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C-6-2

AN EVALUATION
OF
FRIENDSHIP HOUSE
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

MEMBERS
HOUSE AND OPERATION
CENTRAL FINANCE

PROJECT NUMBER: 76-II-E-1264 F01
76-II-A-1264 F02

PROJECT PERIOD: June 11, 1976 - June 30, 1977

John R. Clark
Evaluation Specialist
N.H. Governor's Commission on Crime and Delinquency

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FRIENDSHIP HOUSE
76-II-E-1264 F01
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BACKGROUND

On June 6, 1975, the Governor's Commission on Crime and Delinquency approved a grant to the New Hampshire Youth Development Center for the establishment of Friendship House, 136 Lowell Street, Manchester, New Hampshire. The grant award was made in the amount of \$69,952 federal funds and \$7,772 Crime Commission funds for a total project allocation of \$77,724.

After one year of operation, the project was evaluated by GCCD staff. Although several suggested programmatic revisions were offered, the project was considered viable and renewal funding was recommended.

Accordingly, on June 11, 1976, the GCCD approved second year funding support for the Friendship House project. Funds were awarded on a split grant basis in the total amount of \$93,863, and apportioned as follows:

	<u>76-II-F-1</u>	<u>76-II-F-2</u>
Federal	\$65,000	\$19,477
Commission	\$ 7,222	\$ 2,164

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Facility

Friendship House is the Youth Development Center's first community residential center. The facility is located near the 'downtown' area of Manchester in a house that was formerly occupied by a residential youth treatment program entitled, "The Bradford Young House." In February of 1974 the house suffered extensive damage due to a structural fire, and was subsequently vacated. It remained vacant until it was purchased by the state, refurbished, and opened in August of 1975.

The house and grounds are constantly being improved through the efforts of the staff and residents. It is spacious, comfortable and excellently maintained. There are

adequate sleeping quarters, a recreation room, and a dining area for the designated number of residents and staff. The house is centrally located within walking distance to city facilities, job locations, and schools. It is a most appropriate setting for the intended purpose of the program, and is a visible asset to the neighborhood and community.

Staff

The Friendship House staff is entirely supported through grant funds. The staffing pattern of the first year of operation was continued through the second year without any alterations, and is represented as follows:

<u>Staff</u>	<u># of positions</u>
Boys supervisor	(1)
Cook II	(1)
Cottage Parent II	(2)
Cottage Parent III	(1)
Cottage Assistant	(1)
Night Watchperson	(1.5)

The Boys Supervisor is Mr. Don Bernard. Mr. Bernard has been with the program since it's inception and is responsible for the coordination of the house and the treatment program. The two Cottage Parent II positions are counselors who function as group leaders, and also as direct contacts with the youth serving community agencies. The Cottage Parent III is responsible for week-end coverage of the house and for house supervision in the absence of Mr. Bernard. The Cottage Assistant works with the Cottage Parent III and assists him during his scheduled hours of work. The Cook II is responsible for planning and preparing the meals and supervising the cleaning duties of the youth residents. The Watchmen positions serve to ensure the safety and security of the building and residents at night, thus giving the facility 24 hour, 7 day a week supervision.

Program

Friendship House is designed to serve 17 boys between the ages of 12 and 17 who

have been committed to the YDC for the term of their minority. The boys are selected through the Youth Development Center's new system of Intake and Classification. All newly committed youth are administered a battery of tests and psychological interviews. A classification board designates a treatment cottage and formulates a treatment plan. Youngsters who possess certain positive characteristics are eligible for admission into the Friendship House project. Those characteristics include:

1. A feeling of uneasiness, unhappiness, or discontent with himself or his life, and some concern about doing something to change it;
2. A recognition and acceptance that one does or can control what happens to him;
3. A willingness to examine things about himself with others;
4. A belief that he, other residents, and the program itself will benefit from his participation.

Those youth who show that they will be a threat to the community or to the progress of the other residents will not be accepted into the program.

Theoretically, the new intake and classification procedure should increase the success ratio of program residents. It is designed to select those youth who are most suited for the Friendship House Program, and most likely to benefit from the program structure. Youth who are of the same maturity level and delinquent subtype are selected for the program, and therefore the risk of resident confrontation is decreased.

The actual impact of the new intake procedures on the functional operation of the Friendship House Program has not yet been fully demonstrated. However, the procedure has been in effect for approximately five months and a noticeable trend is apparent. Of the 17 youth who have been sent to the program since the new intake procedure was adopted, only three have been returned to the YDC, or 18%, of the total. As compared to the overall rate of 27%, that trend is an early indication of success. Should it continue to produce similar results, the intake procedure will undoubtedly add to the increased efficiency of the entire program.

Once a youth has been placed at the Friendship House, he is assigned to be a member of one of the two existing 'house groups.' Each group is lead by a staff counselor, and a participating resident is chosen as a junior counselor or group

leader. Most house activities are coordinated through the group arrangement. It is used as part of the treatment structure, for domestic chores, for recreational activities, and for the purpose of providing the residents with an added measure of belonging.

The treatment program at the house involves Guided Group Interaction, Reality Therapy, and Positive Peer Pressure. Group sessions are held on an unscheduled basis throughout the day, and frequently circumstances mandate several sessions daily. The sessions are not limited to any particular length of time. Residents are encouraged to call a session when necessary and continue it until the problems have been resolved.

In addition to the treatment groups, a weekly house meeting is held for the purpose of discussing house matters, furloughs and releases. Staff meetings are also held on a weekly basis, and special meetings are called when deemed necessary.

The residents at Friendship House are required to either attend school or be engaged in some form of gainful employment. The staff maintains close communications with the school system and the students behavior and productivity is closely monitored. Those residents desiring to work rather than attend school are assisted by the staff in securing an appropriate job. All earnings are to be placed in a saving account and spending is allowed only for necessary items. Each employer is requested to provide the staff with frequent performance evaluations, and close monitoring is conducted.

Those residents who attend school are required to work during the summer months if work is available. Thus far the staff has been successful in locating an adequate number of jobs. Last summer each resident was employed on a part-time basis through the Neighborhood Youth Corps. That arrangement was most advantageous to the residents and staff alike, and efforts are being made to continue the program during the upcoming summer months.

An integral component of the Friendship House program is community involvement. Considering the poor relationship that the previous group home had established in the community, this aspect of the program was most important. The residents are always available to assist in community affairs. They have on numerous occasions helped the local church officials, the elderly, non-profit organizations, and the local neighbors. A great deal of goodwill has been fostered, and continued support from the community in return is being demonstrated.

A complex and involved procedure was proposed and is being utilized in respect to resident furloughs and release. Any resident who feels that he is ready for a furlough or release is required first to receive the sanction and support of his group and staff counselor. Upon receiving that support, he is then required to confront the entire house with his request. At least 75% must vote in favor of the request before it will be considered any further. In the event a furlough is requested, that is the end of the procedure provided no staff member is in opposition. However, if the request is for release, the case must then go before a Trial Placement Committee. That committee is comprised of the Deputy Superintendent, a member of the Board of Trustees, and the Director of Treatment. If they decide favorably, the youth is trial placed for a period of between 30 and 60 days. If the placement is successful, the case is referred to the full Board of Trustees for complete release consideration.

The furlough and release procedure has proven most successful. It provides for a gradual reintegration of the youth into the community under a closely supervised system. The youth is given the opportunity to slowly adjust to the transition, and adequate time is provided to establish future plans and personal goals.

COMMENT

This program has demonstrated a high degree of success in terms of adhering to it's proposed method of project implementation. That success can be attributed,

to some degree, to staff stability. Every employee of the program who was working at the commencement of the grant period has remained in his respective position. No staff turnover is reported and consequently each employee is familiar with the original objectives and methods of the program.

Friendship House has been operated as was prescribed in the grant application. The Intake and Classification system has been implemented as proposed, and the academic testing procedures are functioning as was intended. A concerted effort has been made to reduce the average length of resident involvement in the program, and most youth are now encouraged to leave after 4 months if an appropriate placement is available.

PROGRAM STATISTICS

At the time that this grant period began, there were 16 residents involved in the Friendship House Program. Since that time, an additional 44 youth have been sent to the house, making a total of 60 residents at the house during this grant period. Of that total, 17 are currently enrolled. A total of 13 of those who have been placed at the house, or 22% did not complete the program and were returned back to the Youth Development Center. Approximately half of those returned were sent back within 2 days because they were not suited for the program. The remaining half were in the program for an extended period of time, but exhibited behavioral problems and were returned for a more structured method of treatment.

A total of 30 residents have graduated from the program since this grant period began, or 50% of the total population. Of that number, only two have been returned to the YDC for a recidivism rate of 7% versus a projected 20%. A recidivist, as defined in the grant application, is a program graduate who returns to the YDC for a violation of his parole.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the last year of operation, the Friendship House project has operated

in accordance with the intended objectives. The new intake procedures have been implemented, and residents are now being accepted on the basis of educational and psychological test results. Treatment activities have remained relatively unaltered. There is presently more stress on Positive Peer Pressure Counseling, however, other group methods are utilized as well as individual counseling. There has been no report of staff turnover and training is being conducted in accordance with the established programs at YDC. Community support is still being evidenced and there are no reports of neighborhood complaints. The school system and the City continues to provide a wide array of service to the program and the residents. All services and facilities are provided free of charge and complete cooperation has been extended. The physical facility is maintained in excellent condition and was found by this writer to be clean and orderly. A great deal of time and effort has been devoted to the maintenance and restoration of the building, and the staff and residents take pride in its appearance.

The previous evaluation of this project offered three specific recommendations. They were:

1. To implement an intake and classification system,
2. To discontinue the trial period of resident entrance into the program, and;
3. To reduce the length of resident stay in the program.

Each of these recommendations was accepted and included in the proposed method of operation. Each recommendation has been implemented and is now a part of the Friendship House Program.

It is the opinion of this writer that the Friendship House Program has been a success and is fulfilling its objectives. During the past year, the program has graduated 30 residents and has experienced only a 7% rate of recidivism.

Accordingly, renewal funding is recommended in the requested amount of \$86,825 federal funds, and \$9,647 Commission funds. It should be noted that this request does represent third year funding. The project was not included in the operating

budget for the 1978 fiscal year, however, it has been included in the 1979 budget and is included in the Governor's proposal.

This writer did encounter some difficulty in collecting resident data in relation to this program. There is no system currently utilized to reflect the flow of residents within the program and other pertinent data. It is therefore strongly recommended that the attached form be maintained on a daily basis by project staff and retained at the Friendship House facility.

