

974.901
B64.1
C.2

NEW JERSEY STATE LIBRARY

OCT 3- 1972

185 W. State Street
TRENTON, N.J.

*NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
1100 RAYMOND BOULEVARD
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102*

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1971 - JUNE 30, 1972

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1971 - JUNE 30, 1972

To: Commissioner, Department of Institutions and Agencies
Director, Division of Public Welfare
Members, Board of Trustees, New Jersey State Commission for the Blind
and Visually Impaired

We respectfully submit, herewith, the Annual Report of the Commission's activities and accomplishments for the Fiscal Year 1972.

EDUCATION SERVICE

During the year 219 children were newly-referred, which, when added to those on register, made a total of 1,994 youngsters in service. In the same period 260 children were closed so that as of June 30, 1972, there were 1,734 continuing on the register and at school.

The Education caseload has shown a slight decrease in the total number of children served as a result of the completion of services to a large number of retrolental fibroplasia cases that have reached graduation age. Numbers of students in integrated local school programs remained constant. However, the number in special classes for the visually handicapped in larger cities lessened from 201 in 1969 to 100 by 1972 which is in keeping with our recommendations. Percentagewise, just over 50% of the total number of children in the Education caseload have serious additional handicaps, one or more, along with blindness. This is particularly true among children born during the German Measles (Rubella) epidemic of 1964-65. In addition to vision loss, such children may have hearing loss, neurological impairment, cardiac and spleen

involvements.

The implications of this, for program, are more specialized facilities for evaluation and for the development of specialized programs for preschool and school-age youngsters to minimize the effects of disablement, develop the child's capacities, and prevent high-cost institutionalization. To this end, the Commission continued its classes for preschool deaf-blind children in Cranford and at Glassboro State College. Both have been extremely effective. A third class for the Bergen County area is planned for next year. More professional staff have been reassigned to the needs of the multi-handicapped and their efforts have made it possible for some of these children to be absorbed in existing specialized programs for the mentally retarded, cerebral palsy, etc. This has enabled the Commission to keep the numbers requiring high cost residential school training at a relative plateau.

The classification of the 1,734 children continuing in service at year end by school needs is as follows:

<i>Preschool</i>	-	130
<i>Local School Placement (Elementary and Secondary)</i>	-	842
<i>Special Programs for Multiply Handicapped</i>	-	97
<i>Special (Separate) Classes in Public Schools</i>	-	100
<i>Residential Schools and Training Centers</i>	-	123
<i>Multi-Handicapped Children at Home</i>	-	33
<i>College and University</i>	-	155
<i>In State Institutions or Not Educable</i>	-	247
<i>Unclassified</i>	-	<u>7</u>
<u><i>TOTAL</i></u>	-	<u>1,734</u>

Special Federal Grants and Summer Camp.

A substantial Title I Federal grant was developed and received this year making it possible to increase staff services; to provide adequate field supervision; and to supervise more adequately children at out-of-State residential centers. Added to the program this year were two (2) Field Supervisors, a physical education instructor with years of experience working with the blind to act as a State-wide consultant to develop and improve physical education programs; and a specialist in the area of home economics to serve as a consultant in improving daily living skills for older students. These additions will broaden and improve services to blind children in public school classes as well as alleviate administrative difficulties particularly in the area of instructor supervision, efficient case work coverage and reporting.

During the summer, 420 camper weeks were scheduled at Camp Marcella. The first two (2) weeks were geared again to programs for the most severely multi-handicapped children who require one for one supervision and who would otherwise have been unable to attend. Remedial instruction was provided campers by Commission instructional staff employed during the summer. A nature and physical education program was reinstituted and expanded. In addition to the program at Camp Marcella, a six (6) week summer program for 10 deaf-blind children was provided on a day basis at Camp Union operated by Newark State College.

In co-operation with the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Education staff helped sponsor two (2) summer evaluation and training programs - one for college-bound students and another for noncollege vocational students. Thirty-three (33) college-bound high school juniors and seniors spent four (4) weeks on campus at Seton Hall University where their interests, aptitudes and skills were evaluated. They attended selected

classes and were given specialized training in mobility and assistance in the specifics of adjusting to college life. Twenty-one (21) students were enrolled at the Commission's Rehabilitation Training Center where the major emphasis was on vocational aptitude testing, vocational guidance and the acquisition of practical work skills.

The Hayes Unit at Johnstone Research and Training Center while operationally part of the institution is supervised by the Commission under a "Third Party" Agreement to provide vocational rehabilitation services to mentally-retarded youths. Over a period of three (3) years the unit has now grown to its full capacity of 36 residents and strong efforts are being made to develop a model vocationally oriented training program.

George F. Meyer Textbooks and Material Center.

The number of shipments from the Textbooks Center increased to 51,558 units. While Braille utilization went down somewhat, tape utilization, and large print materials increased this year. A new display system for educational aids has been effective in bringing to the attention of Instructors, parents, and teachers items available for use by children. A tape duplication center was established at the Westfield-Mountainside Chapter of the American Red Cross in Westfield using volunteers. A new braille duplication and bindery was opened by the Ocean County Volunteers for the Blind in Toms River, New Jersey.

EYE HEALTH SERVICE

The function of the Eye Health Service is to prevent blindness and to help conserve the vision of New Jersey citizens through community-wide vision screening programs, through public information, as well as through direct assistance and counsel to individuals requiring surgery or treatment.

In the case service sphere, the number served totaled 722. This represents

a 12% increase over 1971 despite increased use of Medicare and Medicaid. Sight was restored or improved for 154 individuals.

The Preschool Vision Detection Program for Amblyopia is beginning its seventh (7th) year of operation and is much in demand. During the year, 164 community-wide detection programs were conducted preceded by training sessions for volunteers in co-operation with Parent-Teacher Associations, Nurses, Lions Clubs, Women's Clubs, Junior Leaguers and similar groups. This was an increase of 35 programs or 27% more than in 1971. In all, 20,026 children were screened (as against 17,133 last year) using 2,434 volunteers trained by Commission staff, the largest number ever used in the program. These volunteers have made it possible to expand this program without increasing professional staff. Of the children examined, 1,246 were referred for complete eye examinations or treatment.

In the Glaucoma Control Program the 17th State-wide detection program was conducted in co-operation with the Medical Society of New Jersey at 86 hospitals. 12,481 adults (a slight increase over last year) were examined at these centers at no cost and 520 Glaucoma suspects were referred to the Commission and received individual follow-up. Glaucoma requires continuous follow-up and treatment to prevent serious vision loss. At year's end there were 3,904 on the Glaucoma Registry of the Commission.

The Traveling Eye Unit provided 315 days and 13 evenings of service (up from 231 last year) and 6,257 eye examinations. This was a 4% decrease over 1971. The Unit screens groups considered most vulnerable. Among these "pocket of need" groups that were reached were: 14 centers for the handicapped; seven (7) multi-service agencies serving poverty groups; 11 migrant locations, three (3) multi-handicapped centers;

fourteen (14) nursing homes; two (2) correctional institutions; three (3) drug rehabilitation centers; seven (7) health departments; and six (6) senior citizens centers.

Two (2) Eye Symposia were sponsored by the Commission's Eye Health Service section and the Essex County Medical Society at the Eye Institute in Newark - one on "Detecting Glaucoma" and one on "Overcoming Eye Problems in Pediatrics." The third (3rd) Migrant program in South Jersey was held in co-operation with the State Department of Health and the State Department of Education and was very successful. This year 2,215 children were screened by nurses in the Migrant Education Department. As a follow-up of the 1969 New Lisbon Colony examination program a number of eligible patients were scheduled for eye surgery with good results at Newark Eye and Ear Infirmary through the co-operation and support of Dr. Anthony M. Sellitto and Dr. Humbert M. Gambacorta, Consultants on the Commission's staff. Further arrangements for permanent ophthalmological services have been recommended to the Division of Mental Retardation.

HOME TEACHING AND HOME SERVICE

The Home Service program serves newly-blinded adults and elderly homebound individuals through an array of services which include training in personal adjustment, communication skills, handwork for leisure or occupation, and assistance with personal, family, and social problems. Working with clients chiefly in their home setting, workers traveled 129,000 miles and made 5,400 client visits. A total of 2,500 clients were served, a slight increase over last year.

Some trends or major activities should be highlighted:

- 1. During the year 1,172 Talking Book machines were provided new readers or as replacements. The total number now in use State-wide is 5,391. Of this number,*

706 are used by physically handicapped individuals unable to read print and 846 were placed in various institutions. In addition, 378 Cassette players were provided for tape users.

2. A small corps of Instructional Aides has been developed to assist the Home Teacher because of extremely high caseloads among the seven (7) professional Home Teachers.
3. An Aids and Appliance Stock Room has been centralized and managed by the Home Service Department for all units of the agency. This has considerably reduced delays and paper work. This year 1,205 items were provided to 471 clients.
4. An experimental program was developed in Union County to provide transportation to clients to meet doctors appointments and dental appointments. Volunteers from Junior Women's Clubs and Lions Clubs in Union County were utilized to provide this service. This pilot project was for a five (5) month period and 16 volunteers provided 18 days of service each month.
5. A course in volunteer service for the blind was established in Red Bank with the sponsorship of the Monmouth Adult Education Commission which was designed to acquaint the class with the needs, interests and abilities of blind people, to provide information on the Commission's service program and to recruit and train volunteers to serve individual blind persons. Lectures were given on the definition and common causes of blindness, guiding blind persons and the tools and techniques used in teaching blind adults.
6. The report on the study of the aged blind population "Blindness and the Vintage Years" was published following a two (2) year study of the unmet needs and interests of the older blind population of the State. Five (5) basic areas of need were identified: health, housing, income, employment and social participation. Copies of this study

were made available to Department representatives, agencies for the blind throughout the country, and to the financial sponsor of the study, The Seeing Eye, Inc., Morristown. A meeting was held with representatives of consumer organizations of the blind in New Jersey to discuss the findings of the survey and to invite recommendations. This proved to be very effective. A major area of expressed concern was the need for improvement of public and private transportation for older blind persons and for more leisure-time activities to overcome the isolation which blindness may impose. The study revealed that 34% of the blind population had a hearing problem requiring medical attention. As a result, diagnostic ear examinations will be provided on an as needed basis to clients of the department.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE

During the year 481 employment placements were made of which 147 were homemakers. This was an 18% increase over the previous year and is the highest of any year for this program. On an annual basis, the aggregate earnings projected for those placed in employment amounted to \$1,397,000. This exceeded by far the State's share of \$460,000 in the cost of the Vocational Rehabilitation program for the year. Earnings for 408 employment placements last year totaled \$1,043,000.

Some of the year's highlights include:

1. 2,963 clients were served by the department - an 11% increase over the year before. During the past four (4) years, the caseload increase has averaged 10% to 12% per year.
2. The special counseling unit dealing with multi-handicapped blind adults continued the difficult effort to develop new training opportunities throughout the State in special centers for other handicapped individuals that will

accept blind people with secondary problems. This is still a problem area. Approximately 288 individuals were served by this unit with 45 rehabilitated into employment.

- 3. The Model Cities program with a staff of four (4) indigenous Aides made good progress in visiting homes and community agencies in the Inner Cities of Newark, Paterson, Trenton, and Jersey City to find black and Spanish-speaking residents in need of service. 271 new cases were found and served.*
- 4. At the Rehabilitation Center operated by the Commission in Newark, 85 clients were served during the year for a total man days of 5,110. 40 of the 85 were in special programs requiring more intensive professional time because of multiple handicaps which in addition to blindness included: diabetes, hypertension, seizure disorders, neurological and psychiatric involvements, mental retardation, etc. Extensive psychotherapeutic counseling and special conferences with families were required to meet the emerging needs of these clients. The training and program emphasis at the Center is changing to meet the needs of these clients. Positive benefits have resulted from the services of a Spanish-speaking Aide. Future plans for the Center include: change in location; larger physical plant and new concepts in programming to meet changing client requirements; a new and more comprehensive prevocational center to add services for older blind people previously not eligible under Vocational Rehabilitation requirements. The diagnostic evaluation program would consist of medical and psychological examinations as well as vocational tryout, mobility training, socialization, and counseling around individual needs and interests.*

5. *A production sewing machine unit is in operation in Atlantic City with a complement of eight (8) clients as consignors for the Home Industries Department.*
6. *The department's High School Counseling Unit served 301 clients who were provided with occupational information, vocational counseling, medical diagnostic evaluations, and appropriate services as required.*
7. *The Mobility Training staff with all positions filled extended orientation and mobility training to some 300 clients. This is a "must" service to prepare blind people for the independence of competitive employment.*

Vending Stand Program.

At year end, there were 57 vending stands in operation. Average annual earnings for operators increased substantially and is now \$9,072 as against \$7,824 last year. Gross sales for the year amounted to \$1,927,743 with net income to operators of \$481,369.

Contract Workshop Program.

This program is for marginal blind workers not, as yet, ready or able to take competitive employment. Gross sales for the year at the three (3) Shops, despite uneven general economic conditions, increased to \$320,700. The number of blind people employed during the year totaled 73. Total wage payouts to blind people amounted to \$79,700. The Federal minimum wage or better is paid and the present average for all blind employees is just over \$1.85 per hour.

The evaluation and training program at the Newark Shop completed the final year of a three (3) year project under a Federal grant and made excellent progress. A total of 38 clients were served with 34 completing the program and four (4) continuing. Of the 38, 24 were given employment in competitive industry, at the Contract Shop or were

continued in further training programs.

Planning and Grants.

The Commission's planning specialist works closely with the Federal government and the State Rehabilitation Commission and local agencies on problems of State-wide planning for facilities and on programs designed to meet the needs of the Vocational Rehabilitation unit. As an official agent, the Commission must approve and supervise Federal grant requests to other rehabilitation facilities in the State that will work with blind people. During the year \$316,667 was authorized to other agencies and \$86,517 to special programs operated by the Commission for a total of \$403,184. All of these grants are matched by the Federal government on an 80-20 or 90-10 basis. These included:

- 1. The third (3rd) and final year continuation of a grant at the Newark Contract Shop for work evaluation.*
- 2. The third (3rd) and final year continuation of a grant for developing the Atlantic City District Office.*
- 3. The second (2nd) year of a grant to develop a Model Cities project using black and Spanish-speaking Aides as part of an outreach program to find people with vision problems in the Inner Cities.*
- 4. The first (1st) year of an expansion grant for providing rehabilitation services to Spanish-speaking clients at the Commission's Rehabilitation Center.*
- 5. The second (2nd) and final year of an Innovation Grant for the sheltered workshop program at Mount Carmel Guild designed to provide equipment needs for specialized training programs for the multi-handicapped blind.*

6. *The first (1st) year of a large training services grant to Mount Carmel Guild for specific vocational training for less able blind people in locksmithing, building maintenance and certain clerical operations.*

In addition to the above, special grants were secured from the Fund for the New Jersey Blind for the following programs:

1. *A special grant of \$2,000 for the continuation of the Orthoptic-Pleoptic Clinic at Helene Fuld Hospital.*
2. *A grant of \$7,500 to conduct a research project on diabetic retinopathy to detect early signs of retinal involvement at the Eye Institute of New Jersey.*

Home Industries.

In 1972, total sales through the Home Industries and craft program amounted to \$141,453 - a \$26,203 increase over 1971. About 160 consignors benefited from this program and received earnings of \$45,000. This represents an 18.2% over-all increase compared to 1971. Shrinking sales outlets and the excessive number and variety of articles made in the home, have been a considerable problem. The department embarked on a policy of broadening its marketing program through mass production of selected articles to be sold through commercial sales outlets. This last has been a difficult area to break into but sales to chains increased by 36% in 1972 to \$43,450 and we now expect rather rapid growth with larger numbers of homebound blind people able to participate and secure income benefits. A goal of \$200,000 in sales for 1973 has been set.

Supervisor of Volunteers.

The recruitment of a Supervisor of Volunteers was effected this year. Her principal role is to co-ordinate the activities of volunteers associated with the agency;

arrange for recruitment, training, evaluation, and awards programs. The entire volunteer program has been improved organizationally as have the services growing out of them.

Much of the effectiveness of the Commission's program is clearly due to the unique morale of this agency in which a highly-motivated staff and Board committed themselves without stint to the task of serving blind and visually handicapped people.

Respectfully submitted,

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joseph Kohn".

Joseph Kohn
Executive Director

JK:ac

August 25, 1972