

# Break from gang strife

## Concerned teacher helping Cabrini-Green kids

By Susan Saiter

Out on a weedy field hard against the Cabrini-Green towers, most days you'll see a team of kids from the project warily ignoring the gang members and slugging it out on the baseball diamond.

Inside a Cabrini-Green building down the way, a summer tutoring program is under way.

The baseball team and tutoring, as well as a basketball team and field trips, probably wouldn't exist if it weren't for a young Chicago school-teacher, Vincil Carter, who

started Project Education Plus at Cabrini-Green.

The programs, partly funded from the Joyce Foundation, operate out of two Cabrini-Green row houses on Cleveland Avenue. A Cabrini-Green mother-and-daughter team, Louise and Rose Rhine, struggle together with Carter to find equipment and good kids.

"I'm trying to make them know that there's more out there. Most of them stay in here all the time. It's like a prison," Carter said.

The tutoring program is strictly a summertime af-

fair, but recreation programs designed to steer teenagers from gangs are year-round. About 90 children of all ages play on the half-dozen baseball and basketball teams, named the Demons.

But that's 90 out of what Carter estimates to be 10,000 children in Cabrini-Green. Many of the others belong to gangs, and he won't let them on the teams.

"We can't have anyone from a gang, because if someone from a rival gang sees him with the team, they assume the whole team is in his gang," Carter explained. "But the kids in sports are left alone by gangs."

Gangs or not, a Cabrini-Green team carries its own distinctive image. Earnest Mackey, 15, a pitcher, said other teams often "think we're going to beat them up."

And playing clean can be dangerous. When the Demons went to play a team in Columbus Park recently, Anthony Franklin, 16, recalled, "The other team lost and tried to beat us up with baseball bats."

The Demons escaped, with a lesson in the phraseology of the upwardly mobile. "Once other teams find out we're from Cabrini-Green, they think we're real tough," said Rose Rhine. Smiling, she added, "So we just started saying we were from 'the North Side.'"

The sports teams have won championships, including a basketball league tournament at Washington Park last winter and a Christmas tournament at Columbus Park.

Carter is one Chicagoan who misses former Mayor Jane M. Byrne, and even



Vincil Carter  
Project Education Plus

"Kids in sports are left alone by gangs."

### 5 Lucky Winners

receive a pair of tickets to the 18th Annual NFLPA Mackey Awards Dinner, emceed by Jimmy "the Greek" Snyder, on Sunday, June 24 at the Conrad Hilton.

Winners will also attend a private cocktail party with the NFL stars.

### Grand Prize Winner

will be selected from the 5 winners to receive 1984 Chicago Bears season tickets (courtesy of the Better Boys Foundation) and a Getaway Rainbow Weekend for two at the Conrad Hilton.

### Runner-Up

baseball team  
(Sun-Times)

