

The House That Students Built

by Luke L. Patrenella, Jr.



High-school students in Tyler, Tex., built this red Mexican adobe brick home valued at \$16,000.

EACH SUMMER in Tyler, Tex., a schoolteacher goes hunting for a residential building lot—on which his students can erect a three-bedroom house as part of their two-year training in the building-trades program of Tyler High School. Come Fall, D. A. McRae and his students begin construction, and prospective buyers start appearing.

For each of the past eight years, students have built houses with money from an unlimited revolving fund provided by the Tyler Independent School District. The profit has outfitted the students in work clothes, paid their expenses to district and state vocational industrial club meetings, and purchased new equipment for the program. One year, the surplus money bought a truck which carries students and equipment to the construction site.

Tyler's building-trades program affords practical experience to five other student groups. Blueprints are developed by students in mechanical drawing classes. Metal-trades students design and weld ornamental iron posts. Landscaping is done by vocational agriculture students. Homemaking girls furnish the house, and girls in the secretarial training classes handle the correspondence.

The program's first aim, McRae says, is "to teach the boys how to get along with the people for whom they are working." Apparently the training has stuck. A Tyler contractor who hired one of the students as a bricklayer said, "That young man has one of the best attitudes of any employee I've ever hired!"



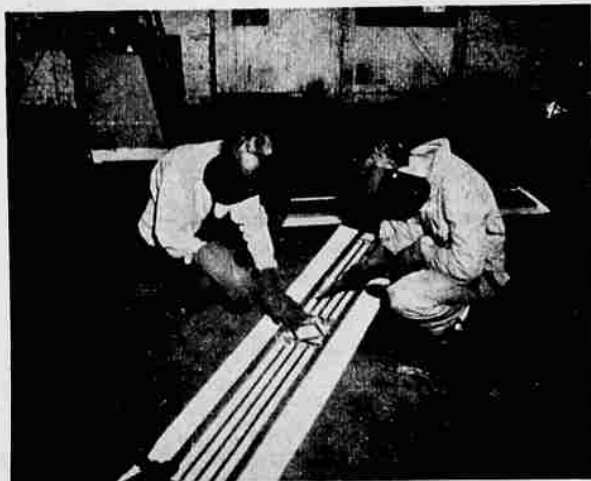
Miss Mary Jernigin's mechanical drawing classes set up blueprints and models in Spring semester.



In Fall, seven skilled trade classes take over, using building materials most popular in area.



Carpenters and cabinetmakers as well as painters, plumbers, electricians learn their skills.



Local contractors are high in their praise for Tyler students like these future metal workers.



Vocational agriculture students in landscaping plant cherry laurel tree before plotting grass.



Homemaking students, operating on budget, furnish home on temporary basis for "Open House."