

# OPPORTUNITY

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

*In a December 13 editorial about the war on poverty, The Jersey Journal raised the question: "Is This War Costly?" echoing the cries of critics who think the poverty program is too expensive. Below, part of that editorial answer is reprinted.*

"By the end of its third year the antipoverty program will have cost about \$3 billion. It is estimated there are 30 million people in the category called 'the poor.' That means the program will cost about \$100 for three years for every one among the poor. Spread \$100 over three years and it comes out to a little more than nine cents a day . . . for each of the poor. It is hardly a spectacular sum. The cost of the antipoverty program looks big, not because it is so big an expenditure per capita, but because there are so many poor . . . To call a nine-cent-a-day expenditure a 'war' seems stretching it a bit. Until there is more ammunition, it will have to remain what it really is—a skirmish against poverty."

## **Multiple Services of New Brunswick Center Cures Family's Legal, Financial Cares**

Eight months ago, a young Negro family of seven from Piscataway faced overwhelming debts.

Mr. B., a 34-year-old father of five, was unemployed. After nearly two years as a \$3.00-an-hour machine operator in a large chemical plant, he was discharged for failing to heed a company rule he couldn't understand. The rule required employees to notify officials—within five days—of the reasons for absence.

Mrs. B., who unknowingly had written a check that bounced, was arrested and jailed. This and her other burdens were bringing her close to an emotional breakdown.

The couple owed money on a number of things including a \$130 monthly mortgage payment on their house. They also faced other outstanding bills for a car, food and furniture they had purchased on credit. Several small loans they had received were of little help since the couple could not afford the interest

or the principal on any of them.

Today, however, Mr. and Mrs. B. and their children are on the road to financial stability — largely through the efforts of the New Brunswick Multi-Service Center, a neighborhood office of the Middlesex County Economic Opportunity Corporation (MCEOC), the county antipoverty office. From August through December of 1966, the center's legal services, job counseling and social work divisions joined in a coordinated attempt to solve the family's problems.

As a result, Mr. B. is back on the job, Mrs. B. is working part-time, has regained her composure and their debts have been wiped out. The case is testimony to the purpose of multi-service centers, where a wide variety of services are available under one roof to solve the varied problems of the poor.

"I think Mr. and Mrs. B. first came to the center hoping to get a

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## **Citizens, City Start Monmouth County Operation Clean-Up**

They drove into a badly-neglected ghetto of Long Branch earlier this month with brooms, rakes, shovels, garbage disposal vans and tow trucks. They came to launch an attack on litter and debris which had been a civic eyesore for years. And they succeeded.

This experiment in self-help sanitation, called "Operation Clean-Up," was initiated January 7 by the Monmouth Community Action Program (MCAP), Monmouth County's antipoverty agency, in cooperation with the City of Long Branch. It started out slowly and early that Saturday morning, but by noon, many residents who were first reluctant and skeptical began pushing brooms alongside antipoverty workers, city sanitation people, MCAP officials and Mayor Paul Anastasio himself.

By day's end, an army of about 100 volunteers — officials and residents alike—had removed 15 truckloads of waste and 10 abandoned vehicles from the litter-strewn lots, backyards and streets. Indeed, the drive proved so successful, that it has been extended throughout other sections of the city and may be tried in Red Bank, Freehold and other Monmouth municipalities.

"We found the cleanup drive managed to establish a good rapport with the neighborhood residents by motivating them to join in the campaign," said Joseph Taylor, MCAP director, who also helped wage the litter-war.

"At first, people in the neighborhood were reluctant to heed our requests for help. So, we just dove into the yards and began cleaning and raking and gathering garbage. But within two hours or so, people

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loan," said Albert Brown, the staff director. "Mr. B. was too proud at first to reveal the scope of his financial plight. Mrs. B. would come in and talk, but he would stay in his car. Finally, after a month, he consented to tell us his problems. We immediately referred the couple to our staff attorney to solve the legal problems."

The first step was to settle the couple's surmounting debts. Robert Hendler, the Center's attorney, said "the extent of the debt was so great and since no fraud was involved, we recommended they file a personal bankruptcy proceeding in Federal Court."

Hendler said the Center rarely recommends personal bankruptcy "except for severe cases," because under law they can only be filed once every six years. "But the B's were in desperate shape," he added, "they needed the slate wiped clean."

According to Hendler, the judge accepted the proceeding and appointed a trustee to sell all family possessions on which they owed money, "except for clothing and personal artifacts amounting to \$500." It was during this period that Mrs. B. wrote the invalid check. In a short time, the service center arranged for bail and she was free within hours. Mrs. B. is now paying regular installments to meet the check's costs.

Meanwhile, the job counseling and social work divisions were continuing their efforts for the couple.

"I was seeking to find employment for both Mr. and Mrs. B," said Mrs. Alice Archibald, the center's job counselor. "Mrs. B. got a job with a pharmaceutical house in New Brunswick, earning \$55-65 a week."

According to Mrs. Ursula Medary, center social worker, Mr. B. had taken a college preparatory course in high school. But an early marriage, followed by the arrival of five children, blocked this ambition, she explained.

"Mr. B. had worked for several years for the Newark Police De-

## **Governor Endorses Program To Combat Adult Illiteracy and Unemployment**

*A major effort of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity over the past eight months has been development of a statewide system of pre-vocational education and literacy training.*

*Most of the hard core poor, and thousands of high school drop-outs, are unable to qualify for job training, because of medical and educational deficiencies. Instead of investing the additional time and effort required to equip this population for work, most vocational schools take the easy way out and reject them as "not qualified."*

*Governor Richard J. Hughes, in his Fifth Annual Message to the New Jersey Legislature on January 10, 1967, recognized the need to close this gap throughout the State.*

*The Governor said:*

"Other programs of interest to urban areas already are being developed through the joint efforts of my Task Force on Adult Literacy Opportunities and our State Manpower Development Coordinating Committee. These specialized groups are comprised of officials from the State Departments of Education, Labor and Industry, and the Office of Economic Opportunity. They have proposed concrete and imaginative programs to meet the related problems of adult illiteracy and unemployment in a comprehensive fashion, primarily utilizing federal resources.

"The Manpower Committee will soon be headed by the new Commissioner of Community Affairs. His department, in cooperation with the others, will establish "opportunity centers" in the most concentrated areas of poverty in New Jersey to provide intensive prevocational training, counseling and medical services. These centers will once and for all tie together all of the relevant State, local and Federal agencies involved in manpower training. By including new programs to combat adult illiteracy, they will help eliminate one of the major stumbling blocks to even the most preliminary attempts to train individuals for employment."

partment, but had to resign — in good standing — when he moved to Piscataway," she added.

In time, the Multi-Service Center found employment for Mr. B. as a toll collector for the New Jersey Turnpike Authority at a rate of \$2.40 an hour. Before he could take the job, however, he had to lose weight to combat high blood pressure.

"Mr. B. likes the new job very much," Mrs. Archibald explained. "He is particularly fond of the uniform, which gives him the stature and pride in himself which he so desperately wants and needs."

The B. family is now residing in

new quarters which the Center located for them. "They are now living in a private, middle-income apartment house," Mrs. Medary said. "The rent is \$150 a month—too high for them—but it was the only apartment available for a family of seven at that time. Hopefully, they will soon be moving into something cheaper."

Through the Center, Mr. and Mrs. B. now look to the future with some hope. "A case like this proves why there is a great need for multi-service centers," Mrs. Medary said. "The welfare system doesn't provide diagnostic, referrals and assistance in one package."





**HYDROTHERAPY**—Foster Grandparent Mrs. Annie Scheper (above) assists young Roberta Herpst, who requires regular hydrotherapy treatment for her legs. She does daily physical therapy exercises in the Seashore House's indoor pool, which maintains a 97 degree temperature at all times.

## **OPPORTUNITY Takes Atlantic City's Fosters**

New Jersey's first and only Foster Home for the Aged, established about five months ago by Atlantic Humane Society, is covering Atlantic and Cape May Counties. It takes in men and women—aged 60 and over—who can earn money by working, part-time, with the Seashore House Colony at Woodbine and the Children's Seashore House.

By serving as aides to these handicapped children, the "grandparents" attempt to fill the void of the uselessness that often accompany old age. "I have nothing to do now," one widow explained. "I'm not so lonely any more," said another. "I'm not so lonely any more because I came from a large family and I can work and play with them. And I have a lot of time to spend."

At the Children's Seashore House, the foster grandparents take care of two children, ranging in age from 2 to 12. They do this in a number of ways—from giving them a bath to reading mother goose rhymes to youngsters who can't walk or swim. In this photo story, O'Connell tells the story of the program in that institution.



**A STORY A DAY**—At left, Benjamin A. Reisman, a 72-year-old Foster Grandparent, has his hands full keeping up with Dennis Larned, a very active five-year-old, who has Cerebral Palsy. Each day, Reisman reads stories to Dennis, plays games with him and is there at his side, whenever the boy needs help. Mr. Reisman, a former piano teacher, also spends much of his time giving lessons to about a dozen children, who, he says, "are progressing nicely."





## es An Inside Look At r Grandparents Plan

Grandparents program was launched  
man Resources, the antipoverty agency  
nties. The project gives 135 qualified  
—an opportunity to earn some extra  
nstitutionalized children in the State  
a's Seashore House in Atlantic City.

andicapped or chronically ill children,  
e voids of loneliness, depression and  
age. "Well, I feel as if I have some-  
ed. "It helps to fill my empty arms,"  
more," a gentleman replied. "I love  
ge family. Now I have a chance to  
ve been more alert, too."

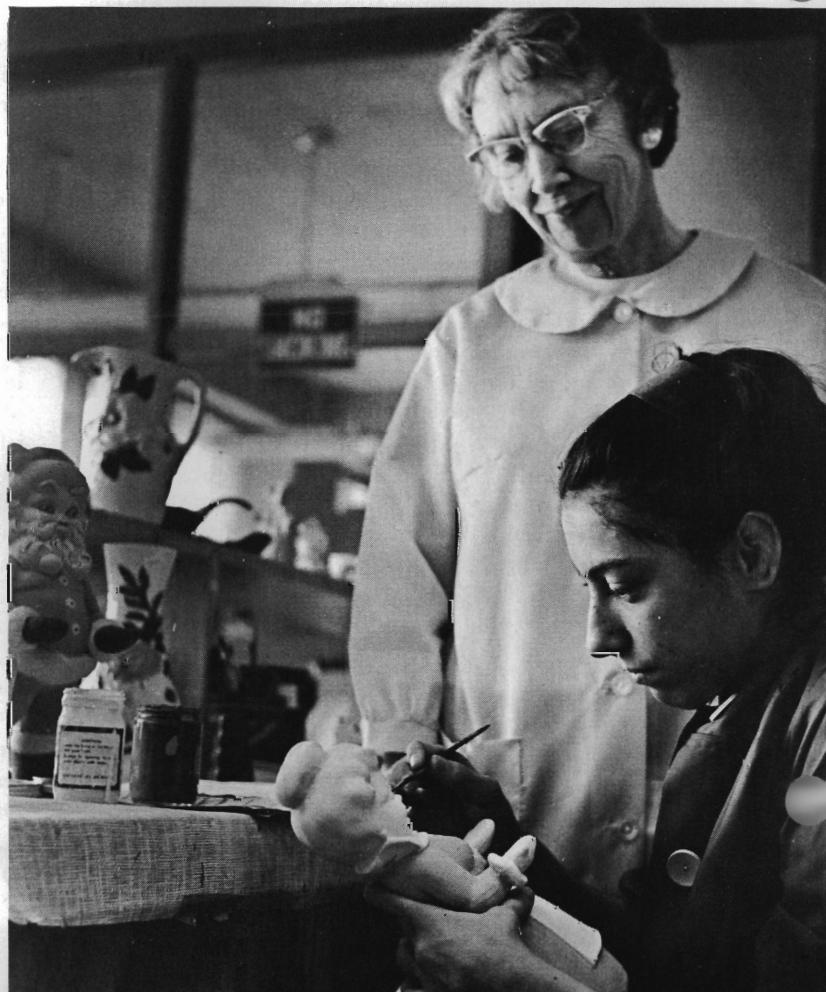
se, 35 grandparents are each assigned  
nfancy to 16. They assist the children  
y tots their morning baths to reading  
or helping handicapped children to  
PORTUNITY presents a capsule view



**TAKING A STROLL**—Foster Grandmother Mrs. Genieve Naylor adjusts the tiny stroller of Mark De Pippa, who sometimes gives "grandmother" a good run for her money. For infants like Mark, the Foster Grandparent program offers the companionship and comfort that their own mothers would provide, if the children were at home. Without such attention, the children could very well feel lost and neglected in the confines of a strange, large institution.



**OVEN BAKED**—At left, Mrs. Olivia Spagnola, occupational therapist (far right), displays new floral-decorated pitcher to Patricia Kerik, who made it as part of the Seashore House's occupational therapy program. Looking on is Foster Grandparent Mrs. Helen Waddell, who worked with Patricia in molding the pottery. At right, Mrs. Waddell gives a helping hand to Patricia, who puts finishing touches to a Mrs. Santa Claus figurine. After the pottery is baked, the children paint decorations on them and put them up for sale in display cases in the House lobby.





## OPERATION CLEANUP from page 1

began leaving their homes to help, cars driving along the street stopped to investigate and many of the drivers joined in.

"It was community action at its best."

Taylor said the drive stemmed from a door-to-door canvass of the ghetto community by MCAP neighborhood workers who were trying to pinpoint the most pressing community need. When the results indicated that most residents complained of littered streets and yards and of dilapidated houses, Operation Clean-Up was conceived.

The plan was brought to the MCAP officials by Miss Joan Minor, MCAP regional representative who coordinated the survey. "After learning that several members of the community thought Long Branch needed some type of clean up campaign," said Mrs. Minor, "We brought the results to MCAP officials and later to Mayor Anastasio, who cooperated fully."

With the help of city equipment and the Mayor's pledge of assistance, a joint manpower staff of city and antipoverty workers planned the campaign.

"The community was fabulous," she added, "We had almost 100 volunteers on the first Saturday, between our staff, the city employees and the residents. I think the program has been a great success. In fact, five of the residents came with me to an MCAP board meeting and spoke very well in our behalf."

After the first day's cleanup proved successful, Operation Clean-Up was extended throughout neglected areas of Long Branch.

One of these sites was Lewis Alley, a narrow dirt road that cuts through two blocks of converging backyards. Lightly trafficked, the alley had become a haven for abandoned autos, discarded furniture and household items, and every conceivable kind of trash.

As sanitation and tow trucks moved in with antipoverty workers, many residents first looked on with disbelief or caution. "Another cleanup week gimmick" was the cry of some. But many later helped in the drive, patching dilapidated houses, covering an open cesspool and clearing yards and streets of debris.

"It's the best thing that ever happened to any community," said Paul Cryan, a nearby resident, who assisted in the cleanup drive. "I remember sometime ago, when President Kennedy said it is not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. Now I feel this way, it's not what your community can do for you, but what you can do for your community."

Another resident, a Puerto Rican father of two, said he was repairing a broken window when he saw the Operation Clean-Up task force arrive. "When I see them, I say 'I'm going to help, too,'" he explained. "Because I want to do what the other people do. Now, look at the street, it's beautiful. That's a beautiful place now. I hope everybody keeps it clean—the same way it is now."



**CLEANUP CAMPAIGN**—The Monmouth County antipoverty agency's "Operation Clean-Up," launched earlier this month, proved to be successful because of the cooperation of municipal officials, antipoverty workers and, most importantly, the residents themselves. Above, a group of residents join community action leaders and city sanitation workers to clear debris from Lewis Alley in Long Branch.

## **State's Seventh Legal Aid Unit Launched Last Month In Mercer**

The seventh Legal Services Program in New Jersey's war on poverty was launched last month in Mercer County.

The program, under the auspices of the Mercer County Legal Aid Society, has been greatly expanded with a \$165,000 OEO grant received through the United Progress Inc. (UPI), Trenton's antipoverty agency.

Last year, the society's legal aid program operated on a \$5,200 budget, with a one-man office staffed by volunteer attorneys and clerical help. This year's program, with a budget more than 30 times larger, is headed by a full-time director and operates from four neighborhood centers, each staffed by a full-time lawyer, investigator and regular clerical staff.

Former Deputy State Atty. Gen. Maurice R. Strickland of Orange, the program director, said the project offers legal counsel to increased numbers of impoverished Mercer County families in the area of civil law, including domestic relations, landlord tenant cases and business matters, especially in installment buying. He said it also "seeks to foster the use of and respect for the law among the poor."

The four legal services offices are located at 242 East Hanover Street and in three UPI neighborhood centers at 300 North Willow, 541 North Clinton and 186 South Broad Streets, all in Trenton.

Six other legal services programs are now operating in Newark, Jersey City, Atlantic City, Paterson-Passaic and in Essex and Middlesex Counties. The New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity also maintains a legal services office which provides research and assistance to local projects throughout the State.



## ***Youth Corps Plan of Garden State Parkway Offers Chances for Training, Employment***

The New Jersey Highway Authority, which operates the Garden State Parkway, is one of two state agencies in New Jersey to hire their own Neighborhood Youth Corps graduates for permanent employment. The other is the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity, which has employed several graduates of its Rural Manpower Development Program as permanent clerical, secretarial and manpower aides.

Believing that every man needs a break sometime in his life, D. Louis Tonti, executive director of the Parkway, signed a contract with the U.S. Labor Department to establish a Garden State Neighborhood Youth Corps in the spring of 1965.

In the intervening year and a half, 173 school dropouts from low-income families have been recruited to train in a variety of skills from landscaping to automobile mechanics. The most outstanding graduates have been given permanent positions with the Parkway.

"This is not welfare," Tonti insists, "dollar for dollar these boys are a great investment. They have paid us back in full and they don't owe a thing."

Tonti estimates the Parkway has saved thousands of dollars by using Corpsmen. Last fall, for example, they performed a job that would

have been impossible without their combined manpower.

Working at the site of the Garden State Arts Center, under construction at Telegraph Hill Park in Holmdel, the boys removed 4,000 bayberry trees and 150 dogwood, which were carefully transplanted to State nurseries. When the proposed amphitheatre at the Arts Center opens this summer, Youth Corps enrollees will replant the same trees. If the trees had not been saved, the Parkway would have had to purchase new ones from nurseries at a total cost of about \$21,000.

The Parkway's Youth Corps operates in three phases. The boys are recruited through the New Jersey Employment Office for a six-month training program. While cleaning the Parkway and tending the lawns and shrubbery, they learn to operate much mechanized equipment, including tractors, cultivators, sod cutters, spreaders and aerators.

Trainees are paid a starting wage of \$1.25 an hour, but after the first month, those recommended by their foreman receive increases to \$1.35 an hour paid by the Parkway. The recruits can receive up to \$1.50 an hour after three months of training if their performances merit raises.

At the end of the six-month training program, select NYC youths are taken into the Parkway's own Cadet Program for an additional half year

of training.

Of the original NYC enrollees, 30 have completed the first phase of the program and 21 have been taken into the Cadet Corps, the second stage of the program. Those who are not retained receive certificates listing the skills they have learned. Hopefully, these help them find employment elsewhere.

When the second training period ends, qualified graduates are eligible for permanent employment with the Parkway. To date, 12 Youth Corpsmen have been employed in regular jobs in the highway's maintenance force.

They now earn \$2.02 an hour and receive the same pension, insurance, health and hospitalization benefits as those of other state employees. After a one-year probationary period, they can be fired only for sufficient cause.

The Highway Authority and Director Tonti have received recognition and praise from federal authorities for "their outstanding pioneering efforts."

NJOEO Director John C. Bullitt has also singled out the Garden State operation: "The success of the entire war on poverty depends to a great extent on whether the poor can find jobs," he reiterated recently, "I urge every organization in the State to see if they can offer training and permanent employment to poor youth as the Highway Authority has done so effectively."

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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

