



ALLEGHENY COUNTY CHAPTER
Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens, Inc.

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PARC

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December 31, 1974

Reverend Joseph Rodgers
WSSH, Board of Trustees
255 Center Road
McMurray, Pa. 15317

Dear Joe,

I appreciate your letter of November 29th and confess that it came as no surprise to me.

As a parent, and a candid person, I disagree that I should have at least contacted the other Trustees regarding the Board's decision to support the administration in handling this offense in the form of a reprimand. Had I been present, I would not have voted with you. I am weary of people being regarded for simply doing their job. Don't we expect employees to act with responsibility and obligation to others? Agreed that a reprimand is strong - but the negligence in this instance was, to parents, inexcusable. (Incidentally, last spring, I brought considerable quantities of cosmetics to this employee, to be distributed, particularly to women being trained to go out into the community. At the time of the candy incident, the cosmetics were still sitting in that store room. Was she going to let another six months pass before distributing them?)

I feel that, at this time, I must tell you how I honestly feel about the administration and some of our staff at WSSH. There is no way I can couch these words to make them pleasant. It is always the parent's group or the advocacy group who raises questions and brings serious matters to the attention of the public. Where are the voices that parents wish to hear, demanding of the Governor and Secretary that they be given help to provide proper care for our people. Why is the parent or advocacy group always acting as the capitalist for change.



Reverend Joseph Rodgers

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I disagree that the wrong person was whipped. The average citizen has little or no knowledge of retardation, and what he has has been brought to their attention by advocacy groups such as PARC or ACC-PARC. I think a Board has an obligation to inform the public as much as possible, not to quietly settle matters in a Board meeting. Those in a position to better the lives of institutionalized persons have a great responsibility because they have seen the true picture. Who knew about the concentration camp known as Hillcrest, later as Ridge View, until I opened my mouth. Had I not done my job, how many other Louis Novaks would have died, and would this citizenry have known how our people were being treated? I think not. In many of these instances, our public officials are to blame and it is you and I who must lean on them until they act responsibly. I know of no Board of Trustees who has ever gone in righteous indignation to confront our elected and appointed officials. I believe I made this recommendation at the October Board meeting.

Frankly, Joe, I am tired of working to try to make paid staff to do their job. They might say that they do all they can, but I disagree. I often think the line of least resistance is taken. The latest report of the conditions concerning the dietary problems are shocking. Will Mr. John Doe, citizen, be appraised of this, likely not, unless the parent's group or ACC makes it known to him. I, too, am trapped in a lousy system, with a child living in a place I find offensive to God and man, but I will never rest until I have done all I am able to do.

I respect the Trustees at WSSH and do not wish to alienate myself from them, but I ask all of you that you return this respect to me and know that when I raise my voice, I do so as a parent first, then citizen, advocate, and taxpayer. This is not to suggest that I care more than the rest of you, but quite simply, when I am in disagreement I say so. That is my right and obligation to retarded citizens. I am willing to share the blame, while I make every effort, as I see it, to do what I think is the right thing for me to do.

With every good wish for a Happy New Year to you, and a better and happier future for our special people.

Love,

Mrs. Jean Isherwood

Jl:cp

CC: C. A. Peters

Virginia Thornburgh

Harry Goldberg