

idea corner

The Runaway Batch

Teenage runaways are an ever-increasing national problem. Such agencies as the American Red Cross have taken the initiative to help with this problem by establishing shelters or halfway houses for runaways. Three such shelters are located in the Alabama cities of Birmingham, Decatur, and Gadsden. The shelters are funded by the National Runaway Act of 1971 through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Thirteenth Place, located in Gadsden, serves not only as a shelter for runaways, but also a shelter for neglected youth, youth awaiting permanent placement, and youth who are school truancy problems. These young people are from 12 to 18 years old.

A 4-H D.O.T. (Diet's Our Thing) program was recently added to their series of recreational, cultural, and educational programs. The D.O.T. program teaches the youth about good nutrition and preparing and maintaining food. We feel *this is an excellent way of helping the residents prepare for long and healthy lives. The youth, who show a genuine interest in the program, are learning rapidly.*

The Runaway Batch, as the group so cleverly named themselves, is under the leadership of Jayne Fetterman. Jayne

is a VISTA volunteer working at Thirteenth Place for one year. She's a University of Delaware graduate with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

We know the program will be successful. Though obviously biased by the enthusiastic reception of our program, we feel that similar programs in other cities, in conjunction with the Red Cross and other agencies, may well make a difference in some young lives!

Maude G. Hill
*Assistant County Agent—4-H
Gadsden, Alabama*