

OPPORTUNITY

A Publication of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity

As of Aug. 19, neither Senate nor House of Representatives had acted on authorizing legislation for fiscal year 1967. The appropriations process has not even begun. The Office of Economic Opportunity is proceeding under a continuing resolution, which expires Aug. 31, and must be renewed by Congress before that date.

There is little likelihood that OEO, or its delegate agencies (Neighborhood Youth Corps, Title V, Adult Basic Education, etc.), will be in a position to make new commitments until perhaps November.

Even when there is final action, the legislation in its House Education and Labor Committee form would require a cutback in New Jersey community action programs. In fiscal 1966, New Jersey received double its allotment; limitation of funds authorized under the House version would mean a cutback of 25% to 50% in New Jersey community action programs.

NJOEO and Civil Service Commission Launch 'New Careers' Demonstration

A \$207,301 demonstration program to help the poor qualify for new careers in the State Civil Service has been jointly launched by the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity and the New Jersey Civil Service Commission.

It is believed to be the first program of its kind in the country and one which is under study by the Federal Civil Service Commission.

John C. Bullitt, NJOEO director, said the program "aims to eliminate artificial barriers that have kept the poor from hundreds of jobs, while state, county and local governments seek desperately for personnel."

He said it would utilize "the employment potential of New Jersey's public jobs to demonstrate how impoverished people can be hired into Civil Service positions, effectively trained and advanced upward."

"Expanding programs in health, education, conservation and transportation, among others, have presented public agencies with major recruiting and training tasks," Bullitt said. "There have been many instances where because of

the acute shortage of trained personnel, public agencies have not adequately met the needs of the citizens of our State. This program is designed to give the poor opportunities to become qualified to fill many of these jobs."

In a recent letter to OEO Director Sargent Shriver, the chairman of U. S. Civil Service Commission—John W. Macy, Jr.—said the New Jersey proposal is "indicative of efforts which can be made at the State and local level to involve government organizations directly in the drive to increase career employment opportunities in useful work for the disadvantaged."

Macy said his agency "will be watching such experiments with interest, with the hope of capturing ideas that might be put to good use in the Federal Government. The U.S. Civil Service Commission, through OPERATION MUST (Maximum Utilization of Skills and Training), is presently attempting to redesign federal job structure to meet objectives similar to those in the New Jersey program, he said.

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Morrow Starts Plan To Train Prisoners

One of the first federally-sponsored rehabilitation and job training programs in the U. S. designed specifically for inmates and releasees of county-run penal institutions was launched recently in Monmouth and Middlesex County jails.

The one-year pilot project, jointly developed by the Morrow Association on Correction and the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity is financed by a \$170,285 antipoverty grant. The Morrow Association, a statewide organization founded in 1961 to prevent crime and rehabilitate criminals, administers the project and provided \$20,000 in cash or in-kind facilities and services.

According to Edmund Goerke of Monmouth Hills, Association president, the project is designed to curb the recidivist (repeater) pattern of many short-term male and female county prisoners, who leave jail without money, a family, a job or a place to live. It hopes to reintegrate releasees into the community as productive citizens through "self-sustaining steady employment."

Goerke said a recent survey of releasees of Monmouth and Middlesex County jails revealed that 70 percent were completely destitute.

Specifically, the plan will offer qualified male and female inmates of both jails individual and group counseling, guidance, family counseling, remedial education and a comprehensive employment and vocational training program.

Two employment centers (halfway houses, one in each county, will also be established for male releasees without families or "wholesome places" in which to live.

Each house, to be located near employment centers, will provide temporary lodging for up to 20 men "in a family type atmosphere," while they complete job training and await employment.

John C. Bullitt, NJOEO director, called the plan "one of the most

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Poverty Teenagers Enthusiastic About High School Head Start

Nothing short of miracles could ever convince a group of slum-dwelling youngsters to voluntarily attend summer school and like it.

Right?

Wrong.

In Newark, more than 200 eighth and ninth graders have done just that in a special six-week antipoverty program designed to help them bridge the gap between the security of grammar school and the uncertainty of high school.

The program is Seton Hall University's award-winning High School Head Start, a \$77,791 project financed with federal funds through the United Community Corp. (UCC), Newark's antipoverty agency.

For the past two summers, more than 300 teenagers from economically and culturally deprived families of Newark received intensive daily instruction in reading, verbal expression, mathematics and science. In addition, they participated in cultural pursuits and journeyed to museums, historic sites, Broadway plays and other places of interest.

This summer, the program attracted 211 youngsters, including 75 of last year's enrollees who returned, strangely enough, because they liked it.

"I needed more help . . . that's the reason I came back," said Debbie Love, a 15-year-old sophomore from Weequahic High School. "But not only for that. The program last year was very helpful to me, and I figured I could really advance myself a little more for the tenth grade if I came back."

Her colleague, Linda Wilson, 15, a sophomore from South Side High School, agreed: "We learned a lot about mathematics—tricks in math—last year, but mostly why I came back is because I liked it, I liked it a lot, because it's not just sitting down and just study, study, study. I mean you have a lot of fun in it."

"It doesn't feel like you're going to school because the teachers here, they all like to have a lot of fun with you . . . I mean it's not all play, we work too, but we have fun while we're working."

Unlike traditional schools, High School Head Start experimented with new and novel teaching methods designed to present secondary education as a challenging and interesting experience. This was an attempt to change the bad attitudes so many culturally-deprived youngsters harbor toward school in general, toward their teachers, and toward themselves.

To do this, a special Institute for Beginning Teachers—staffed by a team of 14 experienced teachers—offered training in subject matter and teaching methods to 22 newly-licensed teachers preparing for careers in "center city" schools. It was this phase of last year's program which was cited for "excellence" by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

In mathematics and science, for example, the students learned about perimeters by cutting up construction paper models and using strings to gain a three-dimensional understanding. And in reading classes,



STUDENTS REHEARSING musical in award-winning high school head start program at Seton Hall University. Teenagers are from poverty areas.

small projectors the youngsters called "teaching machines" effectively maintained student interest.

"This program has really taught me the way to get along with my fellow teachers, pupils and friends," said Milton Lewis, another Weequahic High sophomore. "It made me ready for the coming year, which was a big trial and it helped me in my skills, like reading. I was able to learn new tricks and read faster . . . and our teachers not only put emphasis on your work but they also put pleasure in what you're doing so that it will not be a burden on you."

As part of the program's cultural enrichment phase, many of the students formed an Afro-Band and dancing troupe, complete with indigenous African music, dialects and dances. Others participated in sports endeavors and presented a special production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical "Oklahoma" at the close of the program.

In addition, special dental and medical health services were available to the youngsters. The program's lone dentist filled or extracted nearly 900 teeth for 210 enrollees—an average of more than four cavities per pupil. Many of the other children were treated for eye, hearing, cardiac and skin disorders.

According to Dr. Albert Rainers, program director, High School Head Start does not produce a traumatic effect upon the youngsters when they return to their former schools in the Fall. Of the 100 enrollees in last year's program, 75 accepted invitations to return this year; of the 210 students in this year's program, none failed to complete the program.

"I think the repeaters from last year's program have given us a very fine indication of some of the results we have had," Dr. Rainers explained.

"The program has apparently given them a great deal of confidence, has loosened them up. One day, talking

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Neighborhood Units Credit CAP With Ending Amboy Riot

Conditions were explosive; they could have been worse. Teams of staff workers from the Middlesex County Economic Opportunities Corp.—the County's community action agency—had been on the streets day and night in the teaming Puerto Rican community of Perth Amboy, telling the people to "cool it" so some constructive work could be done.

Now, gathered at the meeting were from 700 to 1,000 people ready to express to city officials their complaints and frustrations and, with hope and design, establish a lasting line of communication with municipal government. MCEOC had arranged the meeting to restore order and peace, shaken by a weekend of riots, and to open a dialogue between the poor and the political structure.

"Our involvement not only stemmed from what we saw as our legitimate role; it also came at the request of many leaders of the Puerto Rican community," said Milton Zatinsky, executive director of MCEOC. "The people knew of our work and they asked for our participation."

Tensions still were volatile when the meeting was convened on a Monday evening early this month. Many young people weren't satisfied with the interchange of complaints and answers. They left.

Had they remained, they would have witnessed the election of eight representatives of the Puerto Rican community who would serve as organized leadership and function as an articulate, responsible conveyer of the needs of the people.

Zatinsky called another emergency staff meeting early the next morning. Staff agreed that the young people had not truly been reached. MCEOC workers poured through the community again. In groups of two—Spanish speaking and English speaking—they went to street corners, pool rooms, back alleys, bar rooms and back yards. . . .

"The continuation of violence



MILTON ZATINSKY, executive director of the Middlesex County Economic Opportunities Corp., speaks to members of Perth Amboy Puerto Rican community in an effort to end rioting.

will only close our your grievances; your voice won't be heard this way. Why don't you elect your own representatives and work toward a total community statement?" MCEOC workers were saying.

The young people elected 10 representatives and that evening met with the others who had been chosen the night before to form a "total community voice."

"This was the proof of our effort," Zatinsky said. "We were able to bring into being a voice where no voice had existed previously."

The immediate result of MCEOC's work was the organization of the Committee on Spanish Affairs in Perth Amboy which sat with city officials on the next day (August 3) to present eight proposals the Puerto Rican community believed should command urgent attention.

That night, Committee members and staff of MCEOC circulated through the streets of the riot center, helped police the area and urged residents to police their own neighborhoods. Before the night was over, the rioting had ceased.

One of the Committee's proposals was that the police department of the city participate in a community relations course. This was an outcropping of what the people feel

to be an overeager enforcement of a municipal anti-loitering law which runs counter to the Puerto Rican culture of congregating outside their homes . . . in the square . . . in the streets.

The Committee also asked city officials to recruit qualified bilingual residents to compete for police officer posts, along with other municipal positions.

The Puerto Rican representatives, further, requested help with long-range housing problems and asked that recreational facilities be built in the riot-torn neighborhoods.

This, then, was one way that a community action agency worked effectively to build from a riotous situation a potentially lasting and constructive social solution to problems that could be continually incendiary.

In a recent newspaper article, leaders of five Puerto Rican organizations in the community were quoted as saying that Zatinsky and his group ". . . were primarily responsible for bringing about the peace.

"We believe that his successful and peaceful methods should serve as a model for all communities which are faced with similar problems," they said.

Legal Services Plan Organized to Assist Community Action

The New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity has opened a Legal Services office with a \$62,386 federal antipoverty grant.

The office provides assistance to the Governor's Committee on Poverty and the Law in carrying out its objectives and aids community action agencies throughout the State in developing and implementing local legal services projects. Howard H. Kestin, a former deputy state attorney general, is director of the office.

The Governor's Committee, established about a year ago by Governor Hughes, is charged with improving ways in which the law and lawyers can better serve the needs of the poor. Under the direction of Atty. Gen. Arthur J. Sills, the committee has undertaken a comprehensive study of New Jersey law to determine the problems confronting the poor and to suggest ways of resolving them. It is composed of some 30 attorneys and civil leaders.

According to John C. Bullitt, NJOEO director, Kestin's staff will serve as liaison between the Governor's Committee and local antipoverty agencies, as well as "provide technical assistance to proposed or existing legal services projects throughout the State."

"The Legal Services office will provide research support for subcommittees on criminal process, civil law, administrative law and procedure and statutory and common law," he said. "This includes the entire scope of landlord-tenant relations, consumer protection, family law, the status of dependent children, the enforcement of municipal housing and health codes, the administration of welfare laws and administrative procedures generally as they affect the poor."

Bullitt said the legal services office, in assisting the development of new programs, will "give some emphasis to rural areas of the State, where geographic limitations and sparse population concentrations make the neighborhood law office approach impractical." He said an-

Foster Grandparents Program Opens In Two Child-Care Institutions

The first Foster Grandparents program in New Jersey's war on poverty has been launched in two child care institutions in Atlantic and Cape May Counties.

The 14-month-program, financed by a \$332,317 federal antipoverty grant, is sponsored and administered by Atlantic Human Resources, Inc. (AHR), the community action agency for both counties.

According to Paul Tuerff, AHR director, the first contingent of 135 elderly citizens from the dual-county area began work in mid-August at the State Colony at Woodbine. The remaining "grandparents" will be phased in at the Colony and at the Children's Seashore House, Atlantic City, within the next eight to 10 weeks.

Foster Grandparents is an anti-poverty program in which the elderly give aid and comfort to thousands of disadvantaged children in public institutions. It is based on the rationale that older persons can help the emotional development of such children by becoming part of their daily pattern of living.

Under the AHR program, 135 low-income persons 60 years old or over will work with approximately 270 children (two children per person) in both institutions five days a week. Each child will receive two hours of individual attention each day.

"Foster Grandparents is designed to provide supplemental income and useful work experience for elderly citizens, while they aid in the development of institutionalized children," said William A. Ware, AHR's Foster Grandparents Program director.

other "high priority" item under consideration was a program for migrant and seasonal farm workers.

Kestin, a graduate of Rutgers University Law School, served as deputy state attorney general from 1963 to 1965, when he became assistant director of the Institute for Continuing Legal Education. While deputy attorney general, he was as-

At the State Colony, 100 "grandparents" will assist some 200 mentally retarded males aged 16 years or younger. This institution is a public, non-profit residential school for such youths ranging in age from 5 to 19.

Ware said Foster Grandparents at the Colony are furnishing individualized attention "to complement an already on-going multi-discipline program of care, treatment and education." He said they also will receive on-the-job supervision from AHR and institutional staff supervisors.

At the Children's Seashore House, 35 "grandparents" will work with about 76 disadvantaged children between infancy and 16 years of age. This institution is a non-sectarian, non-profit hospital for children of that age range with chronic illnesses, orthopedic conditions or in need of short-term convalescent care.

"At this institution, the program will attempt to relieve the serious emotional problems arising when children are separated from their family and home situation," Ware said. "These problems are aggravated when the child is further afflicted with the serious physical handicaps this institution treats."

Each Foster Grandparent receives \$1.70 an hour or approximately \$137 each month.



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comprehensive efforts to break the vicious cycle of recidivism in county jails."

The great majority of releasees from county jails are simply unable, because of a thorough lack of resources, to make the transition into normal community living," Bullitt said: "They emerge from jail lacking adequate finances, education and vocational skills, only to face rejection by both their family and society.

"When coupled with the overbearing pressures and the stigma of a jail sentence, they often take the only remaining outlet in the 'jungle' of antisocial activity from which they came. It is our hope that the Morrow Association plan will work to reverse this trend and help released prisoners make the necessary readjustment in society through sustained employment.

"I hope that, as the new Morrow program get underway," Bullitt added, "it will have in mind the necessity for placing releasees in training and education programs, not just upon release, but in the future, to enable them continually to upgrade their skills. In other words, I am suggesting that instead of doing the least for our most disadvantaged, we should do as much as we need so as to assure them an adequate alternative to continued delinquency.

"This program makes a good beginning: but, like all beginnings, it must look to the future. It must become an integrated part of a comprehensive manpower program," Bullitt said.



PRISONER receives counseling in the Middlesex County Workhouse.

Directing the program, as project administrator, is Geoffrey Berrien of East Orange, 54, who previously was an Essex County probation officer. Berrien, who hold a B.A. degree in psychology from Rutgers University, is a former warden of the Essex County Penitentiary in North Caldwell. He had also served for two years as assistant executive director of the Essex County Youth House in Newark.

Berrien heads a staff of 30 (15 for each county); two employment specialists, two social caseworkers, two employment center managers, two cooks, six case aides from the counties' "target area poor," three clerks and 12 Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) workers, expected to arrive by late summer.

Berrien receives \$10,500 a year, while the annual salaries for the remaining positions, excluding VISTA workers, range from \$4,500 to \$8,500. In addition, consultants and volunteers from the Association's chapters in both counties are working in cooperation with both county antipoverty agencies, in Asbury Park and New Brunswick.

More than 6,000 prisoners will be exposed to the experimental program during the year. But according to Goerke and Berrien, not all will partake of it, because of staff, facility and financial limitations.

"This is not just a social agency formed to do work in the jails," Goerke said. "This whole program is focused on reaching the employable prisoners—those who are willing to be helped to help themselves."

Berrien agrees: "We reject the starry-eyed notion that the program can affect the entire jail population; this is much too much to expect. Based on experience and studies, we know people respond to attention. If the prisoners know that there are people who care for them, I don't see how we can miss getting some constructive reaction from them. Hopefully, we'll influence a change in some of these prisoners, while admittedly missing others."

The project begins with the prisoners' commitment to jail, when inmates who elect the program are interviewed and tested to determine their job potential, past experiences

and shortcomings. Then, screened inmates receive individual and group counseling, job training and basic courses in English, writing and other preliminary subjects that many people take for granted.

The next step teaches enrollees simple vocational skills that can be grasped in a 3 to 6 month period. Among the job training courses tentatively scheduled for both jails are welding, carpentry and masonry, typing, dressmaking, home economics, pressing and radio repairing.

Individual and group counseling and group therapy are available continually, with special psychiatric assistance being offered only when necessary. Upon release, each prisoner will be given a list of job possibilities.

If necessary, releasees deemed "employable" by a screening committee, will be permitted to live in one of the halfway houses until a job becomes available. "These will not be places where hardened criminals can go to get their second wind, but a place where employable people can have a home while searching out ways to return to normal community life," Goerke said.

Berrien acknowledged "some initial community resistance" to the halfway houses, but he said this was expected. He expressed confidence that they would be accepted, "just as residents living within a block of the Essex County Penitentiary in North Caldwell live without fear or resistance."

While emphasizing that the "best interests and protection of the community are always paramount," Berrien said the halfway houses would provide a temporary home and a "feeling that somebody cares" for some male releasees. He said the houses could help overcome the "bias in sentencing" which often offers a fine to a man with a home and other "plus factors," but offers jail to a man without a home.

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Under the direction of Frederick A. Schenck, NJOEO Administrative Services Chief, potential opportunities for the underprivileged in State and local government will be explored in a four-part program developed through Mrs. Thelma Parkinson Sharp, president of the State Civil Service Commission. The 18-month program will attempt to:

- Re-design Civil Service job qualifications so that jobs within reach of the poor may be found. The program will evaluate the skills required for actual job performance, determine which skills and requirements are necessary at the outset and which can be added by in-service training;

- Offer training to help poor people gain the skills needed to qualify for the jobs found;

- Build a training and recruitment capacity within state agencies to encourage the upgrading of present staff and to allow the poor to take entry-level jobs to work into career patterns; and

- Establish a far-reaching personnel planning system guide within the State Civil Service to project public service needs far enough in advance so that training programs can be started before staffing emergencies develop.

"The program will attempt to assist the poor in becoming economically self-sufficient and, at the same time, give them a meaningful opportunity to engage in public service," Schenck said. "It is based on the

rationale that in certain phases of social service, people from similar social backgrounds have a greater understanding of the problems of the disadvantaged and consequently may be more effective in solving them."

Bullitt said the poor are often precluded from employment in public service because of: 1—an ignorance of what positions are available and where and how to apply for them; 2—a false notion that high academic achievement is required for all public jobs; and 3—a reluctance to apply because of police or juvenile records for minor infractions.

"There are in fact many jobs which do not require a formal high school education and there are many institutions where a requirement (such as a high school certificate) could be met after the person has been gainfully employed," the NJOEO director explained. "And, as regards previous police records, recent State legislation permits consideration of applications based on the merits of each individual case."

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signed as counsel to the Division on Civil Rights and the State Education Department.

A life-long resident of Passaic, Kestin is a member of the Passaic, New Jersey and American Bar Associations and is admitted to practice in New Jersey and before the U. S. Court of Appeals, Third Cir-

cuit, and the U. S. Supreme Court.

A second New Jersey legal services program funded through a \$50,168 OEO grant, will provide training for lawyers who will work in neighborhood law offices of local legal service projects. The training program, expected to begin in October, will be administered by the Institute for Continuing Legal Education, under the supervision of Eli Jarmel, institute director.

The institute is jointly sponsored by the New Jersey State Bar Association, the New Jersey Institute for Practicing Lawyers (a non-profit education corporation) and Rutgers, the State University.

The two NJOEO programs bring to nine the number of legal services projects funded in New Jersey (Newark, Essex County, Atlantic City, Trenton, Paterson-Passaic County, Jersey City and Middlesex County). Similar proposals are under consideration in Elizabeth and Hoboken, and in Monmouth, Ocean, Bergen, Camden and Somerset Counties.

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to my teachers, I found them a little worried about the bubbliness of some of our returning students. I said this is the very thing you try to achieve. You give them the confidence to speak out and the desire to move ahead and they're excited about it and they're going to show it—sometimes physically. So the thing you've built and asked for, you have; now you must accept it."

AUGUST 1966—Vol. 1, No. 6

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