

September 15, 1950

Mr. Roy C. Simon, Director
Mental Deficiency Section
National Mental Health Foundation
1520 Race Street
Philadelphia 2, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Simon:

As Superintendent of the Minnesota School and Colony, I desire to submit the name of Carl H. Norlin, Psychiatric Aide II at this institution in competition for the outstanding Aide to the Mentally Retarded for 1950. Mr. Norlin was selected to represent this institution with the assistance of a special board consisting of the Superintendent, the Business Manager, who acts as personnel officer in addition to his other duties, the Senior Psychiatric Social Worker, the Psychologist, Senior Staff Physician, the graduate nurse in charge of in-service training, and the supervisor of recreational activities. The board acted on nominations that had been received after due notice of the contest had been given through displaying your poster relative to the campaign, together with a memorandum to all department heads asking that they call this matter to the attention of each individual employed in their respective departments.

Mr. Norlin has been employed here continuously since January 20, 1938 when he became an attendant in a division for custodial male patients. His duties consisted of taking care of patients of ages varying from young children to elderly persons and of varying degrees of intelligence, from those at the idiot level to the moron group, and varying in physical condition from helpless patients to those in good physical condition, depending upon the particular dormitory to which he might be assigned. He was fully equal to meeting adequately

the responsibilities entrusted to him and from the start performed his duties in a very satisfactory manner with increasing ability as he gained in experience.

On March 22, 1939 he was transferred to another division, or group of buildings, where he was assigned to one particular building housing eighty-six (86) boys, some of whom were school boys, while others were young adults who had completed school training and were patient workers assigned to duties in various places within the institution. On September 16, 1944 he was promoted to the position of charge attendant in a building housing about sixty (60) chronic, defective, delinquent male patients. This was a very difficult building because many of these patients had been involved in serious misconduct in their community and had been closely confined in the one building for a long period of time. His understanding of human behavior and his kindly attitude toward the patients resulted in a minimal amount of difficulty in properly caring for them. In discussing with Mr. Norlin patients showing serious conduct disorders, he evaluated the personalities in a correct manner, but usually found some good qualities that could be mentioned and would utilize them to bring out the best behavior possible in the various individuals under his care. In July, 1945 the chronic defective delinquent patients in his building were transferred to a special Annex for Defective Delinquents established in another institution. The replacement of those transferred was made by admitting the more serious behavior problems in various buildings housing male patients in the institution, resulting in a mixture of patients varying as to age and intelligence levels. Mr. Norlin handled this group of patients just as satisfactorily as he had the former group.

On March 16, 1950 he was transferred as Attendant II, classification changed to Psychiatric Aide II July 1, 1950, to take charge of a building named Grandview located about three miles from the main group of buildings having seventy-seven (77) patients, but with a normal capacity of about fifty (50). The building is situated on farm land belonging to the institution. Mr. Norlin maintains a vegetable garden of 2½ acres in addition to beautiful flower beds. The patients are made to feel that the garden and flowers are theirs and those able to work in them take great pride in them and find interest and joy in helping care for them.

The patients in this building are for the most part older men, but in addition there are some young adults who require special convalescent care. In view of the isolated location of this building, Mr. Norlin has no immediate supervisor and just refer any unusual problems that arise to the staff physician assigned to care for the patients there or to the business manager. Mr. Norlin exercises excellent judgment and during his period of service in the present assignment has never assumed responsibility beyond what was proper, nor has he unnecessarily troubled the staff physician, the business manager, or the superintendent.

In the past patients in this building have at times been unhappy because of the distance they are from the program of activities on the main campus and relatives who come to visit were often dissatisfied because of the distance they must travel to reach the building, but since Mr. Norlin took charge these complaints have disappeared. On one occasion a mother had left word that she wanted to see the superintendent when she learned that her son had been transferred to Grandview, as she feared he would not continue to receive as good care and attention there. Th

superintendent had occasion to go out to Grandview in the late afternoon and found that Mr. Norlin had arranged for a nice meal to be served to this elderly mother and which she had just finished when he arrived. Mr. Norlin explained to the superintendent that she had been upset about her son's transfer and he had permitted her to stay beyond the usual visiting hours in order to show her about the building and grounds and to describe the program of treatment, care and activities. The superintendent expressed his appreciation for Mr. Norlin's thoughtfulness and then went in to discuss the son's case with the mother. She said that she was glad that she had not seen him earlier as she had been very unhappy to find that her son was not in a building on the main campus but since visiting her son and meeting Mr. Norlin and seeing the conditions existing there that she was very happy that he had been moved. I think it is to Mr. Norlin's special credit that he had not objected to receiving and keeping this patient as it had been explained to him in advance that the patient was an imbecile 38 years of age with arrested tuberculosis, that he was sometimes untidy but that there was no other building that would be able to provide as good conditions for the patient's benefit. Mr. Norlin had willingly agreed to accept him and the untidiness has definitely improved and may disappear as a result of the special attention Mr. Norlin is giving. Another patient, who is a moron about 50 years old, admitted about 18 months ago, would not answer when spoken to up to six months ago. Mr. Norlin has gained his confidence by giving him as much attention and encouragement as possible and he now will not only carry on a conversation but is one of the best helpers in the garden. A sister who

visits him often is so pleased and grateful over her brother's improvement that she is arranging to install a television set for the benefit of the patients there. She had interviewed the superintendent at the time of her brother's admission to the institution shortly before Mr. Norlin took charge of the building and explained that she regretted taking this step but that it was necessary as the family could not control him at home. The sister has repeatedly assured the superintendent of her deep appreciation for the very fine care her brother is receiving and cannot speak too highly of the fine work that Mr. Norlin is doing.

Mr. Norlin has taken an active interest in the increased recreational program which was made possible July 1, 1950, as a part of the new mental health program in our state institutions. Those patients able to participate in games such as softball, horseshoe, and volleyball, are encouraged to participate in those activities. As Mr. Norlin has had voice training and is much interested in music he directs his patients in group singing and has arranged for various church groups to render musical programs on Sunday evenings this fall and winter.

Mr. Norlin was born in Kent City, Michigan September 3, 1899 and moved to Minnesota in 1909, where he attended public schools. Later he attended the Lutheran Bible Institute in St. Paul and studied voice at the Minneapolis School of Music. Immediately before coming to this institution he had worked as an orderly in St. Johns Hospital, Red Wing, Minnesota for several years.

Mr. Norlin is held in high esteem by all who know him and has the good will of all employees, as well as of his patients. It was interesting to find that of those nominating Mr. Norlin, two were employees working under his supervision and the further fact that he was the only

nominee in regard to whom no one on the board could find anything to criticize. Although Mr. Norlin had been employed here for many years before our in-service training program was started last fall, he attended the in-service training classes faithfully and took as great interest in the material presented as though he were just starting in his field of work as Psychiatric Aide. He showed initiative and enthusiasm with proper modesty.

Mr. Norlin takes a great interest in all civic matters with special interest in church work. He has sung often in churches and over the radio and for many years has taught bible classes in Sunday schools. Although he is an ardent church worker, he is not at all fanatical. He is a true Christian in that he lives his religion every day and has a sincere desire for the welfare and well-being of everyone.

It is difficult to select an outstanding Aide for the mentally retarded because of the great differences in their needs depending upon mental level, chronological age, physical and emotional condition and behavior, but Mr. Norlin is one whom we feel could be trusted to give the very best treatment and care to any individual or group entrusted to him.

I take great pride and pleasure in nominating Mr. Norlin for this outstanding award and feel confident that he truly merits it.

Sincerely yours,

E. J. Engberg, M.D.
Superintendent

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