

SENIOR PARTNERS HEALTH TALK

Gracing the stage

BRUCE Frazier plays trumpet with the Grace Notes All-Star Jazz Ensemble. But only summers—and when he plays hooky from school. The rest of the time, the full-time middle school math teacher stays connected by lining up dates for the group and even dropping off and picking up their equipment.

The group, which has been playing at community events sponsored by Senior Partners, features Frazier's father, bassist John Frazier, and several of the elder Frazier's contemporaries. Austin Mitchell, now a church organist and a full-time musician most of his life, plays piano for the group.

Art Daniels, a musician and arranger who frequently commutes to New York for gigs, plays

tenor sax, plus some flute and clarinet. Dottie Smith, an old friend of Mitchell's and a Sunday jam session regular, joined the group after its formation, performing vocal chores on the jazz and pop standards that make up most of the group's typical play list.

Frazier says the group's regulars "all have the same positive attitude," and most are still active musically outside of the group. Frazier and fellow teacher Vincent Rutland, a percussionist, happily sit in when school's not in session.

Frazier, who himself has been playing for 38 years, says his dad ran a number of professional groups in the '50s and '60s. There were a lot of musicians in his dad's circle, and he always wanted to be a part of it. "My father tried to keep me out of music," Frazier



► Dottie Smith takes center stage at a summertime performance by the Grace Notes. No matter what the season, temperatures rise when she starts to sing.

says, "but I eventually rebelled."

After working with Frazier on another musical project, Health Partners Community Affairs Director Bernadette Mulligan approached him about putting together a group for a series of events geared toward older adults. And the Grace Notes were born.

These Senior Partners events, many at area senior centers, "help the musicians, as well as the audience," Frazier says. "It makes them all feel good afterwards. It gets people moving, and takes their minds off their problems."

"And," he adds, "maybe the music can actually be a cure."