

Family Service Helps Aged with Adjustments

This is the last in a series of six articles based on actual, typical case histories from the office of Family Service of Oakland County. The material is discussed on previous pages.

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Miss Smith, 69 years old with no living relative, was facing a difficult situation and had no place to go. She was receiving Old Age Assistance and has a slight handicap. Her assistance grant was not large enough for her to remain in her present apartment and the landlord felt that someone should help Miss Smith.

This is when she came to Family Service, a Torch Drive agency. The counselor was impressed first by a pitiful old lady, partially blind, who seemed unable to know where to go and how to get there. She was confused and felt the world was against her as she was trying to live out her later years.

We learned that in her productive years, she was a secretary and held a job for a long period of time until, because of financial reverses, the company went out of business.

FROM 55 years of age she lived with her brother, who was on pension. He died three months ago and she is now facing living alone on her Old Age Assistance grant. Miss Smith has led a rather solitary life with few friends. Thus, she had no one to turn to. She was not actively connected with any church.

There has been a decrease in family ties, which has an effect upon security of aged individuals. This decrease could be due in part to the mobility of population in which children no longer live near their parents plus new names that

are generally smaller and do not have room for the third generation.

AS A RESULT of such changes in our culture, there are different needs of the aging population today.

On the surface Miss Smith's situation seemed relatively simple whereby we could help her move into a congenial living situation. Some suggestions were offered to her but she turned them down, saying that as long as she was able to do her own cooking and housework, she wanted her own apartment. This sounded reasonable and logical so the caseworker went about trying to find cheaper rent.

At the risk of simplification of needs of aged, they can be broken down to economic, housing, medical and problems of personal adjustment.

There are fewer aged people today who are financially and totally self-supporting than there were 50 years ago.

WE HAVE Social Security and retirement plans; but even with all these, all the economic needs of the aged are not being met today.

With the development of new housing, there is no longer room for three generations and average incomes today are not large enough to run two homes.

When there is a third generation under the same roof, oftentimes the aged person is pushed into a lifeless rooming house, slum housing with inadequate facilities or left to a somewhat nebulous existence.

There has been much in the newspapers about medical needs. Regardless of how this problem is

going to be met, society needs to recognize that a problem does exist.

WHEN MISS Smith turned down several suggestions, we began to see some of her personality difficulties. Anything that was found within her budgetary means was immediately unacceptable to her.

The worker began to question whether anyone could really please her. Instead of getting angry at Miss Smith, the worker decided to allow her some time to think things over and allow the pressure of her lack of adequate income help her to arrive at some decision.

Finally, Miss Smith did come to a decision and they moved her into a very nice small apartment over a restaurant.

It was not long after the move that Miss Smith began to complain about the noise of the restaurant and again the congenial living situation was offered to her. It was pointed out that she would not feel so lonely and that she would have other people her own age to talk with and share recreational facilities.

AGED INDIVIDUALS can have personal adjustment problems. They have fears expressed by such statements as "Who will care for me if I am ill?" "Will my money hold out? Who will bury me?" "Will I become chronically ill?"

Then too, the aged person needs to belong, to have companionship in the sense that he is still needed. There is no satisfaction in idleness for any person regardless of age.

Our Senior Citizens need to feel the respect of their society for the contribution they have made in the past and can make in the

future. We need to find outlets to use their knowledge. We need to correct society's attitude of basic ridicule.

THIS IS NOT to deny that some aged people have attitudes and feelings which might be determined difficult. However, if one looked back on each individual life, one would find that the aged person is not basically different than he was in his earlier years.

If an aged person was a happy person before he was 65 and is

given a fair chance after that, he will be a happy person until he leaves this world. Older people are sometimes reluctant to voice their needs; they repulse desires and suffer because of this.

Using some of the above as background, we can understand why perhaps Miss Smith, a lonely, frightened person who led rather a solitary life, was expressing some of these fears in what might be called obstinacy.

BECAUSE OF all the time and effort the counselor had invested with Miss Smith, she began to trust the counselor.

Finally, after more interviews in which the worker patiently allowed Miss Smith to express her feelings, they then looked at the problem together and Miss Smith was able to think in terms of moving to a home for aged people. This is where she is today, happy, contented among people her

own age with her interests, and chances for recreational outlets.

This ends the series of articles on the high cost of unhappy living and how Family Service of Oakland County makes some contributions towards reduction of this cost.

TO BE SURE, not all problems are successfully solved. However, the majority of them are and families that are troubled and concerned should never hesitate to turn to Family Service, an agency supported by both the Torch Drive Club of Metropolitan Detroit and the Pontiac Area United Fund.

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Teen-Agers' Court Handles Six Cases

Six teen-agers were found guilty of traffic violations during Birmingham Teen-Age Traffic Court's monthly session last Thursday.

Of the six cases handled, two concerned speeding violations. Corrective actions included a 10-day suspension of driver's license with attendance at driver's correctional clinic and a 750-word theme with a talk with the traffic referee.

A STOP-SIGN violator received a 1000-word theme and attendance at driver's clinic.

Two of three traffic signal violators were given talks by the

traffic referee while the third received attendance at driver's clinic.

"The difference in penalties for what seem to be similar violations is accounted for by the circumstances of each case," said Lieutenant Robert Schaub.

The next session of the court will be March 2 at 9 a.m. in the commission chambers of the Municipal Building.

Marine Ends Course

Marine Pfc. Carl J. Lisewski Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl J. Lisewski, 1622 Holland, Birmingham, recently completed four weeks of individual combat training at the Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, Calif. The course included the latest infantry tactics, first aid, demolitions, field fortifications and advanced schooling on weapons.

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