

SWEDEN'S LATEST CORRECTIONAL EXPERIMENT

In June 1972 I was privileged to spend a week in Sweden as a guest of that country's Department of Criminal Care, taking special interest in the manner in which the country treats its younger offenders. As is generally known, Sweden has a very efficient and modern approach to the treatment of convicted persons with great emphasis on alternatives to imprisonment. With a total population of 8 million persons the daily average prison population is around 4,000 with the bulk of the prisoners serving shorter sentences in medium to minimum security institutions. One of the most recent experiments being conducted by Sweden's Department of Criminal Care directs its attention to the problem of major social adjustments required by the prisoner stepping back into his family and community role with all its demands, pressures and responsibilities after a long term of "artificial living". In an attempt to bridge the gap between institutional living and the suddenness of community and family responsibilities a type of therapeutic village has been established.

On the 10th April, 1972 the Department opened the village in Gruvberget, Halsingland, North Sweden. The village is to be used for courses with people in prisons who qualify for open institutions care and their nearest relatives, e g. parents, wife and family, etc. Gruvberget is situated about 28 miles from the city of Ballness and in this village the Department has purchased all but a few privately owned properties. There are about 12 family houses, a few single rooms with cooking facilities and an old school house which has been converted into an assembly hall with a kitchen and dining room. Employee's quarters are situated nearby. Thus, virtually the whole village is now owned by the Criminal Service Department, and staffed by a Manager, a Supervisor, a house mother, a Study Supervisor and other professional staff.

The main purpose of the "therapeutic village" is to provide inmates with information of assistance to them about the community into which they will soon be going; to foster the development of meaningful social relationships and to involve them where necessary in family and marriage guidance, etc. The programme is also designed to further the affinity between the inmate and his relatives by making it possible for the relatives to take part in the programme by actually living in at the village.

Gruvberget is a superb place for outdoor life and to make physical training and culture possible, families are equipped with tracksuits, skis, bikes, fishing tackle, etc.

The village takes in 20 to 30 families at a time for a period of about 4 weeks. The actual course programme for the 4 weeks is made up with the help of the inmates and their families and usually includes such subjects as information on social service benefits, consumer education, employment opportunities, driver training, the Swedish language, family life, sex education, family budgeting, physical culture and hygiene, study techniques, etc., etc

As the living quarters are fully equipped, it is possible for the inmates and their families to keep house themselves, though anyone can have dinner or

supper at the community dining room free of cost. The living at Gruvberget is free of cost for both inmates and their relatives with the fare to and from the village being paid by the Criminal Service Department. Inmates fully engaged in the course are paid approximately \$12 for a 40 hour week.

The first course held in Sweden's early spring is now complete and a second course currently in process will be interesting pilot groups to follow up in due course in an attempt to evaluate what, on the surface, appears as a new and bold attempt in correctional procedures.

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### THE SIMPLE WAY TO CORRECTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

(With acknowledgment and thanks to the U.S. Jaycees we reproduce this article which appeared in the April, 1972 issue of FUTURE, the Official Publication of The United States Jaycees.)

We, the United States Jaycees, have a very serious problem with our correctional involvement. This problem often stifles involvement and handicaps action. The problem is simple. Our involvement is and must be simple. But the simplicity of our approach is our biggest problem. People too often look for complicated, technical solutions and therefore have difficulty accepting the simplicity of what is needed. The explanation of our involvement as well as the mode of operation can best be described by the initials of our major problem - SIMPLE

S - can stand for STARTING. Where do we start? We originally started with Jaycee chapters in joint correctional facilities. Forgetting the benefits those chapters brought to inmates (community development and leadership training, the same benefits obtained by free members and communities), we have come to realize that those chapters brought many free Jaycees into direct contact with correctional facilities and inmates. This contact broke the barriers of rumour and fear many of us had and allowed us to learn of the needs of the facilities and inmates

About 300,000 "free" people a year visit chapters in correctional facilities and thereby learn of needs and problems. Taking this approach as a mode of operation, our starting point in the criminal justice field is to go where the action is. Visit chapters in correctional facilities, sit in on courts, tour local gaols, follow a probation or parole officer for a day, have a rap session at the local Bastille. Notice, I have not said "conduct surveys, spend money or call a press conference." Just do a little visiting. From these initial visits our chapters have become involved in everything from legislation to half-way houses to volunteer probation councils to - you name it. But, as a start, all they did was visit and from the visits and rap sessions came the ideas for involvement. (Oh, yes, when you visit look at what you see and who you talk to with this question in mind, "Will anything in this facility or programme keep me from committing another offense when I get out?" If the answer is No, you have an idea for further needs or programmes. Also, take your friends, neighbours, family, casual acquaintances and local political hacks with you on your visits )