



Allegheny County Chapter

OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN, INC.

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President
Dr. Norman Mulgrave
Acting Executive Director
Ronald E. Archer

January 10, 1974

Mr. Joseph Colombatto
Polk State School and Hospital
Box 94
Polk, Pennsylvania. 16342

Dear Joe,

Enclosed is an expression of some of our concerns resulting from our Residential Care Committee's December 11th visit.

Our report (enclosed letter) is being distributed only to our committee and you, Chuck, and Stan at this time.

If the response to the enclosed letter is inadequate, the Polk status quo maintained, we don't know what we're going to do next. We have used up our reasonable patience.

The Committee had some concerns about Right To Education for Polk students. We will express these to you soon. Our Chapter will continue to visit Polk. No matter how critical our observations may be, I hope we can continue the open and understanding relationship between you and ACC-PARC members.

Sincerely,

Ginny Thornburgh
Chairperson, Residential
Care Committee

cc : Stanley Meyers
C.A. Peters

Member Unit - National Association for Retarded Children, Inc.
Participant in the Allegheny County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program

Bob

Visit to Polk - December 11

Gardenside Bldg. - Population of 300 women

This visit prompted the following questions:

1. The development of a special program of behavior mod. for one particular resident (and others like her).
2. Restraints were still in use in this building. The tray chair we considered a type of restraint.
3. Right to Ed implementation raised issues such as:
 - a. Why could not those 200 residents referred to go out of Polk to school?
 - b. Why only 1 resident leaving grounds at present?
 - c. Why is DPW in charge of Speech and Hearing program?
 - d. Why did someone not make effort to retain specially funded programs under Federal Grants (I.T.U. for example)
4. Conversations with the nurses raised serious questions of peonage practice. One unit had 26 residents going to work, in other cottages on the grounds (quote staff), and only one woman seemed to be in an independent work program, by that I mean not employed by Polk, on the grounds. What of these monies, who accounts for them. The script type of payment is fine in learning situation, but for actual work these residents should be paid.
5. What is the function of Cottage #1 at this time? This cottage disturbed us. 16 residents supposedly live there at this time, and from there they will go out permanently.

These are my own random reactions and questions:

20 toilets in one room, no partition to allow privacy. Isolation room admittedly had been in use the day of visit. Pipes were quite warm in this room, could be touched by occupant. Residents in Gardenside (except for the "homey" section) smelled bad, and tho' I.U. is supposedly teaching grooming, dressing, these residents were in great need of help. Their clothes were dreadful..

I question who monitors the program of the I.U. I seriously doubt that these persons left their living quarters daily. And if so, is going to the gym adequate educational programming for them. I think this is the present lack in this entire Right to Ed bit...who can give you actual proof that these things are happening? If it is the miserable I.U.....then quote Chuck Peters...this is like the Mafia policing its own ranks!