



JERRY CAMMARATA IS SUPERPOP

Where can families get help?

The family truly is endowed with the capability of solving problems objectively and with a sensitivity to the needs of the afflicted. For the family to be successful in this area, however, it must practice a system of interpersonal dynamics that will allow each member to freely and completely express his or her feelings and moments of conflict and then explore constructive guidance or suggestions. Reasoning, then, if this simple and necessary dialogue of family members does exist, surely, fewer problems would occur, fewer social services in the community would be needed and a greater application of resources could be shifted to other areas of human concern.

This is not the case, though. Our children are on drugs, many of us are habitual drinkers or gamblers, some of us don't want to be bothered with our old parents and still others of us are selfish about life and will strike back at anything that does not satisfy an immediate goal. It is because of these attitudes and thousands more as serious that the integrity of moms, dads, children and society is being eaten away. If, indeed, the family finds it cannot cope and is helpless in solving the problems of daily living, where does it go for help? The family must rely on new and growing systems of compassion.

Dial a social service

Let's fact it. The problems of today seem to be the domain of social agencies. A network of professionals and programs have inundated our society and are making every attempt to affect change in our behavior. A good example of help being a phone call away is Covenant House—(212)354-4323). A young person distressed about having insensitive parents and who is a runaway from Louisiana in the Big Apple, finds concern and hospitality is only for the asking. Father Bruce Ritter, the founder of Covenant House, offers that unique social service in Manhattan that blends the religious in with the reality of porno and exploitation. Covenant House at 460 West 41 Street in New York City takes over where the family has failed. Father Ritter tries to succeed, not only with saving the youngster from possible self destruction, but also to encourage parents to take a look at themselves and their relationships to their children. The troubled youth who trip to New York City for an escape from the hard times back home, need only have a dime to get assistance from Father Ritter.

Social Service of a different kind is evident in the television industry. Television stations in major cities around the country are now establishing child care centers within the workplace. A sensitive National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, in cooperation with American University, developed child care centers for such stations as NBC in New York, and JLA in Washington D.C. This represents a responsible and significant contribution on the part of management to support the families of its employees. It is this kind of social service that has the potential of creating a stronger bond between parents and child and hedging off any break down of family communication in the future. Certainly, this innovative program will have a positive affect on employee productivity.

And read the job section of the big city Sunday newspapers and you will find at least one company looking for a family transfer specialist. The reality of a company simply reassigning an employee 2,000 miles away and letting him and his family deal with building a whole new life seems to be drawing to an end. Companies are now developing social service departments that attempt to make life easier when moving becomes necessary. The company social service department (some are called the family transfer department) assists in the planning of all the moving details, including identifying schools, newspapers, doctors, dentists, churches, stores and the like. The service does not stop there. Followup supportive assistance is provided to make sure the transfer is going smoothly and the employee and his or her family are managing well. This type of company program for its employees is long overdue.



When you're looking for a program to help you with a particular family problem, go to the telephone directory for assistance. The yellow pages list many, many social service organizations that can be of direct help to you. In an emergency, of course, 911 can be your best support.

There's still hope

It is imperative for us not to lose sight of that still all important responsibility we have as families. Take a good look at the problems facing you right now; you're not alone in your despair. Think how the problem could be taken care of by your family. Realistically, there may be nothing you can do now but secure outside assistance. You may, however, have the opportunity to use your wisdom to insure that future generations of your family will not be in such a bad way.

Consider also your personal involvement in social agencies in your community, even as a volunteer, to help those that are less fortunate. Think of your work as proving some leadership and guidance in the family of community.

It is clear—it is up to us as compassionate people to deal with each other honestly, respectfully and in concert with the accepted standard of behavior of our society. Although sounding very altruistic, we must reach for the stars in order for our children to, at the very minimum, make it to the top of the trees.