



Attitude Plays Big Part In Feeling 'Old'



Photography By Art Richardson

Being old . . . when friends and loved ones matter most.

Drug Action Council Fits Pieces Together

"No one agency has the answer to drug abuse in High Point," says Ralph Nunez of the recently-organized Drug Action Council. "It has to be a joint, or concerted, effort."

The High Point Drug Action Council, which formally came into being in October, is a big step toward finding that answer. "The problem of drug abuse is bigger than any of us individually," says Nunez. "It's a major problem in this community—and its status changes from month to month."

Until the inception of the Drug Action Council, there were no organized programs to deal with the drug situation in the greater High Point community.

"That's not to say that no one was doing anything," said Nunez, who is currently acting as director of the council. "It's just that the community has to come together to combat it."

The Drug Action Council has 23 members on its board. It is made up of interested citizens from all sectors of the population. President is John Thomas; vice president, Mrs. Thomas E. Smothers; and treasurer, Dan Herrington. Nunez is acting as secretary.

The council was organized after the Community Planning Council of which Nunez is director, made a survey in early summer to determine the scope of drug abuse in High Point.

Approximate figures showed that 2,000 are dependent upon drugs in High Point, be it physically or psychol-

ogically. Heroin, it was found, is the most prevalent drug, with LSD (acid), marijuana (pot), amphetamines and barbituates also existent.

STATISTICS IMPOSSIBLE

Nunez, who has been involved in the drug problem from the start, says it is almost impossible to pin down numbers and statistics concerning drug usage.

"Drugs are being used in different ways in different sections of the city," he says. "Drug abuse is serious in the Model Cities Model Neighborhood area, but it's also serious in other areas, too."

When the office of the Drug Action Council is set up, hopefully by the first of the year, it will act as an administrative umbrella over drug programs in the city.

The council is now in the organizational stage. Until its director is hired, United Community Services, the parent organization, is allowing Nunez to act in that function.

Eventually, Nunez hopes the Drug Action Council will apply for membership in United Community Services. Until then the United Fund administrative arm is acting as its sponsor.

Other organizations in the community are working with planning and funding the council's activities. Among them are the Model Cities Commission, Youth Unlimited, Urban Ministry, Department of Mental Health and Voca-

(Continued on Page 2)

Elderly A Neglected Segment Of Population---Sheppard

Being old is a state of mind.

It isn't counted by years, or Social Security checks, or periodic visits by dutiful relatives.

It's when life seems to have passed you by, in that blink of time when you didn't notice.

It's when friends seem to be getting fewer and fewer, and you find you're no longer useful to your family, or anybody. . . .

Being old is when you must be taken care of for the first time in your life; and you like it even less than your family does.

Except, your family doesn't realize it.

Being old is when you finally have that leisure time you've been looking for all these years, and suddenly there's nothing to do to fill it.

Being old is feeling alone, with no place to go.

Some elderly people—whose years are long—are old.

And then, some elderly people—whom society likes to call "senior citizens"—are not old.

Their years are the same. But they have not allowed themselves to be tossed aside, used up.

Their "retirement" has been from long years' hard work, not from life.

Friends, family, and society as a whole play a vital role in the attitude of elderly persons toward themselves.

Society makes a person feel either old—neglected, no longer useful—or simply elderly, with many comfortable, active years ahead of him.

How the aged are dealt with is a matter of concern for all segments of society, in High Point as well as elsewhere, according to local social agency directors.

"Society has not wakened up to the necessity of providing services for the elderly," says Ralph Sheppard, program director of Guilford County Department of Social Services in High Point. "We're not facing up to the necessity of these services."

"Some things are being done, sure, but I hope no one is satisfied with what we think we're doing," Sheppard went on. "We have to work together on a county-wide basis."

Sheppard, whose department offers services, surplus food and money to 1,000 in the 65-and-older group in High Point, calls the elderly a "neglected segment of the population."

"Society in general pushes them aside, tells them they are not useful anymore," he said.

Also, society determines what agencies such as Social Service can do for older folk. "We wrongfully get this notion that simply because one is in retirement he can live on less, that he needs less," Sheppard continued.

Furthermore, the programs designed to ease an elderly person's financial situation don't combat the real problem, in many cases: loneliness.

"Some approaches, such as suggesting placing a person in a nursing home, sometimes forget the human element," said Sheppard. "And if we get to the place we don't keep that in mind, we might as well close up shop."

More staff and more money are needed to help cope with the problems of the elderly in this community, said the social services director. "We could use all available staff 24 hours a day and still not do what needs to be done. We just don't have the proper resources," he said.

In High Point, eight percent of all residents are over age 65. Based on the 1970 census figure of 61,399 for High Point at large, there are 5,420 persons over age 65, or are "elderly."

Twenty percent of all elderly in High Point live within the Model Neighborhood area, according to figures provided by R. L. Polk and Company Survey reports. Elderly persons make up 9.8 percent of the Model Neighborhood population, while the same age group makes up 8.6 percent of the population outside the Model Neighborhood.

Because the economic and social problems are more pronounced within the Model Neighborhood, the problems of its elderly are considered more severe, as well.

To help cope with these problems, the Model Cities' Concentrated Social Services, along with the Department of Social Services, has set up a number of special programs just for the elderly.

Other organizations, such as Council

(Continued on Page 3)

Merry
Christmas

*The Model Cities
Commission and staff
wish everyone a
happy holiday
season!*