

## PLAN FOR A SOCIAL-DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

The life of the retarded child has never been a particularly easy one. In his early years, however, many agencies, notably the school, the playground, and the church are vitally concerned with the retardate's welfare, and in many cases offer programs to help him realize some of his potential. Because of his limited learning ability school opportunities are usually concluded at the age of sixteen, or before. The playground is not available to him because he has physically outstripped much of the equipment, even though he has not outgrown it mentally. The church, in many cases, loses track of him because he has completed the necessary steps for confirmation or because regular church services are beyond his comprehension. The retardate is left to his own devices, which usually means staying at home without outside activities or opportunities.

### Introduction

The plan submitted is designed to help eliminate some of these problems and to make life more interesting and worthwhile for retardates in their community. To obtain counsel in the development of the plan a committee of professional workers in the area of mental retardation was established. The committee was charged with the responsibility to provide a program that was sound with respect to community planning and that would emphasize quality, not quantity of service.

Appreciation of the committee's work is herewith expressed by the Board of the Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children.

#### Evidence of the Need for Services to the Mentally Retarded

Four pieces of evidence are available, at the present time, that point toward the need for recreation-social development services for the retarded. Two of these items are the result of studies conducted by the Community Welfare Council of Hennepin County; the third is represented by the case load carried by the professional staff of the Hennepin County Welfare Board; and the fourth is in the nature of estimates of mentally retarded not institutionalised.

In 1953 the Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children and the Hennepin County Welfare Board requested that the Community Welfare Council conduct a study to indicate services needed by the retarded who were at home. Questionnaires were sent out to parents of retarded children on NARC's rolls and to clients of the welfare board. About 200 of the 500 schedules sent out were returned. While the largest proportion of answers indicated a need for an opportunity workshop, a fairly large proportion also wanted recreation-social development programs for their child.

In 1956 the Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children asked the Community Welfare Council to survey the problems of mental retardation in Minneapolis and make recommendations as to programs and community organization needed to resolve these problems to the best interest of the retardates. The study was conducted through a series of conferences with the responsible leadership of each of the several agencies dealing with retarded in the community. From these discussions and others carried on within

the committee itself twenty-three recommendations and conclusions were presented. Several are not related to the projects at hand, but it was recommended that recreation and social development projects including programs of a day care nature be expanded to better serve a larger segment of the retarded population.

The professional social workers of the Hennepin County Welfare Board carry an active case load of more than 900 retarded living in the county, with an average of 150 cases per worker. More than half of these are adults 21 years of age and over. Undoubtedly some of these adults are awaiting institutionalization, although it was not possible to ascertain what proportion were in this category.

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare of the federal government indicates that there are three per cent of the population mentally retarded. They also indicate that in general about 5 per cent of this population is institutionalized. While the percentage institutionalized may be slightly higher in Minnesota, not less than 90 per cent of the estimated 25,000 mentally retarded in Hennepin County are at home and will probably remain there during much of their lifetime.

The available evidence points toward the need for community services for mentally retarded youth and adults. The limits of the funds available for this project preclude serving all adults of the community, and no large proportion of them can be served if a quality program based upon professionally capable leadership is to be offered. Since there are substantial numbers needing this service, a group will be selected who can be expected to show substantial gain in social adjustment as a result of contacts with the projects to be presented.

## Objectives

It is anticipated that the project, by offering quality service to a limited number of individuals under the supervision of well qualified leadership, will give genuine assistance toward developing desirable social behavior in retardates who have few contacts outside of their home. It is hopeful that the project would offer parents necessary relief from some of the strains of continuous care to a degree that placement of children in public institutions will be reduced. Moreover, it is foreseen as entirely reasonable that improvements in the home interactions because of newly acquired skills in harmonious living will help parents develop new perspectives about their responsibilities toward the retardate.

The project to be established by this grant will try to help the retardates served to become better adjusted individuals with other retardates, with their families, within their communities, and with their normally endowed contemporaries. It is expected that the retardates served will lead happier lives and will be able to adjust comfortably to the framework of accepted social behavior.

The social adjustment center proposed in this plan would have the following purposes:

1. To improve social adequacy of retardates who have few contacts outside their home
2. To assist parents or guardians toward improved care and training in their own homes of the retardates served by the program
3. To demonstrate that mentally retarded children form an important and deserving segment of the population normally served by neighborhood agencies
4. To determine the effectiveness of the programs

## Description of the Services

There will be regularly scheduled meeting of the group with the professional leader, Co-educational social group activities would form an important part of every day's program. Craft work and other hand activities would be carried on to help relieve tensions and to develop capacities and confidence for other types of work. The luncheon period would be viewed as an important opportunity in the day's program because at this time the retardates can gain much valuable experience in social behavior. Practice in decision making would become an integral part of the program, and some facets of the day to day activities would also planned by the retardates themselves. It is presumed that free time would also be available during the day to allow the clients to do whatever they wished, within the limits of the facilities available and the realm of sensible practice.

Four aspects connected with the services to be offered will be discussed further in this section. These include counseling, location, operating schedule, and staff,

Counseling:-- During the entire demonstration period the clients and their parents would have continuous counseling available. Close contact with the gains taking place in other areas of the clients' lives would be maintained by actual visits to their homes by the leader or by reports of visits from the case workers of the Hennepin County Welfare Board who see some of the clients as part of their active case load,

The psychiatrist would also be available for counseling those individuals who were having difficulty adjusting in the program. It is not presumed that the psychiatrist would take on these individuals as patients. By close observation of the clients in the program, and by consultation with the leader activities designed to help alleviate these difficulties would be carefully worked out,

A parents' group would meet regularly to discuss the program and to help with some of the details of the project. Much of the meeting time would be set aside to keep parents apprised of the intended values of the activities carried on, to help parents toward better general understanding of their child, to advise parents who have specific questions about their child, and to get parental suggestions about strengths and weaknesses of the program. To help insure a measure of success of the project parents of the clients will have to share some of the responsibilities. Transportation, always a difficult problem with retarded children, is one area where parents will have to assume almost complete responsibility, Securing volunteer workers, planning lunches and lunch time activities, and other like services could be considered and resolved in parental group meetings. The parents will also play an important part in evaluation of the value derived from the project.

Location:-- The executive director at several community serving agencies was briefed upon the proposed plan. The directors of five agencies have indicated their willingness to have the project located in their facility. These include:

Citizens Club Community Center  
Margaret Barry House  
Roosevelt Branch Y.M.C.A.  
Southtown Branch Y.M.C.A.  
Unity Settlement Association.

Inasmuch as the precise location of the clients to be served is not known, the Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children would like to reserve the right to select some other facility, beside those mentioned above, if conditions make it more practical or if the clients would be better served by such a selection. After the funds for the project are made available, the

professional staff has been employed and the clients to be served have been selected, the facility where the project will be housed will be chosen.

Operating Schedule:- The program will probably meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. The closing hour might be moved to an earlier hour if the program proved to be of too long duration or if the operating schedule of the facility was better served by such a change. However, as reported earlier, the total period will cover the noon hour so that the benefits of this interaction can be obtained.

The program would not be scheduled to meet on holidays of the state or of the federal government, but the regularly scheduled activities would be carried on during the summer months.

Number, type and qualifications of the staff:-- Three types of personnel, a professionally trained leader, a psychiatrist, and volunteer workers will be used to insure that the objectives of the program are attained within reasonable degree of expectation. The general qualifications expected of each are indicated below:

Professional Leader	The professional leader should have college and university preparation in the field of social group work. He should also have had work experiences that will help to instill confidence in the project. He must also be able to carry out and complete the study which will form an integral part of the program presented. If a social group worker is not available, an individual with like
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Professional Leader  
(continued)

competence and with training in the field of recreation or education may be employed. The position will require about three-fourth time. Fifteen hours weekly of the leader's time will be spent in direct contact with the group. A like number of hours weekly is allowed for program planning, committee meetings, counseling, and training volunteers.

Psychiatrist

Since the program is to be psychiatrically oriented, the services of a consulting psychiatrist on a part-time basis will be secured. It is presumed that the psychiatrist will have most frequent contact with the program at its inception and at the conclusion. The contact will, however, be maintained at regular intervals during the entire program period of two years. The psychiatrist will have the following responsibilities:

1. general consultation on overall group activities.
2. consultative capacity with individuals having difficulties
3. Advisory capacity with admissions committee
4. assessment and evaluation of the benefits of the program

Hewitt B. Hannah, M.D., has volunteered his services to the project and is available for consultation when needed.

## Volunteers

Volunteer workers, who are able to relate warmly to individuals and convey feelings of friendliness and trust, will be sought and selected. These individuals will need patience and must not have fixed stereotyped notions about the capacities of the retarded. It is hoped that for the maximum enrollment there will be at least two volunteers at each session.

## Policies

The project will be a demonstration of a presumed need for a specific type of service to the retarded. It is expected that the program set up by the joint support of these funds here solicited and those pledged by Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children will be completed not more than 24 months after the actual beginning of the project.

The program will emphasize professionally capable leadership which, as is known, offers greatest possibility of fostering maximum social-development of the retarded clients.

Admissions will be supervised by a committee which will include the professional leader, the consulting psychiatrist, and representatives of community agencies serving the retarded of the community. New clients will be admitted to maintain the enrollment at twenty.

Eligibility of the clients for the program will be based upon the following criteria:

- 1, Active enrollment not to exceed twenty at the outset (more might be served if it proved practicable)
2. Sixteen years of age or over of both sexes

3. Preferably residents of a geographic segment within the normal service area of an existing facility
4. Clients will be chosen primarily from those having no experience with institutionalization. If possible up to five clients will be selected from a group eligible for release from one of the state institutions, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements
5. No disabling physical handicaps
6. Available diagnostic information of physical and mental nature so that applicant's suitability for the program can be determined
7. Parental interest and indicated willingness to cooperate with the project.

#### Proposed Budget

The budget can at best be only a rough estimate of the cost of operating the plan, inasmuch as the staff salaries and the other operating costs cannot be accurately determined at this time. Since all activities are contingent upon acceptance of the plan when submitted, it will not be possible to operate until the staff can be secured. Moreover, overtures on obtaining a staff cannot be made until acceptance of the plan itself. Therefore, it is presumed that the first 12 months period would extend into 1959, while the second will terminate that same month in 1960. The budget will be presented on an annual basis covering these two 12 month periods.

It was the consensus of the planning committee that some cost of the program should be borne by the client. Both parents and clients might have some tendency to measure worthwhileness of a project in terms of personal cost. Moreover, if the project is to be able to pay any part of the transportation and noon lunch costs additional funds will be needed. The charges would be based upon the ability to pay. In keeping with the principle of worth, all would be expected to pay something regardless of how nominal the amount might be. However, no person will be excluded because of inability

to pay.

During the first year of operation, including the federal grant and money received from client fees, the total income would be \$11,000. (See table I). Expenses for the same period of operation would be \$6,500, of which \$4,500 would be paid in salary to the professional leader, \$1,000 would accrue to MARC for developing the plan, and \$1,000 would cover operating expenses. The balance at the close of the first 12-month period of the program would be \$4,500.

The second year of operation the only income would be from clients fees of \$1,000. The balance of \$4,500 from the grant would make total resources of \$5,500 activities.

As the cost of the plan is now budgeted the federal grant and clients fees will be sufficient to finance the project for the full two year period. It is entirely conceivable that the budgeted amounts will not prove adequate over the two year period. If the project should need additional funds during the second year, the Board of Directors of MARC will pledge an amount not to exceed \$3,000 to insure the continuance to the end of the demonstration period, provided funds are available and in the estimation of the board the project shows promise of success.

## **Evaluation**

An ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the program is essential. A committee would be formed to set the stage for the evaluation. Community representatives, the professional leader, the consulting psychiatrist, a member of the Board of Directors of MARC, and the professional staff of MARC will be members of the committee.

The precise nature of the evaluation will be decided by the committee. Since the project hopes to help retardates toward healthier adjustment with

TABLE I

ESTIMATED INCOME AND EXPENSES OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER 1958-1960

<u>Twelve Month Period Ending 1959</u>		<u>Twelve Month Period Ending 1960</u>	
<u>INCOME</u>		Balance brought forward \$4,500	
Federal Grant	\$10,000		
Client Fees	1,000		
Total Income	\$11,000	Clients fees	1,000
		Total income and available resources	\$5,500
<u>EXPENSES</u>		<u>EXPENSES</u>	
Cost of Developing the Plan	\$1,000	Salary of Leader	\$4,500
Salary of Leader	4,500	Operational costs	1,000
Operational Costs	1,000	Total Expenses*	5,500
Rent	\$500		
Supplies	500		
Total Expenses*	6,500		
		Balance at the close of the first year	\$4,500

\*The professional staff of MARC will have many direct contacts with the project. The staff will assist in program planning, carry much of the administrative detail, meet regularly with the admissions committee, provide resource material for the evaluation committee, promote community acceptance of the project, carry on and write reports on the evaluation of the program, and serve as general coordinators of the project. Secretarial services will also be provided. Although no estimate of the value of these services has been included in the budget, the annual value will undoubtedly exceed \$2,000.

other retardates, in their families, in their community, and with their normally endowed contemporaries. SOME of these new abilities might be measured by the following changes:

- Increased voluntary participation in the program
- Increasingly lengthy periods of harmonious relationships within the group
- Fewer commitments to public institutions for the mentally retarded
- Generally better acceptance of the retardate by his family circle
- Increased willingness of the retardate to share responsibilities in the home, within his capacity to perform them
- Greater independence of action allowed by parents and guardians
- Increased nobility of the retardate in the city as a whole and the area he which he lives
- Simple problems of every-day living resolved more easily
- More general acceptance of the retardate in his neighborhood, etc., despite his disability
- Retardate's feeling of ease with others outside his family circle.

Approved by the Planning Committee Dec. 3, 1957

Approved by the MARC Board of Directors Dec. 11, 1957