-TV, read stories to a group of Head Start children, teachers and parents at the Cornelius Center's literacy celebration.

from the federal government, we decided to distribute books to every Head Start family. Every child received three books, which they picked out with their parents at events held at the Head Start sites around Washington County."

The high-quality paperback books were selected by a committee of Head Start teachers and parents. There was special effort put into locating books dealing with the issues of disabilities and cultural diversity. Books in Spanish were also included. Enough books were ordered so that each child could have their choice. "Each Head Start center organized their book distribution in a different way," adds Wise. "One center hired a clown to help out, in other cen-

ing their children's literacy." Scholastic Inc., the book distributor, donated an extra eight books for every \$150 in book orders. This enabled Head Start to build up their classroom libraries, as well.

Unfortunately, these funds to promote literacy will not be available during the coming year, so this resource for families will no longer be available unless private donors want to help out. \$100 will buy 3 books for each child in one of Head Start's 17 classrooms. **If you are interested in helping Head Start promote literacy in Washington County, you can mail your donation to WCCAO Head Start, 451 S. First, Suite 700, Hillsboro, OR 97123, and mark your donation "Literacy."**

Head Start to expand in 1992-93

The Head Start Program is growing again this year, with a 46% expansion which will bring new and exciting changes to the services we provide to low income families in Washington County. Included in the expansion are:

- Five additional classes, bringing the total number from twelve to seventeen.
- New centers in Reedville, Tigard and North Beaverton.
- "Wrap-around" day care service at two sites, enabling working parents to opt for all-day care.
- Two therapeutic classrooms—operated in conjunction with the Tualatin Valley Mental Health Center—which will serve families who can benefit from additional mental health services.
- All centers will run Monday through Friday and will serve both three and four year old. Last year, all but one center operated only four days per week, and served only four year old.

WCCAO's preschool program has grown rapidly in recent years, from a total of 144 children enrolled in 1989-90 to 306 in 1992-93. Of those, 126 slots are paid for through state Pre-Kindergarten Program funds and 180 are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Although many states fund preschool programs, Oregon is one of the few to have adopted federal Head Start standards, and the only one to have matched federal costs per child. This funding means that we can provide high-quality, comprehensive, family-centered services to all our families.

Cornelius Park Apartments opens

On May 13, the Housing Development Corporation of Washington County (HDC) held the grand opening for its newest farmworker housing

the HDC, which built the 62-unit Elm Park Apartments in Forest Grove in 1984 and 1988. WCCAO was involved in the initial planning and founding of the HDC



Leon Laptook is proud of the new Cornelius Park Apartments.

project, the Cornelius Park Apartments.

The project consists of 24 units located at three separate sites all within the city of Cornelius. The two, three, and four bedroom apartments are occupied by low and moderate income farmworker families on a year-round basis. Units rent for \$345-\$500 per month. So that tenants' rents do not exceed 30% of their family income, very low income tenants receive rental subsidies from Farmer's Home Administration.

"Over 200 families requested rental applications...before they were even opened or advertised to the public."

"Over 200 families requested rental applications for the apartments before they were even opened or advertised to the public. This is a strong indicator of the need for quality, affordable housing in Washington County," states HDC President, Leon Laptook.

Cornelius Park is the third project for

in the early 1980s. HDC's current president, Leon Laptook, is the Director of WCCAO's Housing and Energy Department. Diana Solano and Martha Plaza, both of WCCAO's Self Sufficiency Program, serve on the HDC Board of Directors, and Diane Hess of the Housing and Energy Department provides staff support to the board.

The Cornelius Park Apartments were developed and built at a total cost of \$1.3 million. Financing for the project was provided by the U.S. Farmer's Home Administration as well as the Washington County Housing Authority and Office of Community Development, the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department, and Security Pacific Bank. The Project Developer was CASA of Oregon, a statewide nonprofit organization specializing in farmworker housing development. The project architect was Matteson Architects, and the general contractor was Centrex Construction, Inc. The apartments will be managed by Princeton Property Management, which also manages Elm Park Apartments.

You can help

Volunteers Needed:

- Clerical work, word processing, data entry, reception; call Pilar, 648-6646
- Drivers, truck loaders for the Tualatin Valley Food Center; call Vicki, 642-3236
- Accurate typist for Client Services; call Judy, 648-6646
- Client reception work call Judy, 648-6646
- Reception work, information and referral at WCCAO's Neighborshare office in Tigard; call Carla, 639-0495
- Sales Clerk at WCCAO's thrift store; call Thelma, 644-8956
- Outreach Workers to Spanish and Southeast Asian speaking families; call Diane, 642-3236
- Human Resources Specialist; call Jerralynn, 648-6646
- Mentor for "Next Steps" Self-sufficiency Project clients; call Connie, 648-6646
- Fund-raising events helper; call Denise, 642-3236
- Child Care Volunteer at the Shelter; call Michael or Colleen, 640-3263
- Night/Day Supervisors at the Shelter; call Michael, 640-3263
- Handyperson for Head Start Centers; call Cathy, 648-6646
- Child Care Assistant for Parenting Classes; call Renee, 648-6646
- Phone screener to contact weatherization clients; call Joan, 642-3236
- Carpenter/Woodworking help at Head Start Center; call Cathy at 648-6646

Donations Needed:

Equipment and Supplies: Computers, printers, color TV, VCR, coffee table for the waiting room, phone message machine, table for the conference room, high quality 35mm camera with lenses for macro, zoom and/or wide-angle; call Pilar, 648-6646.

For Head Start Centers: 35mm camera, film and film developing, portable tape/CD players, TV with VCR built in, camcorder, old uniforms for dress-up corners, electric meat slicer, computers, printers; call Cathy, 648-6646.

Furniture: Adopt a transitional house or a room in the house and furnish it; call Michael, 640-3263.

Food: Tualatin Valley Food Center needs high protein and staple food items, such as tuna, rice, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables; call Denise, 642-3236.

Local food drives help stock the cupboards

A number of food drives have been held in recent months to make sure that local food banks are well stocked with food for Washington County's hungry:

Tri-County Libraries: During National Library Week in April, libraries in the tri-county area joined in a cooperative effort to help feed the hungry. In addition to soliciting canned food donations, libraries donated all fines collected for overdue materials to local food banks. The Tualatin library also accepted "food for fines," allowing library patrons to donate food in lieu of paying fines. This event raised 2,958 pounds of food for the hungry.

CPR Saturday: Free CPR training was offered in return for canned food

donations at the Merle Davies School in Beaverton. This event was sponsored by the Beaverton School District Health Career Students, City of Beaverton, Laerdal Medical and Tualatin Fire and Rescue. They brought in 206 pounds of food which was donated to the Tualatin Valley Food Center.

7th Annual Let's Bag Hunger: First Interstate Bank and members of the Oregon Newspaper Publisher's Association sponsored this food drive during the month of May. Over half a million bags, donated by three grocery bag manufacturers, were inserted in newspapers. Readers were encouraged to fill the bags with nonperishable foods of high nutritional quality. The bags were

then delivered to local branches of First Interstate Bank. Local bank branches also held carwashes to bring in more donations. This year's event bagged 14,555 pounds of food and \$1552 in cash donations.

Airshow: Everyone who attended the Yuban Coffee Rose Festival Airshow was encouraged to bring food donations, and in return received coupons for merchandise at Safeway stores. This food drive brought in 1700 pounds of food for TVFC.

WCCAO would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the organizations and individual volunteers who made these food drives possible.

Project Second Wind a huge success

During March of this year, Project Second Wind brought in a record 42,266 pounds of food. Stagg Foods, Inc. kicked

High School, Mountain View Junior High, and Tualatin Valley Junior Academy—were also recognized for bringing in a total of 5,386 pounds. Recognition was also given to Permapost, Eagle Scout Jason Herbert, and the LDS Tigard Second Ward for their outstanding contributions.

Begun by Portland high school students in 1971, Project Second Wind is held an-



Volunteers who helped make Project Second Wind a success show off some of the food they collected.

off the event with their donation of 24,000 pounds of mixed high protein products.

On April 3rd, at the Project Second Wind Awards Ceremony, Stagg Foods was presented with an award of special recognition by the Tualatin Valley Food Center. Other Special Recognition Award recipients were Christ United Methodist Church as well as several volunteers who were responsible for picking up and delivering donated food.

Three local schools—Forest Grove

nually to replenish emergency food supplies. The canned food gathered made it possible to provide thousands of people with canned and other non-perishable food during the spring and early summer.

"What's happening"

- WCCAO Board of Directors meets the third Wednesday of each month, 5:30 PM, Hillsboro Conference Room, 451 S. First, Suite 600; call Pilar, 648-6646, to confirm date, time and place
- Head Start Policy Council meets the second Tuesday of each month (Sept. - June); contact Susan, 648-6646, for time and place
- Washington County Human Services Coalition meets the second Friday of each month from 9:00 - 11:00 AM, WCCAO Hillsboro Conference Room, 451 S. First, Suite 600. Call Ron Dowd, 648-8881 to confirm date, time and place.



Students who helped with Project Second Wind display some of the many cans of food they received.

Affordable housing study reveals underlying issues

WCCAO has entered its second year of community planning activities to create county-wide support for affordable housing development. "The purpose of this project is to increase the capacity of public and private organizations to develop affordable housing," says Leon Laptook, WCCAO's Housing and Energy Department Director.

Over the first year of this project, WCCAO staff contacted 100 individuals and organizations involved or interested in housing development. Of these, approximately 65 participated in in-depth interviews on the issues surrounding affordable housing. Those interviewed included representatives of the public and private sectors, including employers, lenders, builders, developers and

others involved in housing development. "Wide representation was sought in order to clearly identify housing issues related to attracting and maintaining a skilled workforce and maintaining a positive quality of life for all," says Laptook.

The following were the major themes expressed in the interviews:

- Lack of affordable housing is a significant problem in Washington County.
- The future character of Washington County will be determined by how we address our housing issues now.
- On its own, the private sector is unable to provide affordable housing. Subsidies are needed to produce afford-

able housing for low income persons.

- Both the public and private sector lack the capacity to develop low income housing.

During the coming year, WCCAO plans to convene a task force address these issues. This broad-based community group will: 1) analyze the barriers to affordable housing, 2) develop specific strategies to overcome these barriers, and 3) obtain resources which promote the development of additional units of affordable housing.

Anyone interested in participating on the task force or receiving copies of the report can call Leon Laptook, WCCAO's Housing Director, at 642-3236.

"Woody Hite Band", "Johnny Limbo & The Lugnuts" featured bands at 1993 Mardi Gras Ball

Mark your calendars now for the 7th Annual Mardi Gras Ball benefiting the programs of Washington County Community Action Organization. February 27, 1993, from 7:00 PM - 12:00 Midnight, revelers can immerse themselves in the carnival atmosphere of Mardi Gras, to be held this year at the Masonic Temple

"We decided to make this year's event a major event for the entire Portland area."

in downtown Portland.

Besides two fantastic bands to provide entertainment throughout the evening; plans are underway to include a wine tasting and auction, costume contest, fabulous raffle and door prizes, face painting, dance lessons, a no-host Cajun sampler buffet and much more.

"We expect to fill the Masonic Temple to capacity - 1500 people", claims one of the event Co-Chairs, Sandra Miller, Personnel Director for the City of Beaverton. "We decided to make this year's event a major event for the entire Portland area, because we wanted to let people know what we are doing at WCCAO to help people in Washington County, and we want to make more money for the agency

to help continue their services."

Seven corporations have already



Leroy Bentley, honorary chair of this year's Mardi Gras.

agreed to help underwrite the costs of the event, estimated to be \$30,000 this year. Honorary Chair for the event, Leroy Bentley, Division Manager for GTE Northwest, has been a key player in acquiring those sponsorships. On

board as sponsors so far are GTE Northwest, Tektronix, Bank of America, ERA Lois Ebel & Associates, Hillsboro Landfill, Key Bank and Standard Insurance.

According to Gwen Brake, the other Co-Chair for Mardi Gras 1993, "February 27th will be a night to remember! Come prepared to embark on an adventure into a carnival atmosphere full of magic and fun, with themes such as Alice in Wonderland and Camelot. Come in costume and be a part of the color and excitement!"

Tickets, priced at \$25.00 per person, are available by calling 648-6646.

Board Chair...

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our agenda. I consider it an honor and a privilege to again be serving as Chair of the WCCAO Board of Directors, and look forward to an exciting and challenging year. We must meet the challenge of making the best use of limited resources to support and empower low income people in our community. We continue to depend on everyone's involvement in the effort to serve our clients and to accomplish our goals so that perhaps, someday, we can change our agenda.

...Kyric...continued from page 1
 plain. You can have input and control in what's going on," says Linda. It wasn't

voice was heard."
 Head Start has had a big impact on Kyric, Christopher and their families.



The whole family participates in Head Start. Pictured are Teresa Beasley and her two children Kaatie, 17 and Christopher 5.

always easy, she says, and she didn't always get what she wanted. "But my

ready to learn. Linda says that she has greater confidence in her parenting skills,

and that her social life has expanded since her involvement in Policy Council. She has already signed up to help out in his classroom, and plans to be active in the PTA.

"It works," says Teresa. She credits the level of professionalism combined with the compassion and concern of the Head Start program.

Involvement in Head Start helped Teresa understand that she is capable of making change. "Policy Council convinced me to become involved as an advocate for children with special needs. I know what it's like, not knowing which doors to knock on, where to start looking for help." She has decided to become a citizen advocate with ARC (Association of Retarded Citizens) as well as going to Portland Community College to learn how to set up a home day care business. Christopher is now reading at a level beyond his years, and loves to do math on his small computer. He is integrated into a regular kindergarten classroom in his local public school. "I firmly believe that Head Start made it possible for him to be mainstreamed," says Teresa. "Christopher wouldn't have progressed to this level if it hadn't been for Head Start."

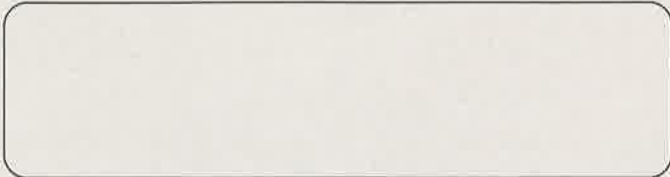
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