

forced disadvantaged youth into an unenviable position. On one side, these young people have the opportunity to shun these crass values and create their own set. On the other, this vast commercial swing has pushed disadvantaged youth into increased envy and frustration, for they realize that these artificial goals set for them by this new false culture are unobtainable. DROP-IN CENTRES can provide the genuine side of a new culture, imparting real values and goals.

Centres should be located within the heart of the ghetto or slum community. Anywhere else would only impede the work of the centre, as the surroundings must not be uncomfortable—in the sense that a lavish environment would only make the young feel ill at ease. Also, to have open communication in the centre requires that problems be discussed. It would be foolish to assume that youth problems, be they emotional or physical, can be solved outside the environment in which these problems occur.

We have at some length discussed the philosophy behind the implementation of DROP-IN CENTRES. A number of points have been made, but it would be redundant to restate those points. Much of what has been written has been stated on many occasions by sociologists and social psychologists and we are certain that many briefs will be submitted to the Senate Committee which discuss the sociological implications of poverty. However, let us conclude the section of the brief herewith discussed with a number of what we feel are essential points.

A DROP-IN CENTRE should provide a place for disadvantaged youth operated by those young people for their peers. The centres should provide a place for disadvantaged youth so that their interests can be expanded through wholesome recreation. Centres should provide an opportunity for disadvantaged youth to identify their own problems and undertake and implement a solution to those needs. DROP-IN CENTRES should provide adequate guidance to youth so that involvement is practiced and not preached. DROP-INS should provide an opportunity for contact between disadvantaged youth and the general community so that age groups become inter-related groups.

By providing youth with a place of their own, there will not occur a subjection to the whims of others in authority, i.e. police, restaurant owners, etc. In a DROP-IN CENTRE a

trained supervisor can relate to the youth without interruption. In a DROP-IN CENTRE, social skills can be developed, a sense of belonging, a sense of accomplishment, and a sense of worth through the operation of the DROP-IN CENTRE. A very important function of the DROP-IN CENTRE can be to foster interpersonal relationships between the youth involved, especially in a society where these relationships are becoming increasingly difficult to mould.

DROP-IN CENTRES can become a common meeting place and a centre for future projects, such as a job core, educational and psychological guidance, a night school and projects related to the general community.

Disadvantaged youth need help. They need the help of concerned, middle-class citizens and perhaps DROP-IN CENTRES are the place where these polarized sectors of our society can meet and become one.

DROP-IN CENTRES in Saint John suffer from many deficiencies which reduce their effectiveness in working with disadvantaged youth. The main problems lie under four general headings of staff and finance, support groups, administration and community support.

DROP-IN STAFF

Saint John lacks trained and experienced personnel to operate DROP-IN CENTRES. Most staff members have a sincere interest in the problems of disadvantaged youth, but have never seen established centres operating in other communities. As a result when the guiding people are unable to provide proper programs, the centre flounders. Lack of training in relation to communicating with youth adds to the problem. The result is a frustrated effort for both parties, for the youth who need to communicate with staff who they feel can help them, and for the staff who must provide help but are ignorant of the available methods.

A second staff problem lies in the fact that staff have two masters; their employers, be they government or private agency, and the group which they intend to serve. As stated previously it is the youth who should run the centre with staff in attendance as the guiding force. A staff member must keep both groups happy. This therefore, impedes the development of the DROP-IN CENTRE into a viable entity.

Thirdly, the staff member is forced to spend his time improperly, i.e. not with the