

**A Manual to Aid in the Establishment  
of Community Programs of the Recreation  
for the Mentally Retarded**

**Minnesota Association  
For Retarded Children**

Incorporated •



A MANUAL TO AID IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMS OF RECREATION FOR  
MENTALLY RETARDED

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PART T

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEMS

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Meeting the needs of the mentally retarded has been the active concern of many professional and other persons since the early part of the 19th century, when Itard, a French physician and philosopher, devoted considerable time and effort attempting to educate Victor, 'The Wild Boy of Aveyron' (6). In the years following Itard's work, institutions were founded, public special classes were started and research studies were conducted in many areas of retardation. In recent years, the founding of the National Association for Retarded Children, with its aim of meeting the total needs of all retarded, has developed wide interest in the problem of providing facilities and services for the mentally handicapped within the framework of the community. Recreation for the retarded in the community setting is, perhaps, the most recent concern in this area to come to the fore. According to the National Association for Retarded Children (11), it began to be promoted actively as recently as 1953. Because this problem is so current many persons have not, as yet, recognized the importance of recreation in the development and welfare of the mentally retarded. Many others, who are aware of the need in this area, do not know how such programs can be established in their own communities.

#### 1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT

**HOW THE PROJECT WAS STARTED.** During the first part of 1957, the chairman for the Minnesota Mrs. Jaycees' mentally retarded project met with the executive-secretary of the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children to discuss the possibility of working with the association on a state-wide project in some area of mental retardation. Mr. Gerald Walsh, the executive-secretary for the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children, said there was a need for work in the areas of recreation and religious training for the retarded, especially in the out-state communities. He suggested that a research and consultation project be conducted along these lines. The Mrs. Jaycees' project committee voted approval of the plan, and 34 chapters of the organization contributed funds to be used in conducting the project. The Minnesota Association employed a teacher of the retarded, Thomas Irvin of St. Paul, as project consultant. The program was carried out during the summer of 1958.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT** It was the purpose of this project (1) to gather information about some of the existing programs of recreation in the United States and Minnesota; (2) to participate with local Minnesota Association Chapters in planning programs in their own communities; (3) to develop a resource guide that would assist local communities in their planning.

**HOW THE PROJECT WAS CONDUCTED** This project was carried out within the framework of the objectives stated in the preceding paragraph. Almost all of the existing programs of recreation for the retarded in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and out-state areas (including state institutions) were observed. Conferences were held with the leaders of these programs to learn of the problems involved in organizing and programming. Periodicals and other reading materials were used to secure information about some of the recreation programs in other locations.

Several local associations for retarded children participated in this project for the purpose of planning new programs in their own areas. This information was invaluable in terms of the total project,

as it offered first hand knowledge of problems involved in planning these programs. The final objective, developing this guide, was the result of the observations, study and planning that were carried on during the term of the project.

## II DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

**MENTAL RETARDATION** According to the National Association for Retarded Children, mental retardation is a condition of incomplete or impaired mental development dating from birth or an early age. Intellectually, the retarded range from the totally helpless to the many more who are not specifically different from "normal." The retarded will require special assistance all or part of their lives, regardless of the degree of handicap. (12)

This manual is concerned with the provision of special recreational facilities for all retarded who can profit from such a program. Almost all of the retarded in the semi-dependent or trainable group can profit from a special program of recreation, as well as some of the retarded in the totally dependent group. Although many of the educable retarded need this kind of program, a good number of this group though requiring special educational services, can profit more from an integrated program of recreation.

**RECREATION.** Recreation is usually defined as any form of amusement, play or relaxation used for refreshment of the body or mind during leisure time. A more comprehensive definition of recreation is given below:

Recreation is currently regarded as an essential factor in the welfare of the individual through its provision of the opportunities and skills for his physical and mental growth and for his creative, cultural and social development (4,p3)

Recreation basically serves the same function for all people. However, the value of recreation in the lives of the retarded is much greater. Whereas recreation is only one of a multitude of activities and endeavors engaged in by mentally normal persons, it may be everything in the lives of many of the retarded. Recreation is a very broad field, and runs the gamut in its provision of activities, from the simplest forms of individual play for younger children, to the more complex involvements in helping older retarded make an adequate social adjustment to the community.

**PLAY** The word play, as used in this guide, will be considered as a component part of the broad field of recreation. Specifically defined, play means to have fun; amuse oneself; take part in a game or sport; engage in recreation."

Play is sometimes used as a means to an end. That is, a group of children in school may play word-bingo as one approach among many used in helping them learn a particular set of words. More often, play is regarded as an end in itself, with no apparent goal other than to have fun. The fact that the retarded do enjoy fun-type activities is reason enough for giving them the chance to play, as mental and emotional health thrives on such happy experiences. It is also important to remember that learning takes place during play sessions, even when the objective is just to have fun. The rudiments of basic skills necessary for social living and adjustment are often learned through the playing of simple group games. Whenever the retarded are given the chance to

play with others, they often demonstrate an amazing aptitude for learning these social skills.

**OTHER TERMS USED IN RECREATION.** When talking about community recreation programs, the words recreation, physical education and social group work are often used interchangeably. As these words may be confusing, it is felt that they should be defined.

Kindelsperger (5) refers to physical education and social group work as methods of working with people. Recreation, on the other hand, is regarded ...as a field of activities essentially taking place in the leisure time of man that provides an enjoyable or satisfying experience ..."

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION** physical education is a method of using the body whereby individuals achieve a sense of physical well-being either through the process of individual performance or through participating with a group or a team.

**SOCIAL GROUP WORK** is defined by the same author;

It is a method of working with individuals in groups whereby a worker trained in the broad discipline of social work helps individuals to relate themselves more efficiently to each other and to experience growth opportunities in the process.

Social group workers are usually found in metropolitan areas, and are often employed by community centers, e.g. neighborhood houses, and other social work agencies. Although social group workers make full use of recreational activities in their work, they are not limited just to the field of recreation.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PLACE OF RECREATION IN EXISTING PROGRAMS

As mentioned earlier, recreation, or play, holds a very important place in the lives of the retarded. Dr. E. Paul Benoit (2, pp44,45) points this out in the following statement:

Play is an absolute essential for the development of retarded children. They need frequent thrills of success in order to counteract the many frustrations they are likely to be subject to. It is in play that they work up a will to live, a will to do things, a will to grow. Furthermore, it is most likely in play that they learn the skills that lie at the root of social living. Because play is the principal vehicle of stimulation for retarded children it follows that failure to provide play for them can only lead to mental deterioration.

#### 1- RECREATION IN THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Recreation and play have served an important part in the institutional setting for many years, and as one source (4) states, "without such a program, any institution is seriously handicapped." This same idea is borne out time and again in the publication, "An Experiment in Recreation for the Mentally Retarded"(17). This experiment was conducted at the Lincoln State School in Illinois during the early 1930's, and such comments as the following are found throughout the report:

\ Such derogatory comments by patients as, "I'm sure going to leave this old place." "When can I go home?" "I'm going to run away, have given way to "Are we going to have basketball tonight? Bill plays as good as an employee." "Gee, that was a swell game last night." (p74)

Minnesota's state schools and hospitals for the retarded also provide us with excellent examples of what can be accomplished through programs of recreation. After visiting one of our state institutions, we would find it impossible to imagine the same friendly atmosphere that presently exists, and the happy attitude of the patients, if there were no picnics, music, dances, baseball games, and a host of other recreational activities which are now so much a part of their lives.

THE RECREATIONAL PROGRAM AT FARIBAULT, Faribault has a recreation staff of 12 people, including 10 patient activities workers, a department supervisor and the director of rehabilitation. There are also two music instructors who work with the staff, and a full-time 16mm movie projector operator. The staff members' time is divided between working with the patients in the wards and with the program of central activities.

There are a number of circle games, table games and outings that are enjoyed by the patients in the wards. Activities vary according to the type of patient. Music is of great value with these patients, and is used in almost all of the recreational functions at Faribault. The recreational supervisor at Faribault stated, "I believe I am safe in saying that music is one medium which is able to reach every patient. Rhythm bands, dancing, story albums and musical games are some of the musical activities provided for the patients. Such activities as dramatics, arts and crafts, and competitive sports and games are enjoyed by the more advanced patients.

The program of central activities is also a vital part of the life at Faribault. Some activities in this area include movies, square dancing, social dancing, and community singing. Many of these activities are in the evenings, because a good number of the patients have various jobs around the institution during the day. During the summer, lawn concerts and street dances are very popular with the patients.

One of the most successful events of the year is the annual picnic. In order to give every ward a chance to participate, it is necessary to have a series of approximately 30 individual picnics. The recreation staff sets up a carnival for most of the picnics. There is a variety of stands, contests and other carnival-type activities at the picnic, and all of the patients win prizes.

THE RECREATION PROGRAM AT CAMBRIDGE. The recreation program at Cambridge is very similar in structure and activities to the one at Faribault. Although both of these institutions have excellent recreational activities for the patients, it is not the activities, but the recreation staff members who make the program so successful. They are aware of the fact, and have stated, that there are "hidden values" in recreation. Through recreation and play, the patients learn to accept themselves; they learn good work habits; they learn social standards. The fact is stressed that the emotional needs of the patients are the same as normal people.

RECREATION AT THE OWATONNA STATE SCHOOL. Although Owatonna does not have a separate recreation staff, there are ample recreational activities provided at the school. Owatonna is operated much like a small community. The students attend school part of the day, they participate in a work program and they have a certain amount of leisure time. All of the students participate in the physical education program as part of the school curriculum. There are several school clubs to which many of the students belong. In addition, there are swimming and square dancing classes at night. There is also a girl scout troupe at the school. Occasionally, groups of students attend a movie in the city of Owatonna. Social dances are scheduled throughout the year. All of the activities mentioned are undertaken by the regular staff at Owatonna, and programs that are conducted in the evenings are conducted by volunteers from the regular staff. During the summer, the school also conducts a short camping session for those students who are not going home for vacation. The camp is at White Water State Park. With the busy schedule these students follow, they have little unplanned time. As Mr. C. M. Henderson, the superintendent, pointed out, these students, like all people, need some time when they can be alone.

## II. THE PLACE OF RECREATION AND PLAY IN EDUCATION

Almost all special class teachers recognize the need for play in their teaching, as do many regular class teachers. And all educators stress the importance of teaching worthwhile use of leisure time as part of the curriculum.

THE VALUE OF PLAY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. In discussing the value of play in a curriculum for trainable retarded children, Cleverdon and Rosenweig (3) state that "...it is regarded as an end in itself as well as a technique that can be utilized for developing other curriculum areas." These authors further stress the part of play:

Many of the concepts that the retarded child needs to know can be taught through the highly structured work-play program. Instead of attempting to teach the child by the dull method of rote learning, this method exposes him to a series of repetitive experiences, con-

stantly connecting concept and experience and presenting the same concept through a variety of play activities.

The recommended program of classes for trainable retarded" in Wisconsin stated that it was found that better than one-third of the daily class schedule was devoted to "individually chosen activities and play and "group games, singing

In the classes for educable retarded children, the students not only learn to play, they also play to learn. Helping children learn to play, and especially to learn to play in groups, constitutes an important part of the elementary special class program. Students who are at the upper elementary and secondary levels frequently play a number of group and individual games; ~~not only to help them retain specific knowledges~~ in reading and in arithmetic, but also as a means of teaching skills, in other related areas.

TEACHING ~~WORTHWHILE~~ USE OF LEISURE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION. In the bulletin, "Let Us Teach Slow Learning Children," Amy Allen (1, p96) devotes several pages to the problem of teaching worthwhile use of leisure. She comments:

...Whatever his job as an adult may be, the slow-learner will have leisure time to spend, too frequently "time on his hands." The richness or poorness of his life will depend as heavily on his use of this leisure time as upon his success as a worker....

According to Miss Allen, resourceful teachers will find whatever spark of creativeness there is in each child, whether it is in music, art, languages or other experiences, and give it maximum opportunity for growth, relative to the child's abilities. Also, resourceful secondary teachers will try to guide their students in the direction of those recreational opportunities which are best suited to the students' interests, abilities and potentialities for adjustment in the group situation.

Frances Lloyd (8, p144) concludes her book, EDUCATING THE SUB-NORMAL CHILD, with the following sentence: "A school which has taught the use of leisure, even if it has not succeeded in teaching reading and arithmetic, has not failed."

## CHAPTER III

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS OF RECREATION

It was stated in the introduction that the need for recreation facilities for the retarded in the community setting is so current a program that many people have failed to recognize its importance. This inertia is due, in part, to the tremendous amount of emphasis given to education. The value of education for these children is undeniable. However, its importance looms so large in front of us that we sometimes forget why it is we are educating these youngsters. The present attitude of many persons concerned with the retarded is this: "Recreation for the retarded is important, but when are we going to have a special education program?" Once we understand the true purposes of special education, and once we are aware of the value of recreation for this group, we might be tempted, under certain circumstances, to ask ourselves the question; "Where does education end and recreation begin?" In the final analysis both of these areas are needed, but there is a tremendous overlap between the two.

#### 1. THE NEED FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS IN MINNESOTA

There are an estimated 3 per cent, or 90,000 retarded in Minnesota alone. Only a fraction of this number are receiving any kind or degree of the special assistance they need, less than 10 per cent are in state institutions. The vast majority are in the community.

**WHAT THE COMMUNITY CAN DO.** It is the belief of many persons working in the field of retardation, that if adequate facilities and services for the retarded (i.e-educational, occupational and recreational programs) were available in the community, institutional placement could be postponed for many of the retarded, and a larger percentage of the group could remain in the community permanently. According to Kirk (7) such a decentralization could relieve the state institutions of the necessity for expansion, since many of the children could be cared for in the community.

**THE PRESENT PROBLEM.** There is no question but that some day there will be adequate facilities and services for the retarded in the Community

The problem is this: what can we do until these facilities are made available? How can we fill the void that presently exists for the hundreds who are waiting for institutional placement, and for countless others who are neither, slated for placement, nor are in any kind of program - special or otherwise?

At present, recreational outlets for retarded are mainly provided in the home. Most parents recognize that individual play is as important for the retarded child as for normal children. The child who is busily occupied is happier than one who sits and does nothing. His sole companion may be his mother, but she can teach him to share and encourage his play ideas.

Although individual play is an important first step in the development of the retarded, this must be complimented by social contacts with other children. Where recreational facilities are not available in the community, it is an unfortunate situation, both for the child or adult and for his family. Mothers, especially, need a time when they can be away from all of their children. This can hardly be considered a

problem with normal youngsters, however, as they not only attend school

there is somewhere to go. They have a reason to watch television - so they can discuss it with their friends. They belong somewhere. (15, p91)

The following is a concluding statement by the same author:

If retarded adults are given a chance to find friends and whole some recreation in social groups; if they are placed in jobs; if they are able to count on help from a counselor or social worker in time of crisis - many of those who now seem completely dependent on their parents will in fact be prepared to live in any community residence which provides a place to eat and sleep. (15,p95)

These are some of the comments from some of the existing programs; if other programs were reported in journals and articles, or we were able to observe them, the same results would be found in the majority of cases.

#### SUMMARY PART I-

Persons have been concerned for many years with meeting the needs of the retarded. The most recent interest has been for programs of recreation in the community setting. Recreation has played an important function in the institutional setting and in programs of special education for many years. It is recognized that if adequate educational, occupational and recreational facilities were provided in the community, many of these children could remain at home rather than being placed in institutions. Until a total program can be provided, recreational programs can help to fill the gap. Recreation can meet many of the needs of the mentally retarded, and programs can be started with relative ease. Examples from some of the existing programs bear this out.

PART II

SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZING COMMUNITY RECREATION  
PROGRAMS FOR RETARDED

## CHAPTER I

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

Every program of recreation for the retarded in Minnesota was started, with few exceptions, because parents wanted such a program for their own retarded children. These parents refused to deny their children the opportunity to have fun with others and to be accepted. They felt the need for community recreational facilities for the retarded, and they did something about it. These determined parents did not plan the program by themselves, although they would have, had it been necessary. Instead, working through local chapters of the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children they sought assistance from their communities, and invariably they were granted whatever help they needed. This group of parents deserves a vote of confidence for the work they have done. They are, in a sense, pioneers in the area of recreation for the retarded, and their assistance will be invaluable to persons in other communities in planning future programs.

Starting community recreational programs is the responsibility of parents and the Association for Retarded Children - by recognizing the need and wanting to do something about it. If parents are indifferent to the need and make no effort to organize such programs, they can expect a disinterested attitude on the part of the community. On the other hand, once they take the initiative in this endeavor, they will find the community, as a whole, not only willing to accept the project with enthusiasm, but also offering its assistance, services and facilities.

How the actual planning is carried out will depend on the situation and circumstances in each local community. It is hoped, however, that this guide will be helpful in offering suggestions for solving particular problems that may arise during the planning process.

#### I RECREATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Parents should voice the need for recreational facilities at a regular meeting of the local Association for Retarded Children. Once it has been decided to undertake the project, the ideal approach would be for the association to set up a recreational planning committee. It is expedient to plan through a committee because of the following reasons: (1) Individuals are seldom able to grasp the total picture, especially when the program to be planned is for an entire county. Or even several counties. (2) Poorly planned or hastily planned programs result in pitfalls in meeting the needs of the retarded. (3) Planning must be long-range if it is to be effective. One program will seldom meet the needs of all retarded in a community. Additional programs will have to be planned for the retarded who, because of differences in age or ability, do not fit into the first program.

It is recognized today that the care of mentally handicapped persons is ultimately the responsibility of society. Because this is a community problem, it is felt that representatives from each local community should participate in planning for this group. Ideally, the recreation planning committee should be kept as small as possible, about 10 people, but should include representatives from local service organizations, professional people and members from the local A.R.C. group.

**TENTATIVE PLANS.** Once the committee has been established, the members of the committee will want to have a preliminary meeting to evaluate



the situation and determine what steps must be taken in planning a recreational program. These steps will be considered in the following pages.

**NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES.** One of the first steps will be deciding why you want the program and what you hope to accomplish. This first step is necessary if you are to be effective in explaining the need and asking for community support. Ideas for stating the need can be found in Part 1 of this guide.

**PUBLICITY.** Once the committee has decided on the needs and objectives, and has set up tentative plans, this information should be given to the local newspaper and radio station. Supplying the local news media with the information and having them write the story is usually more effective. As the program begins to take shape, you should arrange for further publicity also. It is a good idea to conclude each story with the request that parents interested in having their children participate in the program should contact the committee chairman. Publicity should pervade the entire planning process as well as the program itself.

## II. COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION

If we are to be effective in meeting the needs of the retarded in the community, there must be concerted effort by many agencies and groups. Below are some community organization you may find helpful:

**DEPARTMENTS OF PARKS AND RECREATION.** Departments of parks and recreation are willing to provide facilities for the retarded as well as for normal children. Generally, whenever recreation directors are approached, they almost always express an interest in helping the retarded. In many instances, local departments have assumed full responsibility in conducting these specialized programs. The problem is that many directors are not aware of the need, or if aware, they are apprehensive about attempting such a project. Usually they have had little training or experience with the retarded. Consequently, they have little insight into the types of activities to provide.

If there is a department of recreation in your community, and you plan to request their help, it may be a good idea to invite the director to serve on your committee. Once he is educated to the needs of the retarded, he can help you in your planning.

**SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS.** The term "service organization" will be used throughout this guide to refer to all fraternal, service and patriotic groups in the community, regardless of their purposes. If your committee will inquire, they will find many such organizations in your community ready to help in sponsoring projects for the mentally retarded. According to Winifred Wardell:

...These organizations are made up of a cross-section of the community, their resources are many and their interest is alive, but they are not always familiar with the complex problems confronting 'handicapped persons... The various service clubs are usually grateful for being told of the special needs in their communities. The time invested in such an orientation program pays dividends over a long period of years. (18)

**HOW SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS CAN HELP.** Some of the ways service organizations can be of assistance are:

1. SPONSORING THE RECREATION PROJECT. If a service club expresses interest in sponsoring the project, they should be encouraged to have a representative from their group participate in planning the program.
2. SPONSORING A SPECIAL EVENT, ACTIVITY, OR PROJECT. Picnics, parties and trips would be included here.
3. PROVIDING THE USE OF BUILDING FACILITIES.
4. PROVIDING VOLUNTEERS TO HELP CONDUCT THE PROGRAM.
5. PROVIDING VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH TRANSPORTATION.

**CONTACTING THESE ORGANIZATIONS** Local newspapers or chambers of commerce usually have the names of local service groups and the current officers. The committee should be well prepared when they present their requests to the presidents of these organizations. They should stress the need and inform the president of their plans, relative to his particular group. This will be a preliminary visit to determine the president's interest in the project, and to arrange for a time, if necessary, for presenting the project plans to a committee or entire organization. Follow-up contacts should be made after the initial meeting, and a thank you letter should be sent to all groups contacted.

**PROFESSIONAL PERSONS.** Professional persons can be of assistance in terms of long range planning. Teachers and welfare workers will be very helpful, especially when they have had experience with the retarded. As they are already aware of the need, they will probably want to serve on the planning committee. Other professional people may assist the recreational planning committee in an advisory capacity.

## CHAPTER II

## PLANNING STEPS TO CONSIDER,

Following are steps you may wish to consider in planning community recreational programs for the retarded)

## I. PROGRAM, RECRUITMENT AND ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

A. KIND OF RECREATION PROGRAM. The kind of program you plan will depend on the number of retarded in your community, their ages and degree of retardation. Some of the different kinds of programs are given below;

- 1- RECREATION PROGRAM FOR A MIXED GROUP. This program would mainly serve as a starting point in your long range planning. In some programs of this type, the ages of the group range from three and one-half to middle twenties. Playground or park type programs, as well as some year round indoor programs are often used with mixed groups. Usually the children are grouped according to age and/or ability, and leaders and helpers are assigned to each group.
2. SIMMER PLAYGROUND AND CRAFT PROGRAM. This program is similar to the one above. However, when there are two distinct age groups, you may wish to plan a morning program of games, stories and simple crafts for the younger children. During the afternoon, the older group can come for more advanced games and craft work.
3. SWIMMING PROGRAM. This program either could be planned for specific age groups or a modified mixed group, and if facilities were available, it could be on a year-round basis. The number of children participating could vary from three or four to a sizable number. It would probably be expedient to have a qualified swimming instructor in this program, and a ratio of one helper to every two to four children.
4. NURSERY PROGRAMS. This is a program for children from about the ages of 4 to 8. The program could have as few as three or four children. The group could either meet at a public facility or in a private home. The program would include simple games, stories and other activities.
5. TEEN-AGE PROGRAM. This program could be for children with ages ranging from 12 to middle 20's. There are a wide range of activities that can be used with this group. Special programs such as bowling or swimming could be the main center of activity. Or the program could be diversified, including the above, as well as social dancing, games and other activities.

ADULT PROGRAM. The ages for this program could range from about 18 to 50. The activities would be similar to those for the teen-age group. However, the adult group would probably enjoy crafts, visiting and quieter games. This group should not be neglected in your long range planning.

7. SCOUTING PROGRAMS. In planning the various scouting programs, it is necessary to work through the local scout offices. They will also need your help. Usually the local associations supply the leader for the program.

RECRUITING CHILDREN FOR THE PROGRAM. There are a number of families in every community who want specialized facilities for their retarded children. Recreation programs are usually started with this particular group in mind. However, attempts must be made to recruit other retarded in the community. There are two problems involved here: (1) Only a small fraction of the estimated 90,000 retarded in Minnesota has actually been identified. (2) There is often little information available on persons known to be retarded, concerning the person's age, degree of retardation and whether the person is at home or in an institution. Below are some ways that may make you aware of other children:

1. PUBLICITY Publicity about the program will bring responses from a few parents who are interested in having their retarded children participate in the program.
2. LETTER-QUESTIONNAIRES. You will probably want to send a letter-questionnaire to association members, as well as parents of retarded who are not members. The letter will explain the program and the purpose of the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, you not only will want information about the retarded, but also you should have the parents indicate whether they are interested in having their child participate in the program. Also, if parents can assist in conducting the program, this should be indicated.
3. SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS. Superintendents' may suggest names of children who may not be known otherwise. If names are secured through the school, you will want to contact the parents by either letter-questionnaire or a personal visit.
4. WELFARE WORKERS. Welfare workers will also have names of retarded who are not known by the local association.
5. PHYSICIANS AND PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES Physicians and public health nurses can also give you the names of parents of retarded, but normally, they prefer to recommend the Association to these parents, rather than give out the names.

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS Children are seldom excluded from recreational programs. Although some programs require that children be toilet trained and ambulatory, this restriction depends on the type of program and conditions in the local community. Extreme behavior problems are rare. However, if a child's behavior is so different as to disrupt the program, it may be necessary to exclude him temporarily or permanently. This decision should rest not only with the leader and volunteers, but also with the committee. It is in cases such as this that professional advice can be helpful,

## II, LEADER, VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTS

LEADER. Finding a competent person to conduct the recreation program should not be difficult. Trained leadership should be used whenever possible. Experienced group leaders who have worked with normal children are almost always able to handle programs of recreation for the retarded. If it is possible to obtain group leaders who have had experience with the retarded, this is even better. The most important consideration is to find a person with leadership abilities in the recreational setting. Some teachers, for example, may be excellent group leaders in the classroom setting,

but have neither the experience nor the aptitude for working with groups in the recreational framework. Many more teachers, however, are competent in both situations.

The leader should have some knowledge of the retarded. If a person is hired who has neither training nor experience in the area, it will be your responsibility to acquaint him with the problem. This can be accomplished by talking with him and supplying him or her with various reading materials distributed by the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children. The leader should be hired fairly early in your planning so that he can participate in the committee work.

Classroom and Sunday school teachers will probably be your main source of leaders. However, parents of retarded, whenever they have had group experience, may make excellent leaders.

**VOLUNTEERS** Volunteer helpers are an essential part of the recreational program. You will want to secure superior volunteers, just as you want a competent leader. Generally, there should be little problem in obtaining these helpers. Some of the ways in which volunteers can be secured are given below:

1. Public requests for volunteers through various news media.
2. Asking assistance from various church groups.
3. Service organizations often have members who are interested in this endeavor.
4. College students, especially teachers in training, may provide an excellent source, as they may wish the experience.
5. High school students, if they are mature and are directing themselves toward group work, often make good helpers, especially in programs designed for younger children.

**PARENTS** Parents must support the program if it is to succeed. It is often necessary that they participate as well. The kind and degree of participation will depend on the kind of program and the number of children enrolled.

1. Many of the summer playground programs require very little participation by the parents in actually conducting the program. The leaders are hired by the local associations, or they are recreation leaders who are working for the local department of recreation.
2. There are other instances where parents and other association members conduct the entire program.
3. The majority of programs probably will fall between these extremes.
  - a. Parents may wish to assist on a rotating basis.
  - b. They should work with all of the children, staying away from their own as often as possible.
  - c. The leader hired for the program is in charge, and partici-

pating parents should be willing to co-operate.

### III. LOCATION AND FACILITIES

**LOCATION** If you live in a sparsely settled county, your first concern will be deciding upon a geographical location. The problem of transportation, as well as the kind of program will influence your decision. Below are some alternatives;

1. **COUNTY SEAT OR LARGEST TOWN.** You may decide to have the program in the town that is the county seat, because it is centrally located. It is probably the largest city and has ample facilities. If there is a town where there are a large number of parents who are interested in the program, this may be a good location.
2. **ALTERNATING LOCATIONS.** You may wish to alternate the meetings between two or more towns to reduce the burden of having the same persons drive each time.
3. **SEPARATE PROGRAMS.** It may be feasible to plan several programs if interest is high and there are enough children known to be retarded. However, it is perhaps better to start with one of the previous suggestions. It is better to have one well planned program that is successful and proceed from there to organize others, than to plan several at one time and fail

**FACILITIES.** There are usually ample facilities in even the smallest towns. Some that you may consider are:

1. **SCHOOLS.** Local superintendents may offer the use of school building facilities for evening programs. They may also offer use of the playground during the summer.
2. **CHURCHES.** Churches often have excellent facilities, and ministers are almost always happy to offer these for your use.
3. **SERVICE CLUBS** Service organizations often have building facilities that are available during a part of each day.
4. **PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS.** The local recreation director may not only provide you with the use of his facilities, but may also supply a leader for the program.

**TRANSPORTATION** The problem of transportation, as most of these steps, must be solved at each local level. Some ways in which this can be worked out follow;

1. Each parent can transport his own child to the program.
2. Transportation can be worked out on a rotating basis. Parents whose children are participating can set up a driving roster so that parents from a particular part of town, or the county, can take turns driving.
3. Volunteers from service organizations may undertake transportation as one of their projects.
4. Miring one person to transport all of the children is another way. This procedure is generally used in one town. The expense can be handled by each parent or by a service club.

5. Whenever possible, children should utilize public transportation. The purpose is not for financial saving, but for the feeling of independence the child receives from the experience.

#### IV BUDGET AND DUES

- A. **BUDGET.** Recreation programs are one of the least expensive projects any organization can undertake. The only real expense is the leader. In some cases, the leader may volunteer his services. Generally, the leader should be paid from \$5 to \$7 dollars per meeting. This expense may be handled by either the association or by a service group.
- B. **DUES** In many programs, children pay dues at each meeting. This money is used to pay for refreshments.

#### V PROGRAMMING

"What do we do with these children?" is a question that is frequently asked whenever the subject of recreation for the retarded is discussed. Retarded children play the same games and participate in many of the same social activities as normal children. There will be a list of books in the bibliography that describe various games and activities you can use. Some general principles that may help you in programming are given below;

- A. Activities for the mentally retarded should be planned in terms of the chronological age of the group as well as their mental ages. For example, a retarded child of 12 who has a mental age of 6, is similar in some respects to a normal youngster of 6. However, he is also much like a normal 12-year-old in his physical development and social interests. The aim, then, should be to provide games and activities for these children that are in keeping with their social interests, but geared to their mental level. For example, retarded as well as normals enjoy playing games designed after the various quiz programs they see on television. The retarded child can play these games quite successfully if the questions are in keeping with his mental ability.
- B. Younger children often have greater success and more initial interest in activities that require movement.
- C. Almost all retarded will respond to various musical games and to singing.
- D. Provisions should be made for individual entertainment and play at both the beginning and closing of the program. The children seldom arrive or leave at the same time.
- E. The leader should have a large repertoire of games, activities and stories to avoid letting the program drag.
- F. The program should be well planned, but flexible. If the group does not respond to an activity, the leader should change to some familiar one that is liked by the group. The particular activity may be tried again at a later meeting, but if the group still doesn't respond, the activity should not be pursued. It may be that the activity is too complicated and needs to be broken down and explained step by step.
- G. The leader should change activities several times during the pro-

gram. The length of time spent on an activity will largely depend on the age and interest of the group. It may be necessary to change activities every fifteen minutes for the younger children. Teenagers and adults often enjoy participating in the same activity for an hour at a time.

- H. All persons helping with the program, leader, volunteers and parents, should participate in the program as well as supervise. If the helpers stand around, the children are likely to follow suit. When parents stand along the sides, their child often wanders over and stands by them. Whenever possible, the leader should be in the middle of every activity.
- I. The refreshment period should be placed at about the middle of the program. Usually, the more vigorous activities are planned for the first part of the program, followed by a refreshment period. After the refreshment time, the activities, especially for younger children, should involve less physical exertion. This is a good time for stories, singing and crafts.

#### VI. STARTING DATE, TIME AND HOURS

- A. **STARTING DATE.** You probably will wish to set a starting date early in your planning. For example, you may plan during the winter for a summer playground program. However, the exact date cannot be decided until you are well along in your planning.
- B. **TIME AND HOURS.** As with other steps in your planning, the time and hours will largely depend on the kind of program. There should be no fewer than two meetings a month, as the program is likely to lose its continuity. Summer playground programs sometimes meet as often as five days a week. Programs for younger children will meet during the day, and generally should be no longer than two hours. Teenage and adult programs are sometimes held in the evenings, and are for longer periods of time.
- C. **NOTIFYING PARENTS.** Once the starting date has been set and all of the details have been worked out, you will want to notify the parents whose children will be participating.

#### VII. CONTINUED PLANNING

Regular planning sessions should continue even after the program has been started. The committee should meet to plan future activities with the leader, and to evaluate the progress that has been made. Also, as interest grows in the program, and other retarded children in your community become involved, it will probably be necessary to organize additional programs. The first program is only a starting point, and others will follow in the light of success of the first one.



PART III

RECREATION PROGRAMS IN MINNESOTA

## RECREATION PROGRAMS IN MINNESOTA

### I SOCIAL GROUP WORK PROGRAMS

THE FUN CLUB, WAITE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, MINNEAPOLIS. This is a group of about 50 mildly retarded adults whose ages range from 18 to 40. The group meets on the first and third Friday of the month from 8 to 10:30 p.m.

HOW THE PROGRAM WAS STARTED The program started with an individual welfare case worker in Hennepin County recognizing the need for leisure time planning and recreation for the retarded in his case load. This need was expressed at one of the staff meetings, and it was decided to explore possible resources to alleviate the situation. The staff supervisor and the agency's group work consultant asked the Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children to assist in this endeavor. They felt that the program could not be planned without help from the association.

. . .We had then the beginning of a team approach to this problem, and it was felt that without the parent group, we could not have moved forward. The problems and "unknowns" seemed too great to tackle alone. (9)

Finally, arrangements were made with the staff and board of the Waite Neighborhood House, to accept the project on an experimental basis. After the program had been underway for about a year, the Minneapolis Soroptimists Club expressed an interest in the project by offering financial assistance for professional group work service.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES. According to the staff, one of the most obvious services the group has offered is the teaching of recreational skills. Some of the activities used with which members had little or no prior experience are social dancing, folk and square dancing, bowling, ping-pong, volley ball, group games, hay rides, sleigh rides, camping, and outdoor cooking.

GOOD TIMERS CLUB, NORTH EAST NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, MINNEAPOLIS. The last report for this group indicated there were twelve retarded in the program, seven women and five men, whose ages ranged from nineteen to fifty. The group meets on the first and third Fridays in the evening.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES Making simple craft items, gymnasium activities (for the men) and musical activities are some of the recreational outlets enjoyed by the group. They also made their own refreshments at each meeting, and, according to the leader, the refreshment and sociability time was the highlight of the evening.

DUES. Each member contributed 15 cents to pay for refreshments. At the end of the year the extra money was used to take a bus trip to one of the parks in the Twin Cities.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS The leader reports that transportation was a serious problem. However, the director of the agency, as well as the Red Cross and East Side Kiwanis Club in Minneapolis helped by transporting the members to and from the meetings.

VALUE OF THE PROGRAM. Following is a statement by the leader of this program.

...it seems to me there can be no question as to the value of the

group. Everyone of its members gained joy, social recognition, a feeling of accomplishment and personal worth.

THE PARTY CLUB, WAITEN EIGHBORHOOD HOUSE MINNEAPOLIS This program is for a group of about 15 and fourth Wednesdays of the month. A general program of recreation is offered.

## II GENERAL PROGRAMS OF RECREATION

THE ALBERT LEA SUMMER PLAYGROUND PROGRAM. This program is for a group of 8 to 14 trainable retarded children in Albert Lea. The ages of the children range from 6 to 16. The group meets week days during the summer from 9 a.m. to noon.

HOW THE PROGRAM WAS STARTED. The idea for a summer playground program for the retarded was discussed at a monthly meeting of the Freeborn County Association for Retarded Children. It was decided to have two members from the association approach the director of the Albert Lea City Park program. The director expressed interest in the project, and suggested the program be set up on a four week trial basis. The group decided on one of the five city parks that was most centrally located. A special class teacher was hired as leader of the project. The association paid the salary of the leader during the trial period. The following year, the department of recreation allocated funds for this project, and has been supporting the program ever since. At present,\* the leader is a regular class teacher. The leader also transports the children to and from the park. Each parent pays \$1.00 per week toward the cost of transportation.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES. This program is conducted at the same time as the various programs for normal youngsters, however, the mixing of the children on the same playground has worked out satisfactorily. The children like to do the same things all children enjoy. The leader allows the children to engage in any activity they are able to do. Part of the morning is spent reading to the group. Also, part of the program is devoted to simple hand work.

Additional information about this program can be obtained from the following person:

Mrs- F. C. Adair  
Freeborn County Association for Retarded Children  
105 First Avenue  
Albert Lea, Minnesota

TEEN-Y TOPPERS, MINNEAPOLIS This is a program for about 60 teenaged aged retardates. The program meets every Friday evening during the school year from 7:30 to 10 p.m. at the Y.W.C.A. The ages of the group range from 12 to 26. Average attendance last year was 49.

HOW THE PROGRAM WAS STARTED, This program was started because of the interest and efforts of several families of teen-age retardates. These parents started the planning, but realizing they needed help, they approached the "Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children. The association staff pointed out the need for a trained leader to conduct the program. It was also suggested that they explore existing facilities. A committee of parents arranged with the director of the Minneapolis Y.W.C.A. to have the program meet at the Y. A trained leader was hired by the Minneapolis association. Parents serve as chaperons,

and volunteers from' the community help with the program. A committee composed of parents, leader, volunteers and MARC staff meets regularly to determine progress and to plan for future meetings. Transportation is handled by the parents on a rotating basis.

**PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.** The main activities are social dancing, swimming, bowling, group games and singing. The activities are alternated from week, to week. For example, one week the program may consist of dancing, games and singing. The next week bowling may be the main activity. Each member enrolled in the program pays 25 cents per week for refreshments, and pays his own bowling fee.

You may write to the follo\*ing person for further information about this program:

Mr. Gordon Christian, Executive Director  
Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children"  
2742 Hennepin Avenue  
Minneapolis 8, Minnesota

**ST CLOUD RECREATION CENTER FOR RETARDED.** This is a program for trainable retarded whose ages range from 3 1/2 to 26. The group meets every Wednesday afternoon from 1 to 3:30 at the St. Cloud VFW Hall.

**HOW THE PROGRAM WAS STARTED.** The program was started because of a need felt by several families who were members of the St. Cloud Association for Retarded Children. The project was planned through the efforts of interested parents and ARC officers and board members. The local VFW provided two rooms of their new building for this program, as well as other facilities. The program was started in April, 1958, and is entirely supervised by members of the St. Cloud ARC. Two are certified teachers, and all of the helpers, with the exception of the leader, are parents of retarded. Five communities from Stearns County are represented in this program. Transportation is handled on an individual basis.

**PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.** The children are separated into several groups. The older, more able, engage in craft work, play and social recreation. The younger children play various individual and group games.

You may obtain additional information by writing to the leader of the program:

Mrs. John Hazelton % Mr. Edmond Schnettler  
1343 15th Avenue  
Saint Cloud, Minnesota

**MANKATO SUMMER PLAYGROUND PROGRAM.** This program is provided for a group of 17 retarded children, whose ages range from 8 to 18. The group meets each weekday afternoon during the summer from 1:30 to 4 at one of the parks in Mankato.

**HOW THE PROGRAM WAS STARTED.** This program was started in June, 1958. Members of the Mankato ARC requested help from the city's department of recreation. They had already assessed the community to find the number of children who would participate in a recreation program. The director expressed interest, but suggested an integrated program because there was no leader available. Parents felt this would be an unsatisfactory arrangement and declined the offer. However, a special

class teacher of trainable children from Bingham Lake offered his services and was hired by the recreation department. The program consists mostly of handwork and craft activities.

Additional information may be obtained from the following person:

Mrs. Hugo Koeppen  
728 Park Avenue  
North Mankato, Minnesota

THURS.-TEENS, ST. PAUL. This program serves over 30 retardates ranging in age from 14 to 32. They meet weekly on Thursday evenings at the St. Paul Y.W.C.A.

ORGANIZATION Thurs-Teens is sponsored jointly by the St. Paul Association for Retarded Children and the Y.M.C.A. which furnishes space for the program and also recreational equipment. Its director is an occupational therapist with good recreational skills. Those who assist the director are all non-parent volunteers. Parents furnish weekly treats and co-operate in providing transportation. All interested children are accepted into the program on a provisional basis regardless of age and ability range.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES. A typical program consists of large, noisy games and group dances. Swimming night is held once monthly and supervised by three water-safety instructors assisted by regular Thurs-Teen volunteers. The non-swimmers play as usual.

For additional information about Thurs-Teens, write to:

Mr. James McCarthy, Executive Secretary  
St. Paul ARC  
2338 University Avenue  
St. Paul 14, Minnesota

### III SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The following information has been extracted from a monograph entitled, "Services for the Retarded".

In a co-operative venture, the Citizens Club Community Center and the "Minneapolis Association for Retarded Children operate a social development center for teen-age and adult mentally retarded. A grant from the federal government provided the funds for the pilot project scheduled to continue for 15 months.

The staff for the program induces a professional leader with several years of experience as a classroom teacher of the mentally retarded, a consulting psychiatrist, and several volunteers. A speech correctionist will be added on a part-time basis.

Social events, games, craft work and other similar activities designed to help mental retardates toward greater independence and toward some potential for employment are carried on. Bi-monthly evaluation meetings are held with the parents.

#### IV SCOUTING PROGRAMS

##### BOY SCOUT PROGRAMS:

Mr, August Pavel, Scoutmaster  
2116 Nokomis Avenue  
St. Paul 6, Minnesota

Mr. Allen Burtis, Scoutmaster  
6324 Knox Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

##### GIRL SCOUT PROGRAMS:

Mrs. Florence Nagle  
Girl Scouts Inc., Saint Paul Area  
Globe Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota •

Mrs. Walter J. Paton  
2116 21st Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

##### CUB SCOUT PROGRAMS:

Robert Anderson Cubmaster  
Austin, Minnesota

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