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ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1970 - JUNE 30, 1971

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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To: Members, Board of Managers
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 1971.

EDUCATION SERVICE

During the year 232 children were newly-referred, which, when added to those on register, made a total of 2,057 youngsters in service - a slight increase over 1970. In the same period 282 children were closed so that as of June 30, 1971, there were 1,775 continuing on the register and at school.

The Education caseload has shown a net increase in the number of children served during each year for the past 10 years. The increase in 1971 was only 14 children because of the larger number of closures this year as many of the retrolental children of the 1950's came of age and graduated. New referrals continued the trend of the past few years and included large numbers of multi-handicapped blind children. 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. During the year an in-house study identified 80 children on register suffering from brain tumors so that it is clear the secondary conditions are frequently severe.

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 class for preschool deaf-blind children at Newark State College and operated a second class for the first time at Glassboro State College. Both have been extremely effective. More professional staff have been reassigned to the needs of the multi-handicapped and their efforts have made it possible for some 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 residential school training at a relative plateau.

The classification of the 1,775 children continuing in service at year end by school needs is as follows:

Preschool	-	155
Local School Placement (Elementary and Secondary)	-	845
Special (Separate) Classes in Public Schools	-	143
Residential Schools and Training Centers	-	171
Special Programs for Multi-Handicapped	-	60
College and University	-	128

In State Institutions or Not Educable	-	271
Unclassified	-	<u>2</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	-	<u>1,775</u>

Special Federal Grants and Summer Camp.

A Title I Federal grant for disadvantaged children made it possible to give supervision to children at out-of-State residential centers. The Glassboro State College class was supported through a Title VIA grant.

During the summer, 445 camper weeks were scheduled. 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 new activity this season was indoor bowling made available by State Lions Club groups and the Camp for Blind Children, Inc. Next year we hope to add horseback riding since more acreage has been added to the Camp. In addition to the program at Camp Marcella, a six (6) week summer program for 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 four (4) week evaluation and training programs - one for college bound students and another for noncollege vocational students. Thirty (30) 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-five (25) 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 two (2) years the unit has now grown to its full capacity of 40 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 dropped off slightly to 44,177 units. Braille and tape utilization increased but large print materials declined. Part of the decline is due to increased economies in material handling developed by staff and greater utilization of "carry outs" by instructional staff.

A new braille bindery was opened at the Millburn Red Cross to complement the South Orange bindery. Tape duplication is being done successfully for the Commission at Rahway Prison using specialized equipment. Inmate performance is excellent and this unit is now meeting 60% of our requirements. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Albert C. Wagner, Director, Division of Correction and Parole, and his staff for their co-operative effort.

Some 600 volunteers are used by the Textbooks Center and these were honored at a special luncheon with certificate awards.

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 637. Sight was restored or improved for 174 individuals. This represents a 12% decrease over 1970 because of increased use of Medicare and Medicaid.

The Preschool Vision Detection Program for Amblyopia is beginning its sixth (6th) year of operation and is much in demand. During the year, 129 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, Telephone Pioneers, Junior Leaguers and similar groups. This was an increase of 48 programs or 50% more than in 1970. In all, 17,133 children were screened (as against 13,873 last year) using 2,233 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, 1,035 were referred for complete eye examinations or treatment.

In the Glaucoma Control Program the 16th State-wide detection program was conducted in co-operation with the Medical Society of New Jersey at 85 hospitals. 11,000 adults (about the same as last year) were examined at these centers at no cost and 456 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 3,700 on the Glaucoma Registry of the Commission.

The Traveling Eye Unit provided 231 days of service (up from 179 last year) and 6,490 eye examinations. This was a 42% increase over 1970. The Unit screens groups considered most vulnerable. Among these "pocket of need" groups that were reached were: 11 multi-service agencies serving poverty groups; 14 migrant locations, three (3) multi-handicapped centers, three (3) nursing homes, three (3) correctional institutions, three (3) drug rehabilitation centers, six (6) health departments, and five (5) senior citizens centers.

A special screening program was held at the Columbus Homes of the Newark Housing Authority in co-operation with the Commission's special Model Cities project sponsored by the Vocational Rehabilitation service. The 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. It was subsequently written up in one of the professional publications. 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.

HOME TEACHING AND HOME SERVICE

The Home Service program serves newly-blinded adults and elderly home-bound 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 122,000 miles and made 5,100 client visits. A total of 2,300 clients were served, about the same as last year.

Some trends or major activities should be highlighted:

1. During the year 1,061 Talking Book machines were provided new readers or as replacements. The total number now in use State-wide is 4,641. Of this number, 540 are used by physically handicapped individuals unable to read print and 647 were placed in various institutions. In addition, 214 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. These Aides provided 251 lessons to 15 clients.
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.
4. A volunteer program using Sociology students was begun in co-operation with Jersey City State College. Twelve (12) students were assigned to clients under supervision and they extended 235 hours of service assistance with personal needs. Clients were well pleased with the arrangement.
5. Home Teachers and supervisory staff spent considerable time assisting

clients on Blind Assistance with problems arising out of the new flat grant State Public Welfare system.

6. Considerable planning time has been extended to details and methods for integrating this department into the Vocational Rehabilitation program. There is considerable public demand for more extensive service to the elderly blind. Federal legislation which would provide financial support for this has been introduced in the Congress.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE

During the year 408 employment placements were made of which 139 were homemakers. This was a 17% increase over the previous year and is the highest of any year for this program. Moreover, it occurred in a year when the general economy was poor. On an annual basis, the aggregate earnings of those placed in employment amounted to \$1,043,000. This exceeded by far the State's share of about \$450,000 in the cost of the Vocational Rehabilitation program for the year. Earnings for 350 employment placements last year totaled \$1,038,000.

There were excellent developments in the Vocational Rehabilitation service so that more people were served including more seriously disabled individuals. Recognition of the agency's progress has come from various sources and numbers of the professional staff have been called upon to consult, advise or participate at key levels involving national organizations as well as Federal, State and local jurisdictions. Within the State, extensive consultation has been made available to the Mount Carmel Guild in Newark, Model Cities programs, the Division of Mental Retardation, State

Workshop planning, and others on the vocational training needs of special populations.

Some of the year's highlights include:

1. 2,677 clients were served by the department - a 10% increase over the year before. During the past three (3) years the caseload increase was 37%.
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 200 individuals were served by this unit with 35 rehabilitated.
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. 117 new cases were found of whom 85 had never been known or registered with the Commission.
4. The Rehabilitation Center operated by the Commission in Newark has suffered from considerable difficulties during the year because of community problems involving property destruction and thefts. However, 90 clients were served during the year for a total man days of 5,070. 47 of the 90 were in special programs requiring more intensive professional time because of multiple handicaps which

included: seizure disorders, epilepsy, brain injuries or impairments, 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.

5. The Atlantic City District Office was fully operational and has rapidly become a part of the South Jersey community. 140 clients were served in this first year (9 months) of which 85 were new to the agency.
6. The department's High School Counseling Unit served 230 clients who were provided with occupational information, vocational counseling, medical diagnostic evaluations, and appropriate services as required.
7. A course in eye diseases with college credit was given to all new professional staff under the direction of Dr. Humbert M. Gambacorta, Ophthalmological Consultant.
8. The Mobility Training staff with all positions filled extended orientation and mobility training to 280 clients and still had a waiting list of 40 individuals. This is a "must" service to prepare blind people for the independence of competitive employment.

Vending Stand Program.

At year end there were 54 vending stands in operation. A number of marginal stands have been closed; and still others have been upgraded through

renovation and the provision of new equipment. Average annual earnings for operators increased substantially and is now \$7,824 as against \$6,504 last year. Gross sales for the year amounted to \$1,751,105 with net income to operators of \$418,319. Chief problems are delays because of the heavy burden of construction and purchase in the State. This delays considerably the time interval between planning and completing a stand which seriously affects at times deadline requirements of building management.

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 poor general economic conditions, decreased only 2% to \$309,000. The number of blind people employed during the year totaled 91. Total wage payouts to blind people amounted to \$73,900, about the same as in 1970. The Federal minimum wage or better is paid and the present average for all blind employees is just over \$1.80 per hour.

The evaluation and training program at the Newark Shop completed a second year of a three (3) year project under a Federal grant and made excellent progress. A total of 33 clients were served with 28 completing the program and five (5) continuing. Of the 28, 10 were given employment in the Newark Shop or in industry; nine (9) were referred for further training; and nine (9) were referred for sheltered employment.

Planning and Grants.

The Commission's planning specialist works closely with the Federal government and the State Rehabilitation Commission 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 \$188,000 was authorized to other agencies and \$163,000 to special programs operated by the Commission for a total of \$351,000. All of these grants are matched by the Federal government on an 80-20 or 90-10 basis. These included:

1. The second (2nd) year continuation of a grant at the Newark Contract Shop for work evaluation.
2. The second (2nd) year continuation of a grant for developing the the Atlantic City District Office.
3. The first 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. A "Third Party" grant for developing a vocational rehabilitation program under the Commission's supervision for mentally retarded blind youngsters at the Hayes Unit of the Johnstone Training Center.
5. 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. 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. This will include stipends for trainees.

7. A grant to the New Jersey College of Medicine for a vision screening program to be provided to Model Cities residents as a case finding and service tool for the Commission.

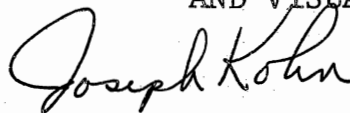
Home Industries.

In 1971, total sales through the Home Industries and craft program amounted to \$115,250 - a \$5,000 increase over 1970. About 200 clients benefited from this program and received earnings of \$41,000. This is the first time in three (3) years that the downward trend in Home Industry sales has been reversed. 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 60% in 1971 to \$32,000 and we now expect rather rapid growth with larger numbers of homebound blind people able to participate and secure income benefits. A goal of \$175,000 in sales for 1972 has been set.

Much of the effectiveness of the Commission's program is clearly due to the unique morale of this agency in which a devoted 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



Joseph Kohn
Executive Director

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August 20, 1971