

Several stay-at-homes can share telephone.



Switch enables shut-in to ask questions.



Chance to participate is considered excellent therapy.



They Go to School by Phone

by Norris Millington

FRANK E. HEUTTNER, JR., was paralyzed from the waist down as the result of an auto accident when he was 14. From that time on he never set foot in a classroom. But he "attended" Wisconsin State College at Eau Claire, was graduated from both the School of Commerce and the Law School of the University of Wisconsin with honors, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and Order of Cof, law honor society. Through the years he "went to school" only by telephone, and now practices law from a wheel chair in Cadott, Wis.

"My family and I had given up hope that I would ever be able to continue my education," he writes. "Then we saw a magazine article about the school-to-home telephone for shut-ins. I consider that article the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me.

"Today, as I look on my experience, I feel it would be impossible to overstate the importance of the school-to-home telephone hook-up. At a cost of about \$15 a month, borne by the Wisconsin Department of Vocational and Adult Rehabilitation, I was converted from a helpless cripple to an independent, self-supporting person."

How is the classroom brought into the home?

It is an intercom system much like that used in offices, consisting of two microphone-speaker units similar to portable radios. One, placed in the student's room, is connected by a regular private telephone line to the second unit in the distant classroom. By use of an on-and-off talk switch, the shut-in can take part in group and class discussions. When he leaves the switch up, he hears the teacher and his classmates. When he presses it down, they hear him.

The flip of a switch brings the classroom right into the homes of thousands of shut-ins.



Teacher reaches unseen pupils via squawk-box.

In the past 10 years, more than 12,000 handicapped students from every state in the Union, including Alaska, have received part or all of their education by phone.

The system, developed by Executone, Inc., in cooperation with the Bell System and independent companies, is available wherever there are telephone lines.

Costs average from \$13 to \$25 a month, depending on local rates and distances. More than 42 states with education programs for the handicapped approve the method for partial or full payment from state aid funds. Kiwanis, Rotary, and Lions clubs, parent-teacher associations, the National Foundation, National Tuberculosis Association, National Society for Crippled Children, and other groups also have helped pay the costs.

Dickie Leonard in Davenport, Ia., spent two years as a "telephone pupil" of St. Vincent Parochial School. "In the hustle of getting a large family ready for school, my little sick boy often was forgotten for the more pressing needs of the early morning," his mother, Mrs. Francis Leonard says. "He had lots of time to think of all he was missing.

"Then came that happy day when wires were connected and a shining new box was installed—a box that brought the outside world into Dickie's room and changed his whole future. It was a happy and well-adjusted boy who, after two years, returned to his classroom and resumed his studies as if he had never been absent."

From big cities to small towns, education by phone has spread widely since the first program



Temporary shut-ins also keep up with their class.

was initiated ten years ago between Boston University and the Veterans Administration Hospital at Rutland Heights, Mass.

From the Silvercrest Tuberculosis Sanatorium at New Albany, Ind., five patients at a time have "attended" the nearby high school. The board of education in Atlanta, Ga., has wired various schools to three hospitals. An outstanding example of what some hospitals do to promote education by phone is Sheltering Arms Hospital in Minneapolis. There, they have four permanent phone outlets to Roosevelt High School.

Dr. Charles K. Pettey, medical director and superintendent of Lake County Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Waukegan, Ill., says, "We have felt that this service has been of great value to the patients who wish to and are able to take on high-school study. It has boosted their morale and given them a feeling of accomplishment."

The feeling of being "part of the gang" is brought into the life of the homebound student by the school-to-home phone. His room broadens into a whole new world, and contact with this world does not end when school lets out.

At Corvallis High School in Corvallis, Ore., Raymond Cooper's set was hooked in for evening meetings. He was class secretary.

One high-school athlete, injured in a basketball game and bedridden for almost a year, had his set hooked in for the regular Saturday night basketball games in the school gymnasium, where a friend gave him a play-by-play description of the games over the intercom. Intrigued by the set-up, the principal decided to visit the young man one evening to see how he was enjoying the game. When he arrived, he found 16 boys packed into the athlete's bedroom, helping him cheer the team on.