

May, 1952

PATIENT TRAINING PROGRAM AT THE MINNESOTA SCHOOL & COLONY

Training functions are specifically borne by two departments in the Institution, the School Department and the Patient Programs Department. In the former, training is the major objective of the program, while the latter trains patients as such training becomes necessary for carrying out recreational and occupational therapies or as is necessitated by the need for maintaining the Institution itself.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the School Department maintains classes which provide the following types of training:

1. Pre-school and kindergarten (10 patients). Here emphasis is placed on group living and accommodation, self-help, and knowledge of elemental aspects of our environment and culture. Children enrolled in this group are expected to develop to the point where they may take academic school work, either here or at the Owatonna State School.
2. "Trainable child" program (48 patients). This type of program is designed to make useful, self-respecting individuals from those who are not capable of learning to read and write. The objectives here are similar to those of the kindergarten class, but the children are generally older and less intelligent.
3. Academic (51 patients). This encompasses a program similar to that of the public school, but geared to the special needs of retarded children. Those enrolled in the academic classes are generally the brightest, and /or have the best prognosis for independent adult maintenance, and /or are capable of living a fuller life within the Institution.
4. Handicraft (45 patients). This provides a special type of training to retarded children for their own personal enjoyment and because of their relatively greater ability to compete with normal persons in this area of activity than in other types of work. This program is part of the School Department insofar as it is an integral part of the training of mentally retarded people. After a child has reached a working level of skill in handicraft, his continued activities whether as recreation, therapy, or production for use, are transferred under the supervision of the Patient Program Department.

To carry out the above programs, the School Department has four elementary teachers, as well as part-time use of a sewing teacher and music teacher from the Patient Programs Department. In addition, a teacher for the deaf has been authorized to be added to the staff and will probably be available beginning September, 1952, to provide the special education required by the approximately twenty-five children who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as mentally retarded.

The handicraft training given by the Patient Programs Department complements the program of the School Department by providing for the

development of manual skills. All employees in the Institution, however, are indoctrinated, by means of an in-service training program, with the concept that they are and should be contributing to the training of patients in their care.

Coordinating the training program at the Minnesota School and Colony is an Education and Training Committee comprised of the School Principal, Patient Programs Supervisor, Chief Social Worker, Clinical Psychologist, and a staff Physician. Following consideration in Case Conference, this committee plans a program for the patients in accordance with his mental level, physical status, general personality traits, and earlier achievement. Any patients whom the committee feels requires prolonged or intensive study is referred to the Superintendent for special attention.