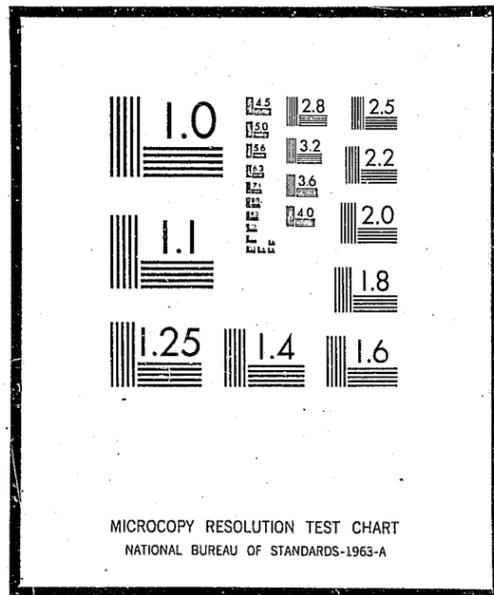


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LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

Date filmed

1/5/76

## FOLLOW-UP REPORT

Luzerne County Prison Training and Counseling Project (NE-186-73A)

In this follow-up report the evaluating team is especially concerned with assessing the RCA staff's reaction to our final report (submitted April 30). We think that, despite the fact that the Training and Counseling Project will be terminated on July 15, the RCA staff has made a sincere effort to alleviate the weaknesses we cited and continues to do an excellent job in the areas noted in the final report. There has been, naturally, a reduction in staff morale. The roots of that lowered morale, however, extend beyond concern for their personal well-being: the staff sees the strong probability that the inmates of the prison, except for the few in work release, will once again revert to passing time idly in their cell blocks with little hope for dealing with the problems that led to their incarceration. The evaluating team also shares that concern.

The major weakness of the project as we viewed it in April was unquestionably the job development component. It was our feeling then that the problems apparent there could, if left unsolved, jeopardize what we viewed as the successful efforts of the carpentry, culinary arts, and general education instructors. A new job developer has been appointed. Although it is too soon to hope for dramatic change, and the renewed effort is clouded by the termination of the project, it is our feeling that the problems we cited were well on the way toward being solved. The new job developer had contacted twenty perspective employers, placed five released

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inmates in jobs, and secured pledges of cooperation from at least eight businesses. The other staff members were generous in their praise for his work and it is obvious to the evaluating team that he demonstrates a real concern for the welfare and well-being of the inmates. In retrospect, perhaps many of the problems we cited in our final report would have been avoided had this new job developer been part of the project from the outset.

One of the major areas of concern in our early reports was with record-keeping. We noted in our final report that progress had been made along the lines we suggested and would be remiss if we failed to point out in this report the strong improvement along these lines. As a consequence of the improved record-keeping system, it is now possible to study records and come away with a strong grasp of what has been taking place in the project. It was to that end that we made our recommendation to improve record keeping. We believe that the record system is now adequately organized.

At the time this final report was written, the additional counselor had been part of the project for only a few days. It was therefore impossible to assess his role in the project or his impact on the counseling services made available by RCA. At this time, however, there is little question but that the diagnostic work done by the staff is vastly improved as a consequence of his addition. The two counselors now have time to interview each new inmate, explain RCA's role in the prison, and when appropriate, administer either achievement tests or psychological inventories. Counseling of inmates enrolled in the training or GED programs has also been greatly facilitated.

The two most successful parts of the project were identified in our final report as improved morale of inmates in the prison and the high calibre of instruction in the three training phases: carpentry, culinary arts, and GED. Our site visits reaffirm the strength of these areas of the project.

The changes in diet and dining that have occurred as a result of this project were cataloged in our final report and have a great deal to do with increased morale in the prison:

- (1) the improved and more varied diet made available to the inmates;
- (2) the inmate refurbishing of the dining area (which continues under the direction of the carpentry instructor); and
- (3) the new method of serving the inmates--cafeteria style, rather than through a hole in the wall.

Since our final report, RCA has donated about \$7,000 of kitchen equipment: dishwasher, booster heater, dishtable, steamtable, three gallon coffee urn, beverage stand, steam kettle, steel cart, peeler, and 100 serving trays. The most important of that equipment is not presently in use due to the failure of the county to make the necessary arrangements for installation. Even though the termination of the project makes its intended use (education and training) impossible, it is to be hoped this equipment will soon become operational in a kitchen badly in need of such additions.

We went into rather great detail about carpentry, culinary arts, and GED programs in the final report and see no need to do so in this follow-up report. The following, however, do seem noteworthy:

- (1) The trainee enrollment in the culinary arts has expanded from four to thirteen since our last report (we had been critical of the low enrollment and recommended more aggressive recruitment).
- (2) In the seventh month, life of the program to date\*, eight inmates have earned certificates in carpentry and two in culinary arts while eight others passed the GED tests and earned the high school diploma.
- (3) At the "graduation" exercises scheduled for July 10, eight additional inmates were awarded certificates signifying completion of the carpentry course while thirteen will receive certificates for the culinary arts.
- (4) A total of seventy-eight inmates were enrolled in the GED program, thirty in culinary arts (plus two guards) and forty-three in woodworking.
- (5) Three of the six power tools have been delivered to the carpentry shop and are in operation. The remainder of the hand tools have also arrived and are housed in a new storage cabinet--making it possible for the instructor to use his office as an office, rather than a storage area.

From the outset of our involvement, the evaluation team has viewed itself as part of a partnership (with RCA, the County Commissioners, the Luzerne County Prison Administration, and the Governor's Justice Commission) working toward a common goal: an improvement in the quality of life for the inmates at the Luzerne

\*It should be noted that the program did not begin in earnest, due to delays in purchasing and refurbishing, until November.

County Prison. Our criticisms have offered in that spirit--constructively, with, we think, some measure of professional objectivity and in the hope of realizing more fully the objectives of the project.

The cooperation of the RCA staff was excellent. They accepted our suggestions and criticisms in the spirit in which they were offered and, we feel, made sincere efforts to adjust their practices accordingly.

In summary, as noted in our final report, we believe that the project has been, on the whole, successful. More importantly, though now moot, is our belief that a solid foundation had been laid that may have assured success in the future: the refurbishing is nearly complete, new kitchen and instructional equipment has arrived, an additional two competent people have joined the staff, and many minor problems that plague any first-year effort have been laid to rest. In the final analysis, the failure to build on that foundation would be a de facto admission that our commitment to rehabilitation of criminal offenders--even for first offenders and for those accused of less serious crimes--is more locked into rhetoric than actual practice.

We urge the responsible parties--the Luzerne County Commissioners, the Governor's Justice Commission, and the contractor--to reexamine their stance in this project and to carry it forward for another year.

The professional staff on this evaluation project has consisted of the following persons:

Barbara R. Price, Researcher

James R. Horner, Researcher

Charles L. Newman, Research Director

RCA EDUCATION PROGRAM  
LUZERNE COUNTY PRISON  
99 Water Street  
Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania 18702

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RCA

Mr. Gerald M. Croan  
Evaluation Planner  
Evaluation and Monitoring Unit  
Governor's Justice Commission  
P. O. Box 1167  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Mr. Croan:

By this time you must be aware of the fact that the Luzerne County Commissioners are not asking the Governor's Justice Commission for funds to renew the pilot program at the Luzerne County Prison.

In response to your first three questions:

1. Yes, the report is factually accurate.
2. I agree to the four recommendations made on page 3.
  - (a.) Space at the prison being limited we had to wait for the completion of the multi-media room in order to plan and implement a Basic Ed Class. Plans for a basic education course has been completed and presentation of same was to be made in our proposal for a renewal program.
  - (b.) Work Release being a separate funded program made our work a bit difficult. However, with our new Job Developer/Job Placement person now working, a better understanding and working program now exists.
  - (c.) With our new culinary arts instructor we did develop a more aggressive recruitment program as well as a better instructional program. The class has increased from four (4) to seventeen (17) students.

- (d.) We heartily agree with the incorporation of women inmates into the RCA Program. We did on a purely volunteer basis conduct a GED course for one of two women inmates incarcerated in the Juvenile Detention Center, a separate building. We asked to have the women brought to our classes in the main prison but we met tremendous resistance to this suggestion.

Relative to the recommendations on page thirty-four (34):

1. While counseling of inmates and testing sets realistic goals for people operating and evaluating programs, this does nothing for the inmate who has to face the realities of incarceration and eventual release. He is constantly reminded that court costs and restitution must be paid even if in token amounts in order for him to be released on Probation or Parole or serving his maximum sentence. Therefore as release time draws near the inmate begins to look to the work release program for employment in any field of work. He will discontinue his courses and will accept even the most menial job. The inmate at this point becomes disenchanted as he sees no future improvement in his financial progress and he finds himself locked in the middle of a power struggle between Probation-Parole and work release program. Both who seek credit for placing an inmate on a job.

Agreements with State and County Probation and Parole departments have been worked out and placed into affect. Guidelines were established.

Guidelines were also established with Work Release. When an inmate in the RCA program indicated his desire to go out on Work Release, an office memorandum was sent to Work Release office asking for an interview for the inmate. If the inmate qualified for Work Release, he would be transferred over. We also offered our services in securing jobs for an inmate on work release that would be compatible with his training in our program. Our offers were rejected more often than accepted.

We secured agreements with three local colleges for inmates to attend as part time or full time students. We also secured loans for them in order to pay tuition. Even though this was a mandated responsibility of Work-Release, we did have four (4) men admitted to various colleges.

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While I do assume the responsibility of supervision, I must take exception to the statement of inadequate supervision of the former job developer. Control over this man was almost impossible task. Due to outside influence it was impossible to get the job developer to comply with rules and regulations, writing of reports and being truthful. This problem almost had to resolve itself and it did.

I do not understand the discussion relative to the roles of the psychologists. There are no psychologist slots in our table of organization. We do have two counselors. The fact that one counselor is a Pennsylvania registered Psychologist and the other counselor is a Psychometrist is a plus factor on the hiring abilities of the program administrator. The psychologist was used from time to time for psychological evaluations by the courts and the Pennsylvania Parole Board.

The intake testing of inmates was not systemized to its present state due to the fact that a form had to be developed that would give us immediate information on the inmate. This then gave us a vehicle to check for a recidivism rate which up to now was impossible to determine. The time it took to develop the data information sheets was also used to achieve other things for the betterment of the inmates life in the prison. As of this writing all inmates in the RCA program have been given either SAT-CAT or WRATH tests plus DPI and MMPI tests when needed.

Relative to Basic Education, we were taken by total surprise in finding so many inmates with less than sixth grade reading level. We were led to believe by the former GED program director under contract with the Luzerne Intermediate Unit Special Programs and Services, that the majority of inmates were sixth grade or better readers. With this information we went for the GED program rather than basic education. However in all fairness to our program eight inmates have received their High School Certificates and those who did not achieve the certificates certainly benefited from attendance by raising their reading level a grade or two. As I noted earlier we did plan an extensive basic education program if the grant were to be renewed.

As for staff meetings on a weekly basis, I did not see any need for them. Our entire staff consists of seven (7) persons all highly qualified experts in their fields. They all submit weekly reports. If a problem arose in any area the staff member could, would and did confer with me. If other staff members needed to be consulted we would meet. Every morning a short coffee break was taken before classes would start. If any problems arose they would be discussed at that time.

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I am of the school that believes too many meetings, too many discussions of problems shows weakness on the part of staff members in facing up to and solving of problems. All major problems relative to policy and procedures were discussed at a staff meeting. All staff members were required to familiarize themselves with the program as it was written. More time, in my opinion should be spent implementing rather than discussing a program.

About the Warden, he was always advised on project plans, first by the staff member and then by the project director. Here again I believe if these things were discussed at Staff meetings the personal touch would be lost. At times discussions with the Warden would be heavy. On individual basis no one feared loss of face.

In all fairness to Dr. Newman and his team, I must say that they were most helpful in giving constructive criticism and suggestions in improving our program. Each suggestion made was implemented where and when possible.

My comments about our program in closing are that a pilot program, entirely new in its approach meets tremendous opposition from all walks of public life. Values are not placed on achievements in human dignity but rather in a dollar and cents value.

The public fails to realize that men and women incarcerated in prisons are human beings and are entitled the opportunity to better their lives even tho incarcerated for having violated one or more of our social laws. The punishment in reality is the incarceration at night, disengaged from all social and family life. How about those who are only accused and cannot meet the bail requirements? To deny them books, decent quarters, decent food and recreation is certainly a travesty of our justice system as they just might be found innocent by a jury of their peers!

We must continue to improve their living standards (food and health wise) allow them to exercise their minds via books, classrooms, rap sessions, etc. Last but certainly not the least we must return to them their God given dignity as a human being. This can be accomplished by men and women with vision, courage and the desire to help their fellow human beings.

I do hope that I have answered all your questions. If I can

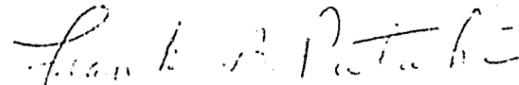
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be of further assistance or help in any future projects  
please feel free to call on me.

Sincerely yours,

RCA EDUCATION PROGRAM



Frank B. Pataki  
Manager

FBP:ma

**END**