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SECRETARY'S OFFICE

APR 24 1973

DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Rel. to

April 24, 1973

Governor Milton Shapp  
State Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17100

Dear Sir:

I am writing this letter in regards to the action taken by the State Welfare Secretary, Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth to fire Dr. James H. McClelland of Polk State School in Polk, Pa. I have hesitated in writing a letter until I had a chance to view both sides of this issue and am now prepared to defend Dr. McClelland.

I myself have visited the Polk School located in Polk, Pa. as a visitor on a tour. I observed patients of various ages and mental capacities. On the tour, visitors were not permitted to view the aggressive patients for our own safety.

I truly believe that if the thousands of school employees and staff as well as many local and county organizations are fully supporting this man and his position in his duties as head of the school, then I can see no inhumane intention toward any of his patients in the procedure of using the so-called "cages" for the aggressive patients. The use of the playpens are much more appealing to me than the use of straight jackets or the injection of drugs.

As a young mother of a 5-month old son, I would have no objection to admitting my son or any other child to Polk State School and under the supervision of Dr. McClelland, if the occasion were that the child needed the attention of such staff at a mental school and home.

The mere fact that the cages themselves were on public display and not hidden from view is fact enough to me that the school was doing the right thing in using them for specific patients. I'm sure that Dr. McClelland and his staff is and has been investigating different means of protecting the aggressive patient and yet allowing them some open-ness to the rest of the patients at the school.

For the above reason, I sincerely hope that you will attempt to do all you can to reinstate Dr. McClelland and protect his professional character as Superintendent of Polk School.

Copy to:  
Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth  
State Welfare Secretary  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17100

Sincerely,

*Mrs. Carol M. Baugh*  
Carol M. Baugh (Mrs.)  
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