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THE PROFESSIONAL-VOLUNTEER PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN CORRECTIONS

by

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One of the most startling features of America's fast moving and affluent society is its ever-spiralling crime rate. Traditionally, the way to deal with offenders is incarceration, but this solution has often gone awry, since exposure to other felons has sometimes converted a young offender into a hardened criminal. The prison, instead of resocializing the offender, gives him the opportunity to learn from more accomplished felons. It often deepens his resentment and hostility, and even provides contacts for later escapades in crime. Through rewards, such as extra food, cigarettes, protection, and other favors, the prisoner is drawn into the inmate culture. If he should resist, punishment could take such forms as; theft of his personal belongings, beatings, ostracism, homosexual rape, and even death.

A more considered approach is that of probation. This technique returns the offender to society under the supervision of a probation officer and subject to a set of conditions to which he must adhere under penalty of incarceration.[1] The word *probation* itself derives from the Latin, its root meaning being "a period of proving or trial."[2]

John Augustus, a Bostonian, is called the "father of probation," although he practiced an informal type of probation, unauthorized by statute. Still his title is deserved since he was a pioneer in the field, the first probation officer in the world, although informally appointed, and the first person to apply the term probation to this correctional practice.[3] His work began in 1841, a time when the social climate was right for such innovative measures as people became aware of the lack of successful rehabilitation of those who were imprisoned.

Augustus was a man of strong convictions, ardent zeal and great sympathy. Born in Woburn, Mass. in 1784 he was a shoemaker in Boston when, at the age of 57, he became interested in Court work. Augustus devoted himself to probation work, often pursuing it at the expense of his own business which consequently suffered. In giving his eighteen years of devoted interest in offenders, he worked with two hundred individuals, most of whom exhibited a high degree of rehabilitation. The most notable feature of his work is that neither he nor his immediate followers were officials of the Court.

The statutory probation system in the United States is of more recent origin. It can be traced back further in Europe where under English

Common Law, a court could suspend sentence temporarily to permit offenders to remain at large in two particular types of cases. The first included those arising *ex necessitae legis* or where it was imperative to suspend sentence for a time because of such factors as insanity and pregnancy. The second type were those cases arising *ex arbitrio judicis* in which the court suspended sentence if it believed that injustice would accompany conviction or execution of sentence.[4]

It soon became custom, as in the case of John Augustus, to assign volunteers, either individuals or agencies, to supervise offenders released by the court.[5] The first statute establishing probation in the United States with publicly paid officers was passed in 1878 in Boston where probation personnel were to be appointed by the mayor.[6] By 1909 some sort of probation system had been provided in fourteen states.[7]

PROS AND CONS OF EXISTING SYSTEM

Probation programs operate on the concept that an offender can learn to live successfully in the general community if he is dealt with in that setting rather than carted off to the more hostile environment of a prison institution for confinement.[8] Banishment from society, as entailed in a prison sentence, seems an unlikely method for integrating a person into society. Moreover, it is doubtful as to what benefit, if any, confinement as it operates today can have. Ramsey Clark, the former Attorney General, terms most penal institutions, "factories of crime," from which youthful or first time offenders emerge as even more firmly entrenched in lives of crime. In the words of Chief Justice Warren Burger:

> There must be some way to make our correctional system into something other than a revolving door process which has made "recidivist" a household word in America.[9]

To many, probation represents an overly lenient approach in the treatment of criminals, but this view reveals a lack of awareness of the purposes and effects of the probation system. Used properly, probation is an effective correctional tool which renders maximum benefit not only to the offender but to society as well. The development of probation constitutes an important step in the emergence of a progressive attitude toward those who offend the law. It is grounded in the concepts of therapeutic and humanitarian rather than punitive treatment of offenders, and individual rather than mass treatment of criminals, with punishment fitting the individual and not the crime.[10]

Theoretically, a good probation program should contain the following elements: (1) the suspension, under conditions and for a period imposed by the Court, of imposition or execution of a sentence of an offender and his retention in the community instead of in a prison;

(2) the assignment of suspension only after the Judge has received a detailed study of the offender's background, character and circumstances of the offense; (3) placement of the released offender under the careful supervision of an adequately trained probation officer.[11]

The pre-sentence investigation mentioned in the second criterion above is of maximum importance in proper probation placement and treatment. It can be defined as a comprehensive study of the relevant legal, social and psychological factors which affect the offender. This report serves a number of purposes. It aids the court in arriving at appropriate adjudications. It is a starting point for treatment and serves as a useful source of background information for future reference.

Most judges advocate pre-sentence investigations. Ideally this report should go into depth as much as possible, presenting a well-rounded picture of the individual. Its quality and understandability rests heavily upon the skill, intelligence and imagination of the individual or panel who prepares it. The pertinent areas that should be examined should include: (1) details of the offense; (2) previous criminal history; (3) codefendants, if any, and their roles; (4) attitude of the complainant; (5) personal history; (6) family history and relationships; (7) community conditions in which the offender lives; and (8) probation program to be administered and its conditions.[12]

The third criterion of a satisfactory probation system centers around the existence of an adequately trained staff. The trend in recent times is to associate probation work with social casework, and to expect the probation officer to have had some training in the social and behavioral sciences. While not widely accepted, the idea is highly recommended, and in 1962, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency advanced the following "preferred" and "minimum" standards for selection of probation officers:

Preferred: A bachelor's degree with a major in the social and behavioral sciences and courses in delinquency and crime, plus a master's degree from a recognized school of social work.

Minimum: A bachelor's degree with a major in the social and behavioral sciences and (a) one year of graduate study in social work or a related field or (b) one year of paid full-time casework experience under professional supervision.[13]

THE PENNSYLVANIA SITUATION: AN EXAMPLE

When measured against these three standards for a good probation system, Pennsylvania's system, not unlike much of the nation, is seen

to have many flaws. Pennsylvania statute does not require that all three vital elements mentioned beforehand exist in all cases. The result of this oversight is a glaring lack of uniformity in probation procedure.

There is no provision whatsoever in Pennsylvania law for a detailed study of the offender prior to release on suspended sentence and the percentage of pre-sentence investigations ordered for cases going through the criminal courts is amazingly low. Where a thorough report is not prepared, limited personnel is often the obvious reason.

It is estimated that pre-sentence investigations are being conducted in only 20% of the felony cases.[14] In 1969 the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole itself carried out 322 such investigations for the counties. The Chairman of the Board has estimated that, if it had the necessary manpower, the Board would be receiving requests for pre-sentence investigations at the rate of 1000 per month.[15] This lack of pre-sentence investigation results in sentencing without sufficient information and was probably responsible for substantial numbers of offenders being in the adult prison system in Pennsylvania today who do not belong there.

The essential weakness of probation as with many other aspects of corrections is the lack of adequate numbers of qualified officers to supervise the probation caseload.[16] In Pennsylvania no provision is made for the selection of personnel on the basis of education and experience, a serious drawback, since the success of the probation program rests upon the character and skill of the persons who administer it. Too often appointment to the probation staff is a matter of political expediency. With the lack of adequately trained personnel, caseloads of individual probation officers may range form 25 to as many as 300 cases, with the ideal load being 35 cases.[17] A State Survey in 1966 of 256 adult probation officers revealed that 87% were overloaded.[18]

Another notable weakness is the uneven proportion of funds allocated to services for probationers. While exactly 67% of the correctional population (or approximately 12,568 per county) is outside institutions on probation, only 11% of the total corrections budget is expended in this area.[19] According to the Pennsylviania "Task Force Report" on corrections, July 1969, the cost of incarceration for one prisoner for one year is $3,369, in contrast to the cost of probation which is only $344.00 per offender.

What is needed obviously is a complete rethinking about probation both on the part of the citizenry and the authorities in order to transform probation into a feasible, productive tool.

THE VOLUNTEER IN PROBATION

A possible solution to the dilemma of the probation system is the development of volunteer programs. This idea is not a new one, but can be traced back to the "Father of Probation," John Augustus.

In light of the many handicaps of the existing probation structure, the volunteer concept has much to offer. It can reduce the overwhelming caseloads handled by most probation officers and free them for more specialized tasks. It can utilize the vast numbers of worthy citizens and channel their efforts and enthusiasm into the correctional establishment. It can put the offender into the hands of a concerned citizen volunteer and establish an all-important one-to-one relationship between them. Hopefully, the improved relations between volunteer and offender might reduce the high rate of recidivism. Finally, if institutionalized, probation programs of a volunteer nature could help to cut down the high costs of incarceration.

Programs of this nature are slowly gaining acceptance. The use of local volunteers in court probation programs has grown from three or four courts in 1961 to three or four hundred courts in 1969.[20] The National Crime Commission maintained in 1967 that:

> Current demonstrations of the vitality of the volunteer . . . argue strongly that he can be a strong ally in correctional planning.[21]

The effective development of a volunteer program requires a clear decision by correctional supervisors that citizen volunteers have an important function to serve in corrections. It requires a willingness to invest volunteers with the power to use their skills and resources. It necessitates a commitment of staff time and funds to develop an adequate program of recruitment, screening, training and supervision of volunteers, as well as training for all agency staff who will be expected to deal with volunteers.

An area which has done pioneer work in the use of volunteers in the service of probation is Boulder, Colorado, where Judge William Burnett has been influential in institutionalizing a Volunteer Probation Officer System (VPO). Judge Burnett and VPO received National recognition when, on June 22, 1971, it was featured in the CBS Special "Justice in America, Part III."

Another notable example of a program based on citizen involvement is Volunteers In Probation. The program is of recent origin, dating back only to 1961, and is the work of Judge Keith Leenhouts, of Royal Oak, Michigan. His inspiration for such an undertaking was prompted by the challenge of what to do with youthful offenders he encountered in the lower court. He finally hit on the idea of recruiting worthy and

inspirational citizens who could serve as volunteer sponsors for first offenders. The rationale of the program is that contact with a concerned and involved citizen sponsor can effect significant changes in the lives of misdemeanants. The idea has other practical aspects: it draws upon the vast pool of citizen volunteers and it takes the probationer out of the authoritarian atmosphere of the traditional structure and into a more relaxed and community-centered environment.

THE VOLUNTEER CONCEPT IN ACTION

Volunteers In Probation of Lackawanna County, Northeastern Pennsylvania is a descendant of the Royal Oak concept and the optimism of Judge Leenhouts. Judge Richard P. Conaboy, Court of Common Pleas, initiated the Court leadership to launch the program in Lackawanna County. Like Judge Leenhouts, Judge Conaboy realized the futility of the former correctional system and set out to do something about it. It was through his direction, together with the help of J. Shane Cramer of the Federal Task Force on Organized Crime; Charles F. Rinkevich, the Director of the Pennsylvania Crime Commission and Dr. Fergus T. Monahan, Dean of the Marywood College School of Social Work, Scranton, Pennsylvania that the Lackawanna County Volunteers In Probation came into being.

Lackawanna County of Northeastern Pennsylvania has a population of approximately 225,000 people. Its probation system prior to VIP intervention in June, 1970 consisted of two hundred active probationers supervised by two staff probation officers, both of whom are retired Pennsylvania State Police officers. Because of the influx of criminal cases before the court in need of pre-sentence investigation the probation officers found themselves devoting the bulk of their time attempting to provide jurists with some background information concerning those offenders who had been selected by the Court as subjects for pre-sentence studies. The remainder of their time was spent supervising the fluctuating two hundred active probation cases assigned to them. In reality the probationer's contact with the officer usually amounted to a monthly visit to the probation office, where the offender informed the officer of his status concerning employment, place of residence, family conditions and other general areas. Often where the probationer lived a considerable distance or was regarded as reliable, he need only mail in a statement containing the vital information. Thus, the offender was released to the same environment which produced him. Not only was he without proper supervision but he was often lacking any meaningful, wholesome relationship. He was expected to be good, or else, on his own.

There are many aspects in the status quo of Lackawanna County's probation system which could do with improvement and some which have been improved by the widespread utilization of Volunteers In

Probation. First and foremost is the matter of pre-sentence investigation. Previous mention was made of its importance and value in an offender's care, rehabilitation and resocialization. In most court systems, such studies are undertaken only on the recommendation of the jurist and then are prepared by the probation officer whose qualifications for such diagnostic work are doubtful. Often times, this results in an all too long accumulation of unrelated facts. A far more acceptable method would be the establishment of a permanent clinic with duly qualified personnel — a team of diagnostic and behavioral specialists, for example, a psychiatrist, psychologist and social workers — who would evaluate, test and compile a study on all offenders passing through the courts so that an accurate evaluation of the offender's personality, problem and environmental situation can be made. From this evaluation, then, a program of restitution and after care could be worked out which would be better suited to the offender as an individual. This approach has been recommended by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement. By this method it is believed that the element of error would be reduced in sentencing offenders to either probation or incarceration.

Done on a nation-wide basis, this policy of in-depth diagnostic evaluation can provide many benefits. While aiding the individual through resocialization, it would also aid society by hopefully reducing recidivism, and by advancing the theoretical basis for testing and treatment of criminals, as well as broader insights concerning the causes of crime. Thus, there can be a preventive and a curative aspect to diagnostic treatment such as described above. Furthermore, the diagnostic records can accompany the offender on his assignment to probation, incarceration or parole, and would put an end to wasteful duplication of records, while speeding up the rehabilitation or resocialization process since evaluation would not have to be administered more than once.

A universal dilemma of probation appears to be the lack of sufficient contact between officer and probationer. One solution offered is to hire more probation officers, which would then obviate the need for volunteers. However, if this proposal were to be effective, hundreds of new probation personnel would have to be employed in order to achieve a manageable caseload. This move is economically unfeasible. A more realistic avenue would be to hire a few trained professionals at a minimum investment, who could prepare and guide volunteers in probation work.

In order to set the proper mood for this type of VIP intervention, court systems must consider changing some basic philosophical probation concepts. First, the idea that probation is a reward for prior good behavior must be discouraged. If the offender's behavior were "good" he would not need probation. But the setting of firm behavior standards between the volunteer and the probationer, together with the

close interpersonal contact between them would provide not only support and guidance, but also supervision of the probationer. The degree of this supervision would depend on the need of the probationer. If a volunteer should be assigned to an offender, who is not in need of guidance, support and supervision, then the court is wasting the time of the volunteer which may result in the loss of the help of an otherwise interested citizen.

Second, the community must discontinue the practice of not assigning those with poor juvenile records to probation; again, the contrary seems more realistic. Bad records give offenders first rate credentials for concentrated probation efforts. These cases in effect represent the very challenge which sponsors need to make their efforts all worthwhile, and these are the offenders most in need of help.

Third, the court system must move away from the concept that defendants should be placed in one of two categories, either receiving all punishment or all guidance. Frequently, through probation both punishment and guidance are combined; punishment for a lesson in reality and guidance for a lesson in humanity.

Fourth, the community must abolish the court's tradition of putting numerous and ridiculous conditions of probation on offenders. Some probation agreements are so idealistic and demanding that even a saint would have trouble living up to them. How much better it would be to replace this with a few positive conditions tailored to the individual.

Fifth, the Court should not let low recidivist rates in their juvenile and adult probation programs mislead them. It is quite evident that in most instances where low recidivist statistics are found, those who are in least need of probation are those being assigned to it, and those who need it are being incarcerated and denied probation. This occurrence, in essence, is putting off the inevitable.

Finally, the courts must abandon the practice of seriously reprimanding probationers when they violate their probation agreements with minor infractions. Behavior patterns developed over a lifetime cannot be expected to change overnight. This is the time when the probationer most needs the relationship with the volunteer. Through his guidance and example, geared to the probationer's need, a gradual change will hopefully occur in the probationer's behavior, making him a less likely candidate for recidivism.[22]

Volunteers In Probation of Lackawanna County is a somewhat unique agency. For one thing, it is the only program of its kind in Pennsylvania and although it claims kinship with the Volunteers In Probation Program of Royal Oak, Michigan, it has several innovative and individual characteristics. It is geared to handle felons as well as misdemeanants, parolees as well as probationers. Another distinctive feature

of VIP in the Scranton area is its heavy emphasis on the use of trained, salaried professionals to direct the activity of the volunteer sponsors. Whereas some volunteer agencies employ semi-retired and minimal staff, VIP of Lackawanna County regards a well-trained and permanent team of profesionals as one of its most necessary features. These professionals meet the standards put forth by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency which, among other things, recommended a master's degree in social work.

The role of the professional, in Lackawanna County, as suggested by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration, would include: the screening of volunteers in order to determine motivation, and capacity for relating to the offender, and to match him to the needs of the individual offender; to train the volunteer in order to help him to be able to interpret behavior and handle crisis situations. In short, to offer supervision and support to the volunteer in order to insure morale and efficiency. Without such professional intervention the program would not be able to function. Additional help in this area comes from student staff counselors from the nearby Marywood College School of Social Work who are assigned to the agency in fulfillment of their field work placement. This has the added advantage of keeping the program in the mainstream of new ideas and theory related to corrections in social work.

PROGRAM METHODS

The methods by which VIP approached its goals of reducing the recidivist maturation rate of misdemeanants or felons are: (1) the establishment of a personal relationship between sponsor and probationer, which, it is hoped, will provide guidance, support, supervision and perhaps identification for the offender; (2) casework and group counseling from the professional staff; and (3) steps to raise the educational and vocational level of the probationers. VIP believes that these techniques will improve social attitudes, reduce hostilities and ultimately improve social behavior.

VIP's *modus operandi* runs as follows: As a condition of his sentence of probation, an offender is assigned by a jurist to the VIP program. The professional staff does preliminary counseling to gauge his needs and potential. The staff will then select a sponsor from among its volunteer personnel who, it is felt, can relate to the offender and can fill a vacancy in the offender's life, such as a father figure, an older friend or a peer. The sponsor is required to visit with his probationer at least bimonthly and to report to the VIP office the results of each meeting. The sponsor thus serves in a direct worker capacity in his relationship with the offender and is vitally important because it is through his contribution that the program gains strength.

The sponsor is not tossed into his task without proper training and instruction. An orientation period prepares him to deal with the probationer, to become familiar with Court proceedings, and to formulate his own role in the program. Afterward, group sessions or in-service meetings with other volunteers, give the sponsor an opportunity to compare his experiences, to iron out problems and to reevaluate constantly the work he is doing.

In addition, the VIP program would have an implicit provision for one-to-one staff-sponsor consultations on a regular basis. It must be remembered that the sponsor, in many cases, is not a professional counselor or therapist, nor should he be. But he is filling a role where professional knowledge is often important. He often has questions on how to handle a faltering relationship, a crisis situation, or a change in behavior pattern. Just as important, he frequently needs the emotional support provided by the professional staff, to handle the feelings involved in a difficult case. Without such support the sponsor may feel helpless and quit because of the futility of his conscientious efforts. All these elements are necessary for the sponsor to derive the moral support he must have in order to fulfill his role adequately.[23]

The VIP program is advanced as a possible solution to some of the serious problems that plague probation. The program has reaped tangible benefits in areas where it is firmly established.

Exploratory and other types of research evaluating VIP procedures are definitely needed to aid in the successful development of the program on a county and statewide basis to facilitate the working and acceptance of VIP. The successful programs must convert their findings into relevant statistical data which can be used in implementing VIP in other areas.

However, certain necessary steps must obviously be taken if VIP is to gain status and acceptance by lower courts everywhere. Primarily, the program must be instituted on a state-wide basis so that proper supervision and funding can be arranged. An example of this is Florida, where in 1968, the state legislature passed a law establishing a Department of Community Service under the auspices of the Probation and Parole Commission. This department has the power to: (1) organize and train local committees of selected volunteer citizens to advise and assist field supervisors of probationers and parolees with special attention to adult education, vocational-technical education and work study participation; (2) maintain liaison with all appropriate municipal, county, state and federal agencies whose services aid in the reintegration of offenders into society; and (3) stimulate community programs relating to persons released under probation, parole and mandatory release supervision.[24]

In view of a nationwide demonstrated need for change in the lower court systems in the areas of probation and parole, it is believed that lower court systems and state governments must jointly provide the necessary impetus to launch VIP on a state-wide basis. At a time when crime is one of the nation's chief ills, new solutions must be employed which will reduce the awful effects that it has on so many lives.

CONCLUSION

This paper has advanced several policies aimed at improving probation. The ideas are based on the belief that probation has much to offer in the resocialization of offenders, but that not enough has been done to professionalize and perfect it as a system.

To achieve this goal, three major recommendations have been put forth. The first concerns the vital pre-sentence investigation which so often either goes undone or is improperly prepared. To rectify this, a diagnostic clinic should be established, which would do evaluative surveys on all offenders, so that the most accurate picture of each misdemeanant or felon could be obtained. In this way sentencing could be based on factual evidence rather than conjecture. This technique has the benefits of being client-oriented, of giving insights into patterns of crime and of providing a basis for treatment methodology.

Second, the diagnostic clinic would be in the hands of trained professionals whose education and background would fit them for the task. Ideally, such personnel would be those trained in psychiatry, psychology and social work.

It is recommended that probation programs of a volunteer nature be adopted on a nationwide basis by lower court systems in an attempt to solve the dilemmas that face probation. To give the idea greater impact, volunteer programs must be institutionalized by the states. The degree of success on the part of these volunteer programs depends heavily on the guidance provided by a full-time professional staff to provide administration, supervision and training needs.

The American philosophy of crime and punishment has assumed a new stance. Imprisonment is no longer the panacea for this social ill; probation has become accepted by jurists and criminologists alike as the "best sentence." The only drawback is that so few states have probation systems that meet the expectations.

The awakened national conscience has affected government priorities. The Congress has made available three-hundred and forty million dollars through the Federal Omnibus Crime Control Act. All that is needed are qualified professionals with vision and foresight who can utilize these funds to their best advantage in probation systems that *really* work.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Richard McGee, "What's Past is Prologue," *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science,* (January, 1969) p. 6.

[2]David Dressler, *Practice and Theory of Probation and Parole,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969) p. 16.

[3]IBID., p. 21.

[4]J. Warren Matson, "Adult Probation in Pennsylvania," *University of Pittsburgh Law Review IV* (1937-1938) p. 170.

[5]*Adult Probation and Laws of the United States,* (National Probation Association, New York, 1933) p. 7.

[6]Edwin Sutherland, *Principles of Criminology,* (Chicago, 1934) p. 7.

[7]*Adult Probation Laws,* p. 11.

[8]*Probation,* American Bar Association Project on Standards for Criminal Justice, (February, 1970) p. 1.

[9]Warren Burger, "A National Conference on Correctional Problems," *Federal Probation,* (December, 1969) p. 4.

[10]Matson, *Adult Probation,* p. 173.

[11]IBID., p. 180.

[12]Dressler, *Probation and Parole,* pp. 109-110.

[13]*Standards and Guides for Adult Probation,* Professional Council Committee on Standards for Probation, (New York, 1962) p. 19.

[14]*Corrections in Pennsylvania,* p. 39.

[15]IBID., p. 39.

[16]McGee, "What's Past is Prologue," p. 6.

[17]IBID., p. 6.

[18]Comprehensive Plan for the Improvement of Criminal Justice in Pennsylvania, (Pennsylvania Criminal Justice Planning Board, 1970) p. 68.

[19]IBID.

[20]Volunteer Programs In Courts, (U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969) p. 1.

[21]O'Leary, Vincent, *Citizen Involvement in Corrections,* Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, (January, 1969) p. 101.

[22]Speech by Judge William Barnhard, Volunteers In Probation, Inc. National Conference in Detroit, Michigan, November, 1970.

[23]Handbook on Volunteers in Army Community Service, Human Resources Research Organization (1969) p. 18.

[24]Charles Unkovic, "Volunteers in Probation and Parole," *Federal Probation,* (December, 1969) p. 41.

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Morris, Joe Alex, *First Offender.* New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970.

A readable and interesting account of one of the pioneers in volunteer probation programs. Tells the story of Judge Keith Leenhouts who originated and lent his court's endorsement to a new idea in solving the problem of recidivism. Good insight into the philosophy behind VIP.

National Probation Association. *John Augustus, First Probation Officer.* New York: National Probation Association, 1939.

An extremely interesting, highly readable book containing John Augustus' own report of his first ten years of court work with an introduction by Sheldon Glueck.

Pigeon, Helen D. *Probation and Parole in Theory and Practice.* New York: National Probation Association, 1942.

This book gave a good over-all description of the function of probation as it studied the program's internal organization, the method of administering probation, and the progress that has been made in the field.

Probation. American Bar Association, 1970.

Establishes standards for probation; discusses conditions for probation, sets qualifications for probation personnel. Helpful introduction to the whys and wherefores of probation.

The Use of Volunteer Probation Counselors for Misdemeanants. U. S. Department of Justice, 1968.

A thorough description of the volunteer program in Denver County, Colorado. Analysis of a specific program in one area — its rationale, training program for counselors, and statistical data and results, etc.

Timasheff, Nicholas S. *One Hundred Years of Probation, 1841-1941.* New York: Fordham University Press, 1941.

This compact writing presented Augustus' early contribution and the blossoming of the probation system after the impetus he provided in 1841. pp. 1-24 and 44-66.

Volunteer Courts in America. Boulder, Colorado: National Information Center on Volunteers in Courts, 1969.

A listing and description of the volunteer programs across the nation as well as abroad, as well as sources where special projects and resource materials are available.

Volunteer Programs in Courts. U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969.

Description of volunteer programs across the nation, notably the one in Boulder, Colorado. Establishes guidelines for the volunteer sponsor and outlines various roles he can play in probation.

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. "The Future of Corrections." January, 1969.

The entire periodical contains useful articles for an understanding of corrections and the role of probation. Especially notable: "What's Past is Prologue," by Richard McGee; "The Correctional System," by Clarence Schray; and "Some Directions for Citizen Involvement in Corrections," Vincent O'Leary.

Federal Probation. U. S. Department of Justice, March, 1970.

Many articles which treat corrections in its traditional forms as well as innovative techniques.

Federal Probation. U. S. Department of Justice, December, 1939.

Contains many articles of relevance to probation. Among them: "A Proposal: A National Conference on Correctional Problems," by Warren Burger; "Jamming the Revolving Door," by Arthur Jaffe, and "Volunteers in Probation and Parole," by Charles E. Unkovic.

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Excellent account of probation in general: its history, purpose and conditions. Discusses Pennsylvania's system in particular and analyzes its major shortcomings.

Task Force Reports. Pennsylvania Crime Commission "Corrections in Pennsylvania," July, 1969.

A whole issue devoted to crime and corrections. Discussion of Institutional techniques and more relevantly, community-based techniques (probation). Summarizes such important points as need for pre-sentence investigations, proper supervision of probation and Pennsylvania's major weaknesses in these areas.

Task Force Reports. Pennsylvania Crime Commission "Goals for Justice," January, 1969.

Good insight into criminal justice in Pennsylvania and what its main objectives are and should be.

VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTE TO REHABILITATION AT INGHAM COUNTY JAIL

by

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While the majority of county jails across the country either have no rehabilitation programs or even limited citizen-volunteer participation, the Ingham County Jail in Mason, Michigan can point to a broad effort offering programs and services designed to meet the vocational, academic, social and personal needs of inmates.

An outstanding component of the overall rehabilitation plan at the Ingham County Jail is its volunteer involvement. Where only several years ago it was being stated that any program at the county level was impossible, volunteers have taken the initiative to offer their time, ideas and effort to build a model inmate-centered approach to solving problems related to inmate recidivism.

In the space of two years the fresh and innovative thinking of volunteers has been instrumental in establishing programs in Auto Mechanics, Blueprint Reading, Physics, Math, Arts and Crafts, and Accounting. Volunteers have also made possible an inmate published bulletin, provided job referral, follow-through and adjustment counseling, as well as tutoring in subjects either too basic or too advanced or too specialized for the regular school-in-jail curriculum.

A close relationship has grown during two years between the Ingham Jail Rehabilitation structure and the Greater Lansing Volunteer Bureau, located in downtown Lansing, Michigan, some 12 miles from the jail. The Michigan State University Volunteer Bureau, East Lansing, Michigan, directed by John Cauley, has also developed close volunteer referral contact with us.

The following is an excerpt from the Volunteer Bureau "Opportunities for Spring 1971" which circulates among students as well as staff on campus.

"The Ingham County Jail is a leader in the field of Adult Education within a correctional setting. It offers its inmates a number of classes ranging from Adult Basic Education, to GED Preparation, to college-level programs. Also offered are programs of a vocational nature. Volunteers are needed to teach the classes. Classes are usually quite small and are attended on a voluntary basis. The inmates have access to a library, and teaching materials are provided. The volunteer will act as a teacher/tutor working individually with inmates in areas of

practical academic importance. Basic math and English are emphasized in a context of social, vocational and professional relevancy. The volunteer must rely on his own initiative to innovate, create, and stimulate within the confines of a highly structured situation. Males are preferred, and they should be at least 20 years old, have no arrest record, have their own car, and enjoy self confidence."

In addition to the areas described above the volunteers have worked to improve the organizing and collecting of materials for the growing reference and general circulation sections of the library. In our overall rehabilitation-educational effort the library has become the center of the attempt to introduce a new kind of learning for offenders who once only had "hard time" to look forward to.

The volunteer is by no means unique to the correctional setting. His work in the courts, probation and prisons has been widely noted. For the often overworked professionals and staff the volunteer has always been welcome.

When he first appeared on the scene in Ingham County, one instructor from the Lansing School District, Office of Continuing Education, was attempting to maintain classes for over seventy inmates. The first volunteer helped until the School District could send additional certified instructors.

Currently there are programs of Basic Education, High School Completion plus Special and Remedial classes. The focal point for the entire academic program, however, which now includes university and community college classes, is General Educational Development or GED preparation. GED or high school equivalency study provides an ideal basis for tutor-volunteer teamwork.

In our attempts to identify or select the "typical" inmate we have found that he is about 20 years old, reading and writing at an early junior high level and a drop-out having on the average completed school up to about the tenth grade. Class attendance for the inmate-student is strictly voluntary. He comes to class knowing that he will not be excluded on the basis of his area of interest or achievement level. If he states a need for penmanship improvement, vocabulary development or a basic math review, he has the assurance that somewhere within the individualized programs of study, he will find the materials, the assistance of a program volunteer and a positive study atmosphere. Attention is focused anew for the student-inmate on once forgotten study objectives.

Successful completion of the GED examination for the former "failure" means a high school certificate. Often the certificate is a central objective in all study areas. The GED helps motivate the basic education student, is a practical and realistic goal for the 9-10th grade drop-out

with a limited 2-3 month sentence, and provides the comprehensive approach to literature, science, math, grammar, and social studies needed for the advanced student anticipating college, university, technical or trade training program acceptance.

Any attempt at this point to separate or dissect the role of the volunteer in the overall process of study and self-improvement would be to cut the heart from the essence of alternatives to "doing time" the hard way.

The student isn't paid to attend class. He does receive High School Completion credit for time in attendance. The student is not required or forced to enroll in the program. Like his tutor, instructor, or counselor, as the case may be, the inmate too is a volunteer. When volunteers get together behind bars to study and work together, progress in attitude, academic achievement, and vocational areas can be measured. Progress here is then defined as the something significant that altogether too frequently does not happen in prison and almost never in jail.

An attempt at this point to overly romanticize or idealize the role of the volunteer in the correctional setting would unfortunately result in glamorizing the role of jails and prisons which is simply — the correction and prevention of crime.

However, as we are almost daily discovering in the Ingham County Jail, the scope, ambition, and success of our rehabilitation program is in direct proportion to the energy, time, and personal involvement of the individual volunteer.

The volunteer's commitment can, in fact, be seen as a focal point for jail administrative and staff support. We are indeed fortunate in Ingham County to have the active and constant support of a farsighted Sheriff. His own energy, however, is only equaled by the dedication and perseverance of inmate and volunteer alike.

In fact the "problem" for us in Mason has become not one of how to use the volunteer, but how to pace the overall program so as to maximize his enthusiasm. Working side-by-side with paid staff, the citizen-volunteer has come to be accepted as the single most actively contributing source of new ideas and programs next to the inmates themselves.

Perhaps the potential of the volunteer can best be emphasized when viewed in relation to the community. Regardless of size, many communities are faced with the common and often seemingly insurmountable problems related to the public offender.

In Ingham County (Population — 261,039), as the location of the State Capitol, Lansing, the volunteer is an immediately available re-

source. Two sources, both the Lansing and East Lansing district, provide qualified volunteers from the business-industrial and the nearby university communities.

Coming to jail, whether for the volunteer administrator, businessman, teacher, college instructor, student or housewife, has meant two things. First, the opportunity to get away, if even for a few hours, from the hustle and pressure of a daily schedule to the relatively slowed-down pace of jail routine. A routine where time assumes the dimension of security and isolation, a time of reflection, introspection or thoughtfulness. A period during which an individual can look at the past, consider the present and often decide future goals.

The traditional custodial nature of the jail for many inmates was not only "hard time" but time lost. By introducing the volunteer into the custodial structure, activity replaced inactivity. The establishment of an in-jail relationship between inmate and volunteer as tutor or counselor and student or advisee carries over into the community. The Ingham County Jail in this case provides the staging area for the continued development of on-going volunteer-inmate contact during the crucible of the post-release period.

At first this was seen as over-involvement, when in fact, it was the result of a successfully established and maintained in-jail relationship. On a one-to-one basis the initial contact between inmate-student and volunteer was ostensibly academic. Respect and acceptance in the work-study area became semi- or informal counseling. Often referred to as "rap" sessions, this period is typically described by an inmate as a time to "get my thoughts together, without the pressure or necessities of being anybody but myself."

Since volunteers were selected for their expertise or ability in an area, a real need was being served: the inmate was gaining insight, knowledge, some practical information in an area of academic or vocational concern. The professional "counseling" was left to those certified in the affairs of personality, character and motivation.

The highly individualized nature of volunteer involvement at Ingham County provides flexibility in recruiting, orienting, evaluating and the supervision of the volunteer staff.

Many volunteer prospects, on hearing of our program initiate contact with Dennis Doolen, the Ingham County Jail Volunteer Coordinator. Whether the prospective volunteer is a self-referral, referred by another volunteer (which is often the case), or by a community agency, the Volunteer Coordinator makes a quick assessment of general program needs and makes contact with specific sub-program coordinators to see if an assignment can be made.

After the initial contact with the Volunteer Coordinator, in-jail orientation is provided by rehabilitation and jail administrative staff. Security clearances are necessary for everyone. The individual volunteer is assigned to the Education, Drug, DVR (Michigan Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), alcohol, or vocational coordinator for assignment with a specific inmate. Close follow-up by volunteer and/or program coordinator tells whether or not a right choice has been made. Both tutor and inmate, remember, are in voluntary attendance. They are free to decide mutuality and acceptance. After the seemingly long chain leading through procedures to the first inmate-volunteer contact, every effort is made to allow for a self-structuring relationship.

The volunteer determines his own schedule. A minimum time commitment is agreed upon. The primary consideration is regularity, regardless of morning, afternoon, evening or weekend. The volunteer also decides how many students he is to work with. No pressure is exerted to "take as many as you can." The only pressure, in fact, is a low-key suggestion that "what is convenient is best." Some volunteers are former teachers who want to teach again. Others are teachers who want to share the excitement of learning without the pressure of the traditionally structured classroom. Volunteers decide within scheduling considerations if they will work individually or with groups.

The matrix of conversational interchange that grows between volunteer and jail staff is equally positive to the person-to-person exchange between volunteer and inmate. The understanding is not of two professionals discussing a common problem, but the dialogue of a taxpayer actively seeking solutions with the jailer who is witness to the full-time failure of custody without correction.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF VOLUNTEERS

by

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The purpose of this study of volunteers in Veterans Administration facilities was to determine what impact, if any, supervision and/or training had in the performance of volunteers. The writer considers supervision and training to be the most effective way of modifying undesirable attitudes in volunteers and a means of making maximum effectiveness of the services volunteers provide. Training is accepted as necessary to utilizing volunteers in a hospital setting. This was corroborated by Vernallis and St. Pierre[1] who concluded individual hospitals have the responsibility of orienting and training volunteers. In view of the widespread use of volunteers by Veterans Administration hospitals, the writer considered it pertinent to examine what influence supervision and/or training had on the performance ratings of volunteers in their duty assignments.

The hypothesis of this study is as follows: Volunteers who receive supervision and/or training will perform more effectively in their duty assignments. The writer also attempted to determine if the education and age influenced the ratings of effectiveness which volunteers received.

Five hundred questionnaires were mailed to ten Veterans Administration Hospitals. The supervisor of each volunteer selected and the Directors of Voluntary Services were asked to complete the appropriate portions of the questionnaire. The names of regularly scheduled volunteers who were on the hospital's roster for the period of January 1, 1968, through June 30, 1968, and who still had current assignments were alphabetized. A random sample was obtained by selecting every third name until each hospital had selected 500 volunteers or as near that number as was possible. Three hundred and ninety-four questionnaires were returned.

Chi-square was used to measure the frequency discordance between observed performance ratings of volunteers and the expected or hypothesized frequencies.*

Ratings were categorized as low, medium, and high. Volunteers were assigned to four different categories: (1) volunteers who had received no supervision and no training; (2) volunteers who had received no supervision but had received training; (3) volunteers who had received

*Detailed analysis of statistical data may be obtained directly from the author.

supervision but had not received training; and (4) volunteers who had received both supervision and training. Supervision was defined as face to face conferences between volunteers and their supervisors with emphasis on teaching-learning relationships. Training was limited to workshops, orientation, seminars, institutes or other more formalized kinds of teaching-learning situations.

The following findings were observed: (1) Volunteers who received both supervision and training made fewer low ratings; (2) volunteers who received no supervision and no training made fewer higher ratings; and (3) volunteers who received both supervision and training made the highest percentage of high ratings. This indicated that volunteers who received both supervision and training were rated more favorably by their supervisors than volunteers in other categories.

Volunteers who received no supervision were compared with those who received supervision and the same was done with training. Comparisons indicated that volunteers who had received supervision made fewer low ratings and made more high ratings than volunteers who did not receive supervision. The same was true of volunteers who received training but no supervision. Volunteers who had no supervision made a higher percentage of medium scores than did volunteers with supervision; however, volunteers who received training made a higher percentage of medium ratings than volunteers who received no training.

Volunteers who had completed eight grades of school or less received the most low ratings while volunteers who had graduate study made fewer low ratings. Without exception volunteers who had completed the most grades of school made the highest number of high ratings. The mode of average ratings was within the 9-11 grades with corresponding decreases in average ratings with increasing education except for those volunteers who had completed less than eight grades of school. There were far more volunteers who completed high school than any other category.

SUMMARY

From the observed findings, this study indicated that volunteers who had been supervised and trained received more high and fewer low ratings than volunteers who had not been supervised or trained. Given the assumption that supervisors' ratings were objective, the above finding confirms the writer's hypothesis that volunteers who received supervision and training performed more effectively in their duty assignments.

Supervisory ratings in relation to age tended to favor younger volunteers. They received more high ratings and fewer lower ratings. The mode of the average ratings was within the 40-49 age group and also

corroborated that younger volunteers were viewed more favorably than older volunteers.

An examination of whether education influenced ratings, indicated that without exception volunteers received higher ratings with each increase in educational attainment. Volunteers who had completed eight grades of school or less were rated least favorably.
The study indicated that there is an association between training and age and training and education. The study does not predict which variable, age or education, is most important. Multi-linear regression or some other applicable procedure would be necessary in order to predict which dependent variable influenced ratings most.

The writer viewed this study as providing some guidelines for users of volunteers. From knowledge gained from the study, users of volunteers should be able to select volunteers who should perform more effectively in their job assignments. Users of volunteers also should accept their responsibility for providing supervision and training for all volunteers since this study indicated supervision and training increased the effectiveness of volunteers' performance.

Reference

(1) Vernallis, Francis F. and Roderick G. St. Pierre, "Volunteer Workers' Opinions About Mental Illness," *Journal of Clinical Psychology,* Vol. XX, No. 1, January 1964, p. 1.

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STUDENT VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

by

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According to O'Sullivan (1957), services of student volunteers have essentially three values: (1) they provide supplementary assistance to professional staff, (2) they interpret the agency's services to the community, and (3) they carry the community's attitudes back to the agency. Students volunteer in order to explore possible vocations, to have a laboratory for their social studies, to serve out of a sense of obligation, and to gain new experiences. However, their greatest contribution in a broader community sense comes as a result of the experience they gain as volunteers in community service, becoming aware of unmet community or individual needs and sensing a responsibility in relation to them. Subseqently, the student volunteer becomes a citizen with vision ready to pioneer services as the community requires. The result is a participant able to understand the need for sound financing of services, able to affect and change community attitudes when necessary, and able to feel an identification with and a responsibility to his community.

The student volunteer works in many different settings. One situation is working in poverty-stricken locales. For example, Coles and Brenner (1968) report the experiences of American college students, the Appalachian volunteers, during the summers of 1965 and 1966. They worked with the mountain people of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. They confronted a way of life quite different from any other in this country, while living with poor rural families and working with them to repair school buildings, build roads, and teach and gather information on the medical, legal, and educational needs of particular communities. They had to come to terms both with life as lived by the resident population and with themselves, their own wishes, and purposes. The accomplishments of the volunteers and residents demonstrated how unnecessary are many of the region's most severe difficulties.

The student volunteer movement in mental health and mental retardation settings has been a most popular one. One of the first major descriptions of college students in a mental hospital was published as a book by Umbarger, Dalsimer, Morrision, and Breggin (1962). These four students were leaders in the program during their undergraduate years at Harvard. The book is a report on the development and growth of the Harvard-Radcliffe student volunteer program to serve the needs of mentally ill persons at the Metropolitan State Hospital in Waltham, Massachusetts. The authors stress the relationships that were developed between patients and volunteers. Particular emphasis is placed on the positive effects of the program upon the therapeutic

climate of the patients and on the attitudes of the volunteers toward mental illness.

Greenblatt and Kantor (1961) report on the same student volunteer program as early as 1954 when 332 students from nine colleges participated, most of them working in the children's unit of a large State mental hospital. In addition, groups of case aides were formed, who were supervised by a Psychiatric Social Worker, and worked intensively with individual geriatric cases for whom discharge seemed possible. These case aides were very successful in providing transitional help during the discharge of the patients. In contrast to senior volunteer workers, the students actively sought the opportunity to work directly with patients on the ward and sought to make a close personal relationship with them. The number of students engaged in the program continued at approximately 200 a year. The students set up an Advisory Board of senior hospital personnel, student leaders, and consultants. The number of students interested in a mental health career approximately doubled after participation in the volunteer program; thus, volunteering may be an important recruitment technique in the field of mental health. Students also set up a halfway house in which students and patients are admitted into cooperative living. In the hospital itself, the recreational and occupational therapy activities provided by the volunteers have increased patients' interest in the outside world and their motivation to regain social skills. The students have recognized the need for a gradual move of the patient from hospital to community and have learned the problems society poses for the mentally ill. In a further evaluation of the Harvard-Radcliffe program, Greenblatt and Kantor (1962) observe that the movement is characterized by intense eagerness of students to get to know the problems faced by the patient and the hospital, high motivation to do something about these, and considerable creativity in working out solutions. In addition, undergraduate volunteering appears to be an effective means of recruiting promising young people into the mental health field and giving at least partial relief of the serious manpower shortage.

A follow-up study of patients "treated" by the Harvard volunteers was conducted by Beck, Kantor and Gelineau (1963). It was found that 31 per cent of 120 patients who had been seen on a weekly basis between 1954 and 1961 were able to leave the hospital while working with the students, as compared with a three per cent discharge rate, generally, for those patients hospitalized for over four years. The success of the program is attributed to the following: (1) length of student-patient relationship (usually over an academic year); (2) looseness of role definition for both members of the relationship, allowing for a wide range of activities (taking a walk, going shopping if a patient does not desire to talk, or counseling); (3) no negative sanctions placed on "unprofessional" interactions, which apparently enabled the relationship to be sustained in almost all cases over the

academic year; (4) extension of activity by the student case-aides beyond the hospital walls; and (5) the importance of group meetings and close supervision, which enabled the students to have a satisfying experience. Results of the program have justified the professional expenditure of the time required.

Reinherz (1963) reports on a program initiated at Metropolitan State Hospital in Waltham, Massachusetts, utilizing the services of college students to work in direct contact with emotionally disturbed children. The volunteers worked with children who had not been assigned to a professional therapist. They were children who would not represent unmanageable behavior problems and would be in the hospital for the academic year. The student volunteer role was delineated as ego supportive, educative, and parental in bringing healthy experiences and relationships and activity necessary for the maturation of the child. Emphasis was placed on activities which took the child out into the community. At the end of the second year of the program, testing indicated that all seven patients studied had progressed and were able to form more trusting and responsible relationships. The program was particularly helpful in relieving the work load of psychiatrists.

Essex County Overbrook Hospital in Cedar Grove, New Jersey, began a college companion program in 1964 (Brunell 1967) which has proved very successful for both companions and patients. College students act as companions to individual patients, often establishing warm relationships. The program was established to provide first hand experience for psychology and sociology majors. It rapidly expanded to include all types of students interested in mental health and was not limited to observance of disorder, but encouraged a spirit of understanding and community mindedness which would aid the cause of mental health in the future.

For the past several years, Larned State Hospital in Kansas has conducted an educational summer service program in which 40 college students participate (McBride, Hesher, and Arnold, 1968). The students aid the staff, augmenting its services by almost one-fourth, and receive a stipend granted by the National Institute of Mental Health. At least two professional people supervise the activities of the students, which include taking patients for walks and directing activities, particularly for the adolescent patients. Several case histories illustrate that their efforts were therapeutic. These students influenced others upon their return to school and the community, and many continued their experiences in taking up careers oriented toward mental health.

A project entitled "A Community Program of Inter-Group Activity for Youth" conducted an experimental program in Champaign, Illinois using volunteer teenagers to supplement casework service to younger children whose needs could be met through a non-professional relation-

ship (Perlmutter and Durham, 1965). It was assumed that the teenager would benefit as much as the child client, developing a sense of dependence, uniqueness, and relatedness as well as an awareness of diverse socio-economic problems. The teenagers were given monthly group training sessions which provided organizational control and direction and met one-half day weekly with the youngsters. The growth and satisfaction derived by both volunteer and child was noted.

A teenage volunteer program was initiated at Newark State Hospital, New York, to encourage more activity for the retarded teenage children. Volunters from several high school organizations spend two evenings each week socializing with the teenage girls. Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops were also involved in volunteer programs in craft work, games, song fests, and camping trips (Bears 1963).

The Happy Hills Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, a non-profit pediatric hospital which provides long term care for children, regularly uses junior volunteers for work with children who need special help and individual attention (Levine 1968). The volunteers work under the supervision of the hospital's nursing service. The author describes her work with the young patient suffering from a severe speech defect which has altered an emotional disturbance which was disruptive to group activities. After lengthy and regular work with a volunteer, the child's vocabulary increased considerably and improvement was shown in general speech facility. The volunteer also served as emotional support for the child in preparing him for foster home placement upon leaving the hospital.

In 1961 the Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn established a comprehensive, efficient adolescent clinic for diagnosing and treating medical and emotional problems of patients from 13 to 18 years of age (Michelson, Klein, Deutch, Kaufman, and Smith 1965). The program is staffed by part-time physicians and trained psychiatric social workers, using group therapy. The treatment program, directly involving the patient's family in the therapeutic regimen, appears to be an efficient, effective method for treatment of the adolescent. Volunteer college seniors, under staff supervision, meet separately with 5 or 10 younger teenagers per group for a regular Saturday activity program. Burnis and Ackerly (1969) report on a volunteer program initiated at the Somerville Guidance Center, Somerville, Massachusetts, in which 20 college students participated. The purpose of the program was to supplement services of the traditional mental health team. Each volunteer was assigned a child with whom he attempted to build and maintain a meaningful relationship. Frequently the children are lonely and withdrawn and poor achievers at school, and many have severe problems in their relationships with parents, siblings, and teachers. Volunteers are carefully selected and trained in weekly group meetings. The biggest difficulty encountered is communicating to the volunteer that the

changes in emotionally disturbed children take place slowly. In the beginning, tutoring was the primary function. Shortly afterward, however, it became apparent that for many children a "special friend" kind of relationship in itself led to improved school performance. Clearly the volunteers have much to contribute; they bring to their work a spontaneity, warmth, and enthusiasm that are sometimes dampened by professional training.

Cowen and Zax and Laird (1966) describes a college student volunteer program in the elementary school setting. The volunteer program for elementary grade children with manifest or incipient emotional problems was set up on an after school, day care basis to determine what types of students volunteer for this type of program. Interest was directed toward any changes that take place in the volunteer as a result of participation, the general nature of the program, types of relationships formed between volunteers and child, and the changes that take place in the children in the program. The method of recruitment, evaluation of volunteers, training, the method of selecting and evaluating the children, the program course, and the results of a volunteer discussion group are discussed.

Skjoiten and Bartlett (1968) report that junior college students in a midwestern town served as volunteer leaders for small groups of children who have problems adjusting to elementary school. The groups, which meet weekly during the school year, emphasize the prevention of serious school difficulties by including children with limited background and group play, adult relations or in various group activity of the school, such as crafts, games and discussion. The school, rather than labeling such children deviant, regards them as being in need of extra experiences for normal growth. The volunteers are easily identified as big brothers or big sisters. Other assets include enthusiasm, warmth, and creativity. In-service training consists of three basic sessions and biweekly consultations. Program evaluation seems to indicate that this approach is positive in helping children to adjust to school.

A program using indigenous volunteers in a coeducational living unit within a university residence hall is described by Sinnett and Niedenthal (1968). Normal college students of both sexes were nominated by student personnel workers to live in this unit with fellow students referred by counselors and psychiatric service staff. The volunteer students were sought as helpers, and their superior coping with the problems of the college years often served as a model for quiet students. Indigenous volunteers may provide a supplementary source of help to their emotionally disturbed peers. Lowering the threshold of accessibility of a professional staff for direct service to students and consultation with dormitory staff were also a part of this program. Initial findings show promise for decreasing the dropout rate of disturbed

students. There is consensus among volunteers and clients concerning the relative value of the therapeutic community as a resource for treatment and maturation.

Volunteerism as a viable means toward constructive social change is becoming documented (Howard, 1970; LaForme, 1970; and Bacon, 1970). "The volunteer movement fights against the very seeds of the sickness which infects mankind. We fight the feeling of uselessness, and we fight to make men whole. After all, the loss of an individual is too great a loss." (Bacon, Hartman, Kurylo, and Osebold, 1969).

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THE VOLUNTEER IN A VARIETY OF ROLES

by

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As Mrs. Richard Nixon said at a meeting in Chicago in 1970, "There is no more noble way to spend part of a life than helping others." Volunteer work is most rewarding. Whether you are a student, a retiree, a parent, a homemaker, an employed person, or a professional, you have a lot to contribute as a volunteer. As a volunteer one is not working for promotion or for financial gain. You are volunteering to help other people. In giving of yourself you grow and gain a deeper understanding of human nature. You meet new challenges, you make new friends, you learn new things and you know you are helping another human being.

"Citizen participation is essential if community problems are to be resolved. Only through a vast cooperative partnership of public and private interests can the quality of life for all citizens be raised. As we all come together to assess and extend our resources to increasing numbers of people, our own lives become more meaningful." [1]

As an active, interested participant in community affairs, one can become "over-extended" very easily. After several years of being involved in local community organizations such as the Community Chest, Heart Association, Cancer Association, Red Cross, Community Council, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Woman's Club, Church Groups, Mental Health Associations and political organizations, it is wise to sit back, evaluate, and decide which of these areas is really the one you are most interested in pursuing and to which you can be the most helpful.

Arriving finally at the decision to make the field of mental health her prime volunteer endeavor, the author discovered that the community had already accepted her as the citizen to contact relative to general mental health resource information.

Serving as president of the local Mental Health Association was a very challenging and educational experience. This non-profit, voluntary citizen's action organization serves an eleven-town area and works for the improved care and treatment of the mentally ill. It is an affiliate of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, which is a division of the National Association for Mental Health. During the three-year term as president of this local Mental Health Association the author gained an extensive background of mental health expertise. Attending conferences, sitting on the Board of Directors of the Child Guidance Clinic, attending public hearings concerning mental health legislation,

assisting in the development of rehabilitation programs, organizing educational seminars, becoming acquainted with the Department of Mental Health and its facilities, only confirmed the author's desire to dedicate her leisure time to the subject of mental health.

After completing her term as president of the Mental Health Association, the author was chairman of the local mental health legislative committee and at that point, became very much interested and involved in overall mental health legislation in the State of Massachusetts. The next step was a term of several years as chairman of the legislative committee of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. This legislative committee is made up of volunteers from Mental Health Associations all over the state. The committee screens bills relative to mental health and does research and fact-finding to determine the value of the bill and makes a decision as to appropriate action — then makes its recommendation for action to the executive committee of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. Whether or not the necessary laws are enacted and well-administered depends in large measure on the extent of citizen concern and the effectiveness of citizen action.[2]

As the author's mental health interests broadened, she was elected a Vice-President of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health while still serving as legislative chairman for that organization. She was also elected to attend the National Association for Mental Health Annual Meeting as a voting delegate for two years.

The question of how to provide better patient care for the mentally ill in Massachusetts was studied by a Planning Project Commission under a Federal Government Grant. Their recommendations became the back-bone of a law — Chapter 735, which was passed in December 1966 and became effective in March 1967. This law calls for a reorganization of the Department of Mental Health and is a master plan for a new delivery system for mental health and retardation care.

Three major goals were envisaged in the passage of this act:

1. To provide more effective treatment and services to persons with emotional disorders or who are mentally retarded.
2. To provide services to citizens through information, consultation, and education.
3. To provide, through the de-centralization of the Department of Mental Health, decision-making responsibilities at a level closer to the patients and their families and to simultaneously develop a system permitting citizen participation in policy and decision-making at all levels of operation.

For the purpose of the plan, the Commonwealth has been divided

into 39 areas, and these areas are organized into seven geographical regions.

The law states that in each area there shall be a Mental Health and Retardation Area Board which shall be an agency of the Commonwealth, and that this Area Board shall consist of 21 members appointed by the Commissioner of Mental Health.

To facilitate the appointment of these Area Board members, selection committees were appointed in each area consisting of seven members who were chosen by the Commissioner of Mental Health on the advice of mental health associations, associations for the mentally retarded and other local planning groups interested in mental health and retardation.

The author of this paper was an appointed member of a selection committee and then was appointed a member of a Mental Health and Retardation Area Board which served a geographic area of 11 towns. She was elected Vice-President of that board for its first year of operation and then was elected President of the Area Board.

The new law also required the formation of a Mental Health and Retardation Advisory Council consisting of 30 persons to be appointed by the Governor. The author was appointed to this Council at its inception and then was elected secretary of this Advisory Council on Mental Health and Retardation. The purpose of this Council is to advise the Commissioner of Mental Health on policy, program development and priorities of need among the various areas of the Commonwealth. The Advisory Council participates with the Department of Mental Health in holding a regular series of public hearings throughout the State. These hearings enable the Department of Mental Health and the Advisory Council to find out first-hand about the effectiveness of Department of Mental Health policies and to hear from the people themselves what needs are still unmet.[8] The author was a member of the panel at the first five public hearings that were held.

One might question the advisability of a person holding several key administrative community mental health volunteer positions simultaneously.

The author definitely found these responsibilities most rewarding, very challenging, and extremely educational. She was constantly working very closely with mental health professionals and realized this to be quite a different experience than her earlier volunteer work with professionals in other medical fields. The mental health professionals accepted her as an equal partner in bringing better services to mentally ill people.

As the president of a Mental Health and Retardation Area Board, the

vice-president of a state Mental Health Association and chairman of the state legislative committee, the secretary of the Advisory Council on Mental Health and Retardation, a member of various sub-committees on Mental Health, and a town meeting member simultaneously, the author had a distinct advantage in being able to look at problems from several directions at the same time.

To be sure, one must have the three E's to carry out this multiple role effectively:

1. Enthusiasm
2. Elasticity
3. Energy

Sir John Hunt, who was the leader of the successful Mount Everest expedition in 1953 gives this recipe for leadership: "Look for some task difficult to do, something which is a challenge to your skill, then go out and achieve it."

References

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