



*(Miss P.R. Harris)

THE COMMUNITY AND CRIME PREVENTION

My current position as Senior Child Welfare Officer in charge of the "Omaru Community Youth Centre", Department of Social Welfare, Launceston, Tasmania has given me immense opportunity to contemplate the relationship between the healthy functioning of a Community, and juvenile crime patterns. I would like to offer a few personal thoughts on this topic, and illustrate these from experiences both here in Tasmania and gained whilst in England, February - May 1978 on a Churchill Fellowship.

The basic premise for my work in the community, and my belief in the value of community based projects stems from a conviction that all worthwhile work between people stems from the establishment of a trust relationship between them, and the evidence of genuine care and concern for the welfare of the client, as a person and a valued human being. There have been trends in the field of social work that cause hesitation in "becoming involved" or "over-involved", in creating "dependency" in perhaps causing "change"; - these trends alarm me, when they mean a withdrawal of personal care and concern under the guise of not respecting the rights of individuals and groups, to privacy and a life style of their own. I support the individual's right to choose life styles and make personal decisions, but I also believe that in developing relationships, a period of dependency can be healthy and used positively within that relationship; that change is a right and a choice for all of us, on small or large scales; that there is a very thin line between being too involved and caring too much and not being involved and not caring enough, to enable worthwhile intervention.

Community work is challenging and thought provoking, it needs people with the involvement of ideas and imagination, integrity and commitment, care and concern. A sense of humour, and a belief in the 'goodness' of humanity are all useful ingredients; for we are part of the community and responses are called for from us as human beings, not just as puppets hiding under the title of Social Worker. Academic Learning and education are important but these are of little value if the practical and basic techniques and skills of forming and developing relationships, and of respecting and valuing people as they are, as unique personalities, who need interest, care and acceptance where they are at the point of contact, are missing. Education is of little value if it cannot be practically utilised and theories and principles related to the normal day to day events in the lives of people with whom we mix. A social worker who holds a masters degree, is of little value if he cannot chat to people on their home ground about day to day events - "whether the veg-

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etables are suffering through the current drought condition", "what do you think of the recent K Mart development?" "Why do they put so many 'R' films on the Drive-In?" "When will they fix the pot holes in Grace St." etc. Basic communication and the establishment of one's genuine interest for the person as a 'whole' vital human being is essential to allow entry into, or help to be offered to, the problems initiating the original contact.

'Omaru' has been an exiting and valuable project development in the field of Community Work in Tasmania, and it is encouraging to see youngsters who have attended the Centre for periods in the initial 3 years, returning to either chat to staff about current events in their lives, or to offer practical assistance in a voluntary capacity to the current programmes. In August 1979, a paper on the Centre's work was given at the 10th Biennial Conference of the Australian Crime Prevention Council and may be read in the proceedings or copies obtained direct from the Centre itself.

One considerable difficulty we have faced in attempting to link youngsters from Omaru to existing community groups, has been caused by the city's inadequate transport system which has few, if any, evening buses (after 7 p.m.) and naturally pushes teenagers, and for that matter, adults, into hitch hiking, cadging a ride for whatever payment (money or personal service) to enable them to reach the city centre where the few main resources are located.

I would like to mention some developments in Community Work that I have observed in the U.K. on my visit there in 1978 and also to offer a few thoughts of my own developed from this visit and my current work.

THE LIVERPOOL FAMILY SCHEME (U.K.)

A tenement house in a rundown housing commission area in Liverpool has been developed as an immediate local resource. The council has supplied the house, it is staffed 9-6 p.m. by a social worker paid by the Liverpool Personal Services Society. His role is that of a catalyst or facilitator in the development of resources for the community. The house is open all day, everyone is welcome - old folk, children, mothers, unemployed teenagers, fathers etc. Whilst I was there, in those 3 days, I saw play schemes developed by the adults in response to childrens needs and the sheer factor of them being 'underfoot' and bored. (These schemes are not necessarily manned by the parents, often by old fold, single folk, unemployed dads etc.) A co-operative to bulk purchase at the market and bulk stores to enable discount and better food economy - the men went to market in the social worker's van, the women did the collecting of orders, and weighing out of produce. A workshop was developed in the outside shed, a weekly lunch cooked by those wishing to be on the roster, holiday activities, etc. The Social Worker was often the knowledge bank for ways of obtaining grant monies, explaining social security problems, listening and advising in matters of child care, family functioning etc. but most importantly he was one of the community as well. For lonely folk, those recovering from breakdowns, etc. here was a place that by just being yourself you could belong, no entry requirements - sex, age etc. didn't matter. In an area with a 17% unemployment rate, it was a vital daytime, community resource.

Pen-y-Craig Rhonda Valley, Mid Glamorgan, Location — disused coal cellar and store under the local Probation Office. Two youth workers appointed under the Job creation scheme to get things organised. The aim of the project was to provide an alternative to the case work approach in working with juveniles, and to provide activities which were stimulating and imaginative, and give the young people an opportunity to operate in a constructive group situation. Resources — the local Community.

Found — three volunteers interested in kids and with skills to enable them to commence two main activities — motor bike scrambling and photography. Boys attended 3 evenings weekly and go scrambling on Sundays. It was seen as important that a 'bad boys' club was not created, some of the boys were known to Probation, some were their friends, some were just local lads. Later girls also joined in. A management group was formed and although initially established on a formal basis, it then decided that it should be open to everyone actively involved. Youngsters also assume responsibilities in the meetings e.g. running a tuckshop, handling the finance etc. It was hoped that in the future they could create a lounge area and open some nights simply as a meeting place. During holidays at Easter, so many youngsters kept dropping in, a holiday programme developed. The cleaning and painting of the premises was all done by the volunteer workers and the youngsters. Finance came through fund raising activities, local authority funds and the local community.

QUARRIER'S HOMES, BRIDGE OF WEIR, GLASGOW

Quarrier's Homes have existed since 1871, and currently comprise over 30 cottages, a hospital, school, and close by, a centre for those of all ages suffering from Epilepsy. There is a clothing store where children can select and "buy" clothes, a gymnasium, swimming pool and innumerable clubs e.g. Brownies, football etc. The majority of children come from the Glasgow area and total about 400 or more. The involvement in field work originated from discussion as to how residential establishments, apart from providing permanent accommodation could help children from families 'at risk'. Initially the idea of Outboard Board Courses was explored, but this was felt to only benefit a few. The Castlemilk Family Services unit in Glasgow then approached the Homes to see if they could provide a holiday for some children 'at risk'. Accommodation was arranged at Largs where Quarriers had a holiday cottage. The success of this encouraged Quarriers to explore their idea further. The focus area was a huge council estate, with poor facilities, high vandalism incidents, a culturally and emotionally deprived environment. The idea developed to the current concept of weekend residential courses, intended to be held monthly, over a minimum 12 months period. Visits were made to homes in the weeks between these weekends, by the group leaders who ran the weekends, and attendance at school was seen as a criteria for weekend attendance. For youngsters from overcrowded homes and poor leisure resources, family difficulties etc. — the provision of existing and stimulating activities was an incentive to behave acceptably in their homes and communities, in between each period away. I joined a group of 6 boys on such a weekend. Activities commenced on "pick up" on Friday afternoon, through to return home on Sunday evening. Swimming, badminton, football, darts, day trips to National Parks, beaches etc., games competitions etc. were combined with group work, community work (e.g. that weekend we cleared the garden and planted vegetables.) A discussion between leaders and boys re the weekend's activities, their value and each other's contribution etc. rounded off the weekend. The location or base for the projects, is at West Yonderton in a converted farmhouse near Glasgow's old airport. The farmhouse was modified and renovated as part

of the project. Quarriers meet the capital and property maintenance costs, the local social services authority pays a minimal contribution for each child they refer. Cost is £26,000 for 40 places per annum £12.50 per place per week. An imaginative, and so far useful scheme, meeting some of the needs of this Glasgow housing estate. Referral reasons ranged from truancy, single parent families needing support, prevention of subsequent delinquency, assistance with personality problems, self confidence, awareness etc.

These are just three projects of many, and mentioned briefly, and without details, although these are available if required. Their significance, is that each in its different way, met community needs at the point where they occurred, and with resources developed from within these areas by folk with commitment, concern, imagination, and genuine interest in promoting community health. There is a very strong link between juvenile crime and community resources — or rather the lack of them. Resources may mean buildings, for sporting and leisure interests, health centres, gathering places for social interaction for all ages, schools, employment prospects etc. but also, and vitally important, concerned, caring people who in their daily lives, take an interest in their neighbours, recognise their responsibilities as community members by becoming involved in whatever aspects of living interests them — visiting aged and lonely neighbours, coaching youngsters sports teams, teaching crafts, cooking for the ill, saying a cheery 'hallo' to those they meet in the street, and generally responding to the needs of others in a positive way.

The development of community and self awareness should be part of every day living, encouraged in schools by human relationships training as part of the normal curriculum, so that from an early age children are encouraged to become self aware, to be concerned about each other, aware of each other's feelings, individuality and needs, so that the adult of the future are community conscious, caring and responsible. So much juvenile crime is a product of bad planning e.g. housing areas with limited resource and little transport services, boredom e.g. lack of leisure pursuits and stimulating activities, limited social consciousness and awareness i.e. self interest opposed to community interests etc.

There is a need for good community facilities e.g. sport's and recreation areas, health centres etc. but the "good facilities" argument in terms of juvenile crime prevention is useless in itself.

"The most important thing is an adult figure of some concern, honesty and character, that children in a group will respond to. Sure people can develop children's interest and then facilities are needed to mature then further." (NACRO Report — Off the Streets — Leisure Amenities and the Prevention of Crime U.K.).

In thinking of the young people and families with whom I work, and come in contact, Virginia Axline's comment in "Dibs — in Search of Self" comes to mind. "Who can love, respect and understand another person, if they have not had such basic experience themselves".

Patricia Harris

THE VIEW FROM INSIDE **Life in a boy's institution.**

In 1979, a group worker was involved with the boys in the Secure Unit of Ashley Home for Boys, with the aim of increasing the boys' skill at handling their emotions and planning their lives, following release.

One of the 'totals' used to focus the boys perspective, was the writing of a booklet "Life in Ashley". Because of the interest in crime prevention, in the Tasmanian media at that

time, (leading up to the 10th Biennial National Conference) the boys gave a crime prevention slant to the booklet. The following article includes explanation by the group worker involved, Mr. Steve Biddulph; (Wellington Street Clinic) comments by Miss Pat Harris (Senior Child Welfare Officer) who has been involved with a number of the boys concerned; and quotations from the booklet itself (with permission of the authors).

My work as a psychologist consultant to Ashley has taken a number of forms, according to the needs of the Home. It has included staff training, staff relations, troubleshooting, some individual assessment of boys and group work with boys in the Secure Unit.

Prison and institution group-work is a fairly primitive field, with only sparse literature available. The most helpful resources I have found include Karkoff (1974) book on the human resource training approach for both staff and boys; and the work of Robin Maslin in the Training Centre in Adelaide. For the remainder I've simply drawn on my own work teaching mental health skills at primary and secondary schools with normal children, simply making these more basic and direct in style.

The secure unit at Ashley rarely holds more than 8 boys, and these include those charged with serious offences, and those in short stay for absconding or misbehaving in the open section of the Home. Group work was very intermittent (2 hours per week) and lacked continuity since the population of the Unit changed from week to week. Fortunately attendance was set as being voluntary, and as the weeks passed, some boys would re-enter the Secure Unit to attend the group, because they had found it sufficiently interesting (at least against what else was being offered!)

A number of strategies were used to:—

- (1) Engage the boys' trust and involvement.
- (2) Work on altering their self-defeating behaviour in the outside world.

Among these were:—

LIFELINES — Plotting on a horizontal line, the significant good and bad events in their past life, their age expectancy and alternative paths open to them in the future, together with goals they would want these to include. (Not surprisingly there was a strong pattern of parental trouble and neglect and disruption in their backgrounds. Similarly I was saddened to notice the impoverished sense they had of life choices, goals or their power to effect their own destiny). The boys drew the lines themselves, and shared these with others in the group; sometimes skirting over more painful material.

The group then focused on the critical future decision that were pointed up by the diagram. I gave no advice or value judgements, but encouraged the boys to evaluate each other's reality.

FEELINGS — Participatory discussion of anger, sadness, loneliness, boredom, fear, and the body signs of these, situations they occur in, and winning — losing, ways of getting these feelings out and resolved. In this area we talked about both past events and current ones in the Home.

PUNCHES AND PATS ON THE BACK — boys prepared under direction a diagram of their own social network, looking at which persons gave them punishing experiences and which person gave them good feelings. This helped us to focus on problem relationships (inevitably either within the family or with the Police). The discussion provoked by this (based on Glassers Reality Therapy — 1970) centred on questions:—

- (1) What do *you* do to get these punches from these people?
- (2) Do you *want* that?

- (3) How can you *avoid* that? etc.

FINALLY THE BOOK — this was suggested by the boys in a brainstorming session and grew in the ensuing weeks. My goals were multiple in acting as the "midwife", for this publication:—

- (1) For the boys to see themselves in perspective — by presenting themselves and their situation to the public.
- (2) For the adult population to see and be aware of Ashley which tends in Tasmania to be something of a forgotten waste basket for difficult teenagers. There is an atmosphere of gentle ferment in the Tasmanian Welfare system at present and I had a wish that Ashley not be overlooked in these developments.
- (3) For people who work with, on and around young offenders to be aware of the world they occupy. The book emerged as very varied in form, content and style (as varied, in fact as are the boys themselves) It includes . . .

- (1) a blunt and perceptive essay on "why boys come here".
- (2) A survey of the boys "advise to parents".
- (3) Details of their daily routine as it is seen by the boys (with an odd mixture of appreciation and resentment).
- (4) Practical hints of crime prevention "how to get your car scoffed".
- (5) Taped dialogues about the first impact Ashley makes on a new arrival.
- (6) An interview by the boys with the acting Superintendent (full of leading questions!)

The varied levels of self awareness shown by the boys and their difficulties with expression (ranging down to almost complete illiteracy) are instructive to the reader in understanding the choices these boys make towards law-breaking. The language is vivified by street style expression which looks odd in written form—

"Sometimes of a night we go to the gym . . ."

"You can make things what you want . . ." (in the trade wing)

Since the boys "committee" checked each other's work many times over, correcting many gross grammatical errors, these wordings were completely accepted by them as plain English. What is significant here is not the boys restricted language, but the restricted world that it is a symptom of. They speak in this way because they never got close enough, for long enough, to anyone who spoke or thought differently. Restricted options, life choices — channels of acceptable membership of the human race, are the limiting factors which make law breaking a more attractive option. A boy steals a car, or worse, because it is the best option he sees to his problems of living. With austerity, family collapse, and unemployment further restricting young people's options in this decade we can look forward to very rapid increase in youth crime.

In designing the crime prevention section, the boys hotly debated whether it was in their interests or not, to give practical suggestions to the home owner and car owner! In any discussion of this kind I refused to make a stand, since it would carry no weight unless arrived at through the boys own reasoning. Eventually the feeling developed in the group that they themselves would be better off if opportunities for theft were not so blatantly available to them.

I cannot do better at this point, than to quote from the book in a section whose author must remain anonymous—

WHY KIDS COME HERE!

"A lot of kids come here because their home life isn't too good, and when kids have a bad home life they nearly always get into trouble.

Most kids get into trouble because they associate with other kids who have nothing to do, so they look for something exciting to do, like stealing a car or breaking into a house. This is the most stupid thing they could do, because no matter how good their luck is, they're going to get caught. Even if it takes a couple of years, they've got to make a mistake sometime, and when they do they're sprung.

The first time they will get a warning, and if they have any sense they will stop, because the next time they go before a magistrate they will probably end up in Wybra or Ashley depending on their age. And believe me coming to Ashley or any institution isn't fun and it's nothing to brag about to friends.

Take Ashley for instance — it's no Devils Island, but then again it's not easy. You have to work, but most people get used to it. But the worst things about institutions is that you don't have much choice in whether or not you want to do something. In other words, you don't decide what you're going to do. They usually tell you! But the worst thing is that you lose your freedom (not entirely, unless you go in the secure unit — because sometimes you go on organised outings).

Once someone has been in Ashley or any other criminal institution for that matter, it's hard to keep out of trouble, and a lot of boys after leaving Ashley for good come back because they can't handle the outside world. And Ashley offers a shelter for them."

In closing, I must say that the word "boys" in the above article and in the name of the institution, is misleading.

These are young men in size, and in type of crime, however childlike some of their writings may be. They are on the brink of actions and decisions — their own and others — which will put them on shaky feet in the adult world, or else in prison.

Mr. Steve Biddulph
Psychologist
Wellington Street Clinic
Mental Health Dept. Tasmania
Churchill Fellow 1980

This booklet has been a useful experience for the boys. It has also been helpful to the adults working with them, as it has been a different means of communication and allowed us as adults, to view Ashley more through the boys' eyes than our own.

The boys I know personally, who have contributed, are aware of a feeling of achievement and personal effort rewarded by adult interest; as well as feelings of just sheer pleasure at producing a booklet entirely by themselves.

Steve's advice and encouragement has been supportive and enabling. In a situation where positives for the boys are often hard to see — this has been an important project. It has also induced a lot of productive thought — by us all.

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Copies of the booklet "Life in Ashley" are available by writing to the Ashley Home for Boys, Deloraine, Tasmania 7304 and enclosing \$1.50 post paid.

EDUCATION ROLE IMPORTANCE IN PRIMARY PREVENTION OF CRIME

*Mrs M. Campbell-Smith

This Conference, with its emphasis on the prevention of crime within the community, looks to the major institutions and the systems of social control at a time when the crime rate, especially among juveniles, is rising. Why do some people turn to crime?

The vast majority of cases probably arise out of the person having poor relationships, poor family background, arrested social development and an inappropriately developed value system. This can be expressed out of difficulties of the person's own integration of themselves — or of themselves with society.

If this is so, the most appropriate way to prevent this is to influence the factors that produce such socially aberrant human behaviour. The most potent influential areas are the home, the school, the peer group, the media, and the local situation in which they live. Obviously certain things only government can do, and to some extent moves have been made in recent times to do just this, but in the educational sphere there has not been a similar move that could have a beneficial effect.

One area in particular that has been given lip-service or has been ignored is that of growth of the self, and in the ability of people to relate to others. The growing emphasis on career qualifications is not being matched with a similar emphasis on the acquisition of social skills and information required for happy healthful living, both in and out of work. However, if our education system (whatever its philosophy or policy) does, in fact, cater primarily for the job market, to the extent

that vital aspects of social education are overlooked or deliberately ignored (particularly at a time when the role of the family as social educator has become significantly diluted by other influences), then it would seem inevitable that the social problems arising from the lack of knowledge and poorly developed social skills would affect the well-being of society as a whole.

All of us have certain basic needs, and the most important of these are the need to belong, to be wanted, and to be loved. For many, these needs are not met, and the consequent feeling of inferiority produces many forms of negative behaviour.

There is an epidemic of inferiority in our society. From the moment children enter the world they are subjected to an unfair value system which reserves respect and esteem for only a few. Those who fail to measure up to society's standards — mainly in areas of beauty and intelligence — will have to cope with feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.

What can parents do to protect their children from the agony of inferiority? How can teachers compensate for the unfair value judgements which damage their students? Are they aware that they may be compounding the feeling of inadequacy to a point of no return? What action and attitudes will enable us to help children develop a normal and healthy self-esteem. If you watch a child whose ego or feeling of self-worth has been damaged, you can see that the pain equals or even exceeds the intensity of physical discomfort. The frightening part is that the pain tends to grow into the con-