

Foster Care Experiment Draws High Praise

The problem of foster children — finding homes for them, helping foster parents adjust to them, dealing with the problems of the natural parents — is one of the most difficult facing any social agency.

Perhaps the most serious difficulty is "drift" — the movement of a foster child from one home to another, with intermediate stops in the court system. Permanency planning for each foster child takes time, patience and discussion among judges, at-

torneys, social workers, parents and children — and there is seldom enough time, due to heavy case loads.

The Department of Social Services in Madison County is typical in this respect. Just over a year ago, Sandy Marler, in charge of the foster care program, had more than 30 cases to handle — far too many to give careful attention to any one of them.

Then the state chose Madison County, along with seven other counties in the state, to participate in a year-

long pilot program in permanency planning. The goal was to determine whether, by reducing the case load of the foster care worker, more foster children could be placed in permanent homes. Madison was the only western county selected.

"We were very eager to get into the program," said DSS Director Anita Davie. "We knew that with Sandy's case load, which was 36 when the program started, there was no way to deal effectively with each child. We also knew that

she could do more if the load were reduced. Of course every agency tells the state this same story, so we needed a chance to prove it is really true."

They had their chance, for a trial year ending in February 1980. Sandy's case load was reduced to 23, (really somewhat lower, because some of the children were siblings). Some of her clients were shifted to several colleagues at DSS, who gamely shouldered the additional burden for the sake of the ex-

periment. They are adoption worker Judy Briggs and protective services worker Sarawill Bellamy.

At year's end, the results were unmistakably positive. As the DSS people told their colleagues at the state Department of Human Services recently, six of the 23 children had been returned home to their natural parents — the preferred plan in the case of foster children.

In addition, two children were cleared for adoption and seven more were pending

adoption. By comparison, DSS had been unable to clear any foster children for adoption during the previous 2½ years.

Of the rest, seven were pending adoptive placement, six were placed in long-term foster care and one left the project.

"We think the project was very effective," said Anita Davie. "We were able to move children out of foster homes into permanent homes or back to their natural parents. This is just too difficult when the caseload is too high."

Also, of 13 more children added after the beginning of the project, eight have been returned home, and there are plans to return four more home. One has been cleared for adoption.

"The project has ended," said Sandy Marler, "but we are continuing. We are so excited to find that permanency planning can work that we don't intend to stop."

DSS does need some additional money to continue the project, to pay some additional salary expense. But

already the state has indicated that at least a small amount of money is coming. "It won't be enough for all 100 counties," said Mrs. Davie, "but it's a start."

Dr. Sarah Morrow, N.C. secretary of human resources, recently announced that \$750,000 will be redirected statewide to the permanency planning program. "We have a moral obligation to do all we can to reduce the number of children in foster care," she said. There are more than

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Special Nursing Program Offers Care At Home

For some medical patients, especially those suffering from long-term ailments, a hospital is not the most desirable place to stay. It is not only expensive, but it also lacks the comfort and familiarity of home.

For such patients in Madison County there is an alternative: the Home Health Program. Two home health nurses, Fay Skemp and Brenda Pace, and one aide, Linda Boswell, visit patients throughout the county on a regular basis. They check the diets, medications and vital signs of scores of home-bound patients. To many of the patients, these nurses, in their familiar blue-and-white Jeeps, have become close family friends and important bonds to the outside world.

One of the home health nurses, Fay Skemp, invited me recently to go with her on her rounds. It became apparent through the day just how important she is to her patients, and how much they enjoy being at home. There they are free to garden, keep house, cook their own meals and most important, make their own decisions.

Our first stop was at a small house by the river just up from Marshall where Lloyd Cuthall and his friend Henry live. It was Lloyd's 74th birthday, and Fay brought him a cake she had made. Lloyd suffers from high blood pressure, pancreatitis, a duodenal ulcer and bursitis which becomes so severe at times that he can't walk. He was feeling all right today and was clearly moved by the present. "Thank you for the cake, Fay," he said several times. Henry, who also has dangerously high blood pressure, made her a present of green onions from his garden, which she accepted, and Lloyd got out a large bag of ramps, which she declined.

"The biggest problem for a lot of my patients," she said as we drove away, "is salt. I can't get them to cut it out, and as long as they don't they won't get well. For most people with any kind of heart condition, salt is bad. It causes the body to retain too much fluid, especially in the feet and sometimes hands. The blood pools there and the heart has to work harder to pump. When they lie down the fluid comes up around the lungs and the heart. This can cause death by suffocation — what many people here call 'smothering'."

"Then there is diet. We can grow better vegetables in this county than anywhere in the country, but then we cook them to death in grease. I try to get patients to cut down on fat and stop boiling their vegetables, which destroys the vitamins."

We drove across the river and down Fortner Road to the riverbank, where Fay stopped

at the house of Evie Church, who also suffers from high blood pressure. Her feet and ankles were swollen, and whenever she works in the garden they become very sore. Fay took a blood sample in order to test the clotting time. Medication for high blood pressure thins the blood to ease the heart's pumping load, but it is important not to thin the blood too much.

We tiptoed around Evie's dog, which has bitten Fay once already, and went over to Cotton Mill Hill where Geneva Edwards, 99, lives. She is Fay's oldest patient and is cared for by her daughters. She recently fell and cut her forehead, which seems to have set her back and reduced her appetite; her weight has fallen to 70 pounds. Fay fussed at her about eating more and drinking more fruit juices. Geneva protested that she drinks gallons of juice, and held her hands wide apart to indicate how much, but her daughter told us as we left that she probably swallows no more than a spoonful at a time.

"When patients get this old," said Fay, "sometimes they just refuse to eat enough to keep themselves going. I spend a lot of time talking to them and their families. One of the most important parts of my job is talking to them about death, which many home-bound patients will soon face. We try to prepare the patients and families for this, so that it does not come as a shock but as something to be expected."

According to Michael Norins, director of the Hot Springs Health Program, there is a very high "burn-out rate" among home health nurses nationwide because the nurses devote so much attention and time to caring for patients, many of whom die.

"All of the home health nurses are very strong, very dedicated people," said Norins. "They live with a lot of stress. They have not only the hard work and the endless paperwork, but also the

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News-Record To Post May Election Returns

The primary election returns will be posted on a blackboard in the courtroom in Marshall next Tuesday night through the courtesy of The News Record.

Election officials at the various polling places are asked to phone in the returns as soon as possible to the county election board which will be in the courthouse.

The News Record will be a day late next week so that the readers will have the election results.



FAYE'S OLDEST PATIENT, Geneva Edwards of Cotton Mill Hill, Marshall, celebrated her 99th birthday in January. Nurse Skemp takes her blood pressure

and urges her to eat more. Inadequate diet is one of the most serious problems with home-bound patients.

Marshall Fire Rates Drop

Homeowners in the Smoky Mountain Fire District in Madison County will save money on their property insurance as a result of improvement in their fire protection classifications, according to the North Carolina Insurance News Service.

INS reported the savings will apply to homeowners' and fire insurance policies.

For example, the rate for a \$50,000 brick veneer home in the

district will drop from \$268 to \$228 a year. The rate for a similarly valued frame dwelling will drop from \$310 to \$259 per year. The examples are based on the most widely purchased homeowner's policy. Savings on other policies are comparable.

The Smoky Mountain Fire District includes the town of Marshall and the area within a four-mile radius of the fire house.

Food Stamp Suspension Warned

Unless Congress acts quickly to provide more funds, food stamps for the month of June may be reduced or completely cancelled. Therefore, all recipients are urged to spend their May allotment wisely.

If funding is not provided by May 15 your local Food Stamp Office will be ordered by the Federal Government to stop all food stamp issuance for June.



YOUNG MATHEMATICIANS from Madison High traveled last week to Cullowhee to participate in the 10th annual Western Carolina University High School Mathematics Contest, along with 32 other high schools. Pictured above are, first row, left to right: Elaine Fore, Ronnie Weathers, Chris Wilde, Kevin Johnson, Karlyn Ammons and Michael McMahon; second row: Teddy Allison, Gina Worley, Chuck

Pfaff, Teresa Norris, Jan Blair, Dana Allen and Sandra Keller; third row: Dwayne Buckner, Greg Dillingham, Amy Knisley, Alfred Dockery, Russell Lambert and Greg Lisenbee. Not pictured: Robbie Waites. The competition was held in algebra I, algebra 2, geometry and comprehensive areas. The contest was won by the Brevard High School team, for the eighth consecutive year.

Community Development Meeting

The Community Development Council will meet on Thursday, May 1 at 7 p.m. at the County Extension Office in

Marshall. There will be discussion of the community clean-up, entry dates for the various contests and prizes for

the 1980 awards program. Earle Wise, county extension chairman, urges everyone to attend.

Citizens Vote In Primary Here May 6

The Primary Election for both Democratic and Republican candidates, for local, state and national offices, will be held on May 6, 1980. The purpose is to nominate candidates who will run in the general election in November. In the primary, voters can vote only for candidates of their declared party.

On entering your polling place you must state your name, address and party affiliation. If you are properly registered, the primary lever will be adjusted for your party in the voting machine. You can then vote for one candidate from your party for each office by turning the pointer beside the name to the left until an "x" appears in the box.

Only two county offices are up for election — tax collector and register of deeds. Both Democratic and Republican candidates are running unopposed, so that they are not listed on the primary ballot.

Following is a list of candidates for state and national

offices who will be on the ballot:

Democratic Primary

Governor

Salary: \$47,700, plus \$10,000 expenses.

James B. (Jim) Hunt Jr. of Lucama, age 43. Occupation: Attorney. Education: BS in Agricultural Education, NCSU; MS in Agricultural Economics, NCSU; Doctor of Law, UNC-CH.

Robert W. (Bob) Scott, of Haw River, age 50. Occupation: Dairy Farmer. Education: Attended Duke University for 2 years; received a B.S. degree in Animal Husbandry, NCSU.

Harry J. Welsh of Raleigh, age 50. Occupation: Sr. claim representative. Education: B.S. degree, Morehead State University.

Lieutenant Governor

Salary: \$41,484, plus \$10,000 expenses.

James C. (Jimmy) Green of Clarkton, age 59. Occupation: Businessman and Farmer. Education: Washington & Lee University.

Clyde Pulley of Goldsboro, age 45. Occupation: Community College Instructor. Education: B.S., Criminal Justice; M.S., Corrections.

Carl J. Stewart Jr. of Gastonia, age 43. Occupation: Attorney. Education: A.B. and J.D. Duke University.

Associate Justice, N.C. Supreme Court

Salary \$49,356 (Unexpired Term Ending 12/31/84)

Ottway Burton of Asheboro, age 63. Occupation: Lawyer. Education: Graduate UNC-Chapel Hill - School of Commerce; Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration; UNC-Chapel Hill School of Law.

J.P. (Phil) Carlton of Pinetops, age 42. Occupation: Associate Justice, N.C. Supreme Court.

Commissioner Of Insurance

Salary: \$41,484.

W. Kenneth (Ken) Brown of Raleigh, age 37. Occupation: Formerly - Chief Deputy Commissioner of Insurance. Education: A.B. "agrec -

High Point College; Masters Degree - Emory University. John Ingram of Cary, age 50. Occupation: N.C. Insurance Commissioner. Education: B.S. in Business Administration, First in Class, Doctor of Law Degree, UNC-Chapel Hill.

James E. (Jim) Long of Burlington, age 39. Occupation: Attorney. Education: N.C. State University; University of North Carolina, B.A.; University of North Carolina School of Law, J.D.

Roy H. Rabon Jr. of Raleigh, age 43. Occupation: Resigned as District Manager, U.S. Census, to run. Education: UNC-CH, 1963 School of Journalism.

Secretary Of State

Salary: \$41,484

George W. Breece of Fayetteville, age 34. Occupation: Broker, former Member of N.C. House of Representatives. Education: B.A. Atlantic Christian College.

Thad Eure of Winton, age 80. Occupation: Lawyer; Dean of Secretaries of State of America. Education: Academic and laws Schools, UNC.

State Senator

James McClure Clark

Zeb R. Shepard

Robert S. Swain

District Court Judge

Boyd Laine Johnson

Richard George Miller

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Unaka Center Invites Public To Open House

The Unaka Center in Hot Springs will hold an open house on May 8 from 5 to 7 p.m. The public is cordially invited to see the center's new building, next to Anderson's Exxon on Highway 25/70 and across from the day care center.

Guests at the open house will be served refreshments and entertained with live music.

The move to the new building was made possible through the financial support of Madison County and the Blue Ridge Community Mental Health Center, as to director Danny Wy