

Outings with grownup friend brighten small boys' lives



Mrs. Stanley Brytcuk of Port Richmond and two young friends on a Sunday afternoon outing at the Staten Island Zoo.

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By ROLANDA COWLES

To all outward appearances, they're just a couple of happy kids on an afternoon's outing. The only anomaly is the woman with them. The stares directed their way attest to that.

For even though the trio unquestionably shares the pleasure of each other's company, she is obviously not their mother. They are black. She is white.

For Mrs. Stanley Brytcuk, the stares are inconsequential.

"I don't think about what people think, ever," she said reflecting on the stares of the curious.

"All I know, is that they enjoy being with me and I enjoy being with them," she added.

"Every once in a while even when we're eating in a restaurant, they'll come to me and pat my face or put an arm around my shoulders, lovingly," she said softly.

But at the end of the day, when it is time to go home, there are often tears in the eyes of the children, who must return to their quarters

in Willowbrook State School. They know that they will have to wait two weeks for their next Sunday outing with "Miss Florence." And two weeks can be a very long time for two boys whose own parents just don't seem to care.

Ricky, now 13½, was placed in the school by his mother when he was six. He never has had a visit from her since.

Ten-year-old Larry had a grandmother, who came once or twice, then suddenly stopped visiting.

A LITTLE GENTLEMAN

Both boys were placed in a Hammond, director of volun- sick ward when they first arrived at the school.

Mrs. Brytcuk discovered as she is known to the boys—Ricky six years ago, when has taken the young man on she volunteered to work there Hudson River Day Line with a group of 8 to 12-year-olds in playground and field Dutch country, Atlantic City, activities.

Niagara Falls and Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

Today, the once irrepressible and unmanageable Ricky talks of being a fireman or maybe a policeman going to "spoil" the time, she said.

Mrs. Brytcuk did every- thing but "spoil" Ricky

during her two-year weekly meetings with the group. It was through her gentle guidance that he eventually developed into "a little gentleman, in every respect."

Turning from group to individual therapy, where she thought her attention would be more effective, she eventually was permitted to take Ricky out every other Sunday for an outing and dinner.

"She purchases clothing for him and denies herself many luxuries so that she can take him on vacation trips and to many community activities," Mrs. Jack

teers at the school stated.

So far, "Miss Florence"—Mrs. Brytcuk discovered as she is known to the boys—Ricky six years ago, when has taken the young man on she volunteered to work there Hudson River Day Line with a group of 8 to 12-year-olds in playground and field Dutch country, Atlantic City, activities.

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Mrs. Brytcuk advised him recently. And school-shy Ricky answered, confidently, "I'm ready for school now," she related.

"I would like to see him grow up to become something special," Mrs. Brytcuk added wistfully.

Larry entered the picture two years ago, when Mrs. Brytcuk agreed to take him along, at Mrs. Hammond's request, as a companion for Ricky.

Both boys attend classes for the educable at the institution.

OTHER INTERESTS

In addition to befriending the two boys, Mrs. Brytcuk visits women residents in another building of the institution every Thursday evening. She brings sweets and devotes her time there in reading to the women, many of them forgotten by their families.

The youthful-looking grandmother of two teenage boys, has a daughter, Mrs. Francis Westlee Norris of Silver Lake.

Mrs. Brytcuk is a member

of the Brighton Heights Reformed Church, New Brighton, where she is engaged in many activities sponsored by the Women's League there.

Away from her switchboard at the Advance, or if she is not involved with church work or at Willowbrook, Mrs. Brytcuk paints and writes deeply introspective poetry for relaxation.

She and her husband, a supervisor in a government supply warehouse in Bayonne, live at 312 Decker Ave., Port Richmond.

Coincidentally, a Decker by birth, she is a descendant of one of the Old Holland Dutch families who settled on the Island 300 years ago. But this, too, is inconsequential for Mrs. Brytcuk, who feels a purpose in her existence.

She expressed this best in an excerpt of a poem she wrote:

"One little thing
That I can do,
May help to strengthen
Your faith in you.
Help, don't hinder
His plan for us
Before your flesh
Has turned to dust."