

could not take French, commenting that "all we do in French is repeat words — Sue can do that." Her observations had an underlying truth which few adults could explain away or discount. Consequently, Sue had opportunities to participate in activities which adults would have considered irrelevant or in conflict with her program. For instance, Sue previously had to miss French so that she would have extra time to get ready to go home on the bus. Kerri felt that Sue was as able as any student to get ready in the allotted ten minutes. And, given the opportunity, Sue was able.

Another student, Scott, also became Sue's advocate. He seemed to be more in tune with Sue's needs than other peers. Over the year, he went from being a volunteer to being truly fond of Sue. His commitment to support Sue turned into a friendship. For Scott, the experiences around helping Sue enlarged his vision of friendship and expanded his active contribution to the school community.

For some students, being in the support group provided them with a relationship which compensated for some absence in their lives. Each of us has primary relationships with parents or siblings which are a major source of nurturing, love and acceptance. Some students, because of divorce, alcohol abuse, or other situations, have had terrible experiences with some significant relationships. These students often become lonely and attention-seeking. This was the situation for some of the students in Sue's peer group; they were eager to overcome their limited success with meaningful relationships and become involved again. This seemed to spark their interest in Sue's group. Over time, other students found the group comfortable to be in.

The commitment made by students generally seen as loners and troublemakers surprised teachers. One teacher said, "I would never believe that this person would ever volunteer to help."