

# OPPORTUNITY

*A Publication of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity*



**A PLAN OF ACTION**—James Farmer (center), once national director of CORE, hosts a press conference to outline a new proposal for the Governor's Task Force on Adult Literacy Opportunities. John C. Bullitt, NJOEO director (far right) and Dr. Ernest McMahon, Task Force chairman (at Farmer's right), also participated.

## **Task Force Backs Literacy Program**

**The Poor shall help the poor.**

This is one of several fundamental tenets meshed into a sweeping new program to combat adult illiteracy in New Jersey, a proposal recently approved by the Governor's Task Force on Adult Literacy Opportunities.

The overall proposal, a three-year, \$14 million project, will be presented to the Governor for his consideration early in October.

The Task Force, with current membership of 33 representing broad community interests, was named by Governor Hughes last October to examine the dimensions of adult illiteracy and develop an action program for dealing with the problems. Dr. Ernest E. McMahon, dean of the Extension Division of Rutgers University, is chairman.

Examination of the 1960 Census indicated to the Task Force the magnitude of adult illiteracy throughout New Jersey. Of the population group 18 years of age and older, for instance, more than 761,000 persons (more than 19 per cent), had less than an eighth grade education. Another 515,000 had less than a seventh grade education and 257,000 had less than five years of schooling. Some 92,000 others had no formal schooling at all.

In addition to sheer numbers of illiterates, the Task Force agreed that years of schooling weren't necessarily matched by actual performance, especially among members of poverty populations.

This was illustrated dramatically in one recent study involving Neighborhood Youth Corps enrollees in Trenton. Even though the youth averaged more than 10 years of schooling, their average reading level was at the third-grade.

With the dimensions of illiteracy known, fresh approaches were sought and ultimately formulated. Drafted by James Farmer, former

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## **Community Action Agency Offering Health Services, Family Planning**

One community action agency in New Jersey today is offering information and materials for family planning.

In two of its three Neighborhood Centers, Atlantic Human Resources Inc. has been offering birth control services for the past four months to everyone who voluntarily asks for them. Although it has done so rather quietly to date, AHR plans in the next month or so to make the availability of the service more widely known.

The planned parenthood project is but one of several components in the agency's Health Services Program, established last year in all of its Neighborhood Centers.

According to Sidney Schweber, director of community services, AHR presents a package of health services to the disadvantaged of the community — casefinding, referral, follow-up and health education.

"Our attempt is to reach the medically indigent person," Schweber

said. "There is a substantial number of families who simply could not survive an extraordinary medical expense. With early detection and prompt treatment, we expect to help many persons avoid serious medical difficulties," he said.

To accomplish this end, each Neighborhood Center is equipped, first of all, to perform medical screening. When a family or an individual seeks help, information is gathered about the entire family — income, size, expenses and the like — before the actual medical services commence, Schweber indicated.

That done, a physician determines an individual's medical needs, after which referral for treatment usually is made to the Atlantic City Hospital or to Shore Memorial Hospital. AHR retains two practicing physicians, each spending about 18 hours a week in the morning, afternoon and evening sessions at the centers.

"Notice the absence of the work

*CONTINUED on page 6*

## **Newark News Hits Poverty Reductions**

"The war on poverty has probably raised more expectations than any amount of money could fulfill. But to cut back now in cities which have demonstrated their ability to use federal funds effectively would tell the poor, in effect, that Congress did not mean what it seemed to say in 1964. It would tell them that what seemed the last hope of the cities was a false vision. It would tell them that efforts at self-improvement were futile.

"Cutbacks would affect not only those actually taking part in the programs in Newark—the more than 2,000 children in preschool classes this year, the 200 welfare recipients getting job training, the scores getting free legal aid, the hundreds who have been hired for the programs and the untold numbers who have found a constructive outlet for ideas and energies. It would also affect the far larger numbers who are not taking part—those who stay on the street corners and stoops. For them, retrenchment would confirm their suspicion that the affluent society is indifferent to their plight.

"While they (Newark's community action leaders) exert every effort to make the federal government aware of the urgent need, they must realize there will always be some limit—reasonable or not—on how much is available. They must seek new ways to get the most out of every dollar. There are only so many pieces in the pie, and the poverty agencies must try to make sure they provide the maximum nourishment.

"But while there are limits on anti-poverty funds, it is doubtful if they have been reached yet. Curbing federal spending is necessary if inflationary pressures are to be reduced, but this comes down to a matter of priorities. It would be unjust and dangerous to let the ax fall solely on the urban poor, when ample antipoverty funds could be obtained by slashing the billions now being poured into the wasteful and needless farm price support program."

*(The comments above are quoted from the Newark News.)*

## **BULLITT'S LETTER PRAISES EDITORIAL**

To the Editor:

A News editorial is a well deserved credit to the mayor and city administration of Newark and to the United Community Corporation. Despite inevitable controversies surrounding a basic new approach to attacking poverty, much has already been accomplished in Newark's war against poverty. Instead of using these controversies as an excuse to gut the program, Congress should look at the positive results The News points to and strengthen it.

The editorial clearly focuses on the most novel—and critically important—aspect of the war against poverty when it speaks of "Newark's successful efforts to bring the poor into planning for community and individual betterment."

The City of Newark is a model for the rest of the nation in demonstrating that controversy can be channeled constructively into meeting rooms and area boards rather than violently onto the streets. Newark is bringing into the mainstream of democracy in a peaceful manner thousands of people who have not previously been touched by government or community processes.

This is an accomplishment of great significance to the vitality of our society, and Congress would do well to consider its deeper meaning.

John C. Bullitt, Director  
Office of Economic Opportunity

## **NJ Community Action Training Institute Completes Session for Spanish-Speaking**

A special two-week training program for Spanish-speaking officials of Community Action Programs throughout the State was conducted earlier this month by the New Jersey Community Action Training Institute.

According to Barry A. Passett, CATI director, the statewide program was the first of its type in the nation and "one of the most rewarding that we have run." CATI is New Jersey's antipoverty training arm.

Conducted on the Madison campus of Fairleigh Dickinson University, the project provided English language instruction, skills training, and community organizing techniques for about 25 community developers operating in Spanish-speaking areas of the State. It was designed to spark a much stronger involvement of the Spanish-speaking in the war on poverty.

"Every modern device in the training business was used," Passett

explained, "tapes with visual cues, video-taped role playing, several varieties of group dynamics consultants, a field trip to Newark to test out community survey and organization techniques and many more."

The program drew the praise of Gov. Richard J. Hughes, who called it "another thrust to our overall effort to aid our Spanish-speaking residents." The Governor cited other antipoverty programs specifically for Spanish-speaking residents of Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, Elizabeth and for migrant workers in South Jersey.

Attending the project were community developers and agency board members from CAPs in Middlesex, Monmouth, Gloucester, Cumberland and Salem Counties; and Paterson, Elizabeth, Newark and Jersey City. A second session, for Spanish-speaking leaders from other parts of the State, is scheduled for later this year.



## Rural Manpower Youth Are Rebuilding Old Hackettstown Community Center

The old and rickety Hackettstown Community Center, condemned and closed in April, has received a new lease on life.

The building, once the Rae Mansion, is being extensively renovated and expanded through the efforts of municipal officials and enrollees of the Rural Manpower Development Program (RMDP) of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity.

RMDP offers basic education, vocational education, on-the-job training, health services and job placement to disadvantaged rural people with serious employment problems.

According to Mayor Robert Kitchen, the 18-month project would have been limited to building rehabilitation if the RMDP labor force had not been available. "There's no doubt about it, without RMDP help, the project would have been limited to a renovation of the building," he said. "When RMDP leaders came to us and explained their program, we decided to take advantage of the opportunity."

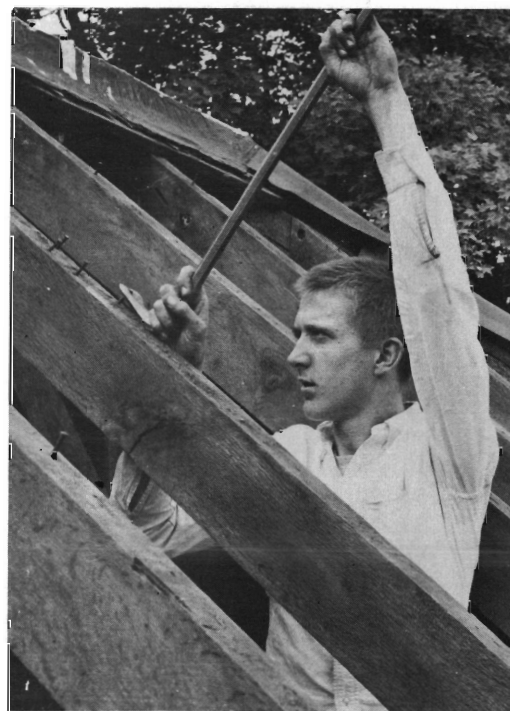
In addition to the Mayor, the town's governing body, local merchants and the Northwest New Jersey Community Action Program, Inc. are cooperating in the project. NNJCAP is the official antipoverty agency for Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren Counties.

Mayor Kitchen said the additional manpower provided by RMDP will probably save the town several thousand dollars and permit construction of a large two-floor rear addition, offering a host of social, civic and recreational facilities to residents.

"We are fully aware that perhaps there are some things the RMDP enrollees are not yet equipped to do, but we have worked out an arrangement to complete, by general contract, the work they can't do," the mayor explained. "We're pretty well satisfied about the monetary savings, and certainly realize that we could not have proceeded this far without RMDP help."

Since August, a crew of 20 RMDP enrollees from the Morris-Warren County area have been at work removing the roof and third floor from the three-story community center building at 293 Main Street, in the heart of the town's business district. When that is completed, the men will assist a local contractor in erecting the new rear addition, expected to begin in Spring.

Included in the RMDP work force are some 15 youths ranging in age from 16 to 21 and a number of adults employed under provisions of the Nelson Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.



ROOM AT THE TOP—Youth in NJOEO's many at once-condemned Hackettstown Community Center building is slated for total rehabilitation and part high praise for the program.

This amendment provides work training experience for unemployed or underemployed adults aged 21 through 65.

Under the direction of RMDP field supervisors and a local contractor, these enrollees—as part of the Neighborhood Youth Corps phase of the program—are being exposed to new skills in carpentry, masonry, electricity, plumbing, heating installation and sheet metal work. The NYC component is designed as a work-experience, rather than trade training, program. At the conclusion of the project, a RMDP job development staff will help them find suitable job training programs or jobs.

"I left school in April because I just wasn't doing too good," said enrollee John Blaine, a 16-year-old from Dover. "Here, I'm learning about carpentry and masonry work and how to come to work on time. When I get out, I want to get a good job or maybe even go back to school."

Somebody asked John why. "Because when you quit school, you can't really make it," he replied. "I see that now."

Another youth, 18-year-old Raymond Pastucci of Hackettstown,



RURAL RENEWAL Community Center in Hackettstown being refurbished by enrollees in State's Rural Manpower Development Program. Men acquire job skills at the same time.





Program prepare beams  
for a new roof. The old  
extension. Mayor expressed

was directed to RMDP after failing to find adequate employment. "I was working on a farm picking crops and transporting them to New York, but there just wasn't enough pay. They didn't hardly pay us at all."

Raymond said he was forced to leave high school in his junior year "because we really needed the money." Now, he thinks in terms of acquiring a good job for improved wages, largely through his new-found skills.

To one of the men—Modesto Sostre of Morristown—the RMDP project has provided security for his family. A 52-year-old Puerto Rican immigrant, Modesto was frustrated in attempts to find suitable employment. As a recent arrival, he was not fully aware of job sources and was handicapped further by the language barrier. Eventually, Modesto hopes to apply newly-acquired skills in a good-paying job.

According to Gerry P. Falcey, RMDP chief, the project demonstrates the benefits of cooperation between a municipality and the antipoverty program.

## College Work Study Program Enables Low-Income Students to Finish School

Many students from low-income families this year will be able to complete or continue their education in New Jersey colleges and universities because of their participation in the College Work Study Program.

First established under provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the program provides funds for students of poor families to work, on or off campus, while continuing their studies. The purpose, as stated in the Act, "... is to stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students in institutions of higher education who are from low-income families and are in need of earnings to pursue courses of study at such institutions ..."

During the last school year, 18 public and private colleges and universities in New Jersey participated in the Work-Study Program. Almost 2,000 students benefited from the \$860,000 in grants USOEO made to New Jersey institutions of higher education.

Among these students was Edward B., who received his A.B. degree last June in mathematics from St. Peter's College in Jersey City. He never would have made it without the Work-Study plan. In his junior year, because of grave financial problems at home, Edward took a job as night clerk in a downtown hotel in Jersey City.

The strain of working all night and studying during the day sapped Edward's strength and he became very sick. The doctor at St. Peter's, feeling the student's health would deteriorate completely if he continued to lead a dual life, recommended he apply to the antipoverty program.

In the summer of 1965, Edward was placed in an on-campus job as computer programmer. He received \$2.00 an hour and worked full-time during the summer. During his senior year, he continued in the position, working for the same pay for approximately 10 hours a week (the EOA limits the hours per week a student can work to 15). When he was graduated in June, Edward was on the Dean's list.

Faith R., a student at Trenton State College, was able to finish her sophomore year because of her job as an assistant case worker at the New Jersey Department of Health. The job was procured for her by the young woman who administers the Trenton State Work-Study program. Faith, one of 80 students enrolled in the plan, worked 15 hours a week and earned \$1.75 an hour. She not only helped to pay her college expenses but also gained valuable experience for the teaching career she is planning.

Besides offering financial aid to economically disadvantaged students, the federal program attempts to enlist the enrollees in community service work. The law states that the institution, in order to qualify for funds, must involve the students in jobs on campus "for the institution itself," or off campus, "for a public or private non-profit organization."

Mrs. Francis Merz, director of the Work-Study Program at St. Peter's College, is very pleased with the community service aspect of the program. "It means that the gas station attendant and the supermarket clerk jobs, which were irrelevant to most students' educational goals, no longer need to be considered," she said. Merz feels that students want to become involved in community service work and welcome the part-time positions the Work-Study plan provides.

One director of a Work-Study program in New Jersey believes there is another interesting sidelight to the community service requirement. "Once students become involved in these agencies," he says, "they begin to consider this work in the light of a full-time professional career."

This year the Work-Study program at Trenton State provided 35 students with off campus jobs in community service agencies. In all, 13 welfare institutions in the Trenton-Lawrenceville area, including National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Parks and Recreation Department of Trenton, Mercer County Library and Lawrence Township Health Department, have cooper-

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## ***Dropout, Jobless Girl Sees Youth Corps As A Ladder to Full-Time Employment***

"Once I was a dropout that nobody cared about. Then, all of a sudden, somebody was giving me a job."

The speaker was Miss Bernice Del Rosso, a petite, dark-haired 19-year-old, formerly of Newark's Iron-bound section. She was describing her successful flight from joblessness to employment — a flight that took just a year and one month.

Once a shy, lonely freshman who left high school to roam the streets in search of work, the former Miss Del Rosso is now Mrs. Dominick Colombo, full-time clerk typist in the city's personnel department.

She got there as the first enrollee of Newark's Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC), an antipoverty program providing work experience and training, counseling, and remedial education to unemployed youth —aged 16 to 21—from low income families.

The NYC, administered by the Labor Department under Title I of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, is geared to offer full- or part-time jobs at \$1.25 an hour to delinquents, dropouts or problem students in an effort to induce them to stay in school, return to school or increase their employability. The Newark NYC, launched in January 1965, was the first of its kind in the nation.

Bernice was an out-of-school enrollee. At 14, she left East Side High School, an inhibited young lady with high hopes of finding a good job.

"I was shy. I didn't talk to people. I felt I just didn't belong. In grammar school, everybody was so close. Then, all of a sudden, I was in a big school all alone. After awhile, I started playing hookey. This is how I flunked my first year." (Under the law, five days of unexcused absenteeism results in automatic failure for the year.)

Soon after, Bernice became discouraged when the only jobs available turned out to be boring, low-paying and short-term. "When I first left school, I thought everybody

would hire me. But first, the employer would say 'You're a dropout, we don't want you.' Then, he would say, 'You're not old enough anyway.' It became so depressing I just stayed at home for a long time. Finally, I decided to return to school."

But Mrs. Colombo's second go-round in the high school she had once bitterly quit proved equally unsuccessful.

In time, she found her way into a neighborhood NYC office and was soon training in the personnel department at City Hall.

By June of 1965, just six months after she had enrolled in the program, Bernice was standing alongside President Johnson at special NYC ceremonies at the White House. It was one of the proudest moments in her life.

Since March, Bernice has been in charge of filing dossiers of NYC enrollees in the personnel department. In time, she expects to take a civil service qualifying examination to become a permanent clerk-typist. A June bride, Mrs. Colombo and her husband make their home in Newark.

### **PLANNING from page 1**

treatment," Schweber said. "Persons in need of treatment are directed to the clinics of the participating hospitals. We have worked out arrangements with them where AHR will pay for further diagnostic services, if necessary, but not for treatment itself."

Followup services are performed by nurses, who find out what the hospitals have determined, how the patient was treated, if he is getting what is needed, if the patient understands the prescribed treatment, and what other family problems there may be that need attention.

Complementary to all the others is a program of health education, also conducted by nurses, who work in Center classes with youth and families.

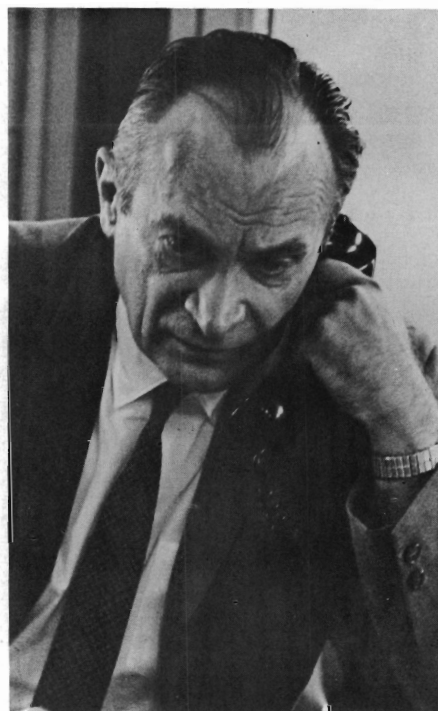
### **STUDY from page 4**

ated with Trenton State. "The program isn't a one way street," says Mrs. Joan Austin, its director at the state college. "These agencies need help and do not have adequate funds to pay for it."

This year, Mrs. Austin plans to cut on-campus positions from 45 to 20 putting even more students into community service work. "If we only could solve our transportation problems and provide cars for all of our students, we would put them all into cooperating community agencies," she says.

The colleges and universities involved in College Work-study operate autonomously and are bound together only by the guidelines laid down by the EOA. The amount paid each student varies from campus to campus depending on the number of students from low-income families who must be served, the cost of education per campus, the number of jobs available, the policies of the institutions scholarship and loan program of the schools.

Many students in College Work-Study are also receiving loans through another federal program, the National Defense Education Act.



SIDNEY SCHWEBER



## ILLITERACY from page 1

national director of the Congress of Racial Equality, the new plan has seven basic objectives:

► Provide basic literacy instruction for 115,000 more adults over the three year period than would be reached through existing programs—now an estimated 15,000 a year.

► Raise the functional reading capability of participants to the eighth-grade level.

► Organize all groups in each community so they become fully involved in an expanded literacy training effort.

► Link the literacy and employment programs together to provide upward economic mobility for the disadvantaged.

► Develop and employ more effective instructional and testing materials and techniques for educationally disadvantaged adults, particularly minority groups.

► Effectively evaluate the impact of the three year project.

► Formulate a long range plan to eliminate adult illiteracy in New Jersey.

Following developmental work and community organization, literacy instructors will be trained. In the words of the proposal:

"Literacy instructor trainees will be selected from the target populations the project will serve and will be referred for consideration as instructor trainees by the various community groups involved. The instructor trainers, to the extent practicable, will also be drawn from this population group."

The departure in allowing non-

professional literacy instructors from disadvantaged populations makes several important points.

One is that, based on the results of experimental programs, certificated teachers show no better performance when teaching under the same conditions with the same student population when using the same instructional materials.

Another is that learning to read and write may have broader meaning to the disadvantaged adult if he is taught by someone with whom he can identify. An instructor with similar background can, by his very presence, provide a visual alternative to the situation of the adult illiterate. The conviction is that this instructor is much more likely to communicate this point than the middle-class professional teacher and therefore more likely to hold his students during the critical first two or three weeks of the program, when the dropout rate is highest.

Furthermore, the instructor is seen as an interpreter to the adult illiterate, bridging the gap between the language and the concepts of the poor and the ghetto and the middle class.

Also fundamental to the proposal is the development and use of programmed instruction technique, which incorporates more effectively than other methods the findings of research in the learning process.

The technique, moreover, permits individual learners to progress at their own optimum rate of speed, it organizes material into logical and distinct learning units easy to learn and to teach, it requires no specialized facility or equipment and it is

portable and comparatively cheap.

Community organization is another keystone. According to the proposal, the entire spectrum of community group—religious, labor, civil rights, fraternal, educational, community action, employment program sponsors—are to be involved in the expanded literacy training effort.

This "maximum involvement" of the total community is regarded as essential to reaching those disadvantaged who have not been served effectively through the more traditional approaches.

The new proposal also stresses linking the basic literacy training program with employment programs to provide maximum upward economic mobility for the disadvantaged. This would be achieved by gearing the Task Force project with the Opportunity Centers program, a separate proposal now being considered by the State Manpower Development Coordinating Committee.

Those who drafted the proposal firmly believe that recruitment and retention in adult literacy training programs is substantially more effective when they are closely bonded to employment programs.

These, then, are the central components of the Task Force plan which recognizes that New Jersey today is confronted with an adult illiteracy problem of massive proportions and aims a major offensive against that problem during the next three years.

Saul Rossien, an NJEO staff member, served as Secretary to the Task Force and assisted in the formulation of the Plan.

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## NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

RICHARD J. HUGHES, Governor

JOHN C. BULLITT, Director

P. O. BOX 2748 TRENTON, N. J. 08625

(609) 292-6064

