Photo by Steve Card

Fostering Friendships brings University students together with developmentally disabled children.

Friendships Continued from Page 6

get education just like any child, so they aren't shunted off the to the side."

Like Thayer, Villanueva soon discovered that the disabled child he was linked with had more similarities than differences with non-disabled children.

"The first child I was linked with couldn't speak — he could understand, he just couldn't talk back," Villanueva said. "After a few visits I realized he was just like any other 13-year-old. He likes to eat, and he likes to joke around in his own manner."

The students, Thayer said, take the children to McDonald's, bake cookies, go roller skating, or whatever they choose. The choice of activities is limited only by the volunteer and the child.

"Different volunteers do different things," Thayer said. "A really common one is feeding the ducks down at the Millrace. I've taken my child to the coast, shopping ... really anything that someone would do with a normal child."

"Most of the children are really excited about being able to get out and do things they want to do," Thayer said.

The disabled persons in the program range from 5-year-olds to adults, although most are younger than 15 years of age, Thayer said. The children are referred to the program through the Association of Retarded Citizens, a non-profit community organization that also sponsors the Pearl Buck Center, respite care programs, a parent network and other programs.

Pam Ring, ARC executive director, said she has a long list of children waiting to be linked with a University student. The problem is a shortage of volunteers.

"At present there are 15 pairs," Ring said, "and we could easily double that amount. If we had 50 volunteers we could link them up no problem. Generally it's first come, first served, but we also match the child and volunteer individually. We do try eventually to get everyone linked."

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You may use the form below or send a letter of nominations to:

Paul S. Holbo, Vice Provost, 103 Johnson Hall
Please send no later than April 2, 1990

ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARDS

Ersted Awards

Faculty members who are in the first seven years of their university teaching careers.

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Faculty members who are full-time and who have held academic rank at the University for at least 7 years.

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I nominate _____
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The reasons for this nomination are as follows: (attach additional sheet, if necessary)

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