

news

from



Allegheny County Chapter

of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children, Inc.
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October 24, 1972

Information to be used by Don Cannon and Bob Sprague in preparing television interview with Virginia Thornburgh for October 28th "Closeup".

Virginia Thornburgh: First Vice President of ACC-PARC;
Chairman of ACC-PARC's State School and
Hospital and Interim Care Committee;
mother of a retarded child.

History:

In June of 1972, concerned that the Department of Public Welfare was not adequately serving the retarded under their jurisdiction, ACC-PARC's Board of Directors charged its State School and Hospital and Interim Care Committee to re-activate visitations to MR facilities in the western region. The death of Richard Hissim at Ridge View Center prompted several on-site inspections of this facility...with requests to DPW after each visitation that the facility be closed. These requests were ignored. The death of Louis Novak at Ridge View reinforced the local chapter's fears for the care of Allegheny County residents placed in facilities throughout the State...and a public pledge was made in August to monitor all facilities housing mentally retarded children and adults from Allegheny County.

Mrs. Thornburgh visited the following facilities that have recently been in the news: Ridge View, Mountain Top, Polk.

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She will answer any questions regarding:

- what she saw on these inspections (physical plant, staffing, programming, residents).
- attitude of DPW (especially N.E. Regional office) regarding these facilities and their reaction when confronted by team
- recommended changes in care and treatment of mentally retarded
- anything else Cannon and Sprague wish to ask. Published and unpublished reports of ACC-PARC site visitations are enclosed.