

Advocacy Dimensions



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Minnesota State Planning Agency

Developmental Disabilities Protection and Advocacy Network

Over 200 Attend March Advocacy Conference

Advocate's Success Lies in Self-esteem

"How one feels about oneself directly affects the way they meet the challenges of their world." This was the message that over two hundred people heard at the opening of "A Conference on Advocating for Persons with Developmental Disabilities II" on March 10 and 11, 1980 at the Raddison Inn, Plymouth. Ray McGee was the Keynote speaker. McGee, formerly employed as a social worker at the Washburn Child Guidance Center in Minneapolis, went on to say that if you feel competent, brave, strong and smart, you will be better able to cope with the day-to-day problems than if you feel weak, helpless, dumb and irresponsible.

Advocates have a role of going out into the world and trying to establish programs to better meet the needs of certain individuals and also to change some of the programs that exist. Sometimes, in this quest, it is very easy for them to forget

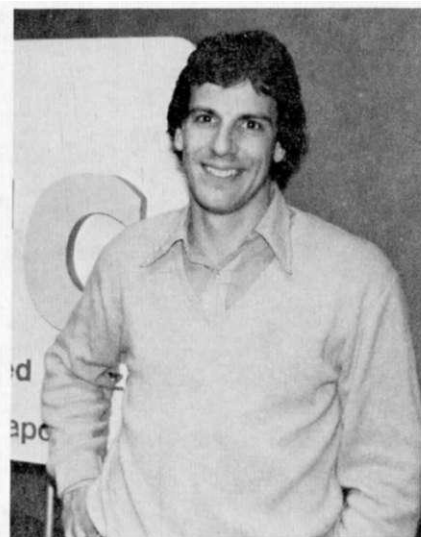
McGee to p.4

Beware of Advocacy Pitfalls

"Recent emphasis on advocacy is a great trend, but advocacy can also have its pitfalls." This word of caution came from Lynn Breedlove, Director of Citizen Advocacy at the Minneapolis Association for retarded Citizens, while presenting at the March 10-11 conference. Breedlove spoke of the need for self-renewal for advocates, as well as self-evaluation.

Advocacy practice is susceptible to the same kinds of pitfalls that we see generally in human services. It may become over-bureaucratized to the point where there is insufficient personal contact between advocates and persons with handicaps. Advocates may lose touch with peoples' real needs and may group people into categories of what they expect their needs to be.

To prevent this from happening, consumers must be encouraged to be involved in the decision making process. When advocates, parents and other interested citizens want to work *for* people with handicaps instead of *with*



Lynn Breedlove

them, this attitude only perpetuates the diminution of self-determination.

After outlining other inherent pitfalls, Breedlove ended on this note, "Be futuristic. Imagine what could be and make a break with the past. Press for major changes in the future."

A summary transcript of Breedlove's presentation may be obtained from the Developmental Disabilities Planning Office.

Advocacy Program Highlights

Project CADRE Advocates for Offenders and Victims in the Hennepin County Criminal Justice System

Project CADRE (Citizen Advocate Development, Recruitment and Evaluation), was funded as a three-year demonstration project that has been supported through Formula Grant and Protection and Advocacy monies out of the Developmental Disabilities Planning Office. CADRE is administered by the Minneapolis Association for Retarded Citizens. In response to questions asked by *Advocacy Dimensions* staff, Sharen Southard, Project CADRE Director, provided the following information:

Do people who have a developmental disability face special problems in the criminal justice system?

"According to the national literature on the subject, people who have a developmental disability face several problems when they come into contact with the criminal justice system. Some of the problems relate to violations of rights, but more frequently, problems arise from inadequate procedures, treatment and placement. Specifically, the national literature reports that: (1) people who have a developmental disability are not always appropriately identified; (2) people who have a developmental disability are not treated adequately; (3) there is a lack of placements as alternatives to incarceration; (4) this population is frequently abused in correctional facilities; and, (5) criminal justice system personnel lack sufficient knowledge about developmental disabilities."

"The accumulative results from these problems can leave a



Sharen Southard

client totally unaware of their rights, options and the complexity of the system. Thus, people who have a developmental disability may be misunderstood or falsely labeled. They serve longer jail time because their lawyer does not understand the problem and know how to proceed with the case. They may be inappropriately placed and set up for failure. It has been documented that they serve longer prison sentences because of the lack of appropriate vocational or educational programming and

they run the risk of verbal, physical and sexual abuses in state or county correctional facilities."

What is the role of advocacy in the criminal justice system for this population?

"During the past two years, the Project has been involved with several advocacy cases ranging from the time of arrest to prison release. There is no one method or style of advocacy that has emerged as *The Best Method*, however, a combination of styles specifically designed to meet each client's needs in a given situation has proven to be effective. Basically, the role of advocacy is always a combination of explanation, investigation, negotiation and education."

"As advocates, our first responsibility is to explain the situation to our client. It is vital that the client understand the criminal justice system process and their options at each particular stage. It is of equal importance that the facts in the case are reviewed by the advocate. Sometimes, false information or misinterpretation can be cleared up before the system is set into motion. Whenever possible, the advocate should be aware of negotiation methods. Often

ADVOCACY RESOURCES

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE AVAILABLE TO HANDICAPPED

Any handicapped consumer who has questions about legislation concerning the handicapped can find the answers by calling Mainstream, Inc.'s national hotline.

Mainstream, a non-profit organization which promotes the mainstreaming of disabled people in employment and education, recently added a TTY communications unit and a toll-free WATS line in an effort to reach out to both Federal contractors and disabled consumers.

"Mainstream On Call" provides confidential answers to questions arising out of Federal regulations, particularly Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

This free service is available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time, by calling (800) 424-8089.

In addition, Mainstream publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, *IN THE MAINSTREAM*, on affirmative action for the handicapped which is offered free of charge. Articles from government agencies enforcing regulations on compliance appear in each issue along with updates on state and federal legislation and reports on other developments in the field. For subscription information, write:

Mainstream, Inc.
1200 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

CITIZEN ADVOCACY RESOURCES, 1979, Compiler: Mary Ellen Michael. Available from Research and Training Center in Mental Retardation, Texas Tech University, Box 4510, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Free, depending on availability.

A compilation of literature, training materials and other resources for citizen advocacy for the developmentally disabled. This bibliography briefly summarizes publications in the categories of: Developmental Disabilities, Advocacy, Administration, Rights and Benefits, Access and Travel, Community Living, Periodicals and Bibliographies, Resource Organizations and State Planning Agencies.

Free Audio-Visual Resources Available

Do you need some new ideas for your next parent discussion group? Or, are you working on a zero-based budget that limits your style? Perhaps this free service would be worth your while. As part of a national effort to provide training and technical assistance on advocacy, films, slide/tapes, and video-cassettes are being loaned on a two-week basis. Return postage would be the only cost involved.

Topics vary: citizen advocacy, discrimination, architectural barriers, humanization, and autism, are only a few examples. Receipt of a complete listing and orders may be transacted with:

Advocacy for Handicapped
Citizens, Inc.
111 Church Street
Charleston, S.C. 29402
803/723-2518

THE FUTURE OF LEGAL SERVICES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

The purpose of this publication is to reflect, insofar as possible, a general consensus of the ideas, findings and recommendations of presentors at a conference at Arlie House, Virginia, in September 1977. Its focus is on the current and future legal needs of mentally retarded persons in such areas as guardianship, education, criminal justice, citizen advocacy, and other legal issues.

The President's Committee on Mental Retardation, Washington, D.C. 20201. Free copies available upon request.

STANFORD LAW REVIEW, April 1979 "Symposium on Mentally Retarded People and the Law," Available from Stanford Law Review, Stanford, CA. 94305. Price: \$3.75 per copy.

Lectures addressed developments in civil law as regards litigation on behalf of retarded persons, on ending abuse in institutions and the case of psychotropic drugs, on ending institutionalization, and on the legal problems of retarded people in community settings.

Telecommunications (TTY) Device for Deaf Persons

The Office of the Federal Register provides a new service for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired who need information about documents published in the *Federal Register*. Call 202/523-5239.

Project Urges Team Approach

cases can be better handled if the advocate can "manipulate" the system to their client's advantage. This form of manipulation is not subversive or outside the law; but rather a gentle bending of circumstances so that the spirit of the law is upheld on the client's behalf. And, every case that an advocate becomes involved with is going to have the potential for education. In fact, sometimes the teachable moment with criminal justice system personnel is when you, as an advocate, can explain a particular disability or community resource that is available to help a police officer, sheriff's deputy, probation officer or attorney with a particular client."

How effective are advocates with the criminal justice system?

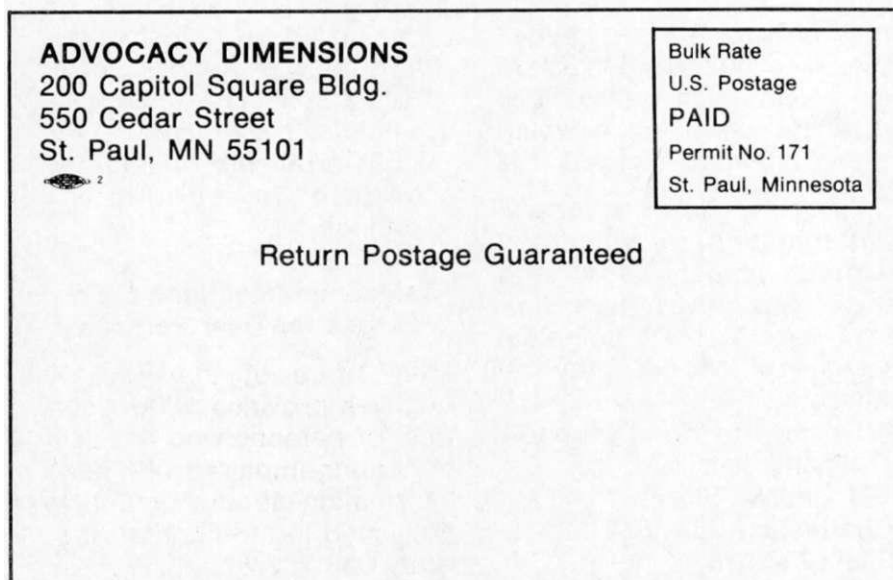
"Since CADRE began, most of the client referrals have come from criminal justice system personnel. They, like community people, realize that the

issues faced by people who have a developmental disability are complex and better approached by a team. In some situations, advocates can provide better services for these clients because it may be difficult for a criminal justice system person to advocate against their own office. In other instances, the criminal justice system personnel may not have the time or expertise to effectively serve their client. In these situations, if criminal justice system personnel are made aware of the issues faced by people who have a developmental disability in the system, and if they know that they can call upon an advocate who will work closely with that client, advocacy services will continue to be called for by the system."

If you have a further interest in this subject, contact Project CADRE, Minneapolis Association for Retarded Citizens, 2344 Nicollet Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404. (612) 874-6650.

that they have many opportunities to affect the quality of the day of those they come in contact with. Those people for whom the advocate goes to battle need more than just the advocate's battle skills. They also have great need for his recognition of their strengths. This was spoken of in terms of developing the art of noticing - getting a message of strength from one person's head to another person's head ("Our brains are fantastic computers.") in a way that is comfortable to give and comfortable to receive. This kind of affirmation is the basis of a healthy self-esteem.

McGee does not want people to think of this as an added dimension of their job, but instead, a part of their job that brings considerable joy to all involved. When one gives strength to another person, one gives integrity. When one gives integrity, one will in turn receive respect.



ADVOCACY DIMENSIONS

Is a publication of the Minnesota Developmental Disabilities Protection and Advocacy Network of the State Planning Agency. Staff members include:

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