



## *Allegheny County Chapter*

OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN, INC.

917-1001 BRIGHTON ROAD • PITTSBURGH, PA. 15233 • (412) 322-6008

President  
Dr. Norman Mulgrave  
Executive Director  
C. A. Peters

July 20, 1973

TO: ACC Board of Directors  
FROM: C. A. Peters, Executive Director  
RE: Threatened Work Stoppage of Child Care and Dietary Workers  
at Western State School & Hospital as a Result of the  
State's Non-Payment of Salaries During Budget Dispute

The captioned strike was scheduled to begin at midnight Thursday, July 12, and to continue for at least 24 hours.

The situation was discussed by the local President of the union involved at Western State School and Hospital (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees), by WSSH's Superintendent, Robert Hiltner, and ACC staff. To insure that residents would not be completely without attendance during the specified period, the union and Mr. Hiltner agreed to allow ACC-PARC to recruit and organize volunteers to help to man the three shifts involved. Mr. Hiltner believed there would be some regular staff on duty, but could not guarantee how many. His high estimate was fifty per cent (50%) of the child care workers.

At 12:30 Thursday, July 12, word was dispatched to all key ACC staff members that an emergency meeting would be held at 1:00. By 1:15, all summoned staff were present and the situation was discussed in depth. Staff present included Shirley Arch, Ron Archer, Rich Hanechak, Ruth Kaplan, Dee Kriceri, Bob Nelkin, Mary Lou Magistri, Dick Sell and Nancy Zirngibl.

Seven categories were drawn up from which appropriate volunteers could be recruited. It was decided that a minimum of 25 volunteers for the night shift and 50 for each of the two day shifts were absolutely essential.



Ron Archer was assigned to arrange transportation and seek an injunction via Neighborhood Legal Services. After discussion, it was agreed that a "writ of mandamus" would have to be directed against the Governor and the Secretary of Welfare for failing to halt the walkout.

Bob Nelkin was assigned communication liaison between WSSH administration, strikers, and the WSSH Parents' Group.

Loretta Bailie and Shirley Arch contacted their staff subordinates seeking volunteers for the midnight shift. It was agreed that the Opportunity Centers would not be closed because of a need for volunteers. Approximately 25 volunteers were selected from the Opportunity Centers Division. All one hundred Foster Grandparents volunteered.

Dick Sell solicited volunteers from our pre-school and the City/County school systems. Ruth Kaplan contacted Base Service Unit volunteers. Mary Lou Magistri also was in touch with the leadership of the Junior Women's Club and had 12 volunteers by 2:30. These were R.N.'s and teachers. Nancy Zirngibl was in touch with all media alerting them to a possible fast-breaking news story. The Executive Director cleared the use of Base Service Units and ACC staff as "volunteers" with the MH/MR Program.

Secretaries agreed to man the phones all night to sign up volunteers. Executive Director contacted regional vice-president of PARC to alert eight chapters in the Southwest Region. Dee Kricer polled the ACC Executive Committee.

ACC's school bus and two station wagons, and two chartered buses were agreed upon as adequate transportation; and a schedule of departure times from the State Office Building was established.

The meeting ended at 2:00 and all staff immediately began specifically to implement their segment of the over-all plan of action.

Fortunately, the strike was averted. We received official notification of this fact at 3:30. Staff then retraced their steps, informing, thanking, and cancelling scheduled and possible volunteers, members of the news media, the bus company, etc., etc.



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Between the time that the planning meeting ended and the time the cancellation of the strike was made known to our office (1½ hours) a total of 45 volunteers had been confirmed. This figure includes 31 staff members. It was evident that we would have been able to assure at least the minimum of 125 volunteers needed before the first shift began.

There are two reasons for this memo being sent to you. One is to keep you fully informed. The second reason is perhaps the more important in this particular instance. It is to share with you an almost unbelievable example of volunteer and staff support during a time of crisis.

The wholehearted cooperation of the staff was no surprise. I am extremely proud of their resourcefulness and dedication.

CAP:nz