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Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau  
Family Counseling Approach to Delinquent Youth  
(SE-75-C-4B-743)

SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

January 1, 1976 - December 31, 1976

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Board of Directors

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YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU

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January 31, 1977

Governor's Justice Commission  
Southeast Region  
214 West Front Street  
Media, PA 19063

Dear Commission:

On behalf of the Upper Moreland Township Commissioners and the Aldersgate Board of Directors, we hereby submit for your review the SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT for the period January 1976 through December 1976.

We are pleased with the progress and success of the project to date and will continue to maintain our services to youth.

We look forward to 1977 and the continued support and confidence of the Governor's Justice Commission.

Respectfully,

Rita M. Mulligan  
Senior Counselor  
Family Counseling Project

Peter C. Weaver  
Director of Services  
Project Director

RMM/PCW/rs

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FORWARD

In August, 1975, Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau in cooperation with Upper Moreland Township applied for funds from the Governor's Justice Commission. The project was approved and began operation January 16, 1976.

The project was to provide a family counseling and systems analysis approach to working with delinquent and predelinquent youth. The project was also designed to demonstrate interagency and intergovernmental cooperation.

The Family Counseling Project has grown from an idea to a viable alternative for youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system. We have received self, school, police, and probation referrals. Percentage-wise, we received 7.5% through self referrals, 6.4% through school referrals, 52.7% through police referrals, and 27.9% through the juvenile probation department. The statistics are significant in that they indicate the Family Counseling Project has served both predelinquent and delinquent youth and has attempted to avoid negative labeling of youth who are involved in the program.

This report will review the efforts of the Project over the last year. Issues that have come to our attention are discussed.

We are encouraged by the accomplishments of the last year and hopeful that we have found an effective and humanistic way to help kids in trouble.

*Rita Mulligan*  
Rita Mulligan

*Tim Spangler*  
Tim Spangler

## INTRODUCTION

### Goals

"The project will provide family counseling and systems analysis to working with delinquent and predelinquent youth.. The counseling service is based on the belief that behavioral change (in this case, the reduction of delinquent acts) is unlikely to take place by counseling youth individually."

The goal of the Family Counseling Project clearly defines the role we will perform in treating youth and their families. This role is one of structuring the family to actively participate in their son/daughter's behavior. The Family Counseling Project seeks to create and guide a crisis into a growth experience. To accomplish this, the parents of the family will need to see their responsibility in the matter and not society's (e.g., police) or his peers, etc. It is important to note that responsibility does not connote blame, merely the willingness to take control of the situation and become accountable to oneself. In addition, the Family Counseling Project will support the adolescent in his attempt to become responsible for his/her behavior.

The goal is to create a counseling program specifically for delinquent and predelinquent young people that can serve as an alternative to direct or repeated involvement in the Juvenile Justice System. Within 12 months the effects of the program will be seen in the following areas:

- (1) During the project year we expect a decrease of at least 15% in the number of contacts which police in the townships of Hatboro/Horsham, Upper Moreland, Lower Moreland, and Abington report with young people age 17 and younger compared to the calendar year 1975.
- (2) A decrease of at least 10% in police involvement in cases of predelinquent behavior reported by schools and families.
- (3) Less than 35% of our clients will have further significant involvement with Juvenile Justice System in the next year. We would expect the remainder of our client population to exhibit the following behavior:
  - (a) No further official contact for first offenders.
  - (b) A decrease in the rate and severity of contact repeaters.

Part of our counseling program includes a component to deal the individuals who are considered "high risk". "High risk" refers to an individual who:

- (1) Would be institutionalized if there were no alternative.
- (2) Is returning to this community from an institution and who may be in need of counseling and related services.
- (3) Is referred by the Intensive Probation Program of Montgomery County Department of Juvenile Probation.
- (4) Has been detained at Montgomery Hall Youth Center and is referred to the project.
- (5) Is on probation for a serious offense, such as aggravated assault, weapons; also, compound offenders and repeat offenders.

Services to "high risk" youth are considered Intensive Services. This component provides family, individual, and group counseling, along with arranging for activities such as job training, alternative educational experiences, training in social skills, and recreational activities.

The effects of this component may be seen in the following areas:

- (1) A program completion rate of at least 60%.
- (2) For those completing the program, steady involvement in a job or school for at least one year.
- (3) Less than 35% will have direct involvement with the Juvenile Justice System that results in a court referral and possible adjudication.

#### Review of Data

Based upon questionnaires completed by four police departments and the Department of Juvenile Probation, and data gathered during the project year, the goals of the project can be discussed in terms of a comparison of 1975 and 1976.

1. Of those police departments reviewed there has been a decrease in the number of juvenile contacts during 1976. The overall decrease in contacts among these departments within our catchment area is 6.37%.

2. The police were questioned as to their involvement with schools in regard to drug related problems. Concerning drug related problems, two departments reported a decrease (10% and 3%), a 5% increase was reported by one department, and no change by the other. Concerning non-drug related problems, two departments reported no change, one reported a 5% increase, and the other a 40% decrease.
3. The recidivism rate for the first year of the project is 19.1%. This is determined by the fomula:

$$\frac{\text{\# of Juvenile Justice System contacts since referral}}{\text{\# of Juvenile Justice System contacts prior to referral}}$$

91% of referrals to the project had justice system contact prior to referral. 21% of total referrals have had some type of contact with the justice system since referral, with 6% of total referrals having actual court (formal hearing) contact.

4. Service to High Risk Youth

22% of the total referrals to the project could be considered high risk youth (21 youth). Of these, 5 have had further contact with the justice system. Services provided to these youth are primarily family and individual counseling. Although the Intensive Services--group, family, and individual counseling--has been structured, it has been difficult to implement for a number of reasons. Staff time is devoted to family counseling activity due to the demand for this service, while Intensive Services have not been sought by probation officers and the case flow of high risk youth is not conducive to holding groups. Aldersgate's main program component is capable of providing group service when necessary. The nature of family counseling as practiced by this project staff necessitates active involvement of the counselor in working with probation officers, schools, other involved agencies, and individual need of the youth.

## I. ADAPTABILITY OF THE FAMILY COUNSELING PROJECT

The Family Counseling Project was designed to allow flexibility in the role that it played with the predelinquent and delinquent juveniles. Basically, this role can be categorized into delinquency prevention, diversion, and post-adjudicatory treatment. Obviously, the Family Counseling Project's function depended on what stage of contact with the Juvenile Justice System the adolescent had reached at the time of referral. (see diagram, p.3)

### Delinquency Prevention

Although many of the cases referred during 1976 had extensive contact with police and/or probation at the time of referral, the Family Counseling Project considers prevention an important goal to be achieved. The program has the ability to simultaneously work with the delinquency while preventing it with any brothers or sisters because the problem is dealt with in a family context. Family counseling activates the entire family by including every member of the family, considering each person a significant and important member. Therefore, the siblings are as much a part of the counseling process as the parents and the referred juvenile. Again, when "change" occurs, it occurs in a family context, affecting each member of the family. The parents begin to deal competently with their son or daughter and then with their other children. What the parents experience with one child will affect their behavior with the other children.

Prevention is also an effect of family counseling if the family is referred in time (i.e., before delinquency)--by the school, for example. Relatively minor misbehaviors can be dealt with effectively in the family before any contact with the police or juvenile court occurs. This requires increased sensitivity by school counselors to perceive the potential delinquent and involve the family with the Family Counseling Project. The project has experienced excellent working relationships with local schools in this matter. There is no way of telling how many juveniles were prevented from delinquency because of the school's perceptive action and referral. To date, the youth referred by the schools have had no further contact with the Juvenile Justice System.

### Diversion

The Family Counseling Project can also function as a diversion or alternative to further and/or deeper contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Without such a diversion program, the police would petition youth more actively, especially status offenders. With a diversion program,

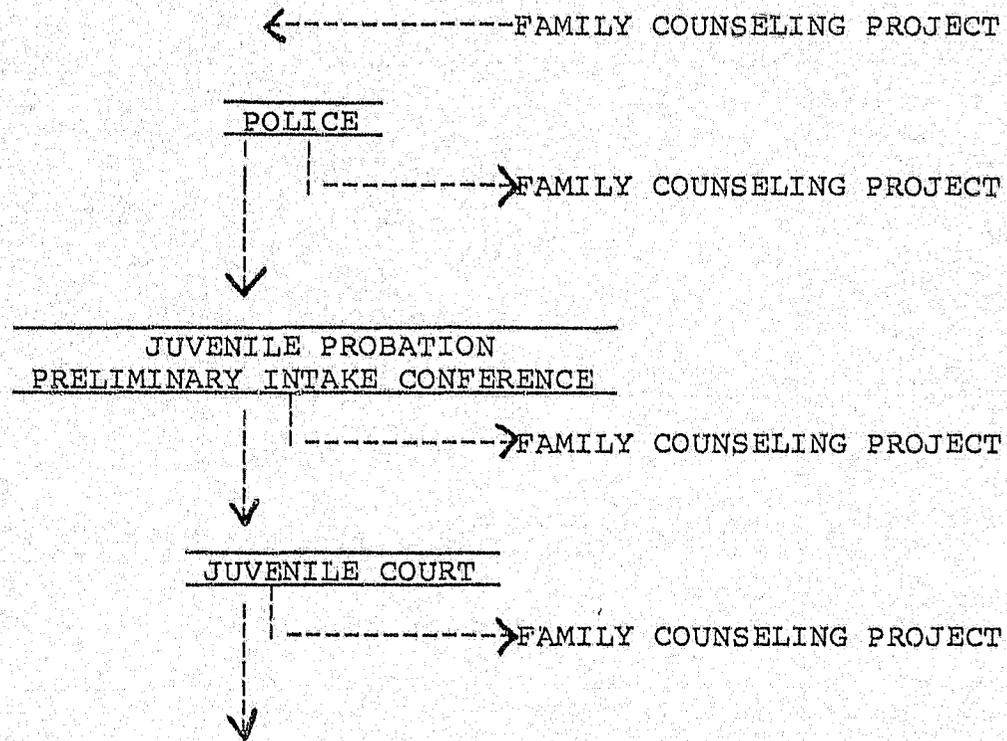
police are able to avoid juvenile court contact in many cases. The Juvenile Probation Department also diverts youth prior to formal court contact. Once the family becomes involved, crisis situations are handled by the counselor rather than by immediate justice system intervention.

The Family Counseling Project acts as a diversion for the probation department and the court in much the same fashion. The social service agencies, in conjunction with the Juvenile Justice System, can provide flexibility via increasing the alternatives available. For example, instead of institutionalization, the court may be able to consider probation in conjunction with court ordered counseling.

### Post-Adjudication

As previously discussed, the Family Counseling Project can also meet the needs of the post-adjudicated delinquent. The project works closely with the probation department to provide services to the juvenile and his family while on probation or intensive probation. Services can also be offered to the juvenile after release from a residential placement to follow-up his/her re-entry to the community. The probation officer, with his varied skills, can be utilized effectively when a systems approach is taken to working with youth. The probation officer can become an active participant in the counseling process.

POINTS OF INTERVENTION FOR THE FAMILY COUNSELING PROJECT



## II. "DEMONSTRATE INTERAGENCY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION..."

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"The project will above all demonstrate interagency and intergovernmental cooperation through receiving referrals from local units of government, school districts, mental health centers, police and probation departments."

The Family Counseling Project realized its unique position of organizing and achieving this stated goal. It was not realistic to expect these agencies to refer to us immediately. It was necessary to mount a campaign of recognition for the Family Counseling Project program, staff, and its purpose. This occurred in coverage by the local newspapers, two open-house meetings, contact with all police departments in our catchment area, the Juvenile Probation Department, all schools in our catchment area, related mental health agencies, and Child Welfare. There were other "gear-up" activities within the first quarter (January-March). Also, the referral process was clarified with written agreements (protocol) with police and the Juvenile Probation Department. The protocol stated the Family Counseling Project's responsibility to referrals and the referral source. The schools and the mental health agencies received a similar copy.

This extensive attempt to establish the program resulted in 26 referrals in the first quarter, which included referrals from all the police departments, three schools, Juvenile Probation, parents or relatives, neighbors, "self", the Aldersgate program, and even a program outside our catchment area. Recognition of these efforts and the corresponding response was encouraging. Equally important was the fact that the network for cooperation had been set. Interagency cooperation is important so that youth receive organized treatment and assistance from different community agencies. In these days of specialization, this type of cooperation is essential to maximize services, especially when there are a multitude of agencies involved.

As the year progressed, it was evident that this cooperation was growing very quickly. At year's end, we had served every police department and most schools in our catchment area, the Juvenile Probation Department, the Juvenile Court, Child Welfare, JJETS, MH/MR programs, and others in and outside of our catchment area. Service was provided to families which included 152 adults and 247 children. It is important to note that of these referrals, many required cooperation

with not only the referral source, but with other agencies which became involved at a later date or were previously involved. For example, the police can refer a family to us while the juvenile is pending a probation hearing, or the juvenile may warrant a hearing after police referral. In any case, when the juvenile probation department is involved, the Family Counseling Project will coordinate and cooperate with both the referring police and the probation department. Further, if necessary, the court and any residential institution may be added to the list of cooperative agencies. Again, it is the Family Counseling Project's intention to "stay with" and support both the youth and the agency through the treatment process.

The support occurring throughout the system is possible because of the cooperative efforts of the agencies involved. However, numerous phone contacts and visits to the agencies are required. The program made, on the average, more than one interagency contact for every two client contacts per case. In addition, monthly progress reports were sent to the probation office. Written information and recommendations were made available upon request to agencies who had secured the family's consent.

The overall effect of this cooperation is not only an increase of referrals from other agencies, but also increased quality of service from the Family Counseling Project and the system which has been designed to help youth and in which he frequently gets lost. Instead of a confusing matrix of agencies which may work counter-productively, the system can become an effective support to the community and its youth. For this process to occur, it takes leadership and initiative. The Family Counseling Project's role within Aldersgate and in the community is conducive to taking such a position. In fact, an objective of this project is to take a leadership role and coordinate services for troubled youth in the communities served.

### III. WORKING WITH COUNTY YOUTH AGENCIES

A large factor influencing the success of the Family Counseling Project was the utilization of the available agencies. The Family Counseling Project did not operate in a vacuum and recognized the valuable resources of other agencies. These agencies were used as an integral part of the counseling plan. One such agency was the Montgomery County Juvenile Probation Department.

The juvenile probation department is a good example of utilizing the referral source to support the program to which the client is referred. Take, for instance, the case of John Smith. John has been placed on probation by the court. It is the probation officer's responsibility to keep close contact with John and to explore the possibility of some sort of counseling. John Smith, while not getting into further contact with local police, is not really changing his behavior or attitude. The probation officer feels a referral to the Family Counseling Project is appropriate and a program of family counseling begins. Obviously, this is not the end of probation. The probation officer is still expected to perform his duties. Technically, separate contracts exist between the probation officer and the family, and the Family Counseling Project and the family. Practically, the family counselor and the probation officer work closely together to ensure John's successful completion of the program. The probation officer can rely on the counselor's opinions and recommendations, while the family counselor can rely on the probation officer to support John and his family as they proceed with the counseling process. Each may complement the other in performing their duties.

If John Smith becomes resistant to counseling, the counselor can encourage, explain, and suggest that counseling be continued. However, it is usually the case that the counselor is seen as someone who stirs up trouble and anxiety within his family (especially in the context of family therapy). The adolescent tends not to listen or accept any support from the counselor. It is also possible that John's family refuses to help and support him. They may present excuses or some rationale for discontinuing counseling (there is no charge for the service, so finances are never a factor). However, the counselor cannot force the family to come in.

It is at this point that the probation officer can be utilized as an outside agent to get past a barrier of this nature. The family knows the probation officer referred them and, also, that the counselor is in close contact with him/her. This is always stated at the onset of counseling and,

in some instances, the probation officer is invited to a family session to discuss the working relationship. When the probation officer is informed of John Smith's and/or his family's resistance to attend counseling, the probation officer can use his position of authority to support continued counseling. It may be viewed by John as a tactical threat, yet the probation officer can merely state the obvious: Should John get in further trouble with the police, the court may decide that counseling was not enough since it was abortive when tried, and that more drastic measures may be in order. Also, just the added opinion or support of continuing by another significant person may be enough to off-set the rationale of the family. Since 28% of the Family Counseling Project cases are probation referrals, we have had many opportunities to divert juveniles from further contact with the court by utilizing this approach.

Continuing with our example of John Smith and his family, let us assume that the counselor's and the probation officer's efforts fail and the family drops out of counseling. At this point, one of two possible outcomes could occur. John Smith, although there has been no behavior change, could succeed in avoiding any contact with the juvenile justice system, or he could violate the law once again. Anyone would hope for the former; however, for the sake of example, consider the latter. Should John Smith become involved with the court again, circumstances may warrant institutionalization. Again, the counselor and the probation officer can work together in order to place John in the most appropriate residential setting. Since the counselor and the probation officer know John and his family and the available resources, it is important that this step be included before the court decides on where John Smith is to be placed.

Once John is placed, the counselor can work closely with the placement agency. This may take form in visitation while at the institute, continued work with the family, and planning for follow-up counseling after John Smith is returned home. Ideally, especially if family counseling was motivated before placement, it may be possible to continue family counseling at the institute. John Smith then has a feeling of continuity as he goes through the system.

The Family Counseling Project has had very cooperative experiences with residential facilities. Two prime examples are St. Gabriel's Hall for Boys and the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic. While the institution is clearly in control when the client is in residence, the counselor can act as the community support system for the family.

## Child Welfare

Most of the families we have seen have had only police contact by the juvenile. 53% of families were referred by the police. Of these families, some juveniles had very minimal contact with the police, but were exhibiting ungovernable behavior. This behavior is not seen to warrant court attention in most cases. If these families experience persistent acting out behavior by their son or daughter, it may become necessary to utilize the services of Child Welfare. The counselor needs to make the family aware of its alternatives and how to proceed, even while attempting to resolve issues within the family.

The case of the runaway demonstrates the use of Child Welfare. The family is usually in a state of distress and crisis. The family counselor attempts to use this crisis to achieve motivation for change and to leave the family with a structured environment until they can meet again. However, at times, the family has reached a point beyond immediate "crisis resolution" and the child must be placed in temporary housing until the family reaches a point of "workability". In these cases, Child Welfare can be called in to find temporary housing, with the hope of working the child back into the family. Even if this reunion does not occur, the Family Counseling Project has served as an important "mediation" point for family, child, and Child Welfare.

#### IV. STATUS OFFENDERS: A POSITION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE FAMILY

A dilemma is posed. Programs which are funded by the justice system, in a sense, become part of that system. It is well documented that the juvenile justice system is not effective in preventing or solving delinquency. On the other hand, counseling services for delinquent youth are difficult to provide because the youth usually does not think there is a problem and is often coerced into counseling as a condition of probation. How then is service to be provided to a status offender--a youth who has committed no "crime"?

A policy statement issued by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency entitled "Jurisdiction over Status Offenders should be Removed from the Juvenile Court" cites many reasons why status offenders should not be involved with the juvenile court. Removing status offenders from the court's jurisdiction is a popular and growing movement across the country. This discussion takes the point of view that status offenders should not be removed from the court's jurisdiction.

In an article in The Philadelphia Bulletin on Friday, January 7, 1977, it was stated that in Montgomery County the Department of Juvenile Probation had approximately 100 teenagers in custodial care and the Department of Child Welfare had approximately 500 teenagers under their jurisdiction. In 1976 the Family Counseling Project received requests from the Department of Juvenile Probation to work with or continue working with 26 families. There were no requests from the Department of Child Welfare to provide counseling services, but a few requests for emergency housing (the project had a few families with previous Department of Child Welfare contact or involvement, but they were not referred by Child Welfare). In meetings with representatives of these agencies, both of whom support the services offered by the project, Juvenile Probation indicated a need for counseling type programs, and Child Welfare indicated a need for group homes and temporary shelters. This difference in stated needs and in utilization of the project's resources illustrates their different views on how best to deal with youth in trouble, particularly status offenders, as well as their different funding sources and accountability.

Monies for youth programs are channeled through a variety of federal, state, and local programs. A major source of federal funds for youth programs is the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In Youth Alternatives, there appears an article "Interview - Representative Miller (D-CA) says HEW lacks sensitivity on family issues". Representative Miller is quoted, "...if they (HEW) were to take a look at what's going on in these families that has caused some of these children to be removed from the families, I'd suggest they recommend psychiatric

care for some of the parents, and various social services and in-home care for some of these families. But they haven't done that. They've simply said let's remove the child from the home." It would seem that this attitude of removing children from their homes would predominate among agencies tied to HEW, such as child welfare departments. Thus, while many children and teenagers do receive service in their homes, when a crisis occurs the child is usually removed from the home, either temporarily or permanently. Status offense problems create many crises within the home.

Problems of truancy, running away, and ungovernability have been found to be a reflection of family dysfunction. It is difficult to work with a family when both the parents and teenager know there is a way out. Moreover, the experience of the Family Counseling Project has been that the way of the court--petition, preliminary intake conference, and hearing--is not the easiest. Parents must accept responsibility for their children, and teenagers must deal with the authority which that responsibility implies. If parents are not seen as authority figures it will be difficult for any social institution to fill that role. The child should be removed from the home, however, in cases of extreme parental neglect and abuse and the parents must come to the court's attention.

The issue of authority and responsibility is an important one. It has been found that parents do not believe that their family is under their control. Responsibilities seem so diffuse among schools, courts, police, and social agencies that it becomes difficult at times to remember that parents are legally and morally responsible for their children. When a family situation is intolerable and needs attention from social authorities it may be that the court has the ability and resources to safeguard the rights of both the child and his parents. This has been found to be true for families involved with this project with ungovernability as the presenting problem. There has been no use of institutionalization and an extremely limited and closely monitored use of detention by the court. Temporary shelters, foster homes, and emergency housing are utilized to their maximum capacity. Based on the work of the project during 1976, all cases of ungovernability, running away, and truancy that were referred needed attention from a family and systems perspective. These were some of the most difficult cases referred and these cases seem to have a similar problem of control.

The Family Counseling Project has provided services to youth referred for status offenses. Several juvenile status offender prehearing programs have been developed across the country by juvenile county authorities (a significant difference between these programs and the Family Counseling Project is that the Family Counseling Project is administered by a private agency and referred to by the county youth authorities).

It has been found by these programs that "in fact there were significantly fewer cases being taken to the court when compared with a sample of cases prior to the inception of the program". (p.80, Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling, January, 1977) Although the Family Counseling Project did not monitor control or experimental groups, the results of these programs are congruent with our limited data that family counseling is an appropriate intervention for the status offender which does result in diversion.

Involving a youth (and his family) in a court action is a delicate issue from the perspective of labeling theory, especially when the youth has committed no crime. In working with the Montgomery County Juvenile Court during the last year, it has been our experience that ungovernable petitions have not been detrimental to the child, but valuable because they bring a troubled youth to our attention. If status offenders are to be removed from court jurisdiction, where will the youth be heard?

## V. DELINQUENCY: THE SOLVABLE PROBLEM

There has been a wealth of theories, analyses, and ideas generated concerning delinquency. Such questions as what is it, how is it caused, how to prevent it, and how to treat delinquent behavior need to be included in such discussions. The answers will largely depend on the purpose of the investigation. The purpose intended for this investigation is to consider delinquent behavior as a symptom in a framework which proposes to offer a solution for such symptoms.

The framework considered here is an ecological or family point of view. The project itself is based on the idea that behavioral change occurs more readily in a family context rather than in an individual context. The important difference of this setting is that the interpersonal relationships of significance are between family members in the family context. The individual context relies on the counselor/individual interpersonal relationship.

As pointed out by Jay Haley in Strategies of Psychotherapy, one can define a symptom as a way of relating or dealing with another person. What will distinguish a symptom from the broad spectrum of behaviors is the extreme and extraordinary qualities of the symptom. Haley further asserts that "the specific symptom is less relevant than the formal patterns people have in common". Traditionally, a symptom is viewed as unusual behavior. The person with the symptom and the people influenced by it regard the symptom as something which is not under any control by the person. The attitude prevails that the symptom is responsible, not the person himself.

Strategically, a symptom is used to "control" what is happening in a relationship. However, this is not done on a conscious level and the symptomatic behavior would seem to be without control. The person with the problem believes, as do those around him, that there is no way to control the problem behavior. Therefore, little can be done and everyone accommodates to the symptomatic behavior; in a sense they become controlled by it. Attempts are usually made to change the individual, but since the individual is not responsible or in control, these efforts are usually futile.

It is important to note that the person's symptom may mean extreme amounts of distress and discomfort to him, but it may be preferred to an environment of unpredictability which has little control. It is not unusual to attempt control in situations which have none. However, when trying to control while at the same time denying that there is control, symptomatic behavior occurs and interventions become necessary.

Let us assume, then, that delinquent behavior, as a symptom, is an attempt to gain control over one's environment. In many cases a youth's environment can be extremely unpredictable. As interaction with the environment takes place there should be a great deal of contact with rules, limits, and authority figures. If the youth has grown up in an environment with few set rules and limits (or none at all), then the youth must set these rules himself in some way. Delinquent behavior may become a way in which the youth chooses to interact with society to gain control. Despite laws, efforts of parents, schools, and police, the youth behaves in a fashion which is not in accordance with the definition of acceptable behavior. The youth will deny having control over this behavior, but the behavior requires some response. If the response is in the form of requiring a change in the individual, it is doubtful that he will comply, regardless of how "nicely" it may be presented. The youth is not in control, so how can he change? He can change only in relation to the people with whom he interacts.

It is in this light that family counseling occurs and becomes a viable "treatment" plan. The individual is asked not to change alone; it is the entire system, primarily the family, that is to change. With this view, delinquent behavior is the responsibility of the family and within its control. The delinquent behavior then becomes a family issue. When parents of the family become consistent and firm via working together as a team, the youth's (and his siblings') environment becomes predictable. It becomes unnecessary to control the system, since it is now controlled and delinquent behavior does not serve any purpose. The youth may begin to experience consistency in his interactions with significant "others" and begin to experiment in his relations with others in the society.

In summary, delinquency can be viewed as attempts to control an uncontrolled environment where the delinquent behavior provides the control. Family counseling brings about changes in authority, control, and communication patterns which lessen the need for delinquent behavior.

## VI. THE STAFF

While not stated as an intended goal of the Family Counseling Project, it became apparent that the project was achieving the establishment of competency and expertise in dealing with delinquents and status offenders. The Family Counseling Staff was expected to function professionally, competently, and expertly in a system which does not define those concepts clearly. Flexibility was necessary to achieve the stated goal of interagency and intergovernmental cooperation, as well as providing a substantial service.

The agencies with which the Family Counseling Project cooperated represented different fields and served different functions in the community. Left isolated, they can be less effective to the community, even while achieving their own goals. When these functionally unique agencies are cooperated with and coordinated, the possibility of achieving both community and agency goals increases. It is no easy task to bridge the gaps between agencies, as in the example of police and social worker. They speak, as it were, two different languages, and it helps to become "bi-lingual". The Family Counseling Project staff grew into a position capable of negotiating many sides into a cooperative effort.

The value of a degree received from graduate professional schools is recognized. However, it is important to recognize and validate the abilities and competence of those who have not completed this level of accreditation. There are certain functional prerequisites to ensure the full range of potential from a counselor in this type of program:

1. The person him/herself: The person must be self-motivated and willing to expend the required energy to get the job done. This means long hours, ability to handle frustration and tension, and flexibility of position.
2. The agency: The agency must be supportive. This requires openness to new ideas. Also, the agency must maintain high expectations of the worker while acknowledging that mistakes are not necessarily a reflection of incompetence.
3. Training: The person does not need to possess a higher degree. However, they will need efficient, effective, and intensive training. Substantial training in modern times can be very expensive, and if the agency can include a training budget, the returns from the employees can be tremendous. The training chosen should be a specific modality and provide the trainee with knowledge and practice of the modality.

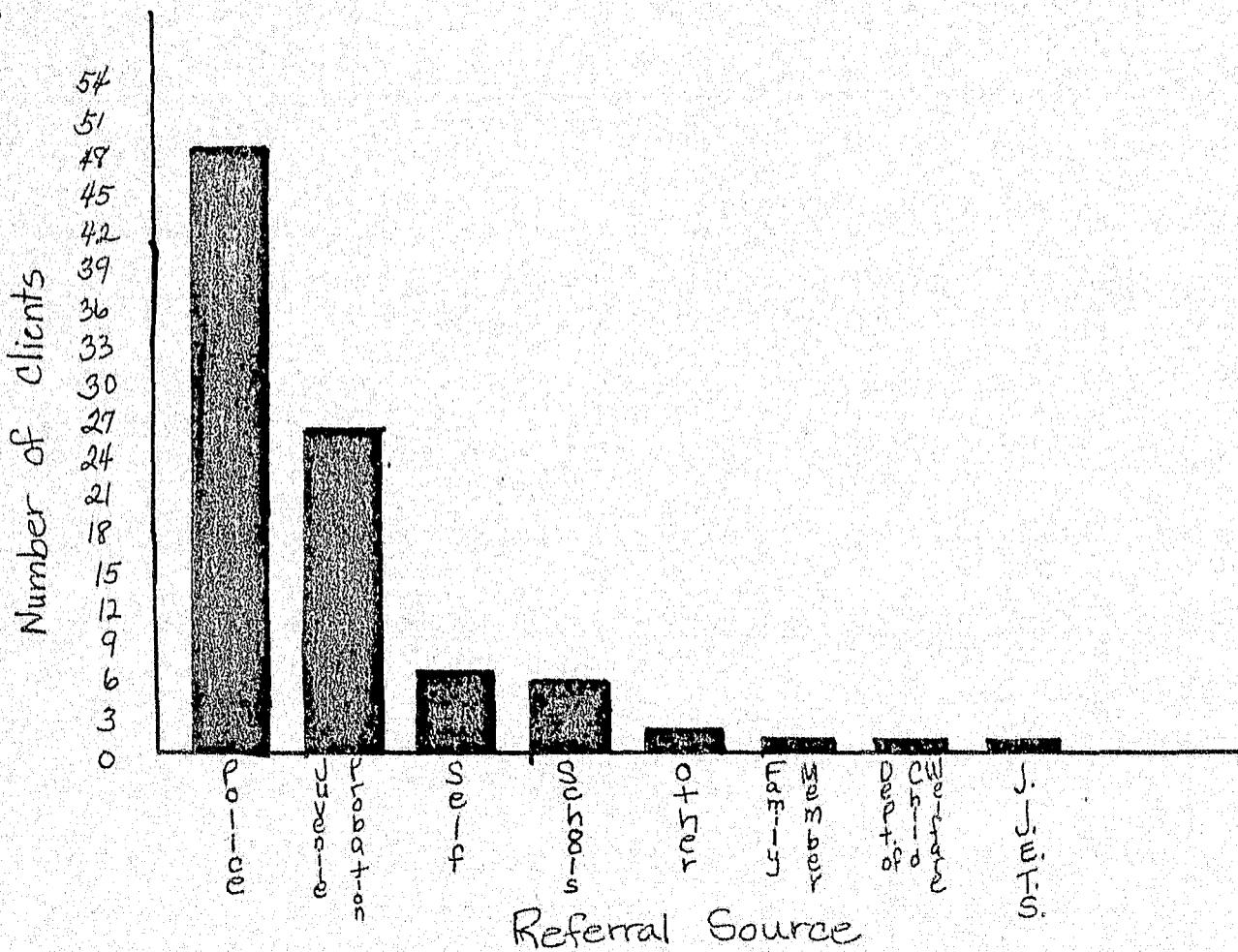
4. Previous experience: The person will need to have some experience in dealing with people in a counseling setting. It would be preferable that this previous experience be related to the training to be received.
5. Supervision: This cannot be emphasized enough. The person needs this support to continue his efforts to grow. The supervisor need not constantly direct, instruct, etc., but will need to provide feedback concerning the counselor's achievements.

With these features, a staff member can function with efficiency and confidence, especially at the interface of agencies. Some professionals are "labeled" and restricted in movement by attitudes of other agencies. Our staff has been able to "join" with the agencies with whom they work and have achieved a high level of cooperation. Expectations of referring agencies have been met and are discussed in Project Feedback.

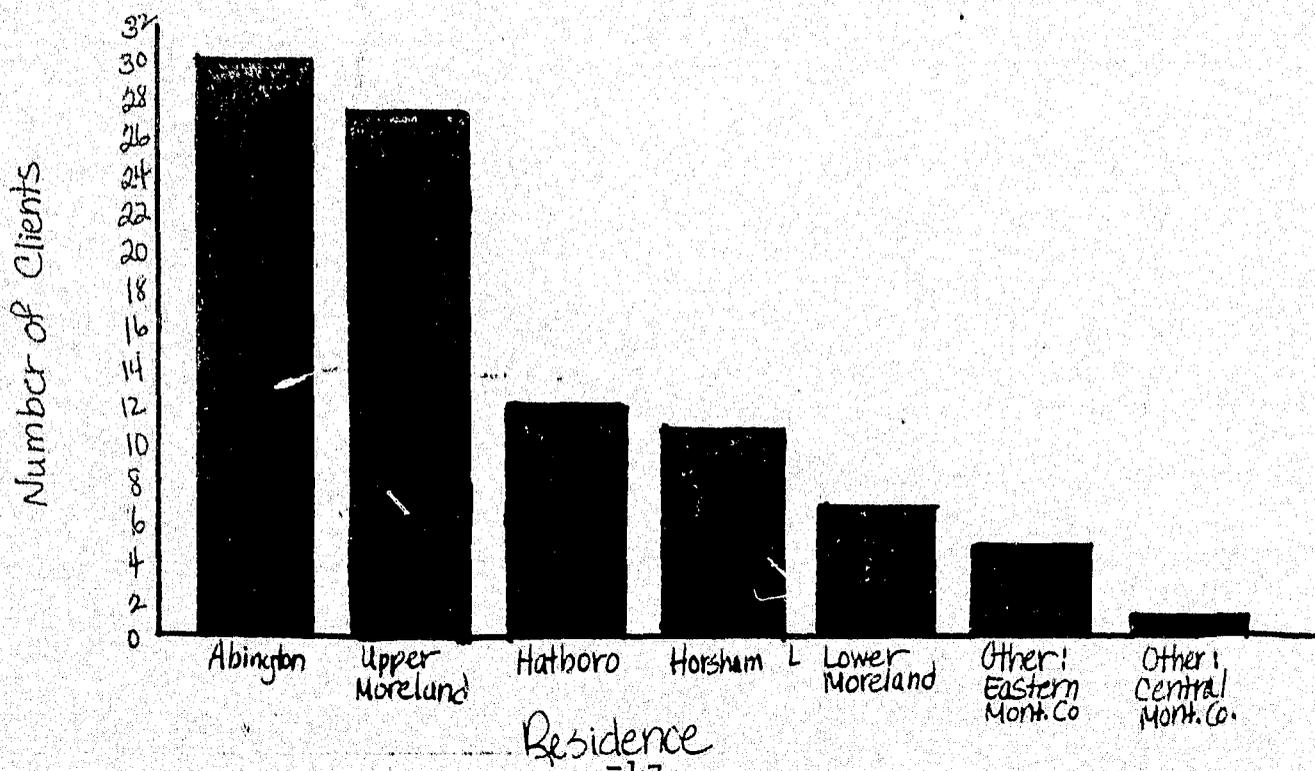
## VII. POPULATION DESCRIPTIONS

Distribution by Referral Source  
Distribution by Residence  
Age Distribution  
Sex Distribution  
Living Arrangements of Youth Referred  
Number of Persons Involved in the Program  
Referrals by Month  
Distribution by Program Activity  
Distribution by Justice System Contact  
Cases With and Without Drug and Alcohol Use  
Referrals to Juvenile Probation - 1975 and 1976

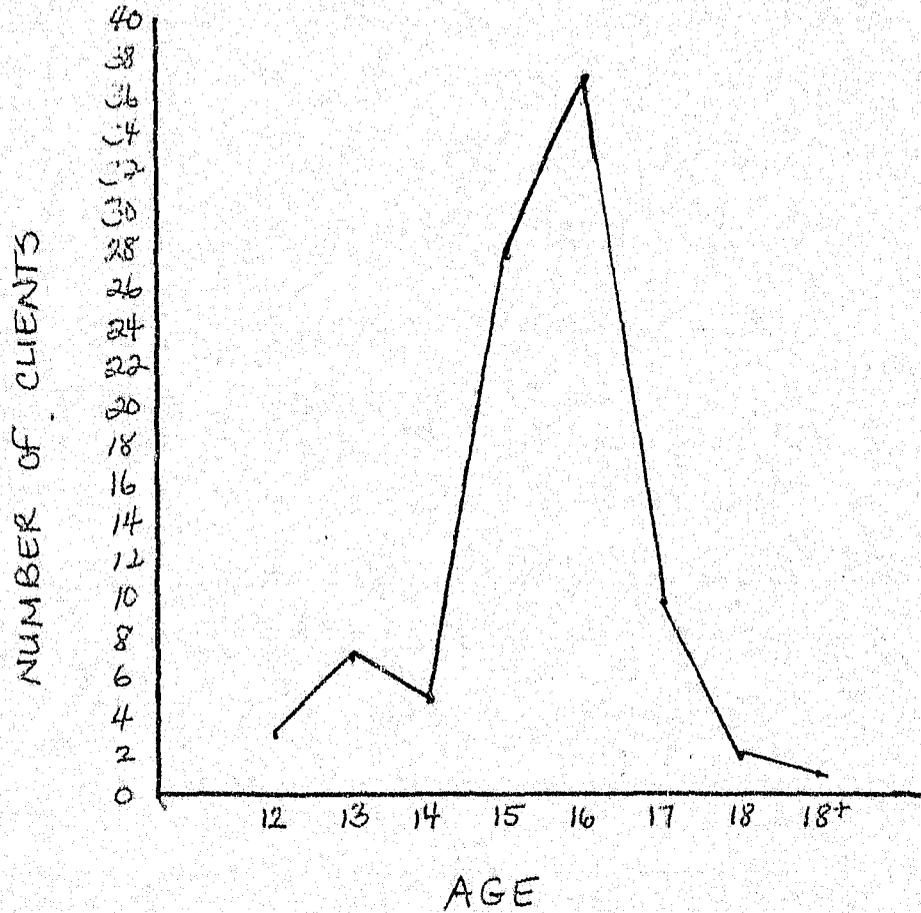
## Distribution by Referral Source



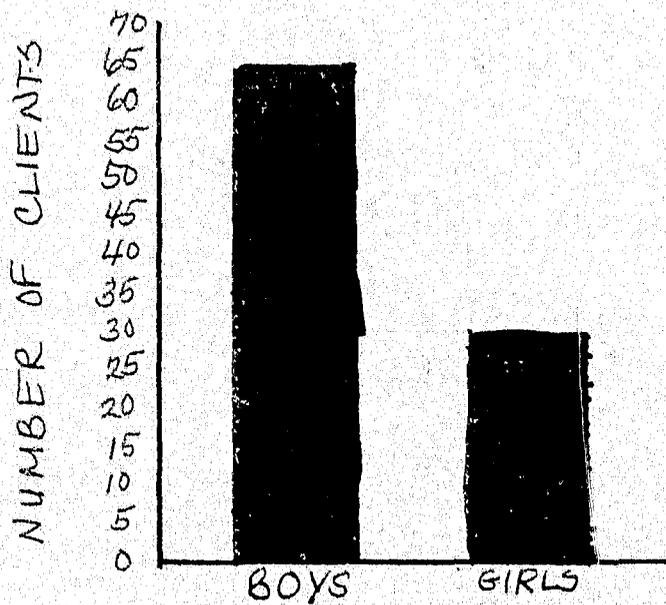
## Distribution by Residence

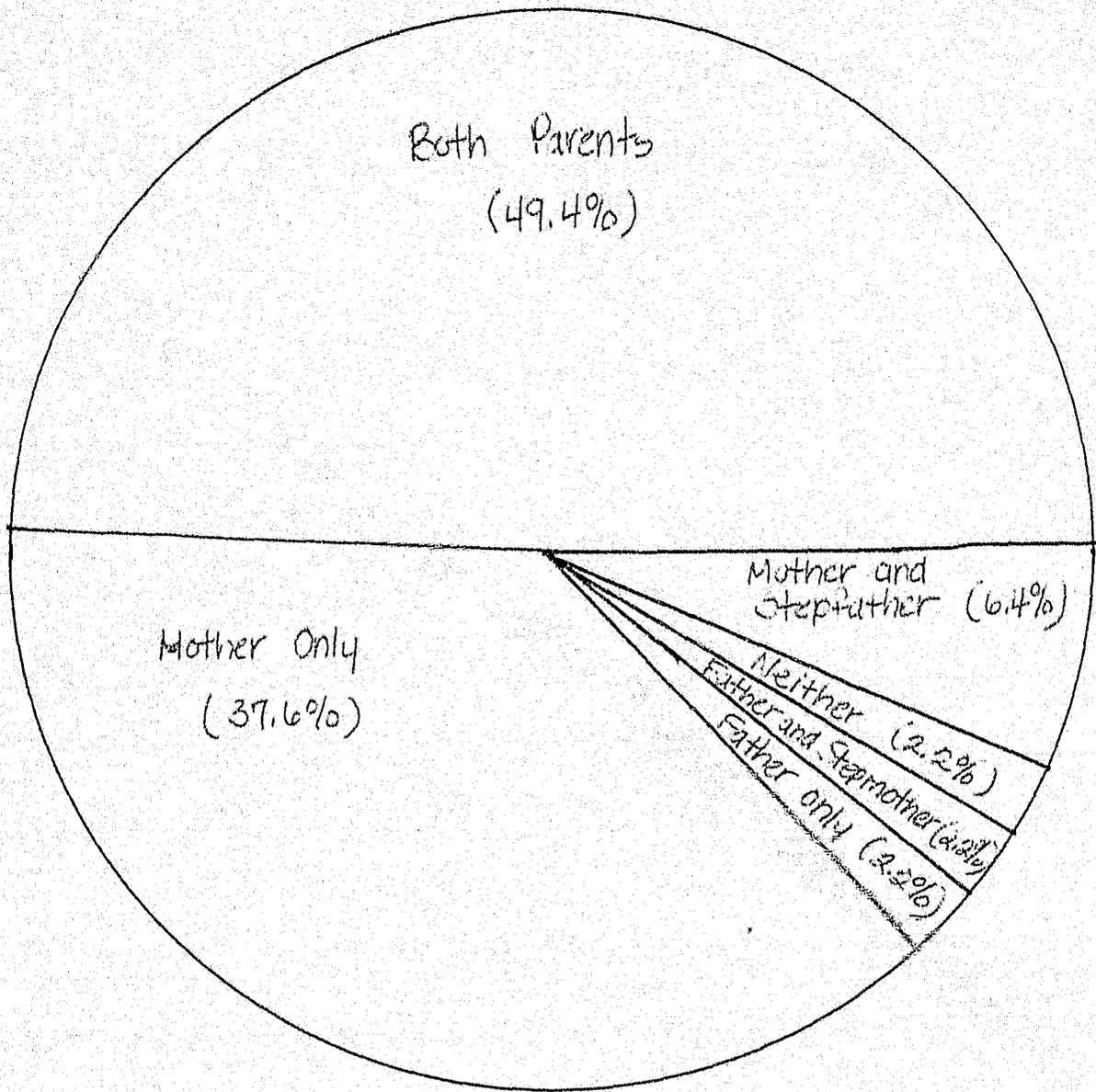


## AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CLIENTS

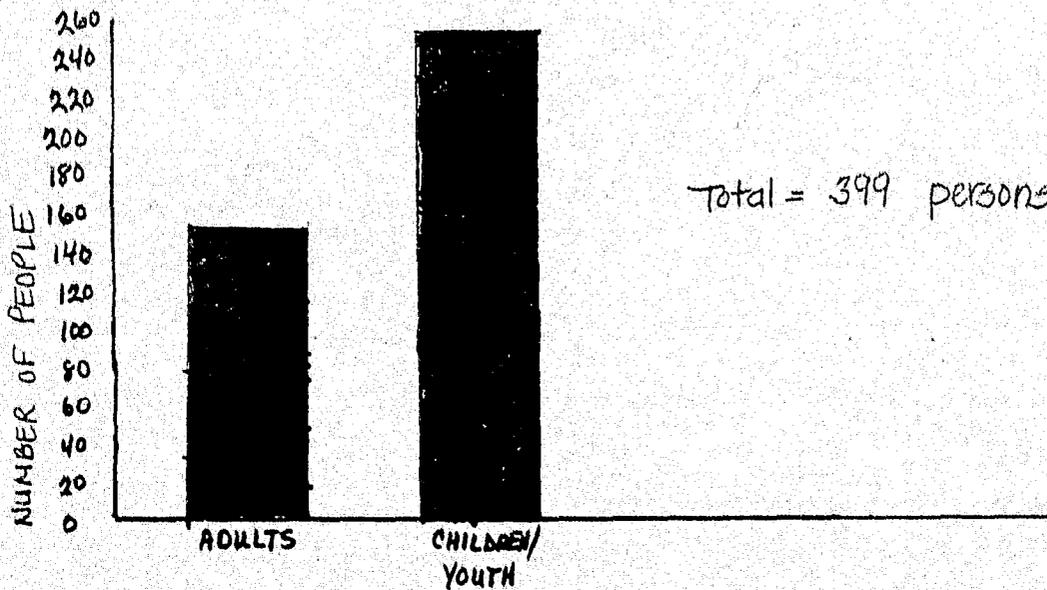


## SEX DISTRIBUTION OF CLIENTS





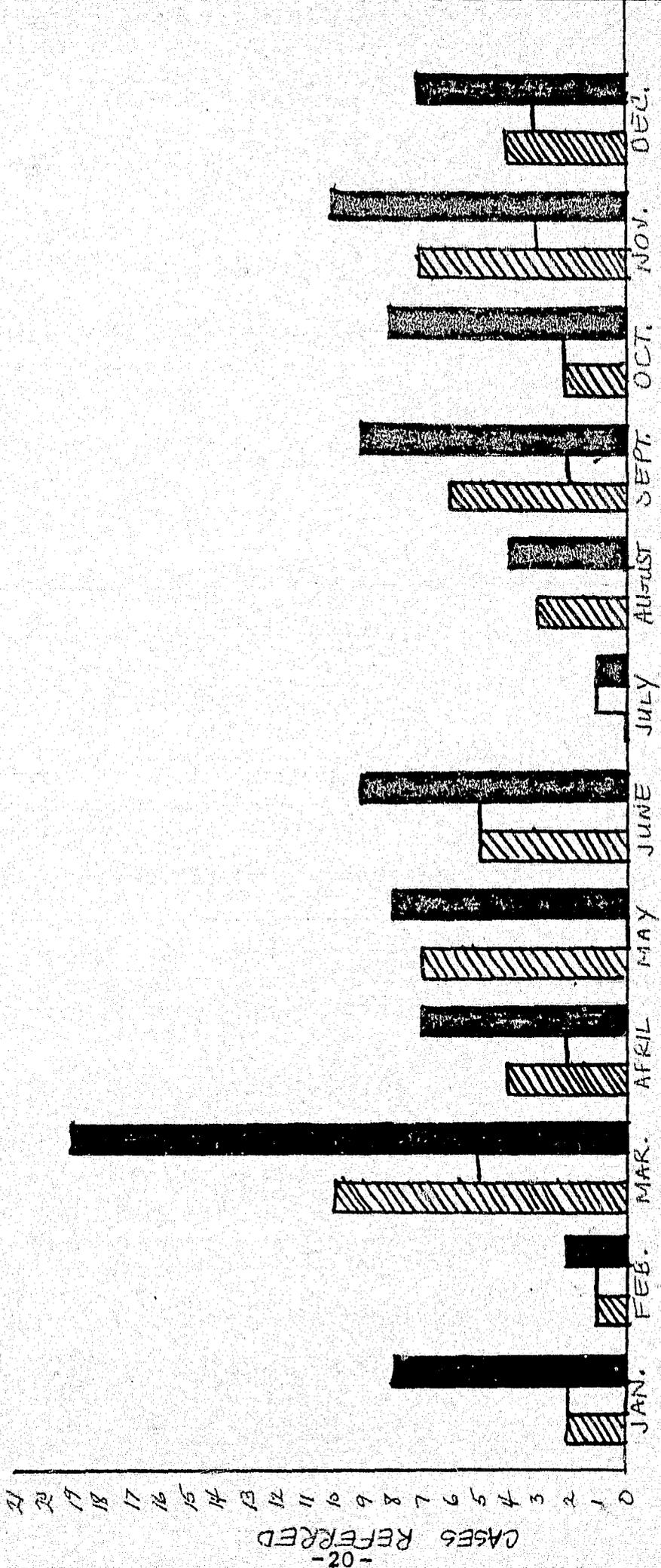
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF YOUTH REFERRED



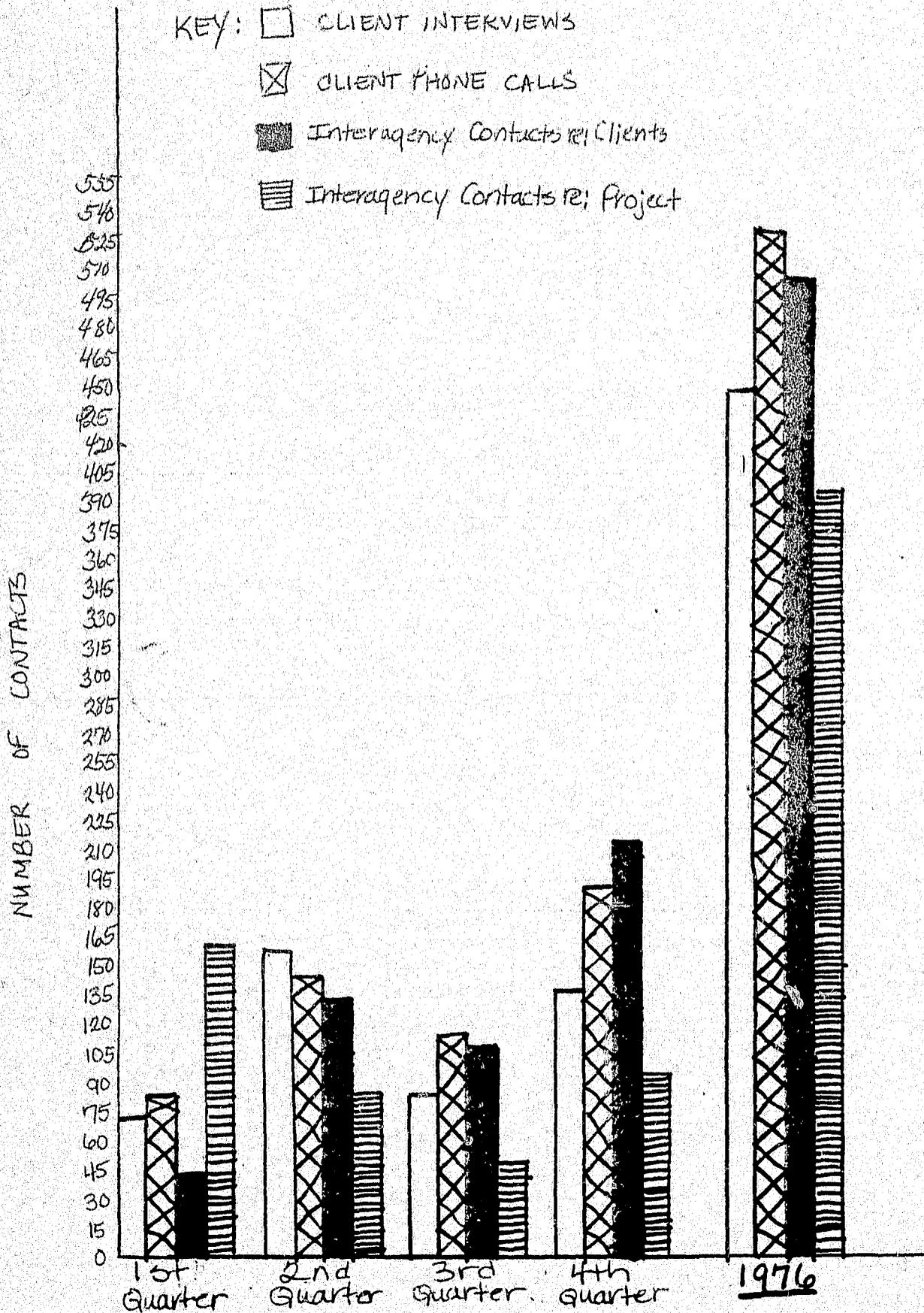
NUMBER OF PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM

# Referrals By Month: Comparison of Police and Probation Referrals to Total

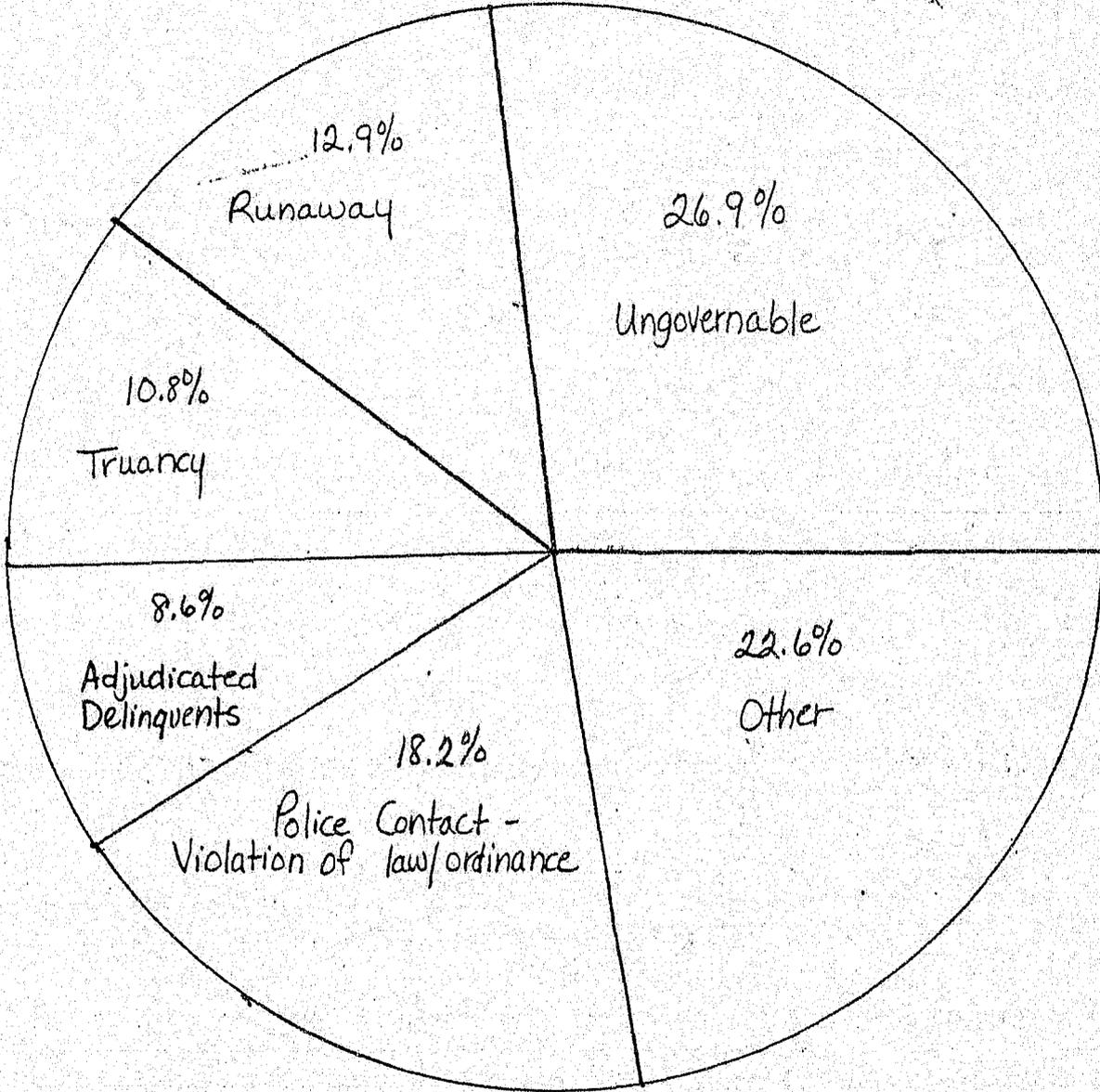
KEY:  POLICE  PROBATION  TOTAL



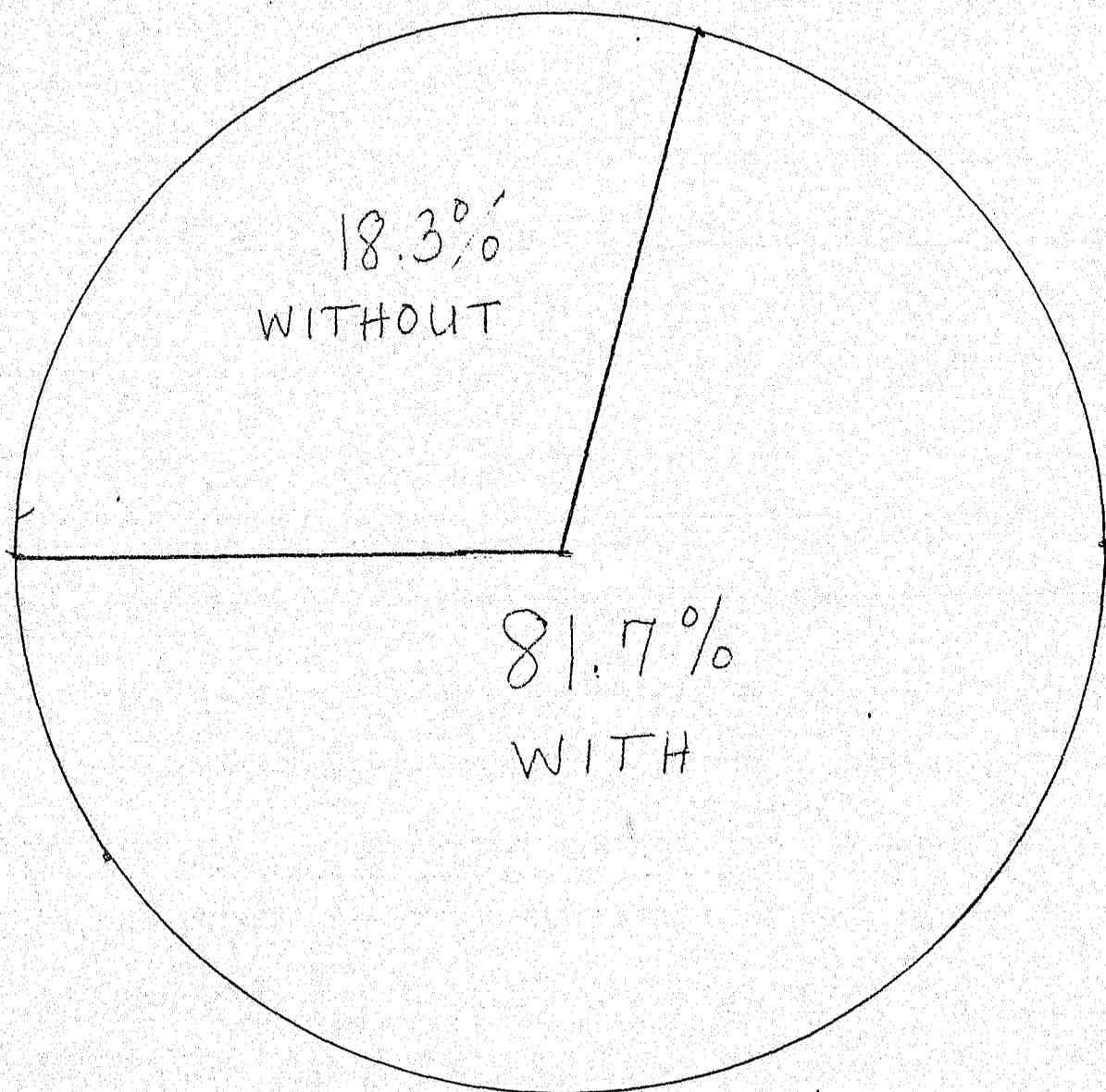
# Distribution By Program Activity



Distribution of cases with previous or potential Juvenile Justice Contact



CASES WITH AND WITHOUT DRUG AND ALCOHOL  
USE IN FAMILY

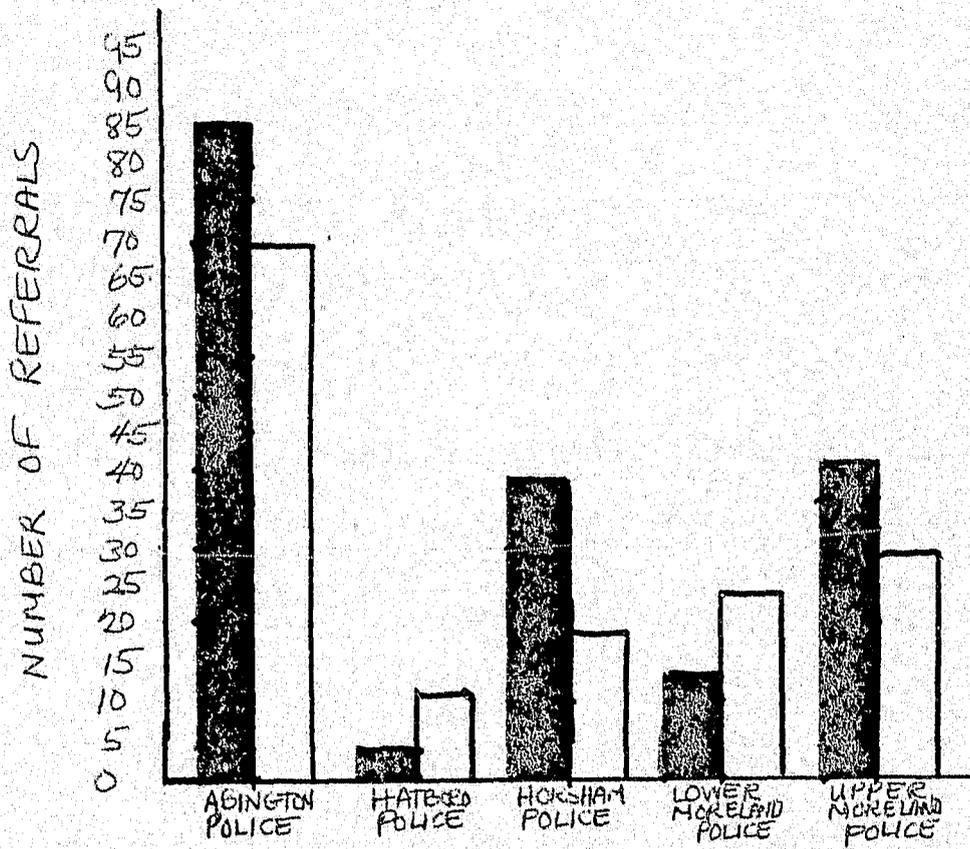


# POLICE REFERRALS TO JUVENILE PROBATION

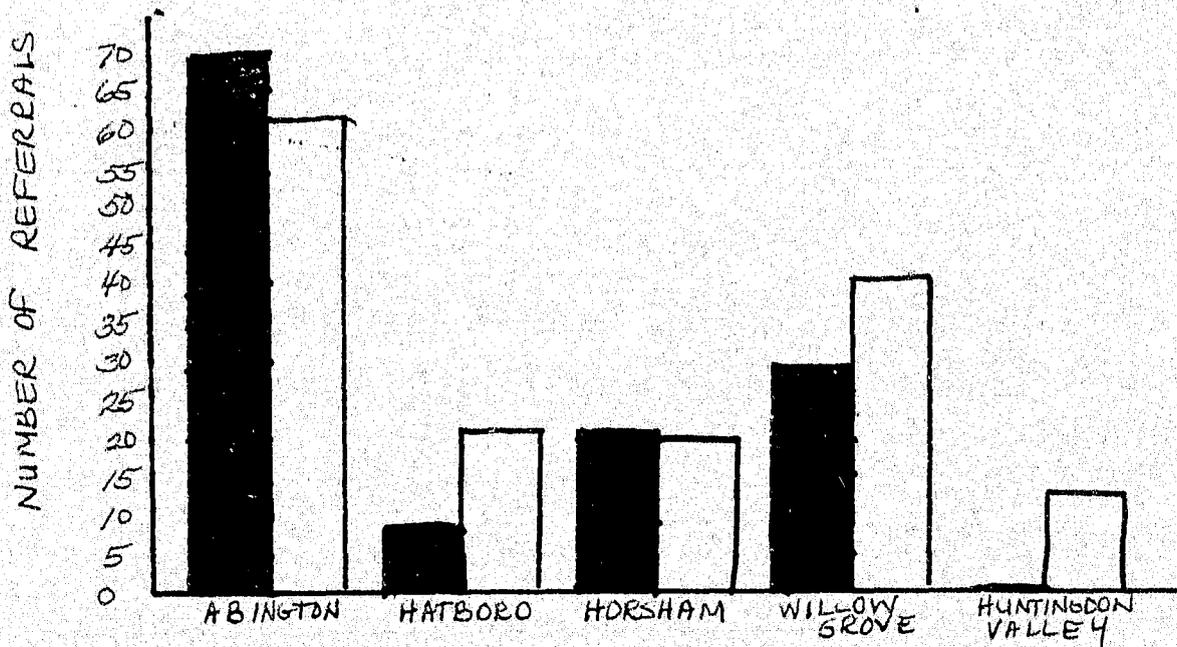
1975\*      AND      1976\*\*

KEY:  1975  
 1976

## SOURCE OF REFERRAL



## PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF REFERRALS



\* 1975 Annual Report  
 \*\* 1976 Statistical Sheets

## VIII. COST: ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

The Family Counseling Project, a component of Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau, had a 1976 budget of \$28,000. Administrative costs for the program, along with indirect costs such as rent, heat, and lighting, were borne by Aldersgate. The \$28,000 budget covered salaries, training and travel monies, the purchase of a video tape system, and miscellaneous operating expenses. Approximately 90% of the budget covered salary and benefit expenses for counselors who provided direct services during the project year.

The Sacramento Diversion Program, which received an exemplary project label from the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, determined that "the cost to the probation department of regular intake care for this type case is thus nearly twice as expensive as the cost of diversion". (p.14, Juvenile Diversion through Family Counseling) The Sacramento Diversion Project deals with status offenders and is located within the Sacramento County Probation Department. These two factors are the primary differences between the 601 Project and the Family Counseling Project. The basic principles and hypotheses upon which each project is based are very similar. This is not to say that the Family Counseling Project is as cost effective for Montgomery County as the 601 Diversion Project is for Sacramento County; however, it is a possible area of exploration.

One indication that the Family Counseling Project could effect a savings for Montgomery County is a reduction in police referrals to Juvenile Probation. A review of referrals from police departments within the catchment area to the Montgomery County Juvenile Court (Department of Juvenile Probation) between 1975 and 1976 shows a 16.9% decrease overall. Surprisingly, there was a 12% increase in the number of youths referred from the townships served; this increase, however, appears to be due to youth from the project's catchment area being referred by police departments outside the catchment area. For example, a Willow Grove youth could be picked up by the Upper Dublin police and referred to Juvenile Court, whereas, if the same youth was picked up by the Upper Moreland police he might have been referred to Aldersgate. Since the Department of Juvenile Probation stated on the questionnaire they completed that a primary weakness of the project is its limited catchment area, enlarging the project catchment area would seem to result in greater diversion and thus more savings to the County. A police officer in one township served felt that the project was a significant factor in the decrease of referrals in 1976 to the Juvenile Probation Department by that police department.

A review of project costs for client services follows:

Expenditures.....	\$28,000.00
Total Referrals.....	93
Total Days in Operation .....	250
Cost/Day (5 day work week) .....	\$112.00
Cost/Client Interview.....	\$62.36
Cost/Client Services (phone calls, interviews, interagency contacts) .....	\$18.91

67 Ongoing Cases, Average 78.8 Days =	5279.6 days
23 Brief Service Cases,	
Average 13.4 Days =	<u>308.2 days</u>
	5587.8 Client
	Days.....\$5.01/day

## IX. PROJECT FEEDBACK

How is the program perceived by those who use the services offered?

Questionnaires were sent to all police departments served, the Department of Juvenile Probation, other involved agencies, and all families who were referred. Families were sent three questionnaires for the parent(s) and the youth.

### A. Review of Police and Juvenile Probation Responses

1. How frequently do you refer families?  
About a third of the time
2. Of those referrals, how many become involved for at least one interview?  
A little less than three fourths
3. How many referred will have further contact within six months, one year?  
Much less than one fourth
4. Do you refer....?

First offenders, drugs/alcohol	All said Yes
First offenders, property damage	40% said Yes
First offenders, violent crimes	60% said Yes
Repeat offender	All said Yes
Un governables	All said Yes
Runaways	60% said Yes
Truants	40% said Yes
Previously adjudicated delinquents	80% said Yes
General troublemakers	80% said Yes
5. Specific criteria used to make referrals?
  - a. To qualify an ungovernable offense
  - b. Advantage is project deals with a wide range of problems
  - c. Seriousness of offense
6. What agencies do you use to help kids?  
MH/MR Clinic, Family Services, other Youth Service Bureau
7. Satisfaction with service provided:  
40% Highly Satisfied  
60% Satisfied
8. Rate follow-up given to you by the project  
All said Excellent

9. Rate staff availability
  - 60% Always Available
  - 40% Usually Available
10. Rate the cooperation given you by the project
  - All said the project was Always Cooperative
11. What gaps do you perceive in the service offered by Aldersgate?
  - a. Concern for funding cutback
  - b. Catchment area too limited

B. Review of Family Responses

1. How helpful was your experience at Aldersgate?
  - 30% Very Helpful
  - 50% Helpful
  - 15.4% Somewhat Helpful
  - 3.8% Not Helpful
2. How satisfied were you with the quality of service?
  - 46.2% Very Satisfied
  - 34.6% Satisfied
  - 19.2% Somewhat Satisfied
3. How available was your counselor?
  - 73.1% Always Available
  - 26.9% Usually Available
4. How cooperative was your counselor?
  - 84.6% Always Cooperative
  - 15.4% Usually Cooperative
5. How is everything going for you now, in the areas that brought you to counseling?
  - 30.7% Very Well
  - 53.8% Good
  - 15.4% Fair
6. Would you contact Aldersgate again if there were difficulties?
  - All said Yes

C. Rate of Response

The Family Counseling Project sent questionnaires to all those who had significant contact with the project. All police responded, however, only four of the five were used in this discussion. This was due to low referrals from the one police department to the project and a tremendous increase of referrals to the Juvenile Probation Department from that same police department. Of those families who were sent questionnaires,

13.3% responded and overall the responses were very favorable.

D. Comments

1. Upper Moreland Police Department - "The Upper Moreland Police Department has been quite pleased with the capable and cooperative response of Aldersgate, in general, and the Family Counseling Program, in particular. In addition to providing a viable 24-hour referral source, Aldersgate has also been instrumental in attempting to coordinate the various services along the York Road corridor in which Upper Moreland resides. Their direct service and the efforts expended by them toward integrating other services proved the only social service agency contact for our police department. Without their aid, we would most assuredly be unable to defer as many cases from the Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice Systems as we do. There would also be a tremendous void in human services that become necessary when dealing with the broad range public in the police contact."

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS



DAVID E. GROSHENS  
PRESIDENT JUDGE

ASSOCIATE JUDGES  
ROBERT W. HONEYMAN  
FREDERICK B. SMILLIE  
WILLIAM W. VOGEL  
RICHARD S. LOWE  
A. BENJAMIN SCIRICA  
ROBERT W. TREDINNICK  
LOUIS D. STEFAN  
JOSEPH H. STANZIANI  
JOHN R. HENRY  
VINCENT A. CIRILLO

MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
THIRTY-EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
19404

ALFRED L. TAXIS, JR.  
PRESIDENT JUDGE  
ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

December 17, 1976

Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau  
P.O. Box 195  
Willow Grove, Pa. 19090

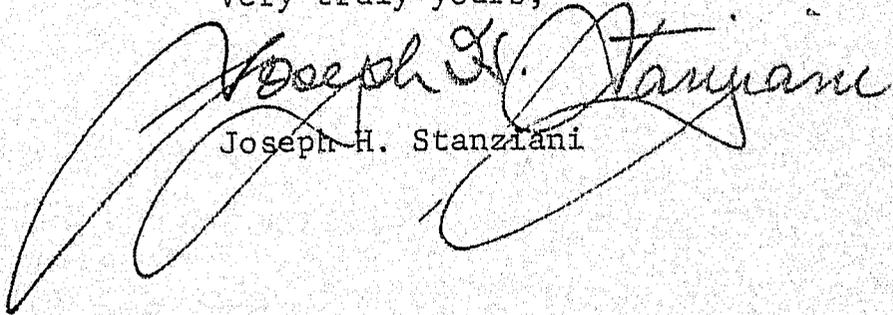
Attention: Rita Mulligan

Gentlemen:

In my capacity as Juvenile Liaison Judge, I have discussed the Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau family counseling program with my staff. The entire Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau program is very highly regarded by us and in particular their family counseling program is an essential service to the juvenile justice system here in Montgomery County.

I am pleased to recommend them to you.

Very truly yours,

  
Joseph H. Stanziani

JHS/ag

HATBORO - HORSHAM SCHOOLS

Keith Valley Middle School  
411 Babylon Road  
Horsham, Pennsylvania 19044

January 20, 1977

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing in support of the Family Counseling Unit at Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau in Willow Grove.

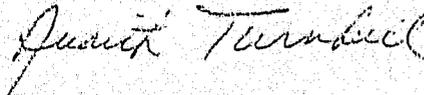
In my role as Assistant Principal at Keith Valley Middle School in the Hatboro-Morsham School District I have had many occasions to refer families in trouble to Aldersgate.

I have found the feedback from the Family Counseling personnel to be excellent. I am kept well informed about each family's progress. Often, the suggestions I have received have been most helpful in working through our students' disciplinary problems. At other times I have been able to work directly with Aldersgate to initiate constructive actions with regard to our families.

I have been most pleased by the cooperation and easy flow of information between my school personnel and those at Aldersgate's Family Counseling Unit. The staff at Aldersgate is professional, effective, and extremely pleasant to deal with.

I feel that a valuable service is being performed and performed well by Aldersgate's Family Counseling Unit. The only drawback to the program is that there is a limit to how many families they can accommodate.

Sincerely yours,



Judith Turnbull  
Assistant Principal

JT:bs

**END**