



Volunteer Service Photographers, Inc.

111 West 57th Street • New York, N. Y. 10019 • Circle 6-3965

PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

In setting up a program, the general factors which are of most importance are that you establish a source of volunteers who are dependable, regular, enthusiastic, and have a sense of responsibility and continuity, so as not to disappoint their students. These volunteers can be culled from camera clubs, photographic councils, retirement organizations in your community, and even among unaffiliated amateurs who frequent camera stores.

Another important factor is a source of supplies. Here a good contact with a camera store can be helpful in several ways. When you have ascertained what equipment, if any, is available in the institution, it can be supplemented with the cooperation of a helpful salesman or camera shop owner. Donations of equipment no longer useful to their owners can probably be obtained from interested camera club members. The type of equipment you will need depends on patients' disabilities, their emotional stability, and the room available for the program.

Dark-
room

If there is no space available for a darkroom per se, another, multi-purpose room can be made to serve if it has running water and can be fitted with light-tight window shades. A closet that can be locked is a very important "must" for equipment that is to be stored between sessions.

The type of enlarger you will want to use depends upon the type of camera used by your students. For the very young or very handicapped, simple cameras are best, with an inexpensive enlarger and the simplest developing methods: apron, not reel, type developing tanks, stainless steel trays, and whatever other supplies are needed which can survive rough handling. If the students are patients in wheel chairs, work tables must be high enough for the chairs to fit under.

The time available for darkroom use determines the type of expendable materials you will want to get. The new, resin-coated enlarging papers process rapidly, but if regular enlarging paper is preferred by the volunteer, he should use a hypo-eliminator to save water and time. It is also very important to establish a wet side and a dry side, especially in the case of the handicapped where spills can ruin printing papers.

We would suggest that color printing not be attempted at the outset, because it is still too exacting a process for the handicapped or convalescent person to handle.

Taking
Pic-
tures

As far as cameras are concerned, the single lens reflex is preferable to the range finder type. Viewing through the SLR, the student will be stimulated by being able to compose and see exactly what he is photographing, and for the handicapped person, such as a quadriplegic who, if he is lying down or if he can be placed in a sitting position, can have the camera securely mounted on a lapboard or a tripod at eye level, and trip the shutter with a cable release held in his mouth. For a person with limited use of the left arm, perhaps a left-handed camera, such as the old Exacta, can be found.

For the picture-taking activity, studio type facilities are not necessary. Everyday activities, portraits of each other, of

favorite nurses, flower arrangements, etc., are most meaningful. If a Polaroid camera is available, it is an excellent means of demonstrating various lighting techniques. If possible, field trips can be arranged which may be on the institution grounds or a place nearby, such as a park or playground. Such activities, will go far in stimulating interest and unifying the group. If the sponsoring agency has a dramatic group, a choral group, a basketball or baseball team, these might also serve as interesting subject matter to be photographed. At other times, short slide shows by outsiders will provide variety to the program.

The decision as to whether to conduct classes or give individual instruction depends entirely on individual situations. The volunteer may find it simpler to give classes if the students are more or less on the same level of ability. Also, if there are three or four handicapped people, an ingenious instructor will find it possible to adapt the equipment to each individual. For example, the enlarger may be operated by a patient who has the use of his hands; solutions in trays can be agitated by means of tongs held in the mouth of one who cannot use his hands, and so on. Loading the camera, advancing the film, and unloading the camera may not be possible in some instances where a student is unable to participate physically. However, he may have a keen mind and be able to impart some excellent ideas on the taking of pictures or simplifying the processing. Many get much pleasure out of merely watching the sessions or seeing their own portraits "come up" in the developing solution.

Sr.
Citi-
zens

All of these pointers apply equally well to Senior Citizens groups except that perhaps they may not prefer the darkroom sessions. Photographic field trips two or three times a year, or

still-life set-ups indoors when the weather is inclement probably will offer these groups a great deal of stimulation and interest. Another way of keeping them engrossed in their hobby, would be to put on slide shows preferably of the pictures they themselves made. Assignments could be given say, for example, to bring in the pictures they took on a particular field trip or "studio" session so that they can see what their fellow-photographers have done with the same subject matter. A slide projector and screen would probably be available in most institutions today which could be used for this purpose. Senior citizens who go to day centers for this type of activity often have their own cameras and would like to know more about using them. Or, if they do not own cameras, the volunteer who handles this part of the program should have two or three simple cameras on hand which the student can be taught to use.

General

There are numerous booklets and material available which may be of further help to you from Eastman Kodak, Rochester, N. Y. 10650. These include such subjects as how to build a darkroom, learning how to take pictures, one for children including basic photographic facts, another illustrating how individuals and organizations can help create public awareness, publicize and promote programs, recruit and train staff and volunteers, and especially detailed specific slide shows with texts which are concise and helpful on practically any point of technique.

We are sure you can understand that it is impossible to be more specific because there are so many variables in the types of students and the facilities and equipment which are available. Some of the important points to remember are that the volunteer keep in mind the

success of the individual at any stage of his activity. No matter how simple the process, this is something he has achieved and can be proud of. The volunteer should be flexible and often has to use great ingenuity in adapting equipment to individual abilities.

Photo-
oil
color-
ing

In many instances photo-oil coloring is the only activity which can be accommodated in the space available. This, as you may know, is the use of translucent oil colors applied with cotton-tipped sticks on matte surface black and white prints, and can be taught to most hospitalized patients, even those with severe handicaps, and in many other types of institutions such as those for the mentally retarded, youth programs for the disadvantaged, ex-offenders, and drug addicts, day centers for the elderly, and so on. Usually scenics are the easiest and most popular subjects to be worked on. It is a very satisfying technique, especially for the emotionally disturbed and the golden age group, who often like to use pictures of family and friends. Simple books of instruction on the process and the needed materials are readily available from art stores.

COMMUNITY SERVICE- THE PHOTOGRAPHIC WAY.



by
IRVING DESFOR

PHOTOGRAPHY is a versatile tool that can be used by civic minded groups or individuals to better their communities. It's a universal tool available to practically everyone everywhere in the country.

There was a concerned housewife in Rochester, New York, for example, who took home movies of motorists speeding by school buses which had stopped to pick up or let off children. The movies were shown on local television to stress the potential danger. That little "home movie" resulted in a public awareness of a dangerous problem that initiated official action and more stringent enforcement of the law. If that mother's home movie prevented even one-child casualty, then the effort was more than worthwhile.

Another example: A community group in Illinois made a slide show illustrating a particularly unsightly problem — eyesores created by large,

garish billboards. The slide presentation was shown to influential public groups and city officials. The result was a public awareness that eventually led to action. The cities of Champaign and Urbana passed strict legislation controlling signs and billboards.

But photography can serve the community in even more basic and fundamental ways. It can help bridge gaps between society and individuals scarred from illness and misfortune.

A Deep Commitment

One group that focuses its attention in this direction is Volunteer Service Photographers, Inc., or VSP as it is generally known. It's a nonprofit group that uses photography as a rehabilitative tool to help hospital patients, the handicapped and the underprivileged.

VSP was born 36 years ago to aid U.S. servicemen then engaged in World War II. Its founder, Josephine U. Her-

rick, a professional photographer, and other volunteers, took pictures of servicemen to send to their families as a morale builder.

As the war progressed, creating a harvest of sick and wounded, VSP entered a new phase of volunteer work. It went into hospitals with several different photography programs to encourage the comeback of combat casualties. Servicemen were loaned cameras and taught how to use them; they were shown how to develop and print; and how to hand color photos with oils.

This new type of therapy proved both mentally stimulating and physically beneficial. VSP's work was soon recognized by the Surgeon General as a valuable contribution to Army, Navy and Veterans hospitals.



(photo by the author)

At Byrd S. Coler Hospital, on Roosevelt Island in New York, volunteers such as Eugene Good (top) use photography to create pride and promote creativity among patients like Eddie Esquillin.

Emphasis Shifts With Needs

The work continued with the Korean War and through the conflict in Vietnam. When the post war years saw a phasing out of military hospitals, VSP efforts were shifted to civilian hospitals, community centers for the elderly, the handicapped, the underprivileged and inner city youth. Rehabilitation programs were set up for former drug addicts and for prison inmates. The need for VSP was as strong as ever and VSP workers were specially trained to fill that need.

At the moment, VSP supports nearly 100 trained volunteers in 50 institutions in the New York area. The combined attendance of all sessions was 10,000 students/patients in 1975. The budget is supported solely by voluntary contributions.

VSP's volunteers are a mix of amateur, professional, and retired photographers. They are required to undergo



Frank (Yogi) Rivera, a long-term wheelchair patient at Bird S. Coler Hospital in New York, won a Grand Honorable mention in the 1976 VSP photo competition for the above photo, titled Needle-Threading.

a six-week training course in VSP's teaching methods. They teach the basics of handling a camera and processing black & white films, contact prints and enlargements, as well as photo oil coloring of prints. The work is designed to stimulate long-term bed patients, to motivate the physically handicapped to use both mental and body faculties, and to give everyone a sense of creative accomplishment and worth.

VSP provides the instruction, the equipment and the volunteers without charge. In addition, it conducts an annual student contest which provides a competitive incentive at all levels and in all categories. Prizes consist of cash and equipment and all entrants receive certificates of merit.

The VSP photo awards day has become a special occasion which provides a gala outing for wheelchair patients and other handicapped. They get away from confined quarters, meet photo experts and have a generally enjoyable time.

The grand award was presented by Cornell Capa, noted photo journalist and director of the International Center of Photography, in 1976, and by Yosuf Karsh, world renown portraitist of great statesmen and personalities, in 1975.

Fund Raising Also Serves

Responding to increased economic pressures resulting from inflation, VSP instituted a new fund raising idea in 1975 . . . The International Invitational of Photography.

The world's outstanding photographers were each invited to donate one or more signed photographs for a fixed term exhibition. At the conclusion of the showing the prints were sold at auction, the proceeds going to VSP.

The unique idea met with favorable response. 373 photographs representing the work of 261 photographers raised more than \$20,000. The "IIP" show, as it is now known, was held at the Union Carbide Exhibition Gallery in New York. The opening night celebrity party in October of 1975 set the tone for the 10-day showing.

A second IIP was planned for March of this year. Within two weeks of the announcement, more than 80 photographers responded with contributions or commitments. It will be held once again at the elegant Union Carbide Exhibition Gallery in Mid-town Manhattan with a gala opening night on March 31, 1977. The exhibition will remain on view to the public for three weeks and will climax with a "live" auction on the final day.

Of course, VSP is but a single example of the importance which photogra-



First Grand Prize, Black & White, was awarded in 1976 by Volunteer Service Photographers to Donald Dien, Odyssey House for this picture shot with a Nikkormat SLR.

phy—and photographers—can hold for the community. It shows photography's enormous potential for drawing all of us a little bit closer together . . . and allowing us to see the world around us a little bit more clearly.

Dr. Howard A. Rusk, Director of The Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, could have been speaking about all community-minded photographers when he commented, "The men and women of VSP . . . prove each day that photography is indeed 'just what the doctor ordered'."

Irving "Doc" Desfor is the indomitable author of "Camera Angles," a weekly column on photography which the Associated Press sends to over 1250 newspapers. Until his partial retirement in 1972, Desfor also held the position of Photo Art Director for Associated Press Newsfeatures and later for the A. P. Promotion Department.



In the 1976 VSP competition, Second Grand Prize, Black & White, was awarded to J. Marala of Fountain House, in Manhattan, for this photo taken in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn with a Konica T3 SLR.

"I've asked for a calendar for Christmas so I can mark the days that photography comes."

—Student-patient in hospital

PHOTO-OIL COLORING

The coloring of photographs with special oil paints offers a creative challenge to all ages. It provides constructive occupation for students with major handicaps and personal expression for both young people and senior citizens.



Charles L. Gill

STUDENT CONTEST

Frank Ericson



Joseph Pleffner



Recent prize-winning picture, taken by youngster in center wheelchair in photo at right.

This is an eagerly anticipated annual gathering of students, instructors, and friends. Prizes for personal achievement through photography, for the best pictures in photography and photo-oil coloring, and for best pictures within individual programs are awarded by a jury of well-known photographers, who comment constructively on their selections. Student pictures are placed on exhibition, most recently at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

TO MEET THE MANY NEEDS . . .

Volunteer Service Photographers provides necessary photographic equipment, supplies, and specially trained volunteer teachers who give thousands of hours in instructing the many who benefit from the programs. VSP is a volunteer organization founded in 1941, which has existed solely with the help of contributions of funds, equipment, and time from its

members. Please help us to continue and to expand this work by sending your contribution or volunteering your services now to:

Volunteer Service Photographers, Inc.
111 West 57th St.
New York, N.Y. 10019
212 Circle 6-3965
(Founded by Josephine U. Herrick)

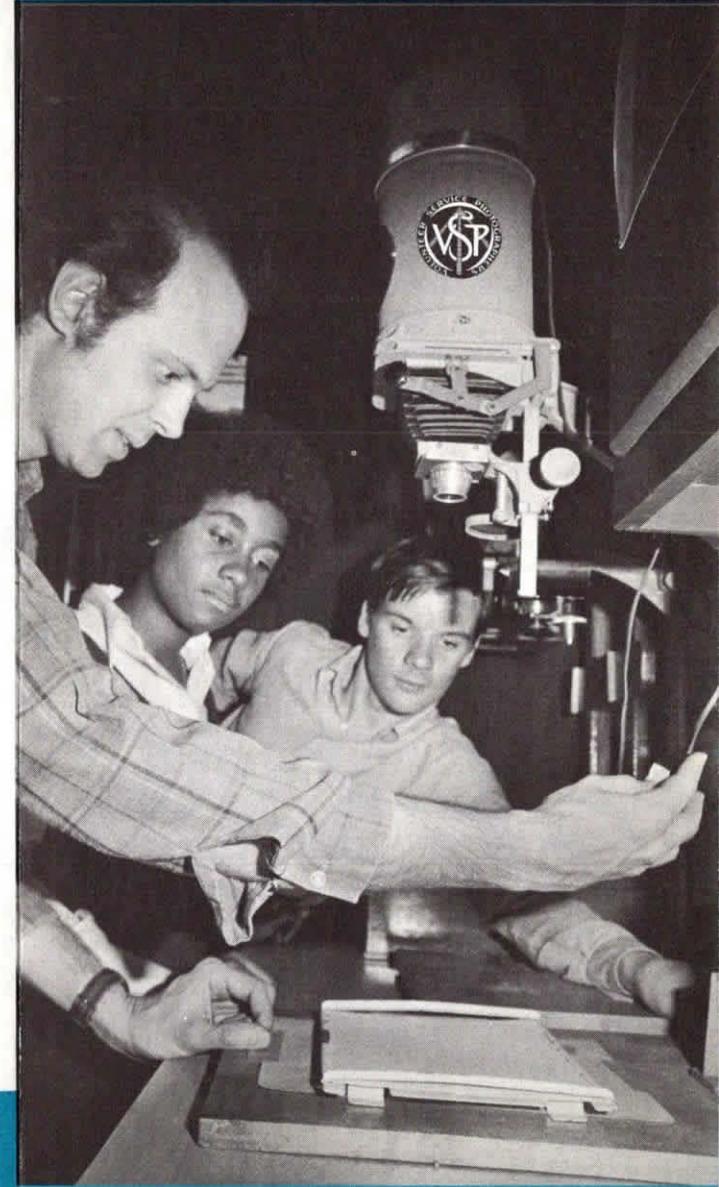


Printing of this brochure was made possible by a friend of VSP. Layout design was contributed by Shinichiro Tora, art director, and text by Carol

Carlisle, managing editor, both of Popular Photography Annuals Div. Printing of photographs contributed by Modernage Photographic Services, Inc., N.Y., N.Y.

VSP*

Dedicated to the rehabilitation through photography of the physically and mentally ill and handicapped and the environmentally disadvantaged



Liz Burpee

*VOLUNTEER SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHERS, INC.

"Volunteer Service Photographers has made a significant contribution to rehabilitation and therapeutic recreation for the chronically ill and physically handicapped."

—Howard A. Rusk, M.D.
Director, Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine
New York University Medical Center

YOUTH PROGRAMS

VSP helps to channel youthful energy into purposeful creativity in teaching disadvantaged youngsters to find and express themselves through the taking and processing of photographs. Future career possibilities can often be sparked by early interest in photography.



Liz Burpee

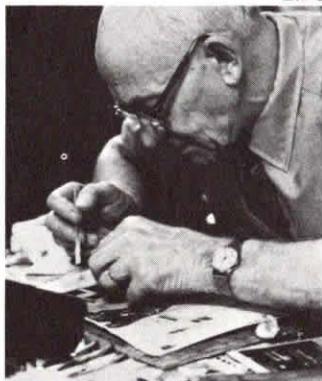
Carol Carlisle



CIVILIAN HOSPITALS

The taking and processing of pictures acts as both physical therapy and pleasant recreation for the ill and handicapped confined to hospitals. All ages and all degrees of disability are served in this way.

SENIOR CITIZEN GROUPS



Retirement's idle hours are filled with new and satisfying hobbies as senior citizens explore the delights of picture-taking and photo-oil coloring.



Liz Burpee

Sylvia Solomon



MILITARY HOSPITALS

More than 30 years ago, VSP established its first Rehabilitation Program—in St. Albans U.S. Naval Hospital, Queens, N.Y.—to teach photography to the wounded returning from World War II combat. This program has continued without interruption since 1941.

"Photography is a powerful but peaceful means of communication for many of the disadvantaged youths in our inner cities."

—Sidney Holtz, president,
Photography for Youth Foundation, Inc.
and publisher, Popular Photography