

blind triplets

(Continued)

Donna Lee and Gail practice speech by feeling each other's vocal cords as they chatter playfully.



Children learn to eat by imitating what they see, but the Petraglias had to teach their triplets by manipulating their jaws manually.

The triplets must play in total darkness, but neighbors have provided a home designed without sharp corners and other hazards.



precaution, I went to school with them in the beginning, but soon this became my regular routine, too. During their school hours I busied myself in another classroom, helping other blind children. Sometimes I also worked in the office.

The discovery of this world outside their own home brought about a remarkable change in the triplets. Now they progressed rapidly, and soon they were able to perform helpful little chores, as well as take care of their own needs.

Every night when I knelt at my bedside to say my prayers I asked for the miracle of sight for my babies. And then, perhaps as a compromise, I'd ask God to make life a little easier for them in some way. In June, 1957, God's wonderful answer came through our front door in the person of Vincent D. Austin, a Bronx newspaperman.

While we sat listening, spellbound, Mr. Austin told us that the Bronx Junior Chamber of Commerce, at his suggestion, had selected the Petraglia triplets as their project for the year. They were launching a campaign to build a new home for us. There would be a play yard for the triplets, and the house would be designed with safety features to make their daily routine less difficult. It sounded like a dream. We always had hoped for a home of our own one day, but it seemed so far off we had to wonder if it would ever happen.

In rapid succession, a land site was donated, plans were drawn, and the construction was begun. The workers labored on their own time and all the materials needed were donated. When the house was completed, the Bronx merchants joined together to furnish it in minute detail. A brand new station wagon was even placed in the garage.

Our dream house had eight rooms and a large

play yard fully equipped with safe playground equipment and toys. Sliding doors were used throughout the house; sharp edges were avoided everywhere; and a play room was installed next to the kitchen, so I could perform my chores and still observe the triplets at play. The furnishings also were selected with a stress on convenience.

WHEN WE MOVED into our new home in April, the children were happier than I've ever seen them. Gail and Donna Lee examined their own individual bedrooms with utmost care, running their hands over almost every object in the room. Little Stevie moved his sensitive fingers over all the chrome parts of our new station wagon and exclaimed, "Boy, what a car this is!"

God has many ways of teaching us. Our lesson came through tragedy—tragedy that I thought we could never overcome. And yet it enabled us to experience one of God's choicest blessings—man's love for his fellow man. Few people have the good fortune to sample this in such abundance.

Thanks to the generosity of all the contributors, our home is actually in the luxury class. It is a beautiful, low, rambling ranch style in brick, with a snow white roof. But the ingredient that makes it truly beautiful is human kindness. That will make it stand as a monument to man's goodness.

We had wondered what means we could have of showing our gratitude to those who gave so generously of their time, energy, and goods. But perhaps little Stevie expressed the feeling that was in our hearts when, at the dedication ceremony, he cried out:

"God bless you all."

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