

HELPING RUNAWAYS TO CATCH UP

New York — Hundreds of thousands of children have run away from home in recent years, and many more may be going, yet few among the parents realize how big the incidence of runaways is becoming, or why the children leave, or how they manage to find food and lodgings and helpful advice along the way.

According to the Travelers Aid Association of America

(TAAA), a voluntary agency supported mainly by United Funds that helps travelers in trouble, help was needed by 40 per cent more runaways in 1970 than in 1969.

Another statistic compiled by the Association, whose agencies serve a million people each year, shows that 30 per cent of all persons aided by Travelers Aid are under 18 years of age.

Why do the kids run? TAAA lists as among the main reasons, adventure, acts of rebellion, emancipation from family and society, the need to start over, lack of parental support, use of drugs, and pregnancy.

The Association has 79 agencies and over 800 co-operating representatives throughout the country. Parents who have lost children can call their local Travelers Aid agency or the one nearest to their community. The phone number can be found in local directories. In some cases, according to the association, parents need counseling as well as the child, and all Travelers Aid agencies have trained professionals on staff who can provide this help to all concerned.

Another common problem involves the father who has

left his home and family to seek employment. He usually tries to get to a place where he thinks or heard there is hope for a job. He leaves behind a family with no funds and then he finds he is lacking adequate means to sustain himself. Travelers Aid pitches in and finds out how this person can best be served.

All Travellers Aid clients are on the move and in some sort of trouble. For some, the problem is a short-term one: overnight shelter has to be arranged; word must be gotten to or from relatives in a distant location; newcomers to a community need guidance and information; and bewildered airline travelers, often elderly or foreigners, must be looked after and reassured.

For many others, however, the situation is far more complex, frightening, sometimes even desperate. Critical personal difficulties come to light. Serious legal entanglements may appear. Deep-seated medical or psychological problems show themselves to the caseworker.

With an estimated 40 million Americans changing residence every year, the prospect is for a growing need for the unique kind of crisis-oriented casework counseling Travelers Aid agencies are equipped to provide.

Who are the persons served? They are migrant workers, often intimidated and inarticulate; depressed or hostile "wanderers" chronically disturbed victims of the "psychological flight" syndrome; aliens, bewildered and help-

less, brought to our shores under emergency legislation; and disadvantaged Americans from poverty areas who, fearful and rejected by society at large, are being relocated and trained for self-respecting jobs under special programs.

In the main, they are society's runaways, stowaways and castaways, both the very old and the very young; people who, in the words of one Travelers Aid executive, "have fallen between the cracks" of life — the unwanted, the exploited, the disenfranchised, the victims of prejudice, those with whom nobody has ever seemed to want to "bother."

In a society increasingly mobile, pressured, and preoccupied, these are the people for whom Travelers Aid is a vital service . . . a professional casework service such as no other volunteer or governmental agency provides on a full-time basis today . . . a service which, in large centers, even functions "after hours" and on weekends. Whether the need is for short-term casework in an unanticipated emergency, or for long-term service beyond the immediate crisis, Travelers Aid is working to prevent travelers from becoming travails.

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DIRECTOR SOUGHT FOR MINORITY NURSE RECRUITMENT DRIVE

New York — The National Student Nurses' Association, Inc., which sponsors a minority recruitment program designed to increase the number of Blacks, Spanish-speaking people, American Indians, and men in nursing careers, is seeking a Project Director for its federal funded program.

"Breakthrough to Nursing" is a six-year-old project of NSNA which received, in April of this year, a \$100,000 grant from the Division of Nursing, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The grant provides funds to expand and strengthen the existing nationwide project by giving Breakthrough volunteers special assistance and by developing resources and materials. The National program is student-inspired, student-led, and student-advised.

In May of 1970 the Research Department of the National League for Nursing reported that only 5.4 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in nursing schools were Black; however, Blacks made up over 16 per cent of the enrollment in schools of practical nursing. Man represented only 2 per cent of nursing students, and Spanish-

speaking people and Indians were not documented.

According to Mary Ann Tuft, executive director, "It is the intention of the NSNA to have a minority group person serve as the Project Director of 'Breakthrough to Nursing.'" The Project Director would have to live in New York City, and some travel would be necessary.

Persons interested in the position of Project Director for "Breakthrough to Nursing" should write: National Student Nurses' Association, Inc., 10 Columbus Circle, New York, New York 10019.

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