

Wistful Summer Hours . . .



At 'Dum-Dum' Day Care

Sounds of laughing, shrieking children bounce off the walls of St. Paul's Lutheran Church every day from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

St. Paul's basement, at 404 E. Jefferson, houses "Dum-Dum Day Care Center," an experiment in free, client-controlled day care. The children named the center.

The idea for Dum-Dum Day Care, one of two such centers in Iowa City — (the other is located at Wesley House, 120 N. Dubuque) was conceived by members of the Women's Liberation Front (WLF). Some of the women have forfeited paying jobs to help staff the center.

The women, however, have given control of both centers to the parents of the children. Each parent contributes eight hours of time per week to the centers. Working parents contribute some other form of service, such as clean-up or laundry work. All parents meet at least once a week to discuss operation of the centers.

Francie Hornstein and Phyllis Berry, two of the women who founded and now help staff the day care center, said that the centers grew out of a WLF demand that a system of free, 24-hour, government-funded, client-controlled day care centers be established. The centers should be equally staffed by men and women, WLF maintains.

The women said they see their work in the centers as a step toward realizing the goals incorporated in this demand.

The centers were established as "a thing to free women," according to Hornstein and Berry because "some of us were interested in early child education."

The women said they discovered that children are unaware of traditional sex roles.

Staffers stress collective ownership of property in the centers although they added the children "have already been conditioned to be possessive."

The children at the centers are most-

ly "children of friends and friends of friends," according to Hornstein and Berry. They said they are seeking clients from all segments of the community.

The parents have similar educational philosophies, the spokeswomen added, which facilitates smooth operation of the centers.

Non-authoritarianism is the rule in disciplinary matters, although some rules — no playing in streets, for example, — are enforced for the children's protection.

Volunteers take the children to the City Park every day and to a farm every week. Other outings, such as visits to the fire station, are frequent.

Both centers are under-equipped, staffers said. They reported that playground equipment and funds for books and other indoor equipment are badly needed.

Plans for more day care centers are in the works for fall, if housing facilities are available, Hornstein and Berry concluded.

— Photos by Jan Williams



And a Smile?



Excitement,

Exhaustion

