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NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1965 - JUNE 30, 1966

We respectfully submit herewith the Annual Report of the Commission's activities and accomplishments for the Fiscal Year 1966.

EYE HEALTH SERVICE

The Eye Health Service function is to prevent blindness and to help conserve the vision of citizens in New Jersey through a program of eye health information and safety as well as through a program of direct case services and counsel to individuals requiring eye surgery or treatment.

In the case service sphere, the total number served amounted to 1,554, a slight decrease over the previous year. Sight was restored or improved in 201 cases.

Because of the high incidence of Amblyopia affecting children (4% in the general population), the Commission for the Blind, the State Department of Health, the Medical Society of New Jersey and other interested groups combined to develop a detection program for this condition. Two pilot studies were begun in Englewood and in New Brunswick. These will be followed by other screening programs to be developed in various communities on a demand basis. Attention is also being given to the need for additional treatment clinics attached to hospitals.

During the year, with the help of a committee of the Board of Managers, a new brochure describing the Commission's services, "Hope Is A Better Companion Than Fear" was printed.

New Jersey State Library

The service maintains a Glaucoma Control Program because this is a condition which can be controlled with proper treatment and thereby can prevent blindness. One outstanding feature of this program is the annual statewide Glaucoma Detection week which was held in co-operation with the Medical Society of New Jersey and was conducted in 72 co-operating hospitals. During this period nearly 11,000 persons were screened with 532 Glaucoma suspects being referred to the Commission for follow-up. The Glaucoma Registry showed 2,758 cases at year's end.

The unit also maintains a Diabetic Registry of 825 cases in co-operation with the State Department of Health.

The Traveling Eye Unit, which extends service mainly to school children in order to detect the beginning of a serious eye disorder, operated for 169 days and its staff made 4,984 examinations.

One of the important events in the Public Relations field was the annual Eye Symposium held at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. Its purpose is to alert and educate school personnel in methods of conserving sight.

The Model Reporting Area for Blindness Statistics, National Institute of Health project, of which New Jersey is a member, issued a brochure which was mailed to almost 500 ophthalmologists and others.

EDUCATION SERVICE

On June 30, 1966 there were 1,557 clients registered with the Education Service. This represents a net increase of 40 cases over the previous year. The

classification of these clients by school needs are as follows:

Preschool	-	152
Special Classes	-	199
Regular Elementary Classes	-	597
Regular Secondary Classes	-	197
Boarding and Residential Centers	-	142
College and University	-	56
Multiple-handicapped (not in school or institution) -		51
Retarded (in institutions)	-	161
Unclassified (recent referrals)	-	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	-	<u>1,557</u>

Some outstanding factors of the Education program are as follows:

Preschool Service

Sixty-five (65) clients of this group are under three years of age. A large percentage of this "under three" group have multiple-handicaps as a result of the maternal rubella syndrome.

Analysis of School Placements

In analyzing school placements over the past twenty-five years some interesting facts should be noted:

1. The growth of clients from kindergarten through college over the past twenty-five years has increased from 456 to 1231.
2. It was fairly common practice twenty-five years ago to teach Braille on the basis of visual acuity rather than on factors related to readiness

and ability to read.

3. In 1946, infectious diseases at birth (ophthalmia neonatorum) represented the largest group of secondary school students to be registered. In 1961, the first large group of Retrolental Fibroplasia children entered secondary school.
4. The peak of the preschool load, which extended from 1948 to 1958, began to show in the secondary school caseload in 1963.
5. Of the 142 children attending residential schools and treatment centers only 20 do not have a multiple-handicap.

Instructional Materials and Textbook Center

During the year 38, 992 shipments of school materials were made, an increase of 34% when compared to 1965. Because tape recorders are now available on quota from the American Printing House, tape recording shipments have increased by 80% in the past year, and 300% in the past two years. There was also a slight increase in the number of disc recordings and professional literature which were mailed.

It should be noted that the center depends upon a corps of 600 volunteers who braille new textbooks not available elsewhere and also prepare books on discs and tapes.

Summer Educational and Recreational Programs

Several special programs were carried on at Camp Marcella and at the Adult Training Center during the Summer of 1965.

1. The usual school camp program which extended for eight weeks.

2. A program with special emphasis on daily living skills, educational counseling, and mobility instruction for slow learning or multiple-handicapped students and one for college-bound Juniors and Seniors at both facilities.
3. A program for severely multiple-handicapped children who lived in a cottage with their prospective teacher prior to the opening of a new class for these children.

HOME TEACHING AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Home Service program serves newly-blinded individuals and home-bound adults through an array of services which include personal adjustment, training in communication skills, handwork training for leisure-time or occupation, and assistance with personal, family and social problems, related to or growing out of the individual's loss of sight. Working with the blind individual chiefly in his home setting, workers traveled 109,636 miles and made 5,856 client calls in providing these services.

Some of the noteworthy activities of the unit may be summarized as follows:

1. Several staff members have pursued various in-service training courses pertaining to Social Work and Home Teaching skills.
2. Two clients interested in Social Work careers had a ten week period of orientation as part of a program of vocational information.
3. In co-operation with the Association for Careers in Social Work a college Senior was employed for a ten week period and received training as a case aide.

4. The staff participated on the Home Industries Review Board to evaluate the feasibility of production and marketing of new craft items submitted by clients.
5. The Talking Book service is expected to be upgraded and the number of readers increased with the establishment of a separate New Jersey library next year.
6. Forty-four volunteers actively served the unit - 33 as personal volunteers to clients and eleven others in other ways such as brailleing simple items and providing transportation.
7. An additional service rendered by the unit in co-operation with the Filing and Registration section was the preparation and mailing of 3,749 letters to advise clients sixty-five years of age and over of the importance of the Medicare legislation.

HOME INDUSTRIES

This service is concerned with the processing and selling of handcraft articles made by homebound blind people. The gross sales of \$174,870 indicate a stabilization from the downward trend of the fiscal years 1963-1965. During the year \$57,000 was returned as earnings to blind craft workers, a drop from the previous year. Sales by the New Jersey Distributors of Blind-Made Products have fallen off because of competition from other licensed vendors. This has had some limiting effect on our production and will make it necessary for the department to develop additional sales outlets in order to maintain sales.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE

During the year, 199 new employment placements were made, a 16% increase over the prior year. On an annual basis, the earnings of these individuals amounted to \$544,960.

During half of this year the Commission was operating under a changed Federal law affecting Vocational Rehabilitation. The entire program has been expanded in order to extend service to clients under a variety of services which have been considerably liberalized. More seriously disabled clients are now eligible. The Federal matching in Vocational Rehabilitation was increased for the entire year in order to encourage the states. With the support of the Division Director and the Department, a number of new positions were created in order to accelerate the rehabilitation program and receive the fullest benefit from the improved Federal matching.

Some of the high-lights include:

1. The addition of a Medical Administrator and an Otological and Dental Consultant which has proven to be of invaluable assistance.
2. An increase in the number of vehicles assigned to the unit thereby allowing better coverage of the state.
3. The completion of plans for a new home for the Adult Training Center.
4. The mobility training program has been most successful and plans are being made to include an additional mobility instructor in September.
5. The development of a specialized staff unit to develop rehabilitation and employment opportunities for the multi-handicapped.

The Contract Workshop program for older noncompetitive blind workers continued to grow. Gross sales amounted to \$225,000. Minimum hourly wages or better are paid and 89 blind workers received \$100,150 in wages. Averages do not tell the story here as a number of workers now on Social Security chose not to work more than a few months a year. This year the paid vacation program was implemented and a large majority of the employees were granted from one to five days of paid vacation. A determination is still pending from the Social Security Administration as to the status of the shops in order to offer Social Security coverage to the workers. During the year, the New Brunswick shop was requested by Squibb's to take over their Repair and Replacement work for the electric toothbrush. This was begun in the Spring and is proving a very successful contract.

The Vending Stand program made considerable progress with the number of stands increasing from 46 to 50. A number of older stands are being rebuilt and refurbished. One feature of the program is a new training program for prospective operators and the development of a list of trained candidates for filling new stand sites. It should be noted that to further broaden the program the State legislature has authorized the creation of several new vending stand positions. Gross sales for all units amounted to \$1,034,000 with net income to operators exceeding \$204,000.

The Adult Rehabilitation Center extended training to 67 clients for a total of 3,770 student days. In 1965 there were 4,230 student days of instruction to 79 individuals. Of the total caseload, 27 had additional health or other disabilities to contend with resulting in increased attention to factors of personal adjustment, mobility, individual differences and needs. The number of totally blind clients

showed a 12% increase, therefore, necessitating a great deal more attention in the areas of mobility and communication skills.

IN SUMMARY, it should be noted that staff members have kept abreast of modern trends and thoughts by affiliating with and attending meetings and conferences of professional, educational and civic organizations.

Respectfully submitted,

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Kohn".

Joseph Kohn
Executive Director

July 29, 1966