

Label Them 'People' First



A man who knows how to make his ideas work, Ray Loomis, spent 15 years in Beatrice before getting the opportunity to prove his effectiveness as an advocate for self-advocacy.

Everyone wants to be known as a person, recognized as a human being. But entire segments of our population are not known as people first, they are known by the labels that others have put on them - mentally retarded, epileptic, spastic, and other similar terms. A human being is a person, not a disability, and an organization of people known as Project II are working very hard to make sure that persons with a handicap are known as "people first."

Ray Loomis, chairman of Project II, got the idea to start a rap group in Omaha two and a half years ago. He had organized bi-monthly get-togethers for persons with handicaps in Lincoln, where he first lived after his release from Beatrice. By the time he left to move to Omaha, the group had grown to about 125. The first rap session in Omaha drew only three persons, but

the word spread and the group now has 30 or 40 regulars, and a current membership of more than 200.

Project II meets for social reasons and recreation, like dancing, bowling and camping, but they have a more serious purpose as well - to help handicapped people help themselves. While self-advocacy was possible in the civil rights and women's liberation movements, it was assumed that persons with mental retardation weren't capable of effectively communicating their needs. Project II is changing that belief. The group discusses living problems like finding jobs and maintaining their apartments, but also addresses issues such as rights, how and when to speak out, solving problems and working as a team.

Ray Loomis and a group of representatives of Project II gave a presentation on the group at the NebARC Convention. The film "People First" out of Kansas City was shown, which depicted the initial planning for a "people first" conference in Oregon. A Nebraska conference is being organized on the same basis, and is scheduled for August 26-27 at the Kellogg Center in Lincoln. All consumers and consumer groups should make every effort to see that as many consumers as possible attend.

Ray Loomis is available to speak to consumer groups across the state, and Region IV has contacted the group to arrange for him to travel to area programs and talk to clients. Project II has no membership fees, and anyone wishing more information should write c/o GOARC, Ray Loomis, Project II Chairman, 3212 Dodge, Omaha, NE 68131.



Ollie Rector, treasurer of Project II, and chairperson of the first annual People First of Nebraska Conference scheduled for August 26-27 in Lincoln.

For Your In IV mation

BONNIE HINES has been accepted into the graduate school of the Department of Human Development and the Family, University of Nebraska - Lincoln. Congratulations, Bonnie!

GREGG and GAYLE DELP are the proud parents of a new bouncing baby boy who weighed 5 lbs. 14½ oz. He was named Timothy Alan Delp. Gayle Delp is the Basic Skills Language Instructor for Bloomfield.

STEVE and LEANNE KESS have increased the size of their family by one - John Ryan, a 7 lb. 9½ oz. boy. Mother and baby are fine, the father's recovering. Steve Kess is the Area Director in South Sioux City.

Bloomfield had a great surprise when Morgen Manufacturing, Yankton, South Dakota, delivered 4,000 lbs. of steel to the program on May 8, 1978. Bloomfield is in the U-pin business again.

If it's happening and you're not reading about it in *The Informer*, be an informer. Send contributions and story ideas to *The Informer*, Box 352, Wayne, NE 68787

New Faces

New staff members in South Sioux City:

SHERRY P. PETEKAVITCH, ADC Instructor. Sherry's interests away from work include singing, swimming, ceramics, spectator sports, house plants and gardening.

GLORIA BALDRIDGE, Residential Assistant. Gloria plays the piano, sews and works with house plants in her spare time.

JOAN BANGFORD, Residential Assistant. Among Joan's hobbies are candle making, tennis and redoing furniture.

CATHERINE MCGEE, Secretary. In her spare time, Catherine enjoys reading, Explorer's Club (career oriented, including some volunteer work with handicapped), house plants and antique hunting.

New staff at Bloomfield:

FRANCES ANDERSON has been employed as Training in Living Skills Instructor. Mrs. Anderson is from Wausa, Nebraska.



Ray always wanted his own family. Now, he and his wife, Nancy Loomis, are the parents of a year-old son, red-haired Billy Joe.

JUL 20 1978

Label Them 'People' First

Everyone wants to be known as a person, recognized as a human being, but entire segments of our population are not known as people first, they are known by the labels that others have put on them — mentally retarded, epileptic, spastic, and other similar terms.

A human being is a person, not a disability, and an organization of people known as Project II are working hard to make sure that persons with a handicap are known as "People First."

Project II recently visited the eight area programs of the Region IV Office of Developmental Disabilities, talking to clients about self-advocacy and encouraging them to attend a "People First" conference scheduled for August 26 - 27 at the Kellogg Center in Lincoln.

Ray Loomis, chairman of the Project II, got the idea to start a rap group in Omaha two and a half years ago. He had organized by-monthly get-togethers for persons with handicaps in Lincoln, where he first lived after his release from Beatrice. By the time he left to move to Omaha, the group had grown to about 125. The first rap session in Omaha drew only three persons, but the word spread and the

group now has 30 to 40 regulars, and a current membership of more than 200.

Project II meets for social reasons and recreation, like dancing, bowling and camping, but they have a more serious purpose as well — to help handicapped people help themselves. While self-advocacy was possible in the civil rights and women's liberation movements, it was assumed that persons with mental retardation weren't capable of effectively communicating their needs. Project II is changing that belief. The group discusses living problems like finding jobs and maintaining their apartments, but also addresses issues such as rights, how and when to speak out, solving problems and working as a team.

Anyone wishing further information about Project II should write Ray Loomis, Project II Chairman, c/o Greater Omaha Association for Retarded Citizens, 3212 Dodge, Omaha, Nebraska 68131, or call Steven Kess, Director, Region IV Services, South Sioux City, 494-2018.

It is yet another step in dealing with a segment of our society who were once more-or-less forgotten.