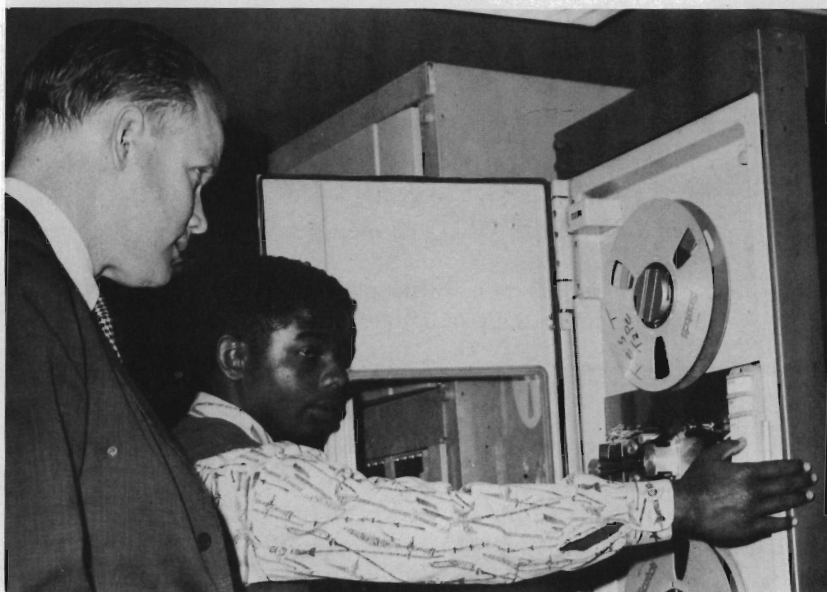


# OPPORTUNITY

A Publication of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity



*NJOEO DIRECTOR John C. Bullitt watches Robert Lee operate computer at Lakehurst Naval Air Station, where the State's Rural Manpower Development Program, a major antipoverty force, offers job skills training, education and counseling.*

## **Three CAPs Draw Plans For FIND**

A New Jersey community action agency may receive one of seven demonstration grants in the country to mark the beginning of Project Find, an important antipoverty plan to help the elderly poor.

Developed by the National Council on the Aging with the assistance of the NJOEO, Project Find is designed to bring assistance to the "friendless, isolated, needy and disabled."

The Northwest New Jersey Community Action Program in Phillipsburg, United Progress, Inc., in Trenton, and Atlantic Human Resources in Atlantic City are preparing applications to USOEO for local programs. These will compete with proposals from 30 other CAPs throughout the northeastern states.

Project Find is an outgrowth of Operation: Medicare Alert, which successfully put 10,000 elderly persons in the country to work registering other elderly persons for new health insurance benefits. Medicare Alert not only demonstrated that the elderly perform effectively in paid, subprofessional roles, but it also disclosed that they have many needs, other than medical, which are being overlooked.

Project Find has four goals, any one of which involves use of the same staff of elderly who performed ably in the Medicare program: (1) To locate the elderly and the elderly poor in rural and urban areas; (2) to evaluate the needs of these persons; (3) to refer them to existing social and community agencies that can provide them with needed help; (4) to develop new agencies and organizations, where needed, which will directly assist them.

NNJCAP proposes the creation, in Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren Counties, of six new multi-service centers, staffed by the elderly, where the rural poor would receive consultation and referral services.

## **Task Force Is Charged With Reshaping New Jersey's Adult Literacy Programs**

New ways to attack adult illiteracy in New Jersey are expected to be developed soon by the Governor's Task Force on Adult Literacy Opportunities.

John C. Bullitt, director of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity, recently reviewed the Governor's charge to the Task Force:

- ▶ Develop needed information through research and statistical analysis;
- ▶ Evaluate existing programs within the State;
- ▶ Review results of programs for educationally deficient adults throughout the nation and make recommendations concerning their applicability in New Jersey;
- ▶ Review resources available and establish priorities for use of such resources;
- ▶ Suggest such legislative measures as may be necessary;
- ▶ Formulate a total plan to solve the problems of the education-

ally disadvantaged adult in our society, using federal, state and local resources, including specific action projects.

Bullitt also told the Task Force that we still do not know whether adult literacy programs are reaching the true illiterates or are using adequate techniques.

He said too few job training programs are tied to adult literacy programs and that most job training programs are not geared for the adult illiterate.

Under Title II-B of the Economic Opportunity Act, 52 local school boards are conducting programs for more than 8,500 adult illiterates — yet, there are more than 750,000 functional illiterates in the State. Aside from EOA funds, however, financial support for adult literacy programs could be available through other Federal Legislation.

In addition, the State Legislature has appropriated \$150,000 for the use of the Task Force and for experimental programs.

## **Webb Sees Goal Accomplished As Head Of CAN-DO Program**

"The goal of the poverty program should not be to make a living, but to make a life," Rev. Ercel Webb said when he resigned last month after serving one year as executive director of the Community and Neighborhood Development Organization, Jersey City's antipoverty agency.

Reverend Webb left the position to resume his work as pastor to 1,500 persons at Monumental Baptist Church and as English teacher in a local junior high school. He had been drafted to the job by the committee which established CAN-DO last May.

"I'm leaving a \$16,000 a year job," he joked, "to return to a life of poverty."

Committed to the idea that antipoverty programs should not depend on individual persons, Reverend Webb leaves the Jersey City community action agency feeling that two goals he had set for himself have been achieved.

He first hoped "to build bridges to the supply lines," the organizations in Washington responsible for applying the Economic Opportunity Act and other new laws of The Great Society to antipoverty programs.

Reverend Webb feels he has achieved excellent working relationships with USOEO and the Department of Labor. By casting and successfully operating a Neighborhood Youth Corps project, an on-the-job training program, a year round preschool system and a remedial tutorial plan, he believes he has used all weapons available to someone in his position in the poverty war. For the coming summer, he also leaves well designed legal aid, Upward Bound and Head Start proposals.

His other goal was to "build an organization within the structure of the city," which would reflect the thinking of poor persons he was serving. This has been done with the creation of six Neighborhood Councils and six Neighborhood Centers developed by and for thousands of disadvantaged in the community.

Reverend Webb has given the poor on these Councils executive responsibility and has given them a majority voice and vote on the executive committee of CAN-DO.

"We have maximum feasible participation of the poor in Jersey City," he said.

He believes CAN-DO has developed exceptionally well over the past year and that it will rise to greater service

and assistance under the direction of his successor. He has built enthusiasm among the people for whom the antipoverty programs were created and among the workers who serve them.

Reverend Webb suggests a final thought:

"The antipoverty program was not conceived as a permanent institution; we're in business to go out of business."

## **Funding Gap Needs Tightening**

"Once I had five responsibilities, now I have five plus," says Estelle Pierce of Newark, New Jersey's only representative on USOEO's 28 member Community Representatives Advisory Council.

The five responsibilities are her daughters; the "plus" is her dedicated participation in the nation's war against poverty.

At the first meeting of the Council in Washington two months ago, Mrs. Pierce spent two days with other members candidly discussing every aspect of the antipoverty program.

"Coming from Newark, where community representation in the program is well over 50 percent, I remember being amazed and saddened by reports of how the white power structure in some southern states had prevented antipoverty programs from taking root effectively," she said.

Mrs. Pierce, who will attend her second meeting of the Advisory Council this month, believes strongly that the tempo of antipoverty work must be speeded up and that the gap between planning and operation is discouragingly wide.

"I intend to speak out at the meeting about the need to have antipoverty programs funded more quickly," she said recently. "There is such a delay once an idea is conceived until it becomes operable. That gap has to be tightened."

Estelle Pierce was selected last January by USOEO Director Sargent Shriver as one of four representatives from the Northeast Region to sit on the Advisory Council. All representatives are from the ranks of the disadvantaged and involved in antipoverty activities.

In her case, "involvement" centers around the United Community Corporation, Newark's antipoverty agency.

Soon after joining the office staff of the Essex County District Court last year, Mrs. Pierce attended an area board meeting of UCC. Her intense interest resulted, quickly, in her election as a trustee and assistant treasurer of the corporation.

She subsequently became involved in Newark's Pre-School Council, the first community-based, year-round program of its kind in the country, and soon afterward was chosen to serve as the Council's vice-president and chairman of its personnel committee.

Although somewhat anxious when her responsibilities grew into national significance, Mrs. Pierce's characteristic dedication to cause leaves her little time for personal concern. She is one of New Jersey's busiest and most enthusiastic fighters in the war against poverty.



*Rev. Ercel Webb leaves CAN-DO program with some final observations.*

## **CAPs and NJOEO Mobilize Programs For Legal Services**

A desperate young Negro, the father of four, finally made his way to a neighborhood legal center in Newark's impoverished Central Ward. For the last two years, he has paid nearly \$900 for a used car that never worked properly from the start.

When the dealer consistently failed to service the auto during the first 60 days, the man stopped payments. In retaliation, the dealer secretly towed the car away, resold it at a higher price and sued the man for deficient payments.

Ignorant and fearful of imposing legal documents, the man ignored the court summons, resulting in a wage attachment on his weekly gross of \$74. With only \$69 remaining to be paid, the man sought free legal help and won the case: the dealer had failed to heed a 90-day guarantee.

Assisting victims of consumer frauds is one of many duties of the Newark Legal Services Project (NLSP) of the United Community Corporation (UCC), Newark's anti-poverty agency. NLSP has already opened two of six planned neighborhood legal centers, financed by a \$279,269 OEO grant. The others are scheduled to open soon.

Although NLSP is the state's first formally organized, full-time legal aid program, similar projects approved or proposed for six other local community action agencies and the state antipoverty office rank New Jersey first in legal services in the national war on poverty.

▶ Atlantic Human Resources, Inc., the antipoverty agency for Atlantic and Cape May counties, was the first to offer part-time legal assistance for the poor. Since October 1965, nearly 100 clients have been aided by a single attorney who spends two hours daily in each of three community service centers. AHR is now seeking an \$11,000 refunding grant;

▶ The Essex County Youth and Economic Rehabilitation Commission, serving suburban Essex County, plans to establish four legal centers, one each in impoverished areas of



*OLIVER LOFTON, director of Newark Legal Services Program, interviews client in one of City's six planned centers.*

Orange, Belleville, Irvington and Montclair sometime before June 1. It is financed by a \$278,237 OEO grant;

▶ A \$67,268 grant to the Community & Neighborhood Development Organization (CAN-DO) of Jersey City and a \$67,041 award to United Progress Inc. (UPI), Trenton's anti-poverty agency, were recently awarded by OEO. CAN-DO plans to set up legal centers at each of its six neighborhood centers throughout the city. The Trenton grant will be administered by the Mercer County Legal Aid Society;

▶ A joint request for \$250,000 for Paterson, Passaic and Passaic County CAPs and a \$31,000 Middlesex County program are pending approval in Washington; and

▶ The New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity (NJOEO) has received approval for a two-part, \$112,554 legal services program designed to assist CAPs in developing and implementing local projects and to train counsel to be employed in neighborhood law offices.

In addition, antipoverty agencies in Elizabeth and Monmouth, Ocean, Bergen and Camden counties are presently preparing legal service program applications.

"In terms of the number of legal aid programs funded and awaiting funding, I doubt if any other state surpasses New Jersey," said William

S. Greenawalt, legal services officer of the Northeast Regional OEO (New York).

"The state's seven or eight approved or proposed programs, totaling just over \$1 million, represent a good portion of the national total. (As of April 26, OEO funds awarded for legal services programs throughout the country totaled more than \$6.3 million). I consider New Jersey a leader in the legal services field."

NLSP, an independent, non-profit corporation, has its own board of trustees composed of attorneys and representatives of the poor. Working in cooperation with the State and County bar associations, the Essex County Legal Aid Society and Seton Hall and Rutgers Universities' Law Schools, NLSP offers legal help primarily in civil law cases, with a special emphasis on "preventive law" — designed to educate potential clients of their legal rights.

"There are three main functions our project hopes to perform," said Newark attorney Dickinson R. Debovoise, volunteer NLSP board president. "First, legal counseling to people who need legal help but either can't afford a lawyer or do not know where to find one; second, preventive measures in cooperation with professional, civic and religious groups, to avoid legal difficulties; and third, use of the law in effecting a change in the city's social structure, in the areas of housing,

welfare, landlord-tenant, consumer credit and domestic relations."

To insure complete independence from political interest, Debevoise said, NLSP is attempting to raise the local share of the project cost — approximately \$31,000 — from "strictly private sources in the community." He said \$15,000 has been collected to date.

Operating from cramped headquarters in the new Rutgers Law School in downtown Newark are attorneys Oliver Lofton, a 32-year-old former assistant United States Attorney and former assistant County prosecutor, who serves as NLSP administrator, and his assistant, Mrs. Annamay T. Sheppard, an experienced trial lawyer. Since March 15, this energetic duo has processed a steady stream of clients on an emergency basis.

Take, for example, the case of a middle-aged father of six, who earned a net weekly income of \$82.45. His wife bought a \$400 weight-reducing machine from an inveigling door-to-door salesman. When the machine proved to be inoperative and the couple decided to withhold payments, the company immediately leveled a wage attachment on the client's weekly salary, reducing his modest income even more.

Curiously, the client had never signed the contract and is apparently not accountable for purchase. As a result, NLSP lawyers have moved to vacate the judgment and seek a "trial on the merits" where the client's defense will be presented. In all likelihood, the case will be won; unfortunately, it might have been avoided.

"This is typical of how a defendant, lacking counsel and unaware of his legal rights, is rolled over by the legal process, even though he may not have been legally culpable to begin with," Lofton explained. "It's sad to see such people victimized merely because they don't know where to go for help. This is how NLSP's educational and preventive aspect hopes to be of service."

According to Mrs. Sheppard, the center has provided assistance in

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## **Women Volunteers Play Important Role As Reading Aides in Trenton Schools**

Dr. Gloria E. Fried, director of reading for the Trenton Public Schools, believes that women volunteers, trained to serve as reading aides in elementary schools, can make an important contribution to a community's antipoverty efforts.

Mrs. Carla Lynton, a Princeton housewife, believes the work she has done for the last nine months as an aide in Dr. Fried's program, "is the best kind of volunteer work I have ever done."

When Dr. Fried received a grant in June 1965 from United Progress, Inc., to develop a remedial reading program in Trenton's schools, she decided to use what she felt was an untapped community resource — the talents of college educated housewives.

"I believed there was a group of women, most of whom had A.B. or higher degrees from liberal arts colleges, whose responsibilities to their growing children and homes prevented them from securing fulltime positions or acquiring more education," Dr. Fried said. "I felt they were eager to give their time — on a limited basis — and their talents to a volunteer position which would give them the opportunity of helping others while satisfying their own desires to continue their education," she added.

Dr. Fried, quite purposefully, made the program flexible so prospective volunteers could give a few hours or several days to it depending upon their individual schedules. She decided to give the volunteers a great deal of personal responsibility:

"I know they would need instruction in corrective reading methods, but, for the enrichment portion, I decided to rely on their imaginations and intelligence."

Dr. Fried, with a grant of \$167,000, was able to hire 12 reading coordinators, fulltime professional teachers with whom the volunteers would consult and work.

Dr. Fried first set the volunteers to work testing all the third, fourth and fifth graders in the City's 19 elementary schools.

"Since I like on-the-job training, I told the volunteers that after they had studied and administered, under supervision, the Gates Standard Reading Test a few times by themselves, they would be able to give it and evaluate it correctly," she said.

Within two months, the volunteers had successfully tested 2,500 children. Then, they began to work in the developmental-corrective-enrichment phase of the reading program.

Since September, Mrs. Lynton, who has two young children, has spent every Wednesday working at the Washington Elementary School. Her day is a concentrated one.

Beginning at 10 a.m., she works for an hour with six, very bright, sixth graders in a creative writing class. (The children are presently writing a mystery play based upon a rhymed clue). From 11:00 to 12:00, Mrs. Lynton meets with 35 third graders to increase their listening and speaking skills. She se-

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*Mrs. Carla Lynton, a volunteer, helps school youngsters in Trenton reading and writing program.*



## **Reflections of Things Present-- Rural Day Care in Moorestown**

You drive along narrow dirt roads in the heart of Burlington County, past august mansions and sprawling farmlands and wonder where the poor could be hiding. In the car, is George, a smudgy-faced four year old from a low-income family who has known the answer for too long.

As you approach George's house, it becomes clear that many rural poor "hide" in wretched, dilapidated shacks like those in Appalachia and just as effectively isolated by the sheer expanse of land and the accompanying inadequacies of communication and transportation.

Since April, George and 29 other disadvantaged tots aged three to five have received special pre-kindergarten training at the First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown, one of two pilot Day-Care Centers of the Burlington County Community Action Program, Inc. (BCCAP). Both centers (the second is in Palmyra) were financed by a \$40,000 antipoverty grant.

For six hours each day, the youths are trained in a comprehensive curriculum of pre-school learning experiences and given some medical assistance and at least one hot meal a day. One day recently, George was going home a bit earlier than usual, suffering from a severe virus.

He sat quietly in the rear seat, clutching a toy pistol in one hand and a book of animals in the other, as the car came to a halt outside his house. He comes from a community of just over 6,000, which ranks among the top ten in the County in overall incidence of poverty.

The house was a ramshackle, two-story structure, badly in need of repairs and paint, and not far from a cluster of similar ones set farther back from the road. Mrs. Sarah Ann Edmondson, the head day-care teacher, took George by the hand, sidestepped a badly-battered baby carriage blocking the entrance and waited at a front door that swung freely open with the first few knocks.

After a while, a woman who looked over 40, came to the door. It was George's mother, dressed in a battered smock.

"We brought George home because he is sick and is not to come to school when he's sick," Mrs. Edmondson said sternly.

"I know he's sick," replied the mother.

"Oh, you know?", the teacher answered, surprised. "Do you have any medicine to give him? He'll need some to get well. Also, he is not to play outside while he's sick."

With that, George shook loose and scampered out the front door, leaped off the stone porch and into a miniature fire engine in the nearby yard.

"See what I mean, the little . . . . .," his mother screamed. "I'm gonna have to beat him till he's red cause there ain't no other way he gonna stay put." She stalked the frightened child, yanked him free from the car by the arm and beat him severely.

"I didn't hit him real hard, don't you worry," the woman said reassuringly to the teacher, as she dragged



*RURAL DAY CARE in Moorestown Center.*

the boy inside. George tried to hide his face and his feelings in his mother's lap but she pushed him aside.

That was part of the environment George and many of his associates in the center have faced since birth, Mrs. Edmondson explained.

"Without special care and education, children like George wouldn't have a chance to succeed in society. Many grow up without ever knowing the comforting smile of a mother; if they speak, no one listens; if they are spoken to, it is probably a harsh command or a reprimand."

She explained how unruly and undisciplined George was when he first came to the day-center.

"At the start, he acted like an animal. He would put his head down and run into me, if he became angry over something. He would take from the other children at will, and use obscenities.

"But after six weeks, you wouldn't recognize him. Of course, I still have to wash his hands and face each morning, and correct his habits occasionally, but he's more controllable now, thanks to patience and discipline. We're very pleased with the progress of the children, but much remains to be done."

The youngsters — both Negro and White, from town and country — are economically and culturally deprived and come from an average family of five. Often one of the parents is missing either through divorce, death, separation or desertion; the remaining parent is on welfare. Many had never seen some of the playthings or places other children take for granted — a book of fairy tales, crayons and coloring books, a "Batman" comic, the local zoo, a shopping mall, or the town library. Others knew little or nothing of soap, toilet habits or table manners.

"On the first day, some kids used their hands to eat peas and carrots and raised the dishes to lick them

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lects all the materials for this class herself and uses a variety of film strips, records, tapes and books.

Skipping lunch, she spends the next hour with two children who are reading below their sixth grade class level. Each child works alone with Mrs. Lynton for half an hour. Starting at 1:15, she monitors a class of 35 youngsters who, for 45 minutes, read silently at their desks to improve their skill and comprehension. Mrs. Lynton spends a final half hour, 2:00 to 2:30, planning for her next week's classes, checking with classroom teachers or the school principal, and occasionally meeting with Dr. Fried for further instruction and assistance.

As the first year of the reading program ends, both Dr. Fried and the volunteers are pleased with the results. Dr. Fried feels the volunteers have greatly helped the children.

"They have treated their work as a joy, not a chore. They have met their responsibilities fully and taken direction well. They have established good relationships with the children. They have skipped lunch, bought their own gas, planned trips and surprises for the children, and taken materials home to study. All the volunteers have achieved the high level of performance and commitment of which I felt they were capable," she said.

**MOORESTOWN from page 5**

clean," said Mrs. La Rae Gantt, of Moorestown, the assistant teacher. "But the trouble, basically, was they had never seen forks and spoons before and didn't know how to use them. But now they eat very well, considering."

At times, the center is unable to give assistance. One mother of four, for example, finally brought her three-year-old daughter to the center after much initial opposition. Unfortunately, the family was evicted from its residence, a converted set of chicken coops without indoor toilet facilities, on the very next day.

"We still don't know where the family is to this date," Mrs. Edmondson said. "We are waiting for the police to tell us."

A similar problem is Johnny, 4½, a handsome blond, blue-eyed youngster who faces serious psychological difficulties: he is hardly able to speak. One of three children, the boy grew up among parents who had little time to speak to the children.

"Johnny tries to say my name, but frankly, he doesn't know how to form the words", Mrs. Gantt said.

"We're not able to train him, either. Soon we hope to obtain a speech therapist trained to treat children like him".

Although the program is still quite new, both teachers seem confident of its successes to date.

**LEGAL from page 4**

other areas, too. She cited a case in which a woman tenant, ordered to move within five days, left her furniture with a neighbor, who unexpectedly moved out with the furniture and stubbornly refused to return it. "In this case, we first inform the tenant that she must return the furniture," she said. "And if she does not, we sue to get it back. This is merely a case of using the legal process to prevent an outright theft," Mrs. Sheppard said.

The list of legal problems already processed is long and promises to get longer: the construction worker who bought a used car and was sued for failing to pay a promissory note higher than the price of the auto; the 14-year-old boy who was named a defendant in an automobile accident he was never in; the arrested purse-snatcher who was unnecessarily jailed for two weeks, pending an arraignment that was delayed at the request of a detective.

Although the project is primarily geared as an "outlet" for persons whose legal interests have never been represented," Lofton said, emphasis will also be placed on its "therapeutic value" which seeks to "replace ill feelings of law by transferring over-aggression and anti-social behavior from the streets to the courts."

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