

Christmas Card Gives a Boy of 11 a Reason to Be Proud



Leonard Sampiere doesn't like making snowmen but won first prize for painting this one.

BY NAN ICKERINGILL
"HEY, Leonard. You're retarded," the neighborhood children would yell at Leonard Sampiere, 11 years old. It hurt. And it made him feel like a failure.

Now Leonard doesn't mind quite so much. He's done something the others haven't. He has won a national painting competition. And he doesn't even like to paint.

Leonard's picture of a snowman with green eyes and red nose and white snowflakes falling against a white background was judged the winner of a Christmas card contest sponsored by the National Association for Retarded Children.

Places in Catalogue

The paintings placed first, second and third by the judges (two artists and two art directors) have been given pride of place in the association's 1969 Christmas card catalogue.

The prize winners, plus 67 other entries, went on display yesterday at the National Society of Illustrators, 128 East 63d Street. The display will continue through



Second (left) and third winners in National Association for Retarded Children's contest.

June 13. All except the winners are for sale at \$35 each.

The pictures are generally as gay as a child's Christmas. There are jolly Santas being pulled through the sky by sturdy reindeer, colorful manger scenes, snowscapes and Christmas trees and children playing. Only one or two are a trifle wistful—a little boy walking up a long path, clutching a dog close to him; four children who look like Dickensian waifs.

Second prize went to

and the actor David McCullum, who has worked with retarded children off television and on ("Teacher, Teacher.")

Leonard's mother, Mrs. Teresa Sampiere of Cranford, N. J., was anxious to see her son's work. All she knew, until she heard he had won the first prize of a \$100 United States Savings Bond, was that his special education class at Cleveland Elementary School had spent a day making paintings.

Not His Mother

"It looks rather cross," she said, tilting her head on one side and studying the snowman. "Is it me?" Leonard shook his head. It was just a snowman, he said, adding that he doesn't like making snowmen.

Mrs. Sampiere, who was widowed when Leonard was an infant, said he was an active boy. His retardation, she said, is "academic, not physical" and he should be able to make a living for himself when he grows up. Does he want to become a painter? "No," said Leonard firmly. "I want to be a cop."

Bruce Shaw, a 15-year-old orphan who lives at Willowbrook State School on Staten Island. He painted a snowman and added a heart and a shamrock to make it multi-seasonal. Third prize winner was Peter Guy Abbott, 19, who works in a sheltered workshop in Las Vegas, Nev. He painted a green and red church and a purple tree.

Leonard was the only winner able to attend yesterday's opening. He was photographed with his painting