

Woman of the Week

Mrs. Zebrowski Finds Talk Best Tonic for Sick Tots

By HILDA COUCH

Talking to tots is therapeutic. Mrs. Chester Zebrowski, one of the most devoted volunteers at Bayonne Hospital, believes that she does more good by just talking to the youngsters in the pediatrics ward than anything else she might do for them.

"THE VOLUNTEERS take the children's minds off being sick," she said.

"The children like somebody other than a nurse or a doctor to play with them. We play games with them. We read to them. And sometimes we just talk, and they seem to like that best."

"Personally I don't think children get much chance to talk nowadays. They either watch television or are given a game to play."

"Most people aren't in the habit of talking much. But children are very avid talkers once they get started."

HOW DOES she get them started?

"I call each child by name. I immediately get his attention. I ask about his school, what grade he is in, what teacher he has, and what subject he likes best," she replied.

Mrs. Zebrowski usually has assistance — not vocal, but line conversation stimulants. She carries with her, in the pockets of her cherry red volunteer's uniform, several tiny dolls and small toys — tiny trucks and automobiles.

"WE ALWAYS have to be careful about the toys, though. They mustn't have sharp edges, or they might injure the children. Toys made of soft plastic are usually best," she explained.

The pocketful of treasures are inexpensive, but worth their weight in gold in taking the children's minds off their troubles, she believes.

"You can't imagine what a hit I made the other day when I took to the hospital a handful of Mexican jumping beans — and they only cost a dime for the lot!" she exclaimed.

MRS. ZEBROWSKI has been working with the Bayonne Hospital Volunteer Services — one of two women's organizations supplying volunteers for certain

sections of the institution — for the last eleven years — "almost since they started."

Her group works in cooperation with the Bayonne Hospital Guild, which supplies all the equipment necessary for the children's ward — from crayons to "croupettes".

She served as president from 1957 to 1959 and is one of two honorary presidents of the organization, now headed by Mrs. Leon Davidowitz. The other "honorary" is Mrs. Harold Grodberg.

MRS. ZEBROWSKI, one of 65 volunteers, is in charge of screening all of the applicants for volunteer posts. Applicants must be at least 16 years old and must give at least two hours

of service each week.

They may work in the escort service, meeting patients as they arrive, escorting them to their rooms, carrying their bags and introducing them to the nurses in charge. The escort volunteers also take patients to and from the x-ray room. They also deliver the mail.

Some volunteers do clerical work in the laboratory, keeping the records. Others take the library cart from bed to bed, help the patients select books and magazines, and, when the patients feel conversational, talk to them as well. Others perform recreational duties — reading to the children in the pediatrics ward and playing with them.

WHAT WORK does Mrs. Ze-

browski enjoy the most?

"I love doing everything. I think I like meeting the people best. I always come away feeling good. I am thankful that I am on the giving end of the service, rather than the receiving end," she said.

"Many people find hospitals depressing but not I. I am never depressed when I see people who are sick. I am just thankful that I am not!"

THE BAYONNE VOLUNTEER. who was graduated from Bayonne High School and took special courses at Mount Carmel and a business school, does not confine her attentions to the hospital.

"I like to work with children of all ages," she declared.

"I particularly enjoy working with girls. I am in contact with girls of the Sunday school of Mount Carmel parish — as principal of the elementary school — and I also teach sophomore high school girls on Monday evenings at the High School Confraternity of Mount Carmel.

"We recently started a gym program for the children at Mount Carmel, with volunteers, and I am a gym instructor. I am also on the school board — there are seven men and women members," she added.

HOME-MAKER, teacher, principal, hospital volunteer, executive — is there anything Mrs. Zebrowski cannot do?

"I am not a fund-raiser," she declared. "I'm glad to contribute, but I don't enjoy asking others to."

She and her husband, who have a married daughter, Mrs. Jack Komar of Annandale, Va., and a son, Matthew, a Rutgers junior, have a fund-raiser in the family, however. The elder Zebrowski is the new president of the Bayonne Community Chest.



HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER — Mrs. Chester Zebrowski of 228 Avenue F, Bayonne, puts some tiny dolls and toys into the pockets of her Bayonne Hospital volunteer uniform as she prepares for duty in the pediatrics ward. She finds that the toys and dolls make fine ways of starting conversation with the young patients. (Jersey Pictures)