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NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
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ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1969 - JUNE 30, 1970

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NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

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To: Members, Board of Managers
New Jersey State Commission for the Blind

We respectfully submit herewith the Annual Report of the Commission's activities and accomplishments for the Fiscal Year 1970.

EDUCATION SERVICE

During the year 266 children were newly-referred which, when added to those on register, made a total of 2,043 youngsters in service. In the same period, 196 children were closed so that as of June 30, 1970, there were 1,847 remaining on the register.

The Education caseload has shown a net increase in the number of children served during each year for the past ten (10) years. The increase in 1970 was 70 children and this, in general, has approximated the pattern in the past. This trend is principally due to general population increases in the State; additional numbers of multiply-handicapped children who are also blind; as well as the effect of certain public health hazards such as the German Measles (Rubella) epidemic of 1964-65. Percentagewise, more than 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 the "Rubella" children where in addition to the vision problem, hearing loss, neurological impairment and cardiac involve-

ment are likely to be present. The implications of this, for program, are more multi-discipline facilities for diagnostic evaluation and for the development of specialized programs for preschool youngsters as well as school-age youngsters to minimize the effects of disablement. To this end, the Commission continued its demonstration class for preschool deaf-blind children at Newark State College and plans have been formulated for developing a similar program at Glassboro State Teachers College. The Newark program has been extremely effective.

The classification of the 1,847 children continuing in service at year end by school needs is as follows:

Preschool	-	208
Local School Placement (Elementary and Secondary)	-	951
Special Classes in Public Schools	-	175
Residential Schools and Treatment Centers	-	159
College and University	-	100
Multi-Handicapped - Not in School (Age 7 and up)	-	22
In State Institutions (M.R. and M.I.)	-	209
Unclassified (Recent Referrals)	-	<u>23</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	-	<u>1,847</u>

Special Federal Grants and Summer Camp.

A Title I Federal grant for disadvantaged children was continued and made it possible to give supervision to children at out-of-State residential centers.

During the summer, 432 camper weeks were made available to children at Camp Marcella. This is a marked decrease over the previous year which reflects the need for additional staff to provide for multi-handicapped campers who require more supervision. A number of other programs for various age groups was conducted at the Rogoff Building which included a home economics training session for older girls. Several teenage groups spent week ends at the Camp with teaching personnel to improve skills of daily living and social maturity. Similar groups were organized in a number of different areas in the State by staff Instructors.

The department in co-operation with the Vocational Rehabilitation section of the agency sponsored a four (4) week evaluation and training program for 24 college-bound high school juniors and seniors at the Commission's Rehabilitation Center. Student interests, aptitudes and manipulative skills were tested and training in academic and practical areas was provided.

A six (6) week day camp program for deaf-blind children was conducted in co-operation with Newark State College at Camp Union.

The Hayes Unit at Johnstone Research and Training Center has been established under a Third Party Agreement to evaluate the rehabilitation potential of mentally retarded blind youths. The facility is designed to accommodate 40 individuals. The initial program was opened to 15 rehabilitation students and is dealing with the usual start-up problems of recruitment, staffing, and equipment.

George F. Meyer Textbooks and Material Center.

On April 15, 1970 the Textbooks Center was renamed in memory of

Mr. George F. Meyer at a ceremony in Newark attended by 125 individuals.

Mr. Meyer had been Director of the Commission for 27 years.

The number of shipments from the Textbooks Center continued to rise. There were 35,000 shipments of texts and educational materials. There was a marked decline in the number of braille volumes which was more than offset by a large increase in the use of tape materials.

Arrangements were made to utilize prison services in the duplication of tapes to alleviate the library overload and thereby provide additional time for record keeping, development of better material flow to transcribers, and more efficient service to clients.

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 733. The decline in new cases is due, in part, to staff shortages as well as change in policy regarding purchase of glasses. Cases are no longer accepted when the primary need is for lenses to correct lesser refractive errors. Sight was restored or improved for 208 individuals.

The Preschool Vision Detection Program for Amblyopia is beginning its fifth (5th) year of operation. This has been a program that had been developed initially through the financial support of the Fund for the New Jersey

Blind. During the year, 81 community-wide detection programs were conducted preceded by training sessions for volunteers in co-operation with Parent-Teacher Associations, Lions Clubs, Delta Gamma Sorority members, and similar groups. Staff have also supervised screenings in Head Start programs in Trenton and Englewood. Head Start programs assume financial responsibility for their own follow-up care. In all, 13,877 children (as against 10,313 last year) were screened using 1,648 volunteers trained by Commission staff. 901 children were referred for follow-up and complete eye examinations or treatment.

In the Glaucoma Control Program the 15th State-wide detection program was conducted in co-operation with the Medical Society of New Jersey at 83 hospitals. 11,114 adults (about the same as last year) were examined at these centers at no cost and 464 Glaucoma suspects were referred to the Commission for individual follow-up. Glaucoma requires continuous treatment and follow-up for control of vision. At year's end there were 3,440 on the Glaucoma Registry of the Commission.

Diabetes also requires continuous control and in some 12% of the Commission's caseload is a factor in vision loss. The department maintains a growing registry which at the end of the year totaled 1,141.

The Traveling Eye Unit provided 179 days of service and 4,570 examinations. Among "pocket of need" groups that were reached were 13 nursing homes, 11 senior citizen centers and low income housing projects for the elderly, six (6) programs for adults over 35 at local health departments,

two (2) community day care centers, the Essex County Children's Shelter, three (3) correctional institutions, two (2) mental health centers, the New Lisbon State School for the Mentally Retarded, a multiple sclerosis center, a center for treatment of narcotic addiction, and five (5) multi-service centers including rescue missions, Salvation Army and various neighborhood service centers in low income areas, and five (5) centers in southern and central New Jersey for migrant workers and their children.

To inform the public as to prevention needs, 21 lectures and two (2) radio broadcasts to schools, colleges and community groups were conducted. There were 70 showings of the Commission movie and a large variety of educational exhibits at Fairs, Conventions, etc.

HOME TEACHING AND SOCIAL SERVICES (HOME SERVICE)

The Home Service program serves newly-blinded adults and homebound individuals through an array of services which includes personal adjustment, training in communication skills, handwork training for leisure or occupation, and assistance with personal, family and social problems. Working with the blind person chiefly in his home setting, workers traveled 117,000 miles and made 4,775 client calls. The number served during the year was 3,166 individuals. This represents a 12% increase over the previous year, primarily due to a Geriatric Survey conducted during the year.

Some trends or major activities should be highlighted:

1. During the year 1,002 Talking Book machines were sent to clients with the total number in use exceeding 3,972. Of this number, 388 were

physically handicapped individuals unable to read and, therefore, now eligible under a change in Federal law. Mail delivery of machines continues to be the basic distribution method releasing valuable professional staff time.

2. The Geriatric Survey Project inaugurated during the summer of 1969 was designed to assess the unmet needs of the older blind persons in New Jersey. There were two (2) phases to this project - (1) the compilation of data from personal interviews; and (2) analysis and conclusion of results obtained. The initial contact was through a questionnaire sent to 3,639 aging blind clients over the age of 60 and personal interviews conducted on 736 individuals. Current plans include analysis of accumulated data and recommendations for program change.
3. Staff assistance was given to the Division on Aging in the recruitment and training of volunteers for a Telephone Assurance program in the Paterson area which is beneficial to blind individuals.
4. A department Committee assisted in the planning of a credit course in Community Service at Montclair State College. A student enrolled in this course was assigned to the Home Service Department for her volunteer project.
5. The department has been involved in many community programs including: SCOPE, Civil Rights Association, Senior Citizens Council, Community Action Program, Newark Community Union, the Union County Adult School Program, in-service to individual clients, etc.

6. A centralized supply system for purchasing or providing Aids and Appliances for the Blind has been developed in the department.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE

During the year 350 employment placements were made. This was a 20% increase over the previous year and is the highest of any year for this program. On an annual basis, the aggregate earnings of those placed in employment amounted to \$1,038,000. This exceeded by far the State's share in the cost of the Vocational Rehabilitation program for the year. Earnings for 290 employment placements last year totaled \$834,000.

There were excellent developments in the Vocational Rehabilitation service so that more people were served including more seriously disabled individuals now eligible as a result of amendments to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. Recognition of the agency's progress has come from various sources and more and more of the professional staff have been called upon to consult, advise or participate at the Federal, State and local level. Within the State, extensive consultation has been made available to the Division of Mental Retardation, the Mt. Carmel Guild, the Division of Aging and others on the vocational training needs of specialized groups.

Some of the year's highlights include:

1. The department's High School Counseling Unit served 220 clients who were provided with occupational information, vocational counseling, medical diagnostic evaluations, physical restoration and appropriate services, as required. The Unit developed a "work-

study" program to be implemented in September of 1970 which will be expanded as resource facilities materialize. One or more "career days" are scheduled for the coming year.

2. 2,432 clients were served by the department - a 12% increase over the year before. During the past two (2) years, the caseload increase was 27%.
3. The special counseling unit dealing with Multi-Handicapped blind continues to develop additional training opportunities around the State in special centers for other handicaps that will also accept blind people with secondary problems. Approximately 200 individuals were served by this unit with 35 rehabilitated.
4. The Rehabilitation Training Center, operated by the Commission, had ⁵⁴⁶⁰54 student days of training which is about the average of past years. Ninety-seven (97) different clients were served. About half of the Center's total caseload served had secondary disabilities. A new arts and crafts program was added to the curriculum in an effort to provide for more varied needs. Preliminary plans are being formulated to expand the Center's curriculum to include specialized vocational training for a select number of clients.
5. Plans are being finalized for the development of a District Office in the Atlantic City area which is being sponsored initially through a three (3) year Federal grant.
6. A series of In-Service Training programs were conducted to increase the skills and competence of departmental personnel.

7. Under a Federal grant the department is in the process of employing indigenous Aides who will work in the inner city areas finding and serving individuals with vision problems. The New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry will operate its Mobile Unit in the inner city area providing free eye examinations to individuals. This will be co-ordinated with the Model Cities Aide program.

Vending Stand Program.

At year end, there were 56 vending stands in operation. Three (3) were new; a number of marginal stands have been closed; and a number upgraded. Average annual earnings for operators is now \$6,504 as against \$5,592 last year. Gross sales for the year amounted to \$1,722,811 with net income to operators of \$363,713. Chief problems are delays in construction; lack of additional interested blind operators because of other opportunities, and the need for improved program legislation.

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 decreased 15% to \$316,000 due to economic conditions. The number of blind people employed during the year totaled 80, with \$74,015 paid out in wages - a small drop-off. The Federal minimum wage of \$1.60 per hour or better is paid at the Shops. Some sighted individuals and a number with handicaps other than blindness are employed for those portions of work requiring vision.

An evaluation and training program instituted at the Newark Shop in Fiscal 1969 is progressing satisfactorily. Of 25 clients evaluated, 11 have

been placed in the Newark Shop program with the others referred for further training towards employment goals in other areas.

The Commission's Supervisor of Planning and Grants and representatives of the New Jersey State Rehabilitation Commission maintain a close liason on State-wide planning for facilities. Facility program development has been hampered by Federal Rehabilitation grant fund deficiencies and greater emphasis on Model Cities areas. However, the agency was able to secure approval for several projects under its supervision including:

1. The continuation of an Expansion Grant for the Camden Contract Shop for a third (3rd) and final year.
2. An Innovation Grant for the development of an evaluation program in the Commission's Contract Workshops.
3. An Innovation Grant for the development of a District Office and expanded rehabilitation services in the southern portion of the State.
4. An Expansion Grant to the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry to provide a vision screening program in the Model Cities area.
5. An Expansion Grant to improve and expand rehabilitation services to Model Cities residents through a subprofessional Aide program.
6. A Third Party Grant to the Johnstone Research and Training Center to develop a residential rehabilitation program for educable blind youngsters.

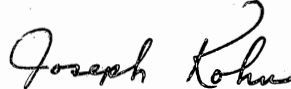
Home Industries.

In 1970, total sales through the Home Industries craft program amounted to \$110,000. This gave employment to 128 consignors on average with earnings of \$52,000. The department has been faced over the past several years by shrinking sales due to fewer sales people being available to our distributors because of economic conditions and a lessening public interest in craft articles. Efforts to broaden the marketing program for this unit are beginning to improve sales. Various additional areas are being tested including possible sales to retail chains; sales by volunteer community groups; sales by additional distributor groups as well as sales to wholesale markets. The basic goal is to broaden the scope of the sales program and train larger numbers of homebound individuals who would otherwise lack any opportunity for developing work skills and income. The wholesale program instituted in Fiscal 1969 continues with 4,288 dozen of a standard clothing item produced. This contributed slightly more than \$20,000 to gross sales.

Much of the effectiveness of the Commission's programs is clearly due to a devoted staff and Board who committed themselves without stint to the task of serving blind people.

Respectfully submitted,

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND



Joseph Kohn
Executive Director

JK:ac

August 31, 1970