

Runaways largest category

Skipworth, Looking Glass handle 'bad' juveniles



Photos by Jacques Beteinor

By GALE ROHDE
Of the Emerald

About 39 percent of the 5.5 thousand juvenile referrals to the Lane County Juvenile Department in 1972 were for children's offenses. The largest single category was that of runaways. Others were referred for truancy, possession of alcohol, being ungovernable, and curfew violations. These are offenses that are only defined as such for those underage.

Two institutions, with different structures, are concerned with handling those guilty of so-called children's offenses and are

concerned with juveniles in general. They are Skipworth Juvenile Home and Looking Glass Family Intervention Center.

Skipworth is the more formal of the two. It is not limited to merely children's offenses, but includes the whole realm of law-violations committed by juveniles. It is county-supported, funded by county taxes. It is a branch of the Lane County Juvenile Department, along with the counseling services and the juvenile court. Most of the juveniles referred there are brought in by the police, though there are self-referrals and parental referrals as well.

It is a detention home — the place where juveniles stay while they await a court hearing. When a young person is arrested, the police decide whether to bring him to detention or to his parents. Usually if the parents can be located, if the young person is not dangerous, and if there is no danger that he will run away, he is brought to his parents. Otherwise, the juvenile is brought to a counselor who will decide whether or not he will remain in detention. If he stays, he will have a court hearing within forty-eight hours.

Deborah Warnes was eighteen when she started Looking Glass. She thought of the idea after having gone through detention for being a runaway. She felt that runaways were looking for a solution and that what they were doing was considered a crime only because of their age. It seemed unfair that runaways and others guilty of children's offenses should be unnecessarily subjected to the detention system. Although she felt that Skipworth was one of the best institutions of its kind in the nation, Warnes felt that its hands were tied.

After talking over her idea with her friend Paul Hurly and a psychologist, Dr. Ashton, the three of them worked closely on the idea for nearly a year before the house was actually opened. They also received a great deal of help from their board of directors, and a graduate psychology class.

The house holds about seven people. Many of those who stay at the house are runaways, or individuals whose families are in a crisis situation, or people who just need to get away from an uncomfortable living situation for a while.

But running away is not a prerequisite for using the services of Looking Glass. It is a temporary shelter for most of those who come. Looking Glass aims to get them back into a viable place in the community, often back with their parents, otherwise into foster homes or group homes.

Skipworth too, has a transient population. It holds about 29 people at a time, staying on the average about seven days. Conrad Guerry, a training coordinator for the Juvenile Department, described it as a safe and secure environment where the young people won't harm themselves or others. He said that sometimes when they first came there, the kids were pretty upset or anxious. They were away from their friends and their families and they weren't quite sure what was going to happen next.

If what one needs is a structured program, Skipworth has it. The day is scheduled, with time allowed for school, as well as for free time and recreation. Everyone wakes at 7:30 a.m., cleans his or her room in time for breakfast at eight.

Then at nine, those who need it

begin school. School hours are interspersed with other activities. There is a half-hour break at 10:30, an hour break for lunch and free time, another hour for P.E. There is a large group meeting daily, at which they decide or discuss the activities that will be happening, and there is another hour of free time before dinner.

Every evening Skipworth has some kind of optional program activity. On Monday nights there is a grooming class, on Tuesday there is a cooking class for between four and six people. On Wednesday and Thursday there are arts and crafts. There are also a few special programs, such as a summer camping program, and art instruction by an instructor from the Maude Kerns Art Center.

Because of the nature of the institution, because many of those there have committed not merely children's offenses, but offenses of a more serious nature; and because many of the residents did not come of their own accord, the residents are under some kind of supervision unless they are in their own rooms. They can't go out of doors without staff members being present. There can't be more than two in the gym without a staff member. Visitation hours are also limited. Visitation is on three days a week, and is limited to family members only.

Looking Glass is less closely supervised; all of the residents are there voluntarily. It is considered more as an association of equals. Generally the houseparents and the kids eat dinner together and everyone takes care of himself for the other two meals.

Residents are fairly free to come and go as they please, and to bring guests to the house. They are expected to be back by ten on week nights and by midnight on weekends. They are expected to be committed to working out a

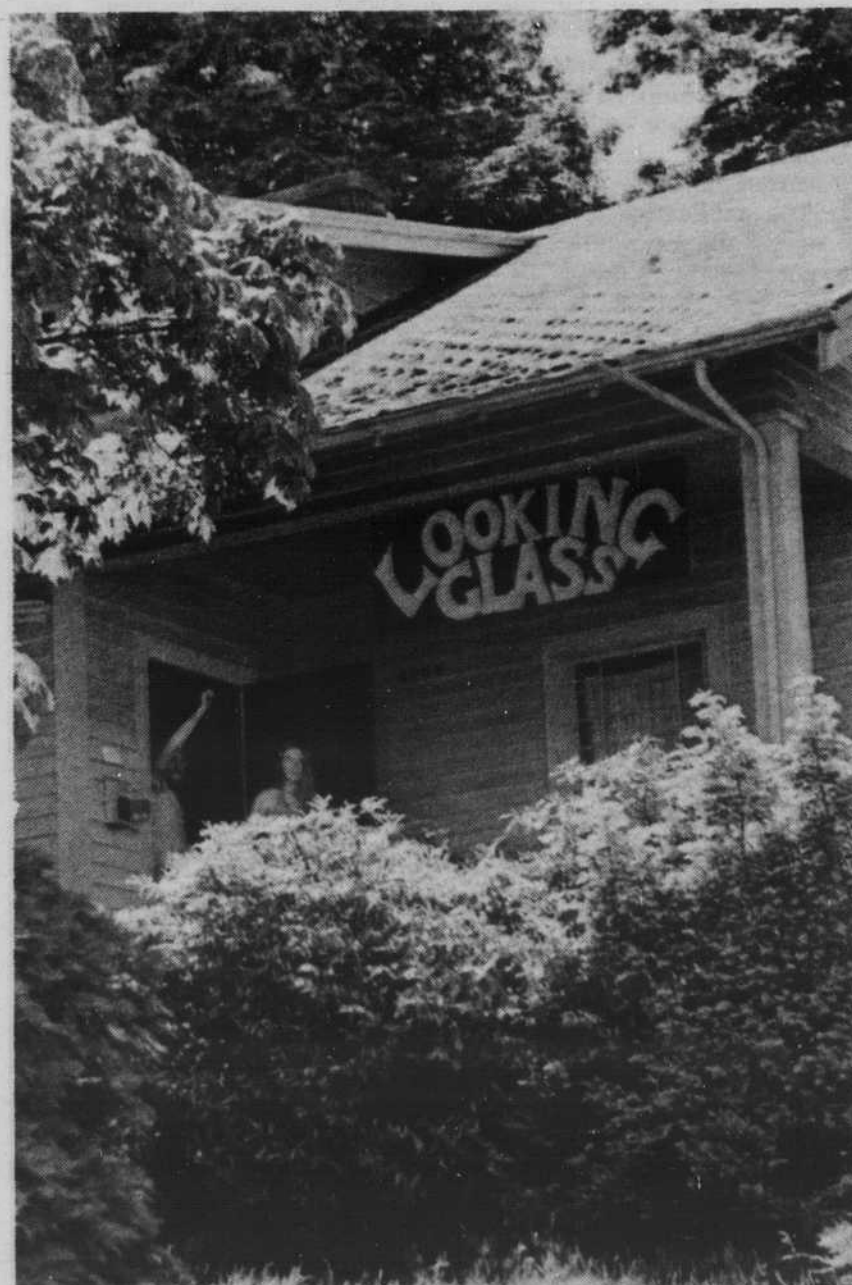
solution to the problem which brought them there in the first place.

But neither Skipworth nor Looking Glass limit their services to the residents. Most of the young people referred to the Juvenile department are released and a report is given to the intake counselor of the Juvenile Department. In 1972, only 1,295 out of the 5,570 referred were admitted to detention. The counselor will either just notify the parents of the report and offer assistance, or will ask the juvenile and her or his parents for an interview. Often from this, the juvenile is referred to another agency or is offered counseling services. The department has community service workers in a team, with counselors and police officers, working in the schools to catch problems and deal with them before they get more serious. There is a parent education group run by counselors in parent effectiveness, and there are various family therapies.

Looking Glass also does counseling; family, individual, and group. It gives school and job assistance, temporary shelter to those who need it; and it helps to place people in group or foster homes.

"Kids are dealing with more these days," Warnes said. They are "14 going on 25." If they run away it is not always the parents' fault, it is just that the kids are going through a lot of changes, she said.

Warnes started Looking Glass at 18 by having an idea, and by surrounding herself with capable and dedicated people. They are still going strong, but they rely on programs such as ESCAPE, and volunteers to a large extent. Right now they need qualified counselors and foster parents, preferably younger couples or individuals. They encourage those interested to volunteer their help.



THE DOWN BEAT

Featured Band All Week
PATTERSON ALLEY
959 Pearl, Eugene Closed Monday

Andrea's is a long thin store a few short blocks from campus on Eugene's downtown mall. Since we are only 6 feet wide, we are easy to miss. Try not to blink when you walk down Willamette between 10th & 11th Avenues.

Basically we sell clothing, fabrics, some sewing notions and jewelry findings. We aim to be different. The clothing is designed and hand made just for us or is consigned to us by local craftsmen. In fabrics we have an extensive selection of African, Java and Malaysian prints & panels. We also have domestic remnants, wools, jerseys and dyable fabrics for your batik and tie dyes. Some of our solid color fabrics are wide enough to make bedspreads, and we have some plastic rain coat fabric... perfect for your see-thru shower curtain.

There are 3 sales rooms. A front room thru which you must pass to get to our back room where you will see stairs which lead to our upstairs room. How we ever fit it all into three small rooms, I don't know.

Sometimes it is hard to find what you want amid the clutter, so if you don't see it, ask. We keep trying to find the things you need. We don't have everything, but what we do have is either different or less expensive. This is our aim, anyway. Sure would like to have you come by.

Andrea's
1026 Willamette
343-4423

Starr Institute

"is a center for human growth & awareness."

Summer Catalog available:
phone 937-2240