

CAN WE AFFORD MISERY?

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One thousand day care centers were needed for 50,000 migrant children in 1963, but government provided no more than 50. This number, small as it is, fails to show how great is the neglect of these children since the states of New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania operated 31 of the 50, while in the three states with the largest migrant populations—Texas, California and Michigan—only one center was operated. The one was the signal achievement of California. In addition to the 50 centers provided by the government were the centers provided by religious groups. These were often decidedly beneficial though reaching only a very small per cent of the children in need.

The states in 1963 with well-established programs of day care for migrant children, supported from public funds were: New Jersey (state funds) four, New York (state funds) fourteen, Ohio (Federal) six, Pennsylvania (Federal and state) eleven, and Wisconsin (Federal) four. Other states which include in their child welfare services plans for migrant day care through Federal assistance are: California, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Oklahoma. Colorado's one day care center receives state support. Day care for migrant children in these states is in a somewhat pilot stage.

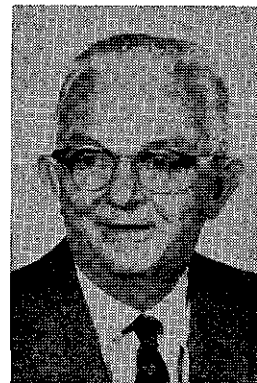
Our Hidden Children

The difference a day care center makes in the life of a migrant child can scarcely be grasped without visiting a migrant camp where the children live. Be prepared to have your heart broken when you see the injuries inflicted on their personalities. In this forbidding place the child has no privacy, no playthings, scarcely any care, and perhaps worst of all, no one to appreciate or admire him for anything he may do. You may read articles and view films on migrant life—all they tell you will soon be forgotten—but once you see the little children at a camp they will never let go of your conscience.

Finding the children is a problem, for

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the camps are located on isolated farms far from the public view. Factory children of a half century past were not hard to find. These children with sad, tired faces, and many with twisted limbs, were readily observed as they entered or left the factories by people walking along the adjoining streets. Today's migrant children are out of sight and out of the public's mind. Their rescue requires a great amount of your determination.

Whose Responsibility?

Who is responsible for the welfare of these children? The growers, primarily, because they import migrant families into the county to harvest their crops. Yet the invariable reply of these men to every appeal for their aid is: "I've no time for the kids; my crops have to be harvested." At the same time, a large degree of responsibility also rests on the neighboring community. For example, a playground is the obvious need at every camp where children live.

These children, like all children, love to have fun; their health and happiness depend on it. The setting up of a playground with sandbox, combination slide and swings would cost a civic or church group no more than \$25, yet can you imagine the great amount of happiness from this small investment? Curiously enough, many people who are quick to help the underprivileged in foreign

The responsibility for operating the centers is contracted by the Department of Public Welfare to the Child Development Department of the College of Home Economics of the Pennsylvania State University. The day care center held at Ulysses in Potter County in 1955, was the first to use federal funds. It had an enrollment of 50 children. The 11 day care centers operated in many parts of the state in 1963 served near 300. Meanwhile, the program has been vastly expanded and improved in day care, personnel, and equipment, in health and social services. Not only are a large number of children aged 3-7 benefitted, but also their families at adjacent camps.

The supervisor of the Day Care Program of Pennsylvania is Mrs. Marion Sheridan of the Office of Children and Youth, while its coordinator is Mrs. Naomi Naylor, instructor in the College of Home Economics of Pennsylvania State University.



The action taken by Pennsylvania in behalf of its migrant children appears all the more significant when it is realized that not only was it the first state to make use of federal funds for day care for migrant children, but it did so at a time when 10 other states, which provided no form of aid to these children, heartlessly returned the unused remainder of their allotments, totaling almost \$300,000 to the Children's Bureau at the end of the fiscal year.

This sum, if it had been used, would have operated a chain of day care centers with incalculable benefit to thousands of children. In 1958 the Children's Bureau adopted the rule of re-allotting the funds that are returned to those states which apply for them, and this policy has resulted in an expansion of services to the resident children, although it is not evident that many migrant children have been benefitted.

This is the Pennsylvania Story. It tells how the Pennsylvania Citizens' Committee on Migrant Labor and the state's Bureau of Child Welfare co-operated in the use of federal funds to establish a day care program for migrant children. The program operates under approved standards and possesses the prerequisite character of stability and permanence. Why have not the other states done likewise? If it is not discrimination against the migrant children because of their class, then what is the reason?

The answers one hears most frequently at the Capitol are these: "The state's allotment has already been used up for resident children;" "The need of day care centers for migrant children in this state has not been officially established;" and "No citizens' group has ever requested the use of these funds for migrant children." Are these the real reasons, or nothing more than the standard excuses for official inaction?

Government officials, as a class, have an unenviable reputation of frigidity toward embracing new programs. Some, it seems, are fearful of the demagogic politician, the type who screams and

dren. They are well aware of the fact that migrant families are non-resident, unorganized, alone and completely helpless at the Capitol. Their helplessness, indeed, in most states, is equal to that of the medieval serfs in London or Paris.

Besides the narrow-minded professional types, one is privileged to meet others who are conscientiously trying to set up day care programs for migrant children. They insist, and rightly, that these be based on a broad involvement of citizen interest to insure success of the project. Members of the citizens' committee, in answer, will protest that they cannot get the thing off the ground without more forceful state leadership. The facts of the situation in several states would seem to place a large share of responsibility for setting up a day care center on the state welfare agency. This is where leadership is to be expected.

When a citizens' committee, one undeniably representative of the community, makes a request for a center, the State Welfare Department should send one of its staff to lend assistance, if possible, someone with experience in composing community differences and promoting indigenous civic leadership. As the situation now stands, in several states, members of the citizens' committees and welfare officials are discussing the problem avidly from all angles, but, like stationary running, there is no forward motion and no day care center.

California

One citizen who has kept her eyes steadily on the children is Mrs. Emma Gunterman of Gridley, California, a crusader to whom all parties give most credit for the official day care center and summer school that were operated in California last summer. The center was the first in the state to be operated for these children with the use of federal funds. The program was conducted under the State Departments of Education and Social Welfare and County Welfare of Butte county at the Gridley

ments. The summer school for the children was operated by the Department of Education of neighboring Chico State College as a workshop for its students. Its program was original and of decidedly high quality. The enthusiasm of the students was delightful to see.

This is an encouraging beginning in California for a predicted chain of day care centers next year. California, which surpasses all other states in its health services to migrants, should be expected to move forward rapidly with day care and education programs now that the ice has been broken at Gridley and the ordeal of the pilot stage is past. Such was the experience of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Wisconsin

As a guest of The Governor's Committee on Migratory Labor on tour I was privileged to observe Wisconsin's day care program, which began in 1962 and developed rapidly during 1963. There was only one center at Spring Lake in 1962; in 1963 there were four, three in Waushara County and one in Door County, caring for about 140 children ranging in ages from three to seven. The program has progressed under the leadership of Jenny Lind, Supervisor of Field Services and Community Services of the Division for Children and Youth, with the support of the Governor's Committee, whose chairman is Dr. Elizabeth Brandeis Raushenbush. (5)

The program includes particularly interesting features that are worthy of emulation elsewhere. Some of these are:

- The enrollment of resident children with the migrant children

- Motion pictures of the children shown to them to their great merriment

- The Family-Visitor, who at camps performs the functions of the social worker

- The employment in the Division of Children and Youth of a staff