

CAC gives aid now

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and get a greater variety of aid in clothes, food, and furniture than they would at agencies in Portland."

Some customers make donations for what they receive, but it is not necessary.

"It depends upon their own conscience and financial state," explained Meeker. "These people can't afford to go out and buy any of these things."

Some of the people can't even shop at Goodwill or St. Vincent de Paul.

"By the time things get there, they have a price on them," he said, adding that the CAC did send those things that needed washing and mending to Goodwill. "We have no facilities for washing and mending."

Besides tangible items offered by the center are services such as help in finding jobs and housing, legal aid and counseling.

For the latter two services, the CAC has professional people: John Mayfield, a young attorney in VISTA who comes in on Thursday morning to dispense legal advice; and Dick Harrison, a counselor at Sandy High School who is always on call.

"It's so great having a professional counselor available to us," enthused Meeker. "I call him immediately when there is severe emotional trauma."

Harrison, whose wife, Trude,

helps out with the counseling, classifies counselees into two types: (1) transients, and (2) disadvantaged people who need help and don't know where to get it. He tries to "bring the county closer to Sandy."

"We're trying to do a job the community used to do but got out of it—do what one human ought to do for another in trouble," he advised.

"I'm not an expert: I'm a human being."

Cases might include a housewife with a landlord problem, a little old lady in need of firewood, a young lady inquiring about where to get an abortion, or a man stranded without food for his family.

"Normally, we don't get potential suicides, but we get some pretty darned desperate people," exclaimed Harrison. "When they get hungry, and don't have any place to go, they get a haunted look in their eyes."

Are all the center's customers desperate, or are some merely taking advantage of the help offered? A few repeaters have been caught, but most are honestly in need.

"We can become a soft touch by a lot of incompetents," Meeker admitted, but he usually gives people the benefit of the doubt.

"I don't feel that I should lower their dignity by questioning their intentions or integrity," agreed Harrison. "We can't insult 90 per cent of the people who come in here."



SANDY HIGH School volunteer Tammy Goins helps CAC volunteer coordinator Astri Torbergson with job-sorting donated clothes.

(Post Photo)

Both stressed that many of the people helped by the center have in turn helped the center by donating money, usable items or time.

There is apparently no real limit on the type of services performed by the Sandy CAC. Friday, Meeker got a call from a firm in Yakima which has received a job application from a Boring man, and wanted him to start work immediately. Because he had no phone, the agency called the Sandy CAC and asked if they could give him the news.

Time limits are unheard of by Harrison who frequently gives up evenings to call upon people who need help and counseling, or goes out to find them in his car. He is typical of community volunteers who give of their own time, talents and pocketbooks to help others.

"Our feelings for humanity often go beyond the limits of our jobs," observed Meeker. "We have to be terribly sensitive to people and their needs, especially in an emergency situation."



COUNSELOR DICK Harrison has a friendly chat with young CAC drop-in. The Sandy High teacher has heavy case load at center especially with young people.



PERENNIAL VOLUNTEER Pete Sulzbach takes on odd jobs, such as minor carpentry. He is now serving as president of the Community Action Council.

(Post Photo)



CUSTOMERS AT CAC like one above, often find just what they need among donations by generous citizens.

(Post Photo)

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DESK WORK-answering phone and keeping log book-take up much of Doug Meeker's time at Sandy Community Action Center's HELP desk.

(Post Photo)

Anyone interested in the Sandy Community Action Center is welcome to attend the meeting slated tonight for 8 p.m. at the center. "We would like feedback from low income persons," remarked director Doug Meeker. "Maybe there are things we're overlooking."

He added "that the council

would like to have more involvement from the community. Those who have ideas or comments to share should attend the meeting or call the center at 668-4746 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The center also welcomes those who would like to donate any usable items, as well as those who need help.

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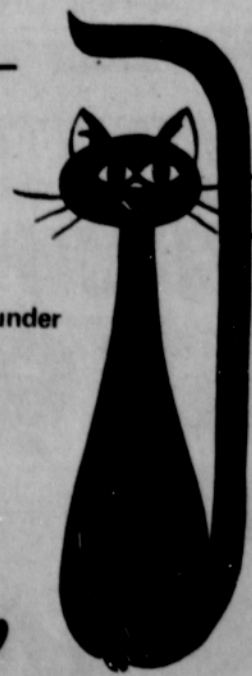
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