

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
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ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1966 - JUNE 30, 1967

New Jersey State Library

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We respectfully submit herewith the Annual Report of the Commission's activities and accomplishments for the Fiscal Year 1967.

EYE HEALTH SERVICE

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

In the case service sphere, the total number served amounted to 877. Sight was restored or improved in 234 cases.

The Amblyopia program, now in its second year has grown substantially. This year 15 community detection programs including the first county-wide one (in Camden County) were conducted. Of the 7,721 preschool youngsters screened, 1,081 required follow-up for possible visual defects. During the year, the Sight Conservation Committee of the Medical Society of New Jersey officially transferred the Preschool Vision Screening Program to the Commission for the Blind. The Medical Society continues to support and cooperate in the program. Various news media have given coverage to individual screening programs, as has the Public Information Division of the Department of Institutions and Agencies.

In the Glaucoma Control Program the 12th State-wide Detection Program was conducted in 74 hospitals. 7,402 individuals were examined at no cost with 404 Glaucoma suspects referred to the Commission for follow-up. Glaucoma control to

be effective requires continuous treatment and follow-up. At year's end there were 2,803 persons on the Glaucoma Registry. With the assistance of the Commission, the Department of Ophthalmology of the New Jersey College of Medicine, has secured a three year Public Health Service grant to study Glaucoma intensively. Arrangements have been made with the college to refer to the Commission for follow-up all blind or visually impaired individuals discovered by the study. A mobile examination unit has been given to this program by the Churchill Fund for the New Jersey Blind and is in operation.

The unit also maintains a Diabetic Registry of 893 cases in co-operation with the State Department of Health.

This year, the agency's Traveling Eye Unit provided 144 days of service to 39 public schools and 8 parochial schools, as well as to the Johnstone Research Center and the North Jersey Training School. A total of 4,206 school children were examined.

Some of the important events in the department's Public Information activities included displays on Cataract and Glaucoma at the Bergen County Health Fair as well as one on Amblyopia and Eye Health at the State Lions Club Convention in Atlantic City. During the year staff members presented 24 lectures, participated in two radio broadcasts, and supplied information at various educational conferences.

EDUCATION SERVICE

On June 30, 1967, there were 1,675 children registered with the Education Department. This represents a net increase of 118 clients over the previous year. The number of new referrals during the year was 286 children and 168 were closed.

This increase of 118 clients requiring service represents the largest in 14 years and is due principally to the Rubella (German Measles) epidemic which occurred in 1964 affecting all sections of the country. Since most of the current referrals are preschoolers more are expected as they approach school age. The tragic part of the Rubella condition is the frequency of poor hearing, cardiac involvement and neurological impairment which is found in addition to visual loss. Many of these children will have only partial visual impairment but the combinations of disablement which includes profound deafness and blindness can be overwhelming to the parent. Because of this, the agency will have to concentrate more staff on the specialized problems of these multi-handicapped children and decrease staff attention to the more customary itinerant teaching and counseling. Nearly 60% of the total education caseload have serious additional handicaps because of a host of health and congenital conditions.

The classification of these 1,675 children by school needs are as follows:

Preschool	-	156
Local School Placement (Elementary and Secondary)	-	867
Special Classes for Visually Handicapped (Public)	-	201
Residential Schools and Day Centers	-	152
College and University	-	67
Multi-Handicapped (Not in School - Age 7-21))	-	43
In Institutions for Mentally Retarded, etc.	-	180
Unclassified	-	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	-	<u>1,675</u>

Special Federal Grant and Summer Camp

The Commission took advantage of the availability of Federal Funds and developed a Title I project during the year. This permitted the employment of a full-time person to work with residential schools, our attending students and their parents - an area previously not covered adequately. It was also possible in the summer to employ professional staff with special training and experience to give individual evaluation, counseling and instruction to numbers of blind or near-blind children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This program included some of the pre-school rubella children and was dramatically successful.

In addition, there were 518 camper weeks available to children staying at Camp Marcella. The usual remedial instruction program was carried forward and four (4) Mobility Instructors were assigned to work with older campers.

Instructional Materials and Textbook Center

The number of shipments at the Materials and Textbook Center was about the same as last year - principally because of staff problems. We had no Librarian for a good part of the year and no unit Supervisor for half the time.

More than ever the Textbook Center has become the nervehead for meeting the everyday school needs of children supervised by the Commission. The volume of activity has increased as we are using some services for direct shipping of educational materials such as Recordings for the Blind in New York which like the State Library can fill individual requests. The Commission supplements all of this through the organized effort of nearly 600 volunteer transcribers and braillists. It is noticeable in comparing this year's experience with last year that the number of

braille volumes shipped are down; that large print materials have nearly doubled because of new sources such as Xerox and increased availability of high school texts. While sound records dropped, taped recordings of educational materials increased very substantially clearly reflecting a trend toward this medium.

HOME TEACHING AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Home Service program serves newly-blinded individuals and homebound adults through an array of services which includes personal adjustment, training in communication skills, handwork training for leisure-time or occupation, and assistance with personal, family and social problems, related to the individual's loss of sight. Working with the blind individual chiefly in his home setting, workers traveled 116,880 miles and made 5,132 client calls in providing these services.

Some of the department's highlights include:

1. Provision for a refresher training course in work with the deaf-blind for two selected Home Teachers. The department is co-operating with the Industrial Home for the Blind in a special case finding and services project to the deaf-blind.
2. Increased graduate training for Home Teachers in order to meet accreditation demands.
3. The department head is participating with a national professional group in compiling a new teaching manual; the development of an instrument for measuring staff performance; and in planning training institutes and graduate programs for Home Teachers.

4. A series of volunteer training programs have been provided. Fifteen (15) volunteers have been active in the northern part of the State. Rahway and Trenton Prisons provide braille transcribing services. The Telephone Pioneers Chapter provided volunteer tape recordings. The McCully Chapter of the Telephone Pioneers continues to repair Talking Book machines and plans to establish 6-12 regional repair centers in the State.
5. As a result of strong leadership from the Commissioner and the Commission Board and staff, this year saw the establishment of a separate New Jersey Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Federal legislation now makes provision for the Talking Book service to be available to individuals who cannot read because of a physical handicap other than blindness. The Commission has added this service in its program.
6. In the interest of efficiency the method of delivering Talking Books has been changed. Talking Book machines in need of repair will be mailed by borrowers directly to repair centers and returned in the same manner.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE

During the year 172 employment placements were made. On an annual basis, the earnings of these individuals amounted to \$488,000 - considerably more than the State's share of the cost of the program.

However, the most important element in the year's performance was expansion. Changes in Federal law made more individuals eligible for service and increased the percentage of Federal financial matching. Staff expansion and reassignment of experienced staff slowed production; however, much seed work has been done for the

years ahead.

Some of the highlights include:

1. Occupancy of a new well-appointed Rehabilitation Center in Newark with twice as much space as heretofore. His Excellency, Governor Richard J. Hughes, the State Board of Control and other dignitaries attended the impressive dedication.
2. Arrangements were completed for a new Newark Contract Workshop of 15,000 square feet scheduled for completion in the fall of 1967.
3. A new Camden District Office was opened and staffed to better serve the southern portion of the State.
4. 1,518 clients were served by the department - an increase of 28% over the previous year.
5. A special unit of two (2) Counselors was assigned in 1966 to develop training and placement outlets for multi-handicapped blind persons who now number 45% of the agency's caseload. Now a year old their results are outstanding. Centers throughout the State have agreed to open their facilities to the multi-handicapped. Problems remain to be solved: absorbing the total number requiring service; solving terminal placement needs and the transportation costs of employed low-producers.
6. With planning and financial support from the Commission, the Mount Carmel Guild opened a specialized evaluation and work center for mentally-retarded blind individuals with an initial capacity of 20 to 30.
7. The Board, the Director and staff have participated very actively on the

Governor's Advisory Committee and Task Forces for State-wide
Vocational Rehabilitation Planning.

The Contract Workshop program for marginal or noncompetitive blind workers continued to grow. Gross sales amounted to \$330,000 - a 46% increase over 1966. The total number of blind employees was 90 with total wages in excess of \$117,000. Averages do not tell the story because of turnover and some individuals on Social Security who worked only part of the year. Minimum Federal wage or better is paid at the Shops. Additional handicapped or sighted people are employed for jobs requiring vision and for the repair and replacement service required for one contract. The Shop program pays its own costs and overhead from income. A new Workshop for the Camden area is in the planning stage.

Vending Stand Program

The Vending Stand program added three (3) new stands and closed two (2) marginal ones. This left 50 units in operation. New legislation has been submitted for consideration to strengthen the program internally and has been recommended by the Department. In addition, a number of problems arising from operating units in State buildings where food service requirements may conflict are being resolved. Gross sales for the year amounted to \$1,200,000 with net income to operators of \$231,000.

Home Industries

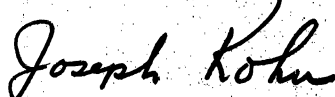
During the latter part of the year the Home Industries Department was incorporated into the Vocational Rehabilitation program. This service has been reorganized to direct its energies toward the training and employment of homebound older adults

who represent an untapped labor force if properly directed. A new commercial sales program is in development. Homebound individuals are being trained on industrial-type sewing machines to produce standardized children's wear articles for chain and department stores. This will be supplemented by the present program of producing craft articles for local sales.

In 1967 total craft sales amounted to just under \$140,000 with income to clients of \$55,300. This was a drop from the \$175,000 gross of a year ago due principally to the inability of the New Jersey Distributors, our chief sales' outlet, to recruit enough sales people because of limited applicants for such work at a time of high employment in the State.

Respectfully submitted,

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND



Joseph Kohn
Executive Director

August 1, 1967