

ADVOCACY NEWS

ROBERT NELKIN
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

POLK OUTREACH TEAM FINISHED

The Department of Public Welfare is terminating the current contract to find host (foster) homes for adults in the western part of the state. This program was conceived as a part of the Polk Dispersal Plan.

In its first year, the Outreach Team found no homes in Allegheny County. This poor record may have been due to the failure of DPW to provide money to establish sheltered workshops and therapeutic activity center programs for the people destined for host homes.

The Department officials say they intend to continue in their efforts to find adult foster homes. We will believe this when they start finding homes and providing day programs for the people going to the homes.

If you are interested in pressuring DPW for foster homes in this community, call Deputy Secretary Anna Belle Calloway at 565-5220 or MR Commissioner, Larry Jenkins, at 565-5144.

FEDERAL FUNDS CUT - TITLE XX

Some federal funds distributed to the state to provide social services for low income persons have been shifted from mental retardation services to other fields. Last year's grant for mental retardation services was \$9 million. The state reduced the amount to \$8 million this year. When DPW officials were questioned, "Why?", they said other funding streams for mental retardation services would be increasing.

ACC-PARC has found no evidence that any other funds, including MH/MR, will be increasing. This happened without us even putting up a fight.

MH/MR BUDGET CRISIS

The problem is that there is not sufficient money allocated to the Allegheny County MH/MR Program to grant agencies, including ACC-PARC, even minimal cost of living increases.

The causes for this crisis are: 1) failure of the Department of Public Welfare to notify Allegheny County of its allocation for the budget year which started July 1, 1975; 2) loss of \$2 million of federal grants that expired last year; and 3) a decrease in Title XX funds from the state to Allegheny County because the emphasis is being shifted away from large counties and mental retardation services.

The quantity or quality of services in MH/MR community agencies will suffer if minimal increases, even 5%, are not allocated.

Write to The Honorable Frank S. Beal, Secretary, Department of Public Welfare, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Health & Welfare Bldg., P. O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, Pa. 17120. Request that additional money be budgeted for the Allegheny County MH/MR Program so its agencies can receive a 5% cost of living increase.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

This holiday season send "Joy, Love and Help". Order your holiday cards and 1976 Bicentennial Calendar NOW! Use the order forms you received in the mail .. or stop in at any of ACC's developmental centers, workshops, the Central Office (1001 Brighton Road, North Side), or downtown office (5th floor, Arrott Building). Choose from the sample cards.

If you need more information, or want an additional order form for a friend, call 322-6008. Proceeds will help ACC continue and expand its local programs for children and adults.

CAN YOU TOP THIS?

Peggy Allebach, an employee at Goodwill's South Side Workshop, has already sold 48 Bicentennial Calendars. We are all indebted to Peggy for her enthusiasm and interest in helping others.

Everyone should have our appointment-type wall calendar in their home or office. Have you ordered yours? They sell for \$1.50 each, plus 18¢ postage. If you have misplaced your order form, send your check - made out to ACC-PARC Calendar - to 1001 Brighton Rd., Pgh., Pa. 15233.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

Our top biker for the past several years, Robert Stuckrath, was missed by many this year at the North Park Ride. Bob was sick on Bike-Hike Day .. but he did do a makeup ride in September at an event sponsored by the Pennsylvania Wheelmen. He is now trying to recover his pledges totaling close to \$500. We hope he can, since he rode 101 miles in 6 hours and 12 minutes. Bob is the Director of Planning and Development at Passavant Hospital.

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

From the October 1975 issue of Interaction:

"Shirley Arch, project director of Pittsburgh's FGP, enrolled interested grandparents in a local community college where they took courses for credit in child development.

"Ms. Arch also began encounter groups to help the Foster Grandparents deal with the problems encountered in various aspects of their volunteer service. As a result of her success with this venture, she was invited to deliver a paper on group process for older adults re-entering the 'work world' at the Tenth International Congress on Gerontology held in Jerusalem, Israel."

THE WORLD AROUND US

The East Area Developmental Center's Newsletter contains the following excellent suggestion:

"A concept you might like to reinforce with your child is the season, Fall. We are talking about and experiencing leaves falling, what colors the leaves are now, weather getting colder, etc.

"Talk to and experience with your child the world around us. It's fun for everyone."



"SECRET"
REPORT

The cover of the October 1975 issue of Pittsburgh magazine proclaims: "Behind the Walls: A Secret Report on Western State School & Hospital Says Death Is a 'Way of Life'".

An in-depth article by writer Evan Pattak reports that "the medical services now provided residents of the Mental Retardation Service of Western State School and Hospital at best is of minimum quality and simply sufficient to maintain survival of a predominant chronically disabled population .. the deficiencies in medical services and care are of such a nature as to make it impossible to correct through simple measures."

Mr. Pattak has quoted the above statement from a report of a task force of experts charged by the State Department of Public Welfare with making a comprehensive review of Western State. He does not reveal how he obtained a copy of this report, but charges the Welfare with keeping the report "secret, and with good reason."

We suggest that you purchase a copy of Pittsburgh magazine at your local newsstand. We urge you to read this article. Why did the Department of Public Welfare refuse .. and continues to refuse .. to make this report public?

Mr. Pattak's exhaustive report elaborates on these statements:

- "Simple arithmetic leaves one minute for the doctor to look at the patient and ask him how he feels."
- "The food was so bad the task force refused to eat it."
- "Six residents may have died in one year due to the lack of proper facilities."

Read the article. Where does the blame lie? You be the judge.

Ronald E. Archer, Esq.
Executive Director

THREE REPORTS
WITHHELD

The article which appeared in Pittsburgh magazine referred to only one of three state government reports on conditions at Western State School and Hospital. These reports, conducted at public expense, have been and continue to be withheld.

You have been reading and hearing about ACC's recent charge to the Department of Public Welfare that these state-commissioned reports have been suppressed and should be made available to the public. We believe that the Department's refusal to make the public aware of dangerous conditions and needed reforms demonstrates that it is not sincerely concerned about the safety of people at that institution.

We are convinced that more deaths and tragic injuries will uncover the Department's lack of commitment and ability to care for mentally retarded children and adults.

Secrecy in running a state agency is undemocratic and destructive of our society. If DPW cannot honor the public's right to know, then all those responsible should relinquish their positions of public trust.

Robert Matesic
ACC-PARC President

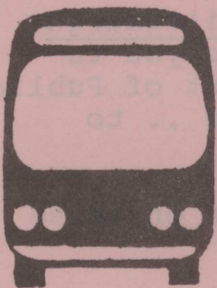
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Parents often have a difficult time getting services for their child because they don't know their rights under the law -- or even what questions to ask the officials responsible for providing services.

In response to this need, Closer Look has produced a new publication: "Know Your Rights!". It contains key questions to ask, a guide to finding answers, and sources of help if you feel you are getting unfair treatment.

For a free copy, write to Closer Look, Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013.

GREYHOUND ANNOUNCES NEW POLICY



Companions traveling with handicapped persons can now travel free of charge on Greyhound buses, if the trips are into, or out of, Pennsylvania.

"Handicapped persons frequently have been unable to travel because of the added cost of being with a companion who could help minister to their need," James L. Kerrigan, president of Greyhound Lines, Inc., said in announcing the plan.

To be eligible, the handicapped person and companion must travel together on the entire trip; the companion must be able to assist the disabled person in boarding and alighting, and the handicapped person must provide a written statement from a doctor stating the need for a traveling companion. Additionally, nonmotorized wheelchairs and other aids will be carried as baggage at no charge.

At the present time, this does not apply to travel within Pennsylvania .. it applies only to trips leaving or entering the State.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

A comprehensive listing of county-wide recreation programs for mentally retarded children and adults is now ready for distribution.

To request a copy, call Ginny Shiner at the ACC-PARC office, 322-6008, and one will be sent to you promptly.

ROBINSON VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an invaluable addition to the quality of service to our residents. If you or anyone you know have time and love to spare, we need you!

Volunteers assist residents in many activities, such as feeding, positioning, mobility, swimming, group activities, communication, and companionship. Residents enjoy being read to, going for walks, and playing games.

Other means of helping include shopping for clothes, making posters, sewing, and hosting visitors to the Center on evenings and weekends. Volunteers are offered a tour, orientation, and a modified version of our employee-training program.

If you are interested, please call the Center, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 and 5:00, 787-2350, Ext. 65.

Ms. Zarin Randeria-Wolf
Volunteer Coordinator
ROBINSON DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER
Clever Road, McKees Rocks