

318 Columbia Street
Sharon, Penna. 16146
April 24, 1973

Received in
SECRETARY'S OFFICE

APR 25 1973

DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE
Ref. to _____

Honorable Helene Wohlgemuth
Secretary of Public Welfare
Room 333, Health & Welfare Building
Harrisburg, Penna. 17120

Dear Mrs. Wohlgemuth:

It was very disturbing to me to learn that you found it necessary to "fire" Dr. McClelland.

It was even more disturbing to learn that you did not have a more humane solution to the situation nor did you find it in order at any time to give Dr. McClelland credit for the excellent educational program at Polk.

I feel sure that you were aware of the situation that existed at Polk at least six months ago, if not longer. I attended a meeting in Harrisburg, at least six months ago, where a statement was made by Mel Knowlton to the effect that conditions at Polk were not satisfactory. It is unfortunate that no one at the meeting saw fit to question the statement. During the past six months it would have been in order to go through the proper channels and thus give Dr. McClelland a real opportunity to correct the situation. It would also have given you an opportunity to learn what the end result would have been without all of the adverse publicity. If he was given this opportunity then it should have been made public.

It is my understanding that Polk, along with other State Schools and Hospitals, has been mandated to reduce the number of residents. Perhaps at Polk this isn't being done as rapidly as you would like to see it but I feel sure that the rate of return is quite high in addition to being costly. Where are we saving the tax payers any money? What affect is the "return" having on the resident?

If your mere interest is to destroy State Schools and Hospitals so that eventually they will be closed, I think this is unfortunate. I have never approved the "dumping" of the residents into the community without provision made for necessary funds and sufficient time to provide community residences and properly train staff - on an ongoing basis. Even with the above, there will always be a need for State Schools and Hospitals but perhaps on a smaller scale than exists today.

I feel that a majority of the residents at Polk are not and probably never will be capable to live in the community and become employed, even under sheltered conditions. In our particular case (Mercer County Chapter of PARC), our present Sheltered Workshop is not large enough to take care of additional clients. A Sheltered Workshop Expansion takes time and, once again, money.

Mrs. Helene Wohlgemuth

April 24, 1973

I feel that your Department, through PARC or vice versa, should provide the necessary training for staff - on an ongoing basis - that will be employed in community residences. If not, you can expect most anything that will not be favorable to the mentally retarded.

I am strongly recommending that serious consideration be given to reinstating Dr. McClelland. Under the present circumstances, what kind of cooperation is Dr. White or any other replacement going to receive from the present staff at Polk?

Sincerely,

Ann Novosel

(Miss) Ann Novosel

P.S. My personal interest - I am an aunt of a 23 year old Mongoloid nephew raised by my family.

A. N.