

the nation increases. Giving money to the poor is not the answer. Established institutions and bureaus have failed or we wouldn't be concerned today. Here is where education and freedom enter.

Improving the economic status of a large segment of the country is heavily dependent upon education—education of the poor families and their children; education of the community in which they live; education of the industries dependent upon them for their labor; and above all, education of the various local, state and federal agencies to achieve the goal of helping the Wasted Americans of today and the future become the independent, productive Americans they can and should be. And freedom? The vehicle devised to combat any aspect of this problem must be free of outside political and self-interest pressures to work successfully. Otherwise the poor, the weak for whom the programs are set up, lose out to the interests of the strong.

The poor of our country experience constant failures. Failure breeds further failure. This pattern *can* be reversed. As an educator, I am interested in success and I am particularly interested in success *now*, for the child *now*. Across the nation, the average ADC child is accumulating the same characteristics that shaped the dependency of his parents. School dropouts among ADC children between the ages of 14 and 17 are more than twice as high as for other children in this age group. Inability to read is the largest single cause of failure during the elementary school years. A low level of reading ability has been accurately identified as one of the basic causes of chronic unemployment and under-employment. The 9- to 12-year old child has an eager, open mind. This is a crucial age when poor reading ability can spell success or failure in life. Then wouldn't an extra class in reading in school take care of this problem? Absolutely not. Home environment, attitudes, hope, nutrition, medical problems and abnormalities—these are some of the aspects of the problem.

What are the handicaps of the public school in attacking this problem?

1. The school is geared particularly for curriculum, not the total environment.
2. Size—they are forced to deal in numbers. They teach many children, not the individual child.
3. Pressures exist—a principal or superintendent is constantly harassed by outside pressures—cannot be flexible and independent in his approach to the problems that exist in his area.

The Boorady Reading Center was set up with the idea of *attacking the failure pattern from every aspect possible*. It must provide an atmosphere of *achievement, success, hope*. This could only be done by providing a facility with complete freedom from outside pressures and the money to operate such a facility. It must not be dictated to by the public schools, parochial schools, civic government or any other group. At the same time, close cooperation with the local school is necessary since compensatory education should bolster the existing curriculum. This compensatory education or special service should be outside of the institution where he had experienced academic and social failure. The physical plant should approximate a warm, attractive home; his teachers should provide a mother or father figure with whom each child can identify; he should encounter acceptance, trust and confidence; he should be provided with new experiences; attention should be given to his medical, nutritional and psychological needs; *above all*, his education should be *individual*, of the *highest quality*, and *geared to his ability* so that he might *progress at his own speed*. This spells the beginning of *success and independence*.

The Economic Opportunity Act provided the opportunity for the Boorady program to expand and operate in this manner. It has been even more successful than we dared hope. Our original idea was to prevent future dropouts. We are encouraged to see yesterday's dropouts beginning to voluntarily ring our doorbell and ask for the opportunity to try again. These boys are the hard-core unemployed now. We call them our "Drop-Ins."

This summer, 1967, we have 6 Indian children from the Cattaraugus Reservation. 12 "Drop-Ins", 5 mothers in addition to 289 elementary and junior high students. An important point I think is the follow-up we do when a student is absent. The family is called upon as soon as a child misses a class. The parents learn that we care, prompt attendance and family responsibility on the part of the parent and child in letting us know when a child cannot attend are all a part of the program.