

# OPPORTUNITY

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

Robert J. Mangum, new director of the Northeast Regional Office (New York), USOEO, expresses his thoughts on a few key issues:

\*New Directions in the War Against Poverty — “We must have more experimentation. We must be willing to be creative and imaginative, even though we get mistakes as well as results. We must always plan for the young and the very young, but we must not forget the older citizens.”

\*On Results — “We are too eager for results. Anyone involved in economic and sociological studies will tell you that a year and a half is much too soon for results. But we will soon be coming to the threshold of the period for evaluation.”

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## **NACD Focus: Program or Involvement?**

The underlying question at a recent Washington conference of the National Association for Community Development was whether Community Action Agencies should emphasize program content or target area involvement.

Joel H. Sterns, NJOEO deputy director, reports that delegates to the four day conference seemed almost evenly divided.

One group, Sterns said, held that specialized programs were ends in themselves, providing employment for indigenous persons in community service occupations, while attacking the overall condition of target area people with a variety of coordinated services. Efforts would be made, in the process, to upgrade skills of target area employees.

Opponents to this “programmatic” approach said that programs, no matter how vital in nature or broad in scope, should be viewed only as a means of reaching a more

distant goal which local community action programs can help attain — namely, the organization of the poor into a coherent power bloc that can force change in prevailing social, political and economic institutions.

According to these “power” proponents, Sterns said, the greatest virtue of programs is the effect they have in conferring dignity on target area people by involving them in decision-making and program execution.

Richard Boone, executive director of the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty, cautioned delegates against those who ask only, “How many poor people do you have on your board? How many nonprofessionals or subprofessionals are in your projects?”

“Although I think the numbers game has some merit,” Boone said, “it can also cloud over the vital issue of quality, spirit and variety of approach.”

## **Evaluation Centers**

Building antipoverty programs on the basis of sophisticated study of the needs of New Jersey’s rural poor is the focus of a new effort by Rural Manpower Development Program of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity.

According to Daniel Schulder, NJOEO assistant director, experience in serving approximately 700 youths during the first year of this program has revealed complex problems.

Of the 240 presently enrolled, the typical youth, for example, is a 17-year-old dropout, who reads below the sixth grade level and has never held a full-time job. His family is large—five or more members—with a yearly income under \$3,000. For 30 per cent of these youths, the father does not live at home, and in most cases, does not have regular employment. At least 40 per cent of the youths have been in trouble with the law.

As a result, a thorough evaluation process, including vocational education and medical and psychological testing, is needed to provide better manpower services to the rural poor, Schulder said. RMDP is seeking federal funds to establish three Regional Evaluation Centers, he said, to offer needed additional services to 1300 youths and adults in the coming year. The centers will be available to community action agencies and other groups.

Schulder said, “RMDP will also make a major effort this year to cooperate with State and local Civil Service officials in redesigning and redefining public service job titles and entrance requirements so that public service employment can be opened to the poor on a career basis.”

“It is the objective of this aspect of the program not only to

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## Antipoverty Helps Solve Unrest

With this issue, OPPORTUNITY begins a special column on the views of CAP directors.

Cyril D. Tyson, executive director of United Community Corporation in Newark, believes antipoverty programs, by properly utilizing "human resources," could help solve the root social problems that spawn racial unrest and revolt.

Tyson contends, however, that it is an "oversimplification" to say racial riots stem only from poverty.

"People are rioting for many reasons, not just because they are poor," he said. "Watts is not just poor. There are many other accompanying problems, such as discrimination, that cause riots."

Tyson said antipoverty agencies like UCC urge people to participate in planning and policy, so they are truly part of the democratic system.

On a recent television program, Tyson cited UCC's attempt to foster full participation of the poor "in a democratic process and decision making" as a factor in lessening the chances of violence in that city.

"Our role is not to stop riots, but to martial human resources through program design, money and the democratic process, to make poor people become a part of society," Tyson said.

"If government is prepared to allocate the financial resources necessary to trigger full development of human resources, overt antisocial activity — which is the direct result of frustrations growing from a lack of full utilization of human resources — will disappear," he claimed.

The UCC director said the antipoverty program, to be effective, requires a new "economics of the poor." He suggested organizing "corporations of the poor," which could create their own nonprofit corporations.

These, he said, would better distribute antipoverty assistance through an "interlocking of agencies and programs, greatly multiplying and distributing antipoverty millions."

"Jobs alone do not make poor people not poor," he said. "Jobs make poor people employed. But there are many employed who remain on welfare. Society should be committed to the premise that every human being should have all that the releasing of the full human potential can make possible for this world."



Cyril Tyson, executive director, United Community Corp.



EDUCATION REFRESHER—Teenagers sharpen typing skills in special classes of Rural Manpower Development Program.

## Pilot Typing Course for Teens

Thirteen Trenton-area teenagers are taking a special pilot typing course as part of the education refresher program of the Rural Manpower Development Program (RMDP).

The nine week coordinated course is the first of its kind to be offered by the RMDP (formerly the Rural Youth Development Program), according to Leonard Miller, assistant chief of operations.

It is an outgrowth of the Mount Zion Study Center education project, sponsored jointly by the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity, the State Department of Adult Education and the Trenton Board of Education. This project is preparing 30 youths for civil service employment.

Since February, 13 of these boys and girls — ranging in age from 17 to 19 — have attended daily half-hour typing classes after their regularly-scheduled education classes three days a week. Nine girls and four boys are now enrolled in the pilot course.

"The typing program came about in February after 11 of 12 former enrollees, despite a good command of English, spelling and writing skills, failed to pass the typing portion of the civil service entrance exam," Miller explained. "As a result, we felt there was an urgent need to couple refresher education and secretarial subjects into one package so the girls and boys would be better able to obtain meaningful and lasting employment upon leaving the RMDP."

Since funds are not provided for the typing segment, enrollees use borrowed typewriters set on makeshift desks made by the boys from old ammunition boxes, Miller said. The course is being taught voluntarily by Miss Marion LaCour.

Miller said the program has greatly motivated enrollees and "rekindled their interest in education, because they can more easily view their progress."

Take, for example, Peter Livingston, an 18-year-old Trenton youth.

"I am coming along all right now. The speed tests built up by speed to 48 words per minute," he said enthusiastically. "The class is really a big help."

## **State Is Opening The Door To New Careers For The Poor**

*Below, NJOEO Director John C. Bullitt speaks about a new and growing concept in the war against poverty—the development of new careers for the poor.*

New Jersey is opening the door to direct involvement of the poor in antipoverty projects by offering career opportunities for disadvantaged citizens.

To meet rapidly expanding demands for public and private social services, we are on the threshold of tapping a new resource—the unskilled and undereducated poor.

There are thousands of poor people now living in the State who lack skill, motivation, training and involvement—and jobs.

Today's vigorous economy gives some of them short-term employment, but they have never had the opportunity of using their full strength for sustained periods in jobs with a future.

These opportunities are described in a book entitled **NEW CAREERS FOR THE POOR**, by Frank Riessman and Arthur Pearl. The authors have spelled out new ways in which people with little or no skill or formal education can be trained to fill nonprofessional jobs in the vastly expanding education, medical, recreational, health, and other human service areas.

Another challenge faced by the authors is how to break down complex jobs requiring specialized skills—often unavailable today—into a series of simpler tasks. Again, this would provide new careers as well as needed services.

The authors suggest different programs that can be developed to fill such jobs as counselor aides, physical therapy aides, nurses aides, teacher aides, community organizers, block workers, recreation aides, research and training aides. Others could work on highway and landscape beautification, waterfront cleanup and slum clearance. They describe how these "entry-level" jobs can in turn lead to better jobs.

The book should be required reading for all antipoverty sponsors.

It may be that all of the new jobs cannot be filled by poor people. But a worker, trained to handle the new positions, will leave his present job open to a qualified low-income candidate. This could mark the beginning of restructuring of jobs at all levels and could create countless opportunities within our labor force.

Nonprofessionals can bring to their new assignment one qualification that most professionals lack—their understanding of the problems of poverty through their own experience of being poor. They can help professionals understand the problems of the poor while helping help the poor they serve understand the problems and purposes of the professionals.

Major employers in the private and semipublic areas have been providing combinations of job-fractioning, training and upgrading for years. The Port of New York Authority, for example, instituted a "New Careers System" over 20 years ago in its hiring and staff development.

A man enters employment as a porter or maintenance worker and is immediately encouraged to enter skills training. He receives the basic education necessary for the next higher job level. Thus, each training course leads to a promotion. Trainees, eventually, can become teachers as well.

Tom Riley, director of the training program, began himself as a porter and came up the ladder.

Many new public service careers can be developed for low income people in municipal, county and state government as well. The New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity is working with other agencies of state government to develop the different kinds of subprofessional career opportunities that can be opened up within existing programs. This effort includes re-examination of the real job requirements (as distinct from paper pre-screen-

ing requirements, such as a high school certificate) and development of training programs that will enable low-skilled people to meet these requirements and thereafter to continue to upgrade their skills.

NJOEO and CAP's throughout the State are investigating job opportunities that local public and private human service agencies can offer low-income residents. All organizations involved in the antipoverty program will soon be invited to join in a statewide effort to develop new career jobs for the poor—permanent jobs in which there is a future.

### **Head Start Renewal**

More than 100 new Head Start programs have been planned in New Jersey this summer to give each child a richer and more thorough educational experience than was possible in 1965—Head Start's first year.

Nearly a half million dollars more would be available here this year to insure each boy and girl a health program for remedial as well as diagnostic services, and to provide transportation for parents so they can accompany children on field trips and observe them more often in classrooms.

As new programs begin, John Nordling, education specialist for NJOEO, warns that "Head Start programs must become more than a summer of happiness."

Last year, Nordling said, education officials were urged to plan for "follow up" and "year round" Head Start programs that would have begun last fall. With a lessening of priority, however, a change in forms and confusion caused by the establishment of Federal regional offices, this ambitious plan wasn't fulfilled, he said.

"Head Start continuation programs must receive the same top priority rating given to summer projects," Nordling said.

## **Educational System Failing The Poor**

The poor are visible symptoms of a discrepancy between the purpose and product of an outdated educational system, Mario Fantini, program associate with The Ford Foundation, told participants at the Governor's Conference on Education early this month.

Fantini, who wrote a major paper for a Conference panel on the education of the disadvantaged student, said the poor ". . . are the most obvious casualties of our educational system."

He charged that some new approaches are necessary, approaches that go beyond what he called compensatory education which "gets kids ready for an already outdated system."

He called for "institutional reforms," and said that curricula should be based more on the needs and concerns of the student, rather than the discipline. He asked that more educational demonstration projects be undertaken as "research and development vehicles," and that a position of "someone in charge of change" be created.

He scored segregation.

"We have allowed a segregated system," he said, "that is reinforced by compensatory education. We need a stronger stand by the profession on the consequences of a segregated system on all children."

A special guest on the panel, Frank Riessman, professor of sociology at New York University, charged that the education of the disadvantaged "suffers from three major errors":

\*That current emphasis on compensatory theory stresses deficits;

\*That education today amounts to "more of the same," except more teaching, manpower training, use of new technology, and curriculum change.

\*That changes in education are piecemeal, and without relevant integration of various approaches.

## **SBDC Offers Help Where None Existed**

There is an old adage which says,

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; Teach him to fish and you feed him for life."

The Small Business Development Center, part of Atlantic City's anti-poverty program, has taught 19 persons "how to fish," since its organization last August by floating small business, low interest loans totalling more than \$200,000.

Three of those persons recently discussed their experiences with Armour G. McDaniel, SBDC director.

"The antipoverty program is the thing; there is no other way. Never has there been anything like it for us," said Donald Donaldson, owner of Tropical Laboratories, Inc., manufacturer of hair products. He was loaned \$15,000.

"I think you can say it in one word — opportunity," said James Brown, who used part of his \$10,000 loan to purchase a new fully-equipped taxi for Jim Brown's Special Limousine Service.

"People ask me — white and Negro — they ask me how I got the loan . . . how many strings I had to pull, where did I get the political influence. This Center just gave me the chance, the opportunity," Brown said.

Earl Laws used the \$10,000 he borrowed to revitalize his Lincoln Ice & Fuel Oil Company.

"My business has doubled since I got the loan," he said. "For years, I didn't have the time to go out and collect on my bills. I have the time now; I've been able to hire five persons to help me handle the business."

Riessman said there should be a new diagnosis of the needs and interests of pupils and that every teacher, if he wishes, should have a professional or subprofessional assistant in the classroom. He added that it was important to teach children how to learn and to build in them some significant attitudes about learning.



*Armour McDaniel  
SBDC director.*

What Laws said is not uncommon. The others, too, have hired new personnel, created new jobs and spread new hope throughout an economically depressed community.

"Many people who want to have never really gotten into the business community, into the mainstream of business life," McDaniel said. "But as these men gain stature in their community, they will serve as concrete examples for others.

"Actually, we encourage businessmen to go to banks for loans; but the banks are reluctant to lend large amounts over a long period of time. Most prefer short term loans at six per cent," McDaniel said.

All three men, in fact, had gone to commercial agencies, including banks, before they applied to the Center. All of them had been repeatedly turned down.

"The qualifications always seemed to change," Donaldson said. "No matter what I did, I could never meet the standards," he added, giving voice to a complaint echoed by the others.

The Small Business Development Center is breathing new life into at least part of the business community of the city; new life, and new hope.

"This is long range. We are teaching them how to fish. The effect of the program probably won't be known for five, ten or fifteen years," McDaniel said.

"It has offered me a chance, and a chance to offer others a chance. I couldn't have done it without the loan", Donaldson said.

## Rural Program Transforms Boy's Life

Emmerson Clark (a real person, but a fictitious name), a 17-year-old Negro from a depressed area of Neptune, was a boy in search of a job.

But like so many impoverished youths, he suffered overpowering liabilities — limited education, a lack of vocational skills and a juvenile record.

Child of a broken home, Emmerson quit Neptune High School in his Freshman year. Within a short time, he had been convicted of breaking and entering and was sent to a State reformatory for nearly two years.

Four months ago, Emmerson was released. He was anxious to help his mother, a welfare recipient, struggling to raise his two younger teenage brothers and a sister. His father had deserted the family when Emmerson was five. Soon, the boy found jobhunting a futile and depressing task.

Today, however, Emmerson Clark anxiously anticipates working as a stock clerk in the near future. He is one of the 24 youths from the Asbury Park area soon to complete an employment training project of the Rural Manpower Development Program (RMDP) of the State Office of Economic Opportunity. The weekly, 30-hour program is staffed by RMDP field supervisors and VISTA volunteers.

Since January, two groups of 12 youths, ranging in age from 16 to 21, have been transported daily to Lakehurst Naval Air Station for on-the-job training in such vocational skills as welding, cable fabrication and testing, auto mechanics, sales commissaries and administration. In addition, the youths receive daily basic education courses.

To Mrs. Clark, a fastidious woman in her mid-thirties, the RMDP program has given her son hope. "I feel deeply that the program has given Emmerson a feeling of responsibility. Now he cares for himself, is not wasteful, is careful about spending money and is much more

mature," she said. "Once he was very disrespectful toward me and was always going out. Now he shows a lot of respect, is very concerned about home problems and is planning for the future."

Originally from Long Branch, the Clarks moved to a tiny, run-down multiple-dwelling house in a section of Neptune mainly populated by transients from the South.

At 15, Emmerson became involved with the law and was sent to a reformatory; at 17, he returned home to conditions that hadn't changed. When Emmerson went to a local employment agency, he was referred to RMDP.

A tall, shy boy with light blue eyes, Emmerson now talks of getting a job and eventually of getting married.

"The program has helped me a lot," he said softly. "When I first went down to the employment agency, I didn't know how to do anything. If I go now, I can tell them I am a stock clerk."

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\*On New Jersey's Programs — "The State has developed the concept of community action more fully than any other. It has a creative sense of federalism."

\*On the Relation Between State and Regional Offices — "The state offices have not been used to their fullest capacity. We want to establish a more creative relationship. We must have communication as well as coordination. Our door will always be a wide open one."

Robert Mangum, director, Northeast Regional, USOEO



\*On Political Leaders — "This program is a challenge to everyone in the power structure. It really shows what a person believes."

\*On Public Officials — "If a person works for government, he serves the general public — not the federal government, not the state government, not the city government."

## Reach Of Medicare

Thousands of New Jersey's elderly have been enrolled in the Medicare program, according to preliminary reports from Operation Medicare Alert. Under the Alert campaign, 16 Community Action Agencies received federal grants to assist the Social Security Administration in locating and enrolling nearly 114,000 elderly persons who had not yet applied for voluntary Medicare benefits.

It is not yet known how many of the 114,000 are now covered. Actual production figures will not be disclosed until recent claims are processed, but more than 90 per cent of the state's elderly, it is believed, had been enrolled by March 31.

Before last month's deadline, nearly 400 elderly poor — hired by the antipoverty agencies — sought to reach those who had not applied because of isolation, language difficulties, illness or lack of knowledge.

Using property tax roles of persons claiming age 65 exemptions and rosters of Social Security recipients who had not responded to Medicare inquiries, Medicare Alert workers knocked on thousands of doors, made thousands of telephone calls, helped in Social Security offices and conducted neighborhood Medicare registration meetings.

In addition to the value of reaching and enumerating persons who were isolated and ailing, lists of these people will be available for future use by Community Action Agencies designing antipoverty programs for the older poor.

## Preschool Training Programs

As preschool programs are put on a year round basis and extended to younger children, more and better-trained professional teachers, subprofessional aides and volunteers are needed for staff and administrative work.

There is a critical shortage of qualified persons working in the field of early childhood development. To help correct this problem, training programs for preschool personnel are being established in New Jersey.

To supervise these programs, Mrs. Angela J. McLinn, faculty member of the School of Education at Fairleigh Dickinson University, has been named by the United States Office of Economic Opportunity as regional training coordinator for Project Head Start in New Jersey.

One training program, the Newark Preschool In-Service Training Program, was started in February.

The Council, which operates a year round, prekindergarten program for 2,000 children, has a staff of 250 which includes professional teachers, as well as subprofessional aides who have not completed high school.

These 40 subprofessionals are being coached by B'nai B'rith volunteers, so they may qualify for high school diplomas by June. The volunteers, were recruited by Raymond Ast of the Adult Basic Education Resources and Service Center at Montclair State College.

Another aspect of the Council's program, developed in conjunction with the College of Education at Fairleigh Dickinson University, enables other staff members to earn up to 15 college credits toward New Jersey teacher certification requirements.

A second training project, The Eight Week Professional Training Program, opened recently in conjunction with the School of Education at New York University.

Designed for head classroom leaders in year round, preschool programs, the Eight Week project uses anti-poverty funds to conduct study sessions five days a week and to pay each participant \$75 a week. Under experts, 25 New Jersey trainees are studying early childhood development, psychology, social work, nursing, nutrition, parent involvement and medical care.

Another program, similar to the Eight Week project, is scheduled to get underway in July, probably at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Head Start orientation programs will begin in June. All head classroom teachers who will be serving in Project Head Start and who did not attend training sessions last summer must participate. Each Project also will be able to send up to one-half of other staff personnel, subprofessional aides and volunteers to the six-day sessions.

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open entry level jobs to otherwise unqualified poor persons but also to provide them with sufficient ongoing training in these jobs, to upgrade themselves to positions of administrative professional responsibilities," Schulder said.

Through the centers, enrollees will receive batteries of psychological, aptitude and achievement tests. They will be observed in work, performing actual tasks, and will participate in individual and group counseling sessions — all over a three-week period.

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