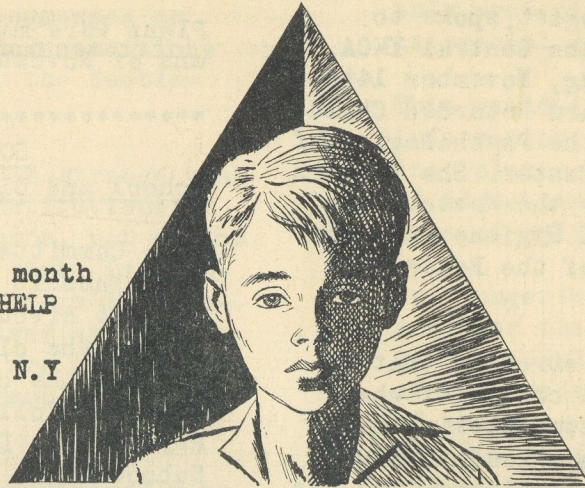


OUR CHILDREN'S VOICE

Issued approximately once a month
by the ASSOCIATION FOR THE HELP
OF RETARDED CHILDREN, INC.
1133 Broadway, New York 10, N.Y.

Chartered by the State of
New York, February, 1949



Volume 1, Issue #6
November 25, 1949
President,
Joseph T. Weingold

Retarded Children Can Be Helped!

WORLD-FAMOUS AUTHORITY ON MENTAL RETARDATION
TO SPEAK AT DECEMBER 1st MEETING OF THE AHRC

Dr. Clemens E. Benda, widely considered to be the foremost authority on Mongolism and Cretinism, has agreed to appear as the principal speaker at the next general and public meeting of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children.

The meeting will take place on Thursday, December 1st, 1949, in the auditorium of the Central High School of Needle Trades, 225 West 24th Street, New York City at 7:45 P.M. This larger meeting place, where Pearl S. Buck spoke to the A.H.R.C. two months ago, was chosen once again because a huge audience is anticipated. The admission is free.

In addition to Dr. Benda's address and a question-and-answer period with the audience participating, several important announcements will be made. All members and friends of the A.H.R.C. are being urged not to miss this very important meeting.

AHRC MAKES BID FOR WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

The Association for the Help of Retarded Children has written the Children's Bureau of the United States Federal Security Agency, requesting participation in the mid-century Conference on Children and Youth to be held in the White House, Washington, D.C. during the week of December 3rd, 1950, it was announced today.

NEW BRANCH IS ORGANIZED IN NASSAU COUNTY.

A new chapter of the A.H.R.C. was set up in Nassau County, Long Island, under the direction of Mrs. Margarete Reiss, a former member of our central chapter, and one of the original founders of the Association. A report from this new chapter will be found elsewhere in this issue.

GALA CARD PARTY AND MAH JONGG SESSION TO BE HELD IN BROOKLYN, DECEMBER 14th.

A Brooklyn sub-committee of the Fund Raising Committee is now organizing a card and mah jongg party to be held on Wednesday, December 14, 1949 at 8 P.M. at THE APERION 814 KINGS HIGHWAY, BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Tickets are one dollar each. Checks and money orders for this affair should be mailed to the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, Inc., and mailed to Mr. Ben Droutman, 789 St. Marks Avenue, Bklyn. New York. Among the events of the evening will be a series of raffles and door prizes. All articles for this purpose should be sent to Dr. Frederick Kleinberg, 6414 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Tickets for this affair have already been sent to Brooklyn members. Requests for tickets from those who have not received them, or from those wishing additional ones should be addressed to Mr. Droutman, Pres. 4-6880 address above.

CHAPTER REPORTS

WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Mrs. Ruth Bockner, Psychologist, spoke to the Westchester Branch at the Central YMCA, White Plains, Monday evening, November 14th, on "Parental Attitudes Toward Retarded Children". Mrs. Bockner is now the Psychologist of the New Rochelle Guidance Center. She formerly was the Psychologist for the Westchester County Department of Mental Hygiene, and the Psychologist on the Staff of the Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital.

Mrs. Bockner, in her talk, stressed that we must accept our exceptional child for what he is, avoid comparisons, stop pushing him, have pleasure in him. "Have a good time with your child. Guide him into happiness, and his intellectual capacity will also improve in the secure environment of his happiness".

Mr. Richard Hungerford is going to address the Northern Westchester Principals Association on Monday, November 21st at a luncheon meeting at the Horace Greeley High School, Chappaqua, N.Y. This area has no special classes for retarded children in any of its schools, so this talk should be of great meaning to these educators.

There are now approximately 250 on our mailing list, including 150 families. Many very well equipped special teachers are working with us and coming to our meetings. They have offered to help us with a parent education program. The social agencies of Westchester County, who are all very helpful and interested in our problems, recognize our value more and more, and are constantly coming to us for information. A plan is under way to have more integration of service, so that we may be of greater mutual assistance.

NASSAU AND SUFFOLK COUNTIES

Over 50 parents met on October 25th at the Carle Place Fire House, Carle Place, Long Island, and formed the Long Island Chapter of the A.H.R.C. This was an organizational meeting and temporary officers were elected, as follows: Chairman, Margarette Reiss, Vice-Chairman, James E. McConnell, Treasurer, Joan McConnell, Recording Secy., Rita Jedlicka, and Corres. Secy., Helen Kaplan. Some members of our central chapter attended as guests and they described for the benefit of the new parents, problems of membership, funds, and organization.

The first general meeting was held on November 10th at the Carle Place Fire House again and objectives for the year were discussed. These

are as follows: Membership, Pre-School Classes, School Age Classes, Public Clinics, Parental Education, and Fund Raising.

Plans were made for our next meeting at the end of November.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

School and Clinic Committee:

This Committee met on October 20th, under the chairmanship of Dr. Emil Posner. The first project discussed was the recommended staffing of the clinics. The committee recommended that the clinic be divided into 4 departments as follows: Medical, Psychiatry and Psychology, Dentistry, and Special Therapies. Subcommittee chairmen are as follows: Mrs. Posner-Dentistry, Dr. Posner-Physiotherapy, Mrs. Sondack-Musical Therapy, Dr. Kleinberg-Pediatrics, Mr. Quaytman-Psychology. More professional committee volunteers are needed so that every department will be taken care of properly. These subcommittees prepared arrangements for contacting the various professional societies with respect to obtaining volunteers to staff our clinics.

Fund Raising Committee:

The Fund Raising Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Shirley Hulnick met on November 9th. Arrangements were completed for the Brooklyn card party on December 14th (details on first page). Mrs. Hulnick spoke about the proposed spring luncheon or dinner tentatively scheduled for some time in April or May. Plans were discussed for a journal at this affair and a committee set up to handle this project. An entertainment committee was also formed with Dr. Hecht as Chairman and Mrs. Tarches as Co-Chairman. Mrs. Hulnick reported on a basket-ball exhibition game between CCNY and NYU to be held on March 25, 1950, at the St. Nicks Arena. This affair is being sponsored by the Ester Bela Organization from which proceeds we are to receive a donation. Tickets will be available at our December 1st meeting. More information in our next issue.

Publicity Committee:

The Publicity and Public Relations Committee met on November 3rd under the chairmanship of Mr. Eugene Gramm. Attending were: Mr. Gramm, Mrs. A. Greenberg, as secretary, Mr. & Mrs. J. Raynor, Mr. D. Weiss, Mr. W. Hay, Mr. H. Sacks, Mr. B. Luchans, and Mr. L. Slater.

Assignments were designated to each of the above and a program of Publicity and Public Relations involving press, radio, and other media was outlined.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT STRESSES NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT IN STATES' INSTITUTIONS

In her World-Telegram column of October 31st, Eleanor Roosevelt commented on overcrowding and other poor conditions in state institutions for the feeble-minded.

Said Mrs. Roosevelt: "It is strange that states require private institutions to live up to certain standards, yet at the same time they permit in state institutions, sub-standard conditions that injure the patients themselves and create anxiety for families who are obliged to place these defenseless people in institutions."

Mrs. Roosevelt referred specifically to four institutions for the feeble minded in New Jersey. At the end of the last fiscal year, she states, "564 feeble minded children in the community (are) awaiting placement".

Ed. Note: The A.H.R.C. has already gone on the record as stating that there is an obvious need in New York State for a new state training school for the mentally retarded to relieve the overcrowded conditions and unwieldy administrative duties of our present, overburdened state training schools.

CONFERENCE ON CHILD WELFARE IN PENNSYLVANIA
ADDRESSED BY RICHARD H. HUNGERFORD.

Richard H. Hungerford, Director of the Bureau for Children with Retarded Mental Development of the New York City school system, spoke before a group of legislators, psychiatrists, social workers, special educators, and other interested persons at a conference held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on November 7th, under the auspices of the Child Research Clinic of the Woods School, Langhorne, Pennsylvania. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Departments of Health, Public Welfare, and Public Instruction, and was intended to spotlight special problems to be referred to the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth to be held in Washington next year.

"Mental Deficiency", Mr. Hungerford stated, (is a) "physical defect like blindness". Intelligent citizens, however, who might demand special services for the crippled, deaf or blind, might deny special services to the

mentally deficient, he stated. "Since", he added, "society at present will not give the mentally deficient any special consideration with respect to employment, the only protection of the mentally deficient is special education".

This would include, he said, occupational information, vocational guidance, training, placement, and help with the problems of adjustment to the freedom and independence of self support.

Mr. Hungerford's "Minimums of a State Program for the Retarded" has been endorsed by the A.H.R.C. and placed in the hands of Dr. Frederick MacCurdy, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Hygiene of the State of New York by A.H.R.C. representatives.

AN OPEN LETTER TO AN UNINFORMED DOCTOR

(AN EDITORIAL)

Dear Dr.-----,
On the week of November 7th, one of your patients, a member of a woman's organization who are contemplating financial support of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, came to you asking for advice.

It is not known whether or not she had our printed long-range program with her, but in any case, she reported that you stated "there is nothing that can be done to help mentally retarded children. Supporting any program for them would be a waste of money".

This statement attributed to you, if true, indicates an ignorance of the problem of mental deficiency so gross and alarming, as to reflect discreditably upon your entire profession. For aside from being entirely untrue and unfounded, it is completely contrary to the humanitarian precepts which guides your profession.

Let us examine your alleged statement in the light of cold fact.

To begin with, modern medicine holds that there is no known absolute cure for mental deficiency. If you will take the pains to read the September issue of the Journal of Pediatrics, however, you will discover that this has not deterred the eminent vascular surgeon, Dr. Claude Beck, and several of his associates at the Western Reserve Medical School from experimenting in a new

surgical procedure which has brought definite relief and help to a number of children who were mentally deficient. While the final efficacy of his experiments is yet to be reckoned, the important thing to consider is that these and other members of your profession are not ready to turn their backs upon the mentally handicapped simply because no known curative measures have yet been proven.

Beyond that, however, lies the broader question of how the mentally deficient can be helped... today.

Consult with any administrator of state or private institutions and you will learn that a given percentage of mentally deficient persons can be trained, can be rehabilitated, can be converted from total consumers (dependent upon their families or upon the taxpayers of our state) into producers in our society.

The simple, and sometimes complex jobs which they have been taught to do represent a vital contribution to our society. For example, it has been pointed out that whereas the job of a street cleaner can be taught to persons with limited intellectual prowess, this position should not be looked upon with scorn. For, if all the street cleaners were removed from our social structure, society itself would crumble in very short order!

But what of those unfortunates who may perhaps never be capable of absorbing vocational training? Shall they be abandoned by society? Or shall they be given the opportunity to realize their potential maximum of development, whatever it might be? And most importantly: who shall determine which children are capable of becoming producers in our society and which are not until all have been tested and afforded the opportunity to realize their potential maximum.

Or to put it simply, doctor, suppose you were the parent of a retarded child. Would you be willing to accept any one individual's judgment as final that your child could never be taught to take a role in society? Or would you wish that child to have the opportunity to prove or disprove that fact for himself by being provided with testing and training which had already rehabilitated great numbers of seemingly "hopeless" retardates?

Another thing: many mentally retarded children are in great need of psychological help. With this help, their chances for successful orientation to society are greatly heightened... Shall they be denied such help, doctor?

Finally, examining your argument in the light of plain mathematics, there are approximately 8 percent of all the mentally deficient in institutions today. It is estimated conservatively that one out of every hundred persons is mentally deficient. Now, then...with our institutions already overcrowded to a critical degree and with perhaps another 10 to 18% of these children absorbed in the public schools, what do you propose that we do with the other 80% of these handicapped ones? Remember, please, they are not mere mathematical figures...They are warm, livable beings...hundreds of thousands of them, and they have parents and families who are daily driven to the point of utter physical and spiritual exhaustion by the tremendous burdens and frustrations this problem poses.

We have said before, and we say again: RETARDED CHILDREN CAN BE HELPED...and we propose to demonstrate how they can be helped with clinics, schools, sheltered workshops...with the opportunities which are the birthright of every American child.

With or without the aid of those who stand now and weigh whether or not they shall give us the helping hands we need, we shall work and build and fight for these rights for our children until in the end, the truth will prevail. And finally the mentally retarded shall have their chance and they shall be afforded their opportunities...just as they would if it had been their little limbs that were crippled instead of their minds.

E.G.

The editors regret that lack of space prevents us from running the Questions and Answers feature usually found on this page. This feature will be resumed in the next issue.

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

REMEMBER OUR MEETING- DECEMBER FIRST-
THURSDAY- CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL OF NEEDLE
TRADES- 225 West 24th STREET