

1971
MAY

PRESENTATION TO THE MAY 25TH, 1971 BOARD ORIENTATION MEETING

BY J.W. FREI

During 1970 the work of the SPC was affected by the profound change in the activities of both Board and staff. Board members had to solve the basic problem of the function of the corporation and this resulted in the preparation of a new constitution and a policy statement, both of which were approved at the Annual Meeting of the membership in April of this year. The work of the Board will be discussed in the next item on the agenda of today's meeting.

For the staff, the year 1970 was a period of transition from one era into another. Not only did they have to adjust to a new Executive Director, who came in the fall of 1969, but they also had to cope with the impact of basic social change bringing about a new awareness of the problems which the people in Metropolitan Toronto are facing, and of the many new needs which accompany this change. We all had to divide our time between the continuing work for the United Community Fund and its agencies, and the work for the community at large. This work includes more and more planning and consultative activities aiming at the development of those new services necessary to satisfy or alleviate new needs. Examples of such services are those to youth, to immigrants and migrants, citizen groups and the development of day-care facilities, etc.

Our function - social planning - can be defined in simple terms as an effort to provide for the inclusion of socially important elements in the activities planned by various other professions or institutions, so as to make the resulting services of such activities more appropriate to the needs of the human beings who will be using them. To cite some examples from the past year: Our research study of the influence of high-rise living on family life; advice given to the Family Service Association concerning their work with the people living in the O'Connor Housing Project; the production of the Guide to the Landlord-Tenant Act, a booklet explaining in plain language the complex legal terms of the new Act to both parties concerned, and published in English, Italian and Portuguese; the "After Four" demonstration project in which a school remained open after the end of classes to enable children in the

neighborhood to use its facilities for recreation, study etc. This project resulted last week in the decision of the Toronto Board of Education to extend the program to 30 schools; study and evaluation of Harbour City project, in which problems of sewage disposal, the danger of further intensive pollution of the lake water, the problems of transportation, etc., were presented to the Toronto Planning Board and thus the SPC helped in the apparent decision of this Board to give the project more intensive study; work with a Committee of the Regent Park Community Improvement Association, who are organizing a Neighborhood Service Centre to serve the 9,000 people living in the project. These are only a few examples of the many social planning actions which we had to undertake.

In doing this work the SPC had for the most part to remain anonymous, as we have to work only as enablers, guides, experts and often brokers between and among parties. Such actions cannot be successful if we try to claim recognition for achievements. On the contrary, in most cases the more anonymous our work, the more successful it becomes, as the people concerned, after achieving their goals, have in their feelings of satisfaction a powerful incentive for further constructive work in their neighborhood and the entire community.

Many actions of this kind were organized and helped to alleviate the problems of the Metro population. These can be described, at your request, by the individual staff members this evening as you circulate from one booth to another around the room.

Let us now explore some of the fields of work in which we were involved:

Work for the U.C.F. and its member agencies was continued and intensified. Besides the normal evaluation of agencies in the triennial reviews, work in allocation committees, admission reviews, etc., a more thorough Trend Report 1971, analysing the state of welfare in the Metro community was prepared and published, and became an important resource tool, used not only by the U.C.F. but by many volunteer, government and even private enterprise institutions. So was the Metro Profile and other research studies and reports, which are being used by many agencies and about which you may obtain information at the various booths in this

room. Our work for the U.C.F. included a detailed proposal for a new method of identification of the needs of the population of the entire Metropolitan Area and of setting priorities for meeting such needs. In the U.C.F. Re-Examination Study this proposal was accepted in principle and a special committee will be organized to implement it.

As the general amount of work of the SPC is rapidly growing, based on requests coming from the community, the division of work between the SPC and the UCF will also be subject to the re-examination study. The results of this study, we anticipate, could free some of the capacity we need for the requested expansion of our work for the whole community.

Over the past several years, our staff has been involved in work with various community and citizen groups at the "grass roots" level, even though frequently it has been done in an unco-ordinated way. In September, 1970 we were able to employ a specialist in community, or social-development work and with him we reviewed the situation of such work in the Metro area. We completed, in summer of 1970, a thorough research study of the Don District which includes a great number of low-income families, many of them on public assistance. Out of the study came several recommendations about ways of intensifying work with the people of the area and how to co-ordinate the needs and the available resources existing in the area. We focussed, therefore, our grass roots work in the first place in this area. Four students worked there with our specialist and with the support of other staff members as necessary. The result has been the organization of several citizen committees working with many professionals of the local agencies and institutions in the direction of better use and supplementation of the resources of the area to improve the conditions of life there. This work was recently extended to the Riverdale area, where we began co-operating with a citizen group and some agencies working with the 'grass roots'. We are trying to help them to secure funds for their work and not only to organize their work systematically, but also to explore the methods used and to exchange their experiences in this respect with other citizen groups in the Metro area. Similar efforts are being directed towards the organization of citizen groups in the Borough of York.

In this category of our work there also belongs our efforts to organize coalitions of groups, individuals and agencies working in a

specialized service field with the people in the entire Metro area. Examples are:

Project '71, organized by young people as a continuation of Projects '69 and '70. This Project achieved several important goals in services to youth, in close co-operation between its members and the Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governments.

The Committee on Day Care is another coalition, the work of which will be intensified as the Minister of Family and Social Services will probably support it financially.

The Inter-Agency Council is developing services for immigrants and migrants. These coalitions are not part of the SPC, they work independently and we give them only such services as they request, e.g. accounting, banking, housing, etc. Otherwise they raise their own funds (sometimes with our help) and are tied to us only by liaison officers - normally their Executive Secretaries or consultants. Experience gained to date seems to indicate that these coalitions represent very effective extensions of social planning with citizen groups, agencies and grass roots groups which the SPC could not do without. Information on their work, too, can be obtained at the pertinent booth.

Another field of service has been the support of the work of the six Area Councils in the City of Toronto and the five Boroughs, working in a variety of ways with the people of their communities in the improvement of conditions of life. Some important results have been achieved. Five full-time and one part-time consultants were assigned to this work. Again, information can be obtained in discussions with the staff at the Area booths.

Research work formed the base of many of these activities. During the year several research projects were finished and reports on them published. You can skim through these at the pertinent booth. As requested by the Board a year ago, at a similar Orientation Meeting, these reports were, in several cases, followed by direct SPC action, such as the previously-mentioned Don District Study, which was followed by social development work in the Don Area, and the Study of the Needs of Immigrants, which formed one of the bases for actions by several agencies and institutions now grouped into the above-mentioned Inter-Agency Council and work in several fields of immigrant needs in the Metro area.

An important and growing field of work of all the SPC staff is general consultation. The staff has, over a long period of time, represented an important resource to the community, of information, referral and counsel, and continuously receives a wide range of requests for help, which may require one minute's response or consultation over a period of days or weeks.

An illustration may be helpful: a citizens' group may request information on how to start a day care program. The consultant may simply refer the group to an existing program or she/he might consult on the phone for an hour, arrange an interview, or continue to work with such a group over an indefinite period of time. Such activities frequently highlight an existing or growing need for a co-ordinated program related to specific services.

Requests are received from a wide variety of individuals, social agencies, citizens' groups, government departments, etc., from Metro and across the country, as well as from other countries.

This type of activity is seen as a fixed and ongoing commitment of all staff members, as it represents one of the important functions of the SPC. A list of various community groups to whom consultation has been given recently is attached, and further information is available at the booths.

This field of work - general consultation - also includes gathering and disseminating important information. Recent examples are the previously-mentioned Trends Report, a List of Neighborhood Information Centres, a List of Community Groups, Community Resources in Metro with Emphasis on Youth-Oriented Service, and of course the previously-mentioned various research reports. This kind of information is produced when no other group can do it, and is often seen as a project which, after the initial effort, can be passed to others.

In this category one may also include the organization of the Community Information Centre, originally the information and referral service within the SPC, which during 1970 was detached and organized as a separate corporation, funded 50% by Metropolitan Government and 50% by the UCF, with support from the Provincial government and managed by a Board of Directors representing both the voluntary and government sectors.

There are several other direct services which the SPC gives to the community:

The Volunteer Bureau provides both a direct service and a planning service to individuals and organizations in the recruitment, training and referral of volunteers. The Bureau will remain a fixed commitment of the SPC in the immediate future, but some thought is being given to possible change.

Career Counselling has been an emergency part-time (one day per week) response to the large number of people coming to the Council seeking jobs. This is a temporary commitment, but a direct service.

Student Field Unit. The School of Social Work has placed students at the SPC over the past several years. At the present time the second year of a three-year demonstration field practice has been completed. Thus, for one more year this unit and its expenses are borne by the School, through Foundation funds. SPC's commitment is to provide facilities and assistance to the Student Supervisor.

Educational service in general, given to individuals and/or groups coming to Toronto to gain experience or skill in social service work. Just now we have the pleasure of having with us Mr. Alfred Chui, Welfare Officer from Hong Kong, who will be here about three weeks as part of his study period given in the framework of our direct service plan.

I would like to repeat that in all this work the SPC staff has to function as enablers, guides, experts or brokers, remaining in the background as much as possible, helping those whom we serve to achieve their various goals without any claim on our part for recognition of our work. This is essential as many of our achievements could not be realized if we did not allow for recognition being given to those whom we help.

Before I end my report I would like to present some statistics concerning the rise of our professional staff time. As a preparation for functional budgeting our staff has completed daily work sheets, indicating time spent working in the main fields of our activities. In the Fall of 1970 the division of work was as follows:

Work for the UCF and Its Agencies	-	20%
Area Work	-	34%
Community Development	-	30%
General Consultation	-	16%

(Research and Administration time were divided proportionately into the time of the four fields).

In March, 1971 another study of time division was made, in which the Area work was divided to show the time spent in the Areas on community or social development (work with the citizen groups) and general consultation. In this study the time spent on Research and Administration was again divided, according to subject and/or proportionately to the percentage of time used, into the three main categories of work. The results were as follows:

UCF and Agencies	-	11%
Community Development	-	52%
General Consultation	-	37%

I would also like to mention that the average working time of all staff members was 8.8 hours per day, i.e. 44 hours per week, when the official time is 37 hours per week. Some staff members, however, regularly worked 50 and more hours per week.

The complexity and intensity of our work is well illustrated by the List of Services given by the S.P.C. in 1970, which includes over 150 various kinds of service performed by our 15 professional staff members during that year. This list is available at one of the booths in this room.

Our situation will become much more difficult in the coming months. You will hear from our President and our Treasurer about our financial situation, which will probably force us to reduce our staff and consequently produce a situation in which we shall not be able to do what we have done to date, and in which we shall not be able to satisfy the growing demands of the agencies and the people whom we serve.

The staff will need your help to improve this situation, so that we shall be able to do not less but more for our community.

Before closing my report I would like to mention that in the field of administration the SPC is up to date with modern principles of management. The rapidity of societal change, the continuously changing

demands from the community and the limited resources, far from sufficient to satisfy these demands, forced us to change our organization from rigid "departments" to flexible, functional groups, prepared to tackle various tasks coming from the community. A schematic illustration of this organization is available at the booths and includes the names of the personnel for your easier orientation. A special paper, based on our experiences, is available on request to those Board members who wish to have more information regarding our organization.

It is very difficult to describe in 20 minutes all the work we are doing. It is impossible to discuss its further development. We hope, however, that this evening you will be able to get in touch with the individual staff members when we end our formal discussions, to obtain more general information and, possibly, details of the work in which you are most interested.

In the coming months we shall need all the help you can give us to improve on our work which, as you will gradually come to realize, is of great importance not only for the further development of the voluntary social service efforts, but for the improvement of the life of our entire Metro community.

J.W. Frel.

May 25, 1971.

BIOGRAPHIES

Mr. J. H. Donahue
5627 - 115 Street.

Background: Born and raised in New Brunswick.
B. Arch. McGill, 1955.
Urban Planning - Univ. of Edinburgh, 1958.
Partner - Dupuis, Dunn, Donahue Architects, 1955.
Council, Alberta Association of Architects.
Practised in New Brunswick, Alberta, B.C. Northwest Territories,
Yukon and Peru.
Board Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1968.
President, Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1970.

Father Marc Barrier O.M.I.
9916 - 110 Street,

Background: Working as an outreach worker under the supervision of the
Archdiocese of Edmonton.
Performing a community development function with persons of
native origin living in the City and with skid-row dwellers.

Mrs. G. E. Stacey
12229 Dovercourt Avenue.

Background: Separated, mother, 4 children, boys aged 16, 15, 13 & 7.
Has been on Social Allowance for 1½ years. Currently on an
upgrading program to Grade XII. Plan is to go to U. of A.
to get a degree in Education specializing in counselling.

Terry J. Hansen
10640 - 66 Avenue.

Background: Public Relations Director - Future Society.
Partial High School, University Extension Courses.
Ex-convict, married, 4 children.
Concerned with the welfare of ex-cons and anyone up against
the system. To help ex-convicts help themselves to become
responsible productive citizens and to bring about a better
understanding between society in general and the ex-con.

Denise Williams
10223 - 95 Street.

Background: Grade 11 and Business or Secretarial Course at N.A.I.T. 1967.
2 months college - dress design, Olds, Alberta.
Worked in factories, No business experience.
Worked at Native Brotherhood Society one week as Secretary.
Two children, boys aged 5 and 2.

Dennis Bartels
10608 - 81 Avenue.

Background: B.A. (philosophy) M.A. (philosophy) U. of A.
Grad student in Anthropology
Secretary-Treasurer of Interim -
Steering Committee, Sturgeon Valley Housing Co-operative.