



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

WESTERN STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL  
333 Curry Hill Road  
Canonsburg, Pennsylvania 15317

cc: Ron, Ginny, Billy,  
JEAN, Norman  
12/23

ROBERT J. HILTNER, ACSW  
SUPERINTENDENT

December 19, 1974

TELEPHONE  
AREA CODE 412, 745-0700

Dr. Gary Makuch  
Special Assistant to  
Commissioner of Basic Education  
Department of Education  
333 Education Building  
Harrisburg, PA

Dear Gary:

I have enclosed a copy of a memo which I'm sure you will find interesting. The reason I'm forwarding it to you goes beyond the immediate concerns in your new job.

You have cautioned and advised me twice within the past few weeks that I shouldn't attempt to make Western State School and Hospital so desirable that residents would want to stay or that families would want to send their relatives here. On the contrary, I feel that I have the moral (if not the legal) responsibility to deliver the best services possible to those individuals in my charge. I cannot turn my back on situations which I know cause discomfort to the very people who are unable to fend for themselves. When I am able to turn my back, I hope somebody will tell me, because then it is time for me to quit.

I think that you made the statement because you feel community placement should be the ultimate goal. I do not disagree with you. However, Society is a long way from accepting in actuality what both of us believe philosophically. We both know that it has been next to impossible to establish group homes, to obtain host homes, to increase sheltered workshop opportunities, etc. I hope that you will agree with me that in moving selected residents from present institutions into smaller facilities, you create mini-institutions which may or may not render better services and care. Until the quality of service is regarded as the top priority by all who are responsible for directing and developing programs and services, only complaisance and support of the status quo will continue to exist.

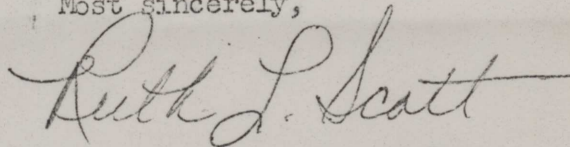
I have found it difficult to believe many of things I have discovered in my few months at Western State School and Hospital. I am not able to comprehend how administrators at all levels (here and upward) could knowingly tolerate such conditions and not protest them at the top of their collective voices.



Hopefully, all of us entered into this work because we elected to do so and recognized the need to be committed to the task of bettering the lot of individuals assigned to our care. Our work has to consider the past, the present, and the future. We've come a long way in Pennsylvania in the past twenty (20) years and we still have a long way to go. We have to educate the public to change for future programs; but now we must provide quality care to real live human beings who deserve our best efforts today.

I hope you will join with me in trying to deliver the very best now, and I will join with you in trying to implement the very best for the future.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth L. Scott". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Ruth L. Scott, Ass't. Supt.  
for Mental Retardation Services

RLS/pb

Enclosure

cc: Donald Carroll