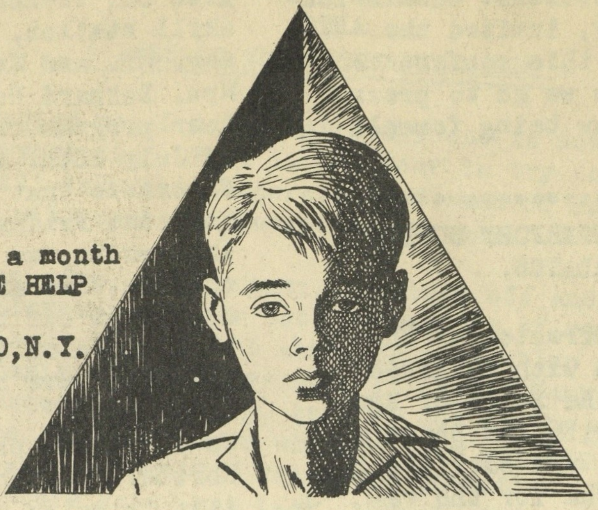
# OUR CHILDREN'S VOICE



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Acting President,
Joseph T. Weingold

## *Retarded Children Can Be Helped!*

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### PEARL S. BUCK, WORLD-FAMOUS NOVELIST TO SPEAK AT SEPTEMBER MEETING OF THE AHRC. ANNUAL BUSINESS AGENDA IS PLANNED.

Pearl S. Buck, noted writer, Pulitzer Prize winner, and long a champion in the cause of aiding the mentally retarded, has agreed to appear as the principal speaker at the next general and public meeting of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, Inc.

This meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 27th, at 8 P.M. in the auditoriim of the Central High School of Needle Trades, 225 West 24th Street, New York City. The new meeting place was decided upon by the A.H.R.C. Program Committee because of the larger turnout which is anticipated. All members and friends of the A.H.R.C. are being urged to attend.

In addition to Miss Buck's address, a complete annual business agenda is planned. Election of permanent officers will be announced and other annual business procedure will be conducted.

Despite the great popularity of Pearl S. Buck, the admission will be free, the Program Committee stated.

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### ELECTION OF REGULAR OFFICERS NOW TAKING PLACE THROUGH THE MAILS.

The Nominating Committee has now completed its choice of a slate, and ballots are being sent to all A.H.R.C. members. As the ballot directions explain: ballots may be filled in and mailed back to the office of the A.H.R.C. or brought to the September 27th meeting in person, where the final tallying of votes will take place. Included on the slate are Mr. Joseph Weingold as candidate for the Presidency, Mr. Nathan Feder as the 1st Vice-President, and Mr. George Hirsch as the 2nd Vice-President. Most of the slate includes members who have been serving as Acting Officers. "We feel that these people have become experienced for the offices to which we have nominated them", a Nominating Committee spokesman said.

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### CONFERENCE WITH DR. FREDERICK MAC CURDY, STATE COMMISSIONER OF MENTAL HYGIENE CURRENTLY PLANNED BY AHRC COMMITTEE.

A conference with Dr. Frederick MacCurdy, Commissioner of the Mental Hygiene Department of New York State, and members of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, will very likely take place early this season. This announcement was made by the Public Relations Committee of the A.H.R.C. This committee corresponded with Commissioner MacCurdy several months ago. In its letter, it pointed out that the Commissioner had recently been appointed by Governor Dewey, as head of a special five man committee, charged with the study of state wide problems concerning the mentally deficient, the mentally ill, etc. The letter stated that the A.H.R.C. is able to provide first hand information on the problems of the mentally deficient, along with many pertinent suggestions. Commissioner MacCurdy, in his reply, invited the AHRC to make arrangements for this conference sometime in September. As we go to press, these arrangements are now being formulated in another letter.

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## CRMD DIRECTOR RICHARD HUNGERFORD OUTLINES STATE WIDE PLAN FOR RETARDATES.

Mr. Richard Hungerford, Director of the CRMD (Bureau for Children with Retarded Mental Development), of the Board of Education of New York, met with the Board of Directors of the A.H.R.C. and outlined his minimums of a state program for the retarded. The Board of Directors expressed wholehearted approval of Mr. Hungerford's plan (which will be given in detail in a future issue of Our Children's Voice). A unanimous vote of confidence was expressed. Executives of the A.H.R.C. are now planning the complete adoption of the plan in their long range program.

In brief, the plan embraces every aspect of the problem of mental retardation, including all chronological and mental age groups.

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## NEW BRANCH OF AHRC STARTED IN PUTNAM COUNTY.

On September 8th, twenty persons will have met in Carmel, New York, to form a Putnam County Chapter of the A.H.R.C. Mrs. Russell Mahar is directing this new chapter formation.

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## A REPORT FROM THE WESTCHESTER CHAPTER.

The Westchester Branch had one big event this summer, and that was a picnic for our entire families, on August 6th, at the Everit Macy Park in Ardsley. Since we know that socializing is just as important to our kids as it is to their normal sisters and brothers, we decided to put into practice our beliefs by providing them with a day of fun. It was very successful, in that it was such a simple and relaxed affair, especially relaxing for the parents, who, for maybe the first time, did not have to be apologetic in any way for the antics of their slowpokes. The children had a very satisfying day. The older boys played baseball with their daddies. The older girls were particularly happy to have "found each other". And the little ones ate from one family picnic basket to the other. What more could one expect from a picnic?

Also our branch has been on our local Peekskill station, WLNA, three times this summer. Mr. and Mrs. Karl Dixon and Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Rosenberg spoke on a half hour program called "Opinion Unlimited" on July 15th. Audience reaction was so favorable that we were asked to contimue the next Friday night. And slowly, through this means, we have increased our membership in this area. Incidentally, we were told that our broadcasts were the best that "Opinion Unlimited" has ever had, and they have had some very good ones.

We have many plans for the fall. The Northern Westchester Principals Association is going to have the problem of mental retardation as the first item on its program. We plan to have an article in the Westchester County Medical Bulletin. We hope to get to our Mothers Clubs and to P.T.A. groups and men's organizations such as the Lions, etc. In fact, our Mr. Cremins has already interested the Lions in us. And we hope to get every family involved with our problem to join forces with us.

Emma Rosenberg,
Corresponding Secretary

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## A REPORT FROM LONDON, ENGLAND.

23rd July, 1949.

In London, the responsibility for the care of the mentally defective rests with the London County Council. There are four district offices covering the entire area and each is staffed by trained social workers; one Local Organizer, six Visitors, and one Employment Worker.

The majority of those dealt with, are under Statutory Supervision under the Mental Deficiency Acts, but there are some who are certified under the Acts.

Briefly, Statutory Supervision involves regular visits to the defective's home, in order to find out at first hand how the defective is getting on. The visits vary according to the needs of the defective and the family. Every possible help is given and amongst the duties are:

(1) Seeing that children under 16 years and unable to attend an Occupation Centre, receive milk at a cheap rate.
(2) Seeing that those unable to work and

over 16 years, receive an allowance under the National Assistant Act.

(3) Seeing that the appropriate authority is informed of those males not eligible for any form of National and Military Service.
(4) Seeing that if suitable for work, they are employed, and if they wish, can be placed on the Register of Disabled Persons.
(5) Seeing that no defective holds a driving license.
(6) Seeing that they are represented and spoken for if they should become involved in Police Court Cases.
(7) Rendering help in medical treatment if they do not know how to proceed.
(8) If unemployable, seeing that they obtain the necessary exemption under National Insurance.

Occupation Centres are run for children, ages usually 5 years to 16 years. Craft Classes are held for males and females over 16 years and there is no age limit. Attendance is voluntary and the defectives are guided to and from the Centres by paid guides. Meals are provided at a cost of 5d. a day. Free meals and fares are granted to needy families. All children attending receive free milk daily. Instruction is given in handwork, speech training, hygiene, P.T., games; and music plays an important part in the training. Percussion instrument playing is included.

The classes held for the elder boys and girls are run on much the same lines but the work is more advanced.

Those mental defectives who are considered educable, attend Schools for the Educationally Sub-Normal, and remain there until the end of the term in which they become 16 years. These schools specialize in handwork. In their last term, the children are seen at a school-leaving conference following which, every effort is made to place the child in the work that he thinks he would like; to which the parents agree; that the Head Teacher approves, and which seems to be within the capacity, of the child. The Employment Worker canvasses firms and explains the limitations of the child, and tries to enlist the sympathy of the Manager and the Foreman under whom the child will be working. The child is a year older beginning his industrial life than the majority of the children, and in most cases, will be slow and sensitive when starting out to work. Once placed, the child's progress (or

cooperate and many difficulties are thus avoided. This side of the work has been delegated by the Ministry of Labour and National Service to the London County Council, as it has been realized that each mentally defective child needs individual attention in placing in employment. The Employment Worker covers the children for two years by which time it is hoped that the defective will be stabilized in the industrial world. From 18 years on, they attend the Employment Exchange in the same way as normal people, though, of course, help would be given by the Employment Worker, if there were serious need. It should, perhaps, be noted, that shortly all juvenile employment will be taken over by the Education Department of the London County Council. It is hoped that special workers will be employed to deal with the mentally defective.

This department also deals with requests made by parents to have their offspring home for holidays or on license from the resident institutions. Reports on the suitability of the homes are submitted to the doctor in charge of the institution. Should they come home on license, they are supervised by this office.

If institutional care becomes necessary, the first steps are taken by the Local Office. They can also take action in the cases where institutional care becomes immediately necessary.

There are no age limits as far as visiting the institution is concerned. However, visits are adjusted to individual cases.

Information gathered by
Mr. George Hirsch,
Chairman, Education
Committee

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Mrs. D. asks:**
Does Cerebral Palsy mean mental retardation?

**Answer:**
Cerebral Palsy is not mental retardation. Although Cerebral Palsy children may be mentally as well as physically handicapped, cerebral palsy is usually considered a physical disability and is treated as such. For further information, contact the Cerebral Palsy Society, Academy of Medicine Building, 5th Avenue and 103rd Street, in New York City.

**Mrs. C. writes:**
I understand that this organization is interested only in retarded children outside of institutions. Is this correct?

**Answer:**
No. This is not correct. This association is interested in a program for the benefit of all retarded children in and out of institutions. Our program when completed will, we hope, answer the needs of all retarded children of all ages.

**Mrs. T. writes:**
I have been a member of the A.H.R.C. for six months, and so far it has done nothing for my child. Why should I continue to be a member?

Answer:
The Association works every day and late into many evenings planning, writing letters, calling people, seeking funds, and trying in every way to get a working program started as soon as it is humanly possible. We cannot state at this time when the first clinic, the first school, the first sheltered workshop, will be started. The answer to this depends entirely on how soon we can recruit more of the estimated 80,000 parents of mentally retarded children of this city, and the many thousands of other parents in other cities in this state. We would venture a guess, that at the rate we are now progressing, we would say that before another year has passed, our first clinic will be started. Of course, cooperation in every respect of all our members will speed the realization of our program.

**Mrs. W. asks:**
Since to the best knowledge of modern medicine there is no known cure for mental retardation, what purpose will the clinic you plan, serve?

**Answer:**
There are many purposes which this clinic will serve:

(1) Many retarded children need psychological help.
(2) Parents need psychological counsel.
(3) A clinic serving many types of these children under expert direction, may develop new methods and therapies. Remember, they would deal exclusively with the problem of mental retardation.
(4) It is the objective of this organization to see that every retarded child is given the opportunity to realize the highest point in his development with his limitations. This is difficult, if not impossible to achieve without expert and interested guidance. This, our clinic will provide, through its social service, psychologists, its pediatricians and psychiatrists.

**Mrs. G. asks:**
I have heard that some diseases in pregnancy may cause retardation in a child. Could you tell me something about this?

**Answer:**
Norwegian doctors have repeated studies that were made in Australia and the United States as to the effects of virus diseases on prospective mothers. The investigations conclude that German measles, mumps, virus inflammation of the liver, and infantile paralysis during pregnancy, may injure the prospective child.

All correspondence and contributions to Our Children's Voice should be addressed to its editor, Mr. Eugene Gramm, at the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, Inc., 1133 Broadway, New York 10, N. Y.

Editor-Eugene J. Gramm
Co-Editor-Joseph T. Weingold

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# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

With the summer behind us, I hope that every one is now ready to continue the work of the Association. This is the year to try to realize a part of our program. It will take the cooperation of each of us; it will take work and more work; it will take singleness of purpose.

There has been some time, this summer, to stand off and evaluate what we have done. One achievement stands out: We parents of retarded children have been able to band together to work for a solution of our common problem. This sounds insignificant, perhaps. It isn't. Many hundreds of us have achieved that adjustment necessary, to come out in the open and work. We feel that there are thousands more who are only waiting to hear about us, to join, and I am sure our Public Relations Committee will do a good job on that. As our numbers grow, our task, though, not easier, will be facilitated. We will grow in importance and in manpower, which we need so badly.

Before the summer began, membership committees were formed for each borough. Their function is to visit every member possible who has not yet sent in a filled out questionnaire, or who has not appeared at meetings for some time. The purpose behind this is twofold: one, to have a census of our membership's children, and two, to make our members feel that they belong together at all times. In time, we hope to have social get-togethers on a local basis.

Our fund raising has lagged, naturally, during the summer. I cannot repeat too often, how much financial support means to the realization of our program. We still feel that the receipt books all of you have, are the best way to raise money. Now is the time to get them out and work with them. No amount is too small, and I am sure that every one can get something. This is your Association: work for it and with it and it cannot fail. We are contemplating a Bazaar for some time in the not too distant future. We have repeatedly asked for merchandise to be sent to Mr. Carl Rappaport, Sunport Products Co., 114 Spring Street, New York City. The response has been almost nothing. This is too important to neglect. It is a measure of your interest. We must have large amounts of merchandise for a Bazaar to make it successful and we must count on our membership.

What has not been done in a hundred years cannot be accomplished overnight - but of this rest assured: with our incentive to drive us and the cooperation of each of us, the things we set out to do will be accomplished in time. We have hopes that our clinic and courses for parents will be a reality before another year goes by. We have hopes that there will be many more camp facilities for our children for next summer. And, in due time, all the rest will follow. It is hard to say "patience" to parents of retarded children, when the problem is with us so strongly every minute, but patience plus hard work will reward our efforts with the successful realization of not only the program we have set, but a much larger program in the making.

The choice is plain. Either we make our organization succeed, each and every one of us - or we go back to being individual parents with individual problems...baffled, beaten, alone. WHICH SHALL IT BE?

Joseph T. Weingold,
Acting President