

The Tribal Group Home: "Time Out" For Families

(The Tribal Group Home with its recently enlarged staff of 24 is more than a home for teenagers. It is actually a complex of services in the Family and Children's Services Department, of which the residential treatment facility is just a part. The Group Home also includes a pre-adolescent program and an outreach component.)

...Although they are tied together in their common focus—families, children and their welfare—the components operate independently. This article deals with the group home residence only.)

You can walk into the Tribal Group Home and find teenagers giggling, quarreling, watching TV or doing dishes.

They might be rebelling or asking for guidance, sharing confidences or withdrawing from staff and peers.

In fact, whatever goes on in an average home is likely to go on in the group home.

The adolescent treatment facility in Warm Springs tries to provide a home environment for its residents, encouraging the responsibility, range of activities and relaxed atmosphere that should characterize home.

But, as one staff person commented, the group home is "time out" from the real home to allow all family members a breather so that problems and strengths can be re-examined.

It is a time out to "notice things around them," to discover their true feelings and capabilities, to become stronger as well as more humble.

The group home is not a vacation, but a confrontation.

Kids aged 12-18 arrive at the group home in a variety of ways, from a variety of backgrounds. They may be referred by the court on an involuntary basis, admitted by a parent or self-admitted with parental permission.

They might be truants or paint-sniffers troubled by their parents' divorce or drinking problems or simply unable to make it at home or at school.

They may stay for 30 days or 90 days but while they are there they find it no longer possible to run away from themselves. At any given time they have one or two staff members and up to eleven other teenagers to help them face up to their troubles.

Said one resident, "I held in a lot of hatred and pain and it's all coming out now that I'm here...I'm letting myself out more."

Child care worker Darlene Estep, who has been with the group home since it moved into its new building 4½ years ago, said that even though "kids know themselves more today than in my day," they are nevertheless confused by the choices they have to make. Darlene explains that the group home helps prepare kids to cope with life off the reservation while instilling pride in their Indianness.

The staff emphasizes the



Meal time is a chance for residents of the group home to socialize with each other or

staff. Valerie Switzler and Ruthie Anderson shared some school gossip over the dishes recently. CDS Photo

teaching of responsibility to the youngsters. That is not easy medicine to give or to take.

Residents are expected to pick up after themselves, plan their time, resolve personal conflicts and adhere to a schedule.

They are initially quite vocal about their dislike of the group home. But eventually many admit that the structure

is helpful and the staff really does "listen and try their hardest."

Darlene explained that the five child care workers and four relief workers who provide around the clock supervision try to "stay within the circle" of being a friend and authority to the residents, territory that is unfamiliar to many of the kids.

Getting used to one another is often long, hard road for staff and residents. The pain and joys of this process can reveal to "kids that 'being human isn't wrong but being human also isn't perfect by a long shot,'" said Darlene.

Discipline is a touchy subject. Many residents have difficulty accepting it and staff feel that it should be enforced without alienating the youth.

Runaways may be detained in jail overnight. The Staff expects the planned juvenile justice center to be a more suitable environment than the current adult facilities for temporary detainment of violators.

If a child uses alcohol or drugs in the group home he is contained while under the influence. Later "strict restrictions are imposed on their activities and freedom," according to psychologist Gloria Edelhart.

She adds however that the staff's concern is with why the kids are using drugs and other ways of experiencing good feelings are suggested.

A typical day at the group home includes school or tutoring, three meals, chores, and evening entertainment such as movies, basketball or TV. Although many kids are checked out for the weekends, those remaining might take a camping trip or attend a cultural event in Portland.

Activities Director Oliver Kirk, a group home veteran since it started in the Presbyterian Church five years ago, does not plan more for the residents than they would be apt to do at home.

Sports, crafts or trips are a way for kids to interact with each other and learn responsibility. Kirk encourages them to suggest activities for themselves. Even so, he adds, their interest wanders...I have to keep them on the track and remind them that they made a decision."

Each resident meets regularly with one of the two

Reports Turn to Action as Drought Impacts Reservation

A three-pronged attack on the effects of the drought has been launched by the Inter-agency Drought Committee. Their May 31 report indicated that the range and the rural water supply should be top priorities on the reservation and action has begun in these areas.

The Tribal Council this week approved the formation of a livestock-range board and gave the go-ahead for a tribal hay purchase program. In addition the planning department has been advised by the Council to investigate EDA funding for a Schoolie water system.

Representing the drought committee, Extension Agent Clint Jacks has recommended the tribal purchase of hay for resale to livestockmen as a means of stabilizing the price and supply of hay.

Because of the drought, hay prices are soaring. A \$60 ton of alfalfa hay will probably go for \$90-100 by summer's end. The supply will be uncertain, too, as outsiders come into Oregon to buy hay and Oregon growers continue to contract sales on hay that hasn't even been cut.

With monies either borrowed at a rate of 3 percent from the Tribal Credit Department or taken out of the general fund, the Tribe would

buy enough hay to meet needs of reservation livestockmen. Individual stock owners would then purchase the hay at cost from the Tribe according to their need.

Jacks indicated there is a possibility that livestockmen could receive assistance under the emergency feed program (20 cents per animal per day) for the purchase of this hay.

Predicting that \$80,000 would be needed for the tribal purchase, Jacks said that storage, handling and other associated costs had yet to be determined as well as the actual expressed need of the livestockmen.

Jacks reminded the Council that this program has a price attached, in terms of tribal and BIA personnel time devoted to administering it, but that the seriousness of the situation warranted the effort. The program would also demand some planning, projection and budgeting on the part of stock owners.

The purchase of alfalfa, grass straw and grass hay for winter feed is only part of the answer to the range problem. Responsible foraging practices would ensure the preservation of range grasses for future grazing.

A livestock-range board as suggested by the drought com-

mittee would be a vehicle for range user groups to communicate with one another and offer their input to the Range Committee and Tribal Council on drought-related matters. The organization of such a group would also facilitate the receipt of emergency drought relief funds.

Proposed members of the board, who are ride bosses identified at recent district meetings, are as follows:

AGENCY: Sidwalter-Wilbur Johnson (horse boss) and Earl Squiemphen (cattle); Tenino - Delton Switzler (cattle) and Elmer Tom Jr. (horse); Boulder, Miller Flat, Dry Creek - Mickey Brunoe (cattle) and Perry Greene (cattle and horse); Dry Hollow - Alvis Smith (cattle) and Buck Smith (horse).

SEEKSEEQUA: Jazzie Wewa (horse) and Avex Miller, Sr. (cattle).

SIMNASHO: Mutton Mt. - Olney Patt (cattle) and Vernon Spino (horse); Schoolie, Log Springs - Pierson Mitchell (cattle), Levi Keo (cattle) and Franklin Suppah (horse).

AT LARGE (representing those with interest or knowledge in livestock): Charlie Jackson, Norman Danzuka, Buddy Kalama, Jacob Frank, Sr.

Tribal Planner Ray

Rangila reviewed for Council the serious water shortage predicted for households depending on wells, especially in the Schoolie Flat area. The May 31 report described Schoolie's water problem as a recurring one that will be aggravated by the drought.

With Tribal Council permission the Grants Department is looking to the EDA (Economic Development Administration) for funds for a Schoolie water system. Rangila reported that 50 percent grants are available and that 5 percent 40-year loans from EDA could make up the balance.

Another funding possibility would be the Indian Health Service, which could justify the project if it can be shown that Schoolie will be experiencing a significant population increase. A further option is to hold a general referendum to amend the budget.

The proposed \$600,000 water system was turned down by HUD earlier this year but the need still exists and in fact becomes more acute as the dry conditions persist.

The Tribal Council has acknowledged the need for drought action here and in other spheres on the reservation and their decisions this week translated research and

reports to action.