

STATEN ISLAND SUNDAY ADVANCE, March 27, 1971



Lynn Hoffman, standing, director of family therapy at the Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, speaks at yesterday's family therapy seminar sponsored by the Staten Island Chapter of the New York Society of Clinical Social Workers at the Staten Island YMCA headquarters, West Brighton.

We on Staten Island wish you a happy and cool summer ahead.

Seminar mulls family therapy

By MICHAEL AZZARA JR.

Lynn Hoffman, a leading proponent of "family therapy", a relatively new form of psychotherapy, conducted a seminar yesterday afternoon at the YMCA building in West Brighton.

Mrs. Hoffman is Director of Family Therapy at the Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, where she resides. She also co-authored the book "Techniques of Family Therapy."

The seminar was sponsored by the Staten Island Chapter of the New York State Society of Clinical Social Work Psychotherapists. It was conducted mainly for social workers and students in the field.

Family therapy, according to Mrs. Hoffman, "views the problems of a disturbed individual as a signal of trouble within his or her family." A person may develop an acute problem as a result of some larger family problem, as a means of distracting the family's attention from the larger problem. The individual usually does this subconsciously.

For instance, a child who misbehaves becomes the focal point of a married couple's concern. According to Mrs. Hoffman, the child may be doing this to "mask over" problems and tensions the

parents may have with each other by diverting their attention to him or her.

If the family is treated, and the child begins to act normally again, the tensions and problems that his behavior had masked over then comes to the surface. The parents must confront their differences rather than neglecting them in favor of worrying over the "problem-child."

Mrs. Hoffman and Sam Sterk, president of the Staten Island chapter of the society, pointed out that this type of therapy is extremely important in a "family-oriented borough" like Staten Island, where many problems are "inter-generational," or even "multi-generational."

"The virtue of working with a family unit," said Mrs. Hoffman, is that you can catch many things before they develop into real problems."

Although the Staten Island branch of the organization did not get under way until last September, the New York State society was formed in 1968. The purposes of the society, according to Sterk, are:

¶ To maintain high standards for the practice of clinical social work psychotherapy.

¶ To help pass legislation for reim-

bursements from health insurance companies, like the state and federal Medicare and Medicaid programs.

¶ To promote training and further education for clinical social workers.

¶ To promote the private practice of clinical social work.

¶ To help change the image of the social or welfare worker of the 1930's to today's more sophisticated, professional and educated view. In connection with this, Sterk explained that clinical social workers must obtain a degree from a recognized educational institution, in addition to obtaining state certification.

Sterk also said that the state society hires lobbyists in both Albany and Washington D.C. to help campaign for health insurance legislation to bring payment parity for clinical social work and other forms of health-related functions.

Scouts fly kites

Cub Scout Pack 105, which meets in PS 41, New Dorp, conducted a "kite derby" at Miller Field yesterday afternoon. Three scouts received the Arrow of Light, the highest cub scouting award. They are Frank D'Amico, Philip Mangiatia, and Nicky Thomas. The pack plans to attend the circus at Wagner College on Friday.

Westchester - Rockland Chapter

by Martin Pollens

COMING EVENTS:

Sunday, May 15, 1977, from 11:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M. at New York Hospital, Westchester Division, Bloomingdale Road, White Plains

"Third Party Insurance Payments for Health Care By Clinical Social Work Psychotherapists--its future and yours--"

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Panel Members will include:

State Senator John Flynn, co-sponsor of our 1976 Third Party Payments Bill

(panel members continue on the next page)