

A COMPARATIVE STUDY: TWO TRAINING PROGRAMS
FOR MENTALLY RETARDED ADULTS

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by

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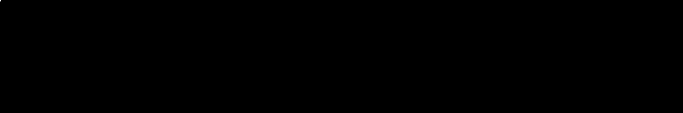
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ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to conduct a descriptive comparison of two existing training facilities for mentally retarded adults. The two facilities are operating to provide the mentally retarded adult with the necessary work habits and social skills which will enable him to become a working, contributing member of his community. Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., which is located near downtown Houston, Texas, has chosen the sheltered workshop approach as its means of training the mentally retarded adult. Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., which is located in a rural suburban area near Washington, D.C., trains its clients by the use of horticultural therapy.

Methods


A review of the literature concerning training programs for mentally retarded adults and specifically concerning the two types of approaches utilized by the agencies was conducted. The areas of interest, i.e., operation, financial aspects, and goals were identified and specific questions concerning each were developed.

In order to obtain the necessary information, the operation of each agency was personally viewed and individual interviews were conducted with various personnel at each agency.

Findings

Even though obvious differences do exist between the two agencies in regard to the approach taken, i.e., geographic location and size of the client population, the operation, financial aspects, and goals of each are essentially the same. Two significant differences were determined through this study. First, the client/staff ratio for Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. is 8.83:1 and for Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. the ratio is 2.77:1. Second, the cost per day of training a client for Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. is \$8.90 and for Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., the cost is \$15.87.

In conclusion, it was determined that each agency provides the mentally retarded adult with the opportunity to become a working, contributing member of his community.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within our society, the attainment of a salable skill, trade, or education is often looked upon as the primary factor which will determine an individual's future lifestyle. Generally, the more skilled and educated individual has many more opportunities and alternatives available to him in his pursuit for a fulfilling and rewarding life. Although there are various cultures, sub-cultures and classes within our society, it is generally an accepted goal throughout our society for each individual to become a working, contributing member of his community. Our public school system is designed in such a manner that most individuals do have an equal opportunity to achieve an education, skill or trade within the classroom. Therefore, the public school system is viewed as the child's initial attempt toward his preparation as a contributing member of society. This is where the child begins his long journey in quest of his and society's goals.

Following his exposure to the public school system, the child is felt to be prepared to pursue the course in life for which he feels suited. He may continue his formal education, obtain employment or choose one of the many alternatives which are available to the individual today. Whatever the person chooses, his main goal is to start a

life for himself, with a home, family, and job. Most individuals seem to have little or no problem completing the cycle of education, job, family and security. However, there are various segments of the population who, for one reason or another, have more difficulty than most. Because our educational process is only one of the variables which are influential concerning the individual's lifestyle, there are many people who have more obstacles to overcome in their pursuit of happiness than the majority. An individual's home life, his biological endowment and his developmental process are all important factors concerning the person's future. Our educational process and social system are designed for the "average" or "normal" individual who possesses no obvious mental or physical disabilities. For those individuals who aren't considered to be "normal" there are special classes in the public schools which are set up to cope with specific problems. There are special facilities and institutions within the community which deal with those individuals who for various reasons cannot cope successfully with day to day living. These special facilities may be called correctional facilities which deal with those individuals who have committed crimes against society, or state hospitals which deal with the mentally ill, or state schools which treat the mentally retarded, just to mention a few. Whatever the name of the institution and regardless of the population within the institution,

they all have one thing in common--the individuals who are receiving treatment are there because they are not able to cope with and adjust to the demands which the society makes.

For the purposes of this paper, the discussion will be limited to the mentally retarded individual and how he fits into this broad scheme. Mental retardation refers to any individual who is not able to function mentally at a certain predetermined level which is generally referred to as "normal." The determination of a person's mental level and capabilities can generally be made by casual observation by the family, relatives, friends and by the school personnel. If a child seems to be slow in reaching his developmental milestones, i.e., walking, talking, toilet training, et cetera, then this behavior may concern those involved with the child to the extent that he will be examined by the appropriate professionals. Generally the examination will include some type of intelligence test to determine the child's level of intellectual functioning. Most states have a definite intelligence quotient range within which an individual is considered to be mentally retarded. If the examination reveals that the child is currently functioning within the range of mental retardation, the parents or guardians will then hopefully be referred to or will seek the appropriate facility where the child will receive the

training which is needed. Most public school systems have special classes which train the mentally retarded child. The program the child enters will depend upon his age, level of functioning, the particular school district, parent's income, et cetera. Most mentally retarded children respond well to programs which are designed for their specific problems and generally the parents are pleased to have their child enrolled in a program where he seems to belong. But like every child, the mentally retarded child does grow up. Except for the more severely retarded child, he grows up with the same dreams, hopes and ambitions as a normal child. He wants to be self-sufficient, he wants a home, family and children. However, his mental deficiency remains and many are not yet capable of achieving society's goals. His formal public school education has been completed at the age of seventeen or eighteen years and unlike the normal child he is not yet capable nor does he have the skills, training or intellectual functioning which are necessary for competing in society. The public school system has brought him a long way and he is now capable of doing a great deal for himself.

What happens to the young mentally retarded adult who has completed his formal education within the public school system? Studies conducted by Delp and Lorenz, Saenger, Tisdall and Stanfield all report that many of

those mentally retarded children who have graduated from public school special education classes do not engage in any meaningful social, recreational, educational or employment activities following their graduation (Stanfield, 1973). Most of those who were not engaged in any meaningful activity spend their time around their homes and in the immediate neighborhood. Idly walking around the neighborhood, visiting the nearest shopping center and watching television in the home were the three main activities for these young adults. The parents reported that the severity of the child's handicap, lack of transportation and lack of proper referrals to a post school program were the main reasons for the shortage of structured activities for the young mentally retarded adult. Most of the children had no friends to visit and therefore no peer group with which to associate. Following approximately ten years of public school education, where the child was engaged in structured activities for the majority of his day, surrounded by his peers, he is left alone and idle following his graduation. This puts a great deal of emotional strain on both the young mentally retarded adult and his parents. If these young adults are ever to become contributing members of society, they must be better prepared to face up to and accept the responsibility which society demands of its members. This cannot be obtained for

many by the formalized educational system within our public schools. That is only the beginning.

There is also one other aspect of the problem which supports and stresses the need for more post school programs for the young mentally retarded adult. According to national surveys, approximately three per cent of the general population functions intellectually as mentally retarded (Haskins, 1973). If this statistic is correct, then there are approximately fifty thousand mentally retarded individuals in Houston, Texas alone. Also according to various studies carried out within our society's correctional facilities, approximately ten to twenty-five per cent of the population within these facilities is considered to be mentally retarded (Haskins, 1973). Why is there this discrepancy between the proportion of mentally retarded individuals within our general population and the correctional facility population? Many people in the past have believed that there is an inherent predisposition to crime among the mentally retarded segment of our population. However, recent studies seem to indicate that this is not a valid argument. It seems that there are certain legal and administrative artifacts which give rise to this differentiation between the two populations. The mentally retarded offender, as opposed to the offender of normal intelligence, is more likely to receive a sentence involving incarceration because:

(1) the mentally retarded offender is considered a poor risk for probation, and (2) there are fewer alternatives to incarceration which are available to the mentally retarded offender. When comparing the mentally retarded offender to the "normal" offender, the mentally retarded offender has less chance of securing and maintaining employment, which is a strong criterion for sentencing an individual to a program other than incarceration. With the limited availability of community based treatment programs for mentally retarded adults, the sentencing judge is left with few alternatives. If left in the community, the mentally retarded has a poor chance of rehabilitation unless he can obtain employment or proper training. Therefore, the correctional facility becomes the best school training program for many mentally retarded adults.

As can hopefully be seen by these discussions of the mentally retarded adult and his lifestyle following his public school education, there is a definite need for community based post school training programs for mentally retarded adults. If the community expects all of its members to become contributing members of society we must be willing to accept the responsibility for making this possible for all, including the mentally retarded adult. If we are willing to devote time and effort to the training of mentally retarded children, we must complete the task by

providing the training which is needed for the mentally retarded adult. Every community within our society has its share of problems. Included in these problems are the mentally retarded. No two communities are alike and therefore the problems they must face and the resources available are different for each. The number of mentally retarded individuals in the community, geographic area served, type of employment opportunities available to the mentally retarded, community and parental support, as well as community resources are all variables which must be considered when thought is given to opening a training facility for mentally retarded adults.

The basic philosophy of these post school training programs should be to provide the mentally retarded adult with the necessary work skills, habits and social skills which will enable him to reach his potential as a human being and to become a contributing member of society. The approaches will vary from community to community, but the goals and problems encountered by each are similar. As the previously mentioned studies indicate, the mentally retarded adult who is not engaged in any structured post school program, essentially leads a non-productive, non-fulfilling life of boredom and idleness. But what happens to the individual who is fortunate enough to find himself a place within one of the post school training facilities? The purpose of this paper is to study two existing

community based post school training programs in an effort to determine what benefits and opportunities are available to the young mentally retarded adult in these two communities. Each agency was visited personally and interviews were conducted with key personnel at each. Three main areas will be described: (1) the operation, (2) the financial aspects, and (3) the goals of each. The following chapter will be a description of the sheltered workshop program of Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., located near downtown Houston, Texas. The workshop is designed in much the same way as any large industrial factory with all clients receiving their training in one of the various training centers located under one roof. Chapter three will be a description of the horticultural therapy program of the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., located in the country near Upper Marlboro, Maryland which is on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. This center utilizes the science of horticulture as its approach to training the young mentally retarded adult. Since each of the two agencies has chosen different approaches to the same task, Chapter four will be devoted to discussing the similarities and dissimilarities of the two agencies and will deal with the summary and conclusions which resulted from the study.

CHAPTER II

HARRIS COUNTY CENTER FOR THE RETARDED, INC. THE SHELTERED WORKSHOP

The work ethic is and always has been an important aspect of the American lifestyle. To be a working member of society, indicates that the individual is both a socially acceptable member of his community and is also reaping the benefits of economic gain. From the psychological viewpoint work is "seen as one of man's primary needs in ego structuring and personality integration [Morgenstern, 1973, p. 24]." America can basically be viewed as being a two-pronged nation regarding its attitudes toward work. On one hand we are a capitalist country which indicates that the strongest individuals win through competition. On the other hand, we view ourselves as being a humane society which prides itself on the amount of concern and care we give to those less fortunate individuals who for various reasons are unable to compete without assistance. Since an important factor regarding the development of our country deals with equality, it is not surprising that we should spend a great deal of time and effort to assure each individual an equal opportunity for competing within our society's work world. As was indicated in the introductory chapter, the normal avenues for achieving the necessary skills to compete and achieve are often not enough for

many individuals. Therefore, we have established the various facilities and institutions within our society which are designed to help those individuals with special problems to be better prepared to cope within our competitive society. The mentally retarded individual, because of his impaired intellectual functioning, is usually not capable of securing a foothold for himself within the working community.

Sheltered workshops have assumed one of the major roles in the care and training of disabled individuals. The first sheltered workshops established in this country were terminal in nature; i.e., they served simply as havens for the severely disabled. "The first workshop established in the United States was set up at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts, in 1829, and it set the pattern for the terminal shop [Gellman, 1967, p. 283]." Terminal workshops remain in existence today and they serve as a vehicle for the limited productivity of those who cannot compete in a normal work setting. "The goal of the operation is not only to provide a resource for the disadvantaged, but also to lower the cost of community subsidy by providing some income through the sale of merchandise [Morgenstern, 1973, p. 54]." Although the terminal workshop cannot be considered genuinely rehabilitative in nature, it does serve a very important function by providing a place of work and refuge for society's non-competitive

members.

The second type of workshop which is in existence today is known as the transitional workshop. The emphasis of this type of program is the acquisition of a working skill rather than the production process itself. The transitional workshop differs from the terminal workshop by having job placement as its goal. Even though the transitional workshop utilizes vocational counselors and social caseworkers in its approach, "it does not make use of the workshop as a clinical tool for in-depth preparation of the retarded for independent living [Morgenstern, 1973, p. 56]."

The third type of workshop is known as the vocational adjustment workshop. This type of workshop can best be defined as "a work-oriented rehabilitation facility with controlled working environment and individualized vocational goals which utilizes work experience and related services for assisting the handicapped person to progress toward normal living and a productive vocational status [Center for Social Rehabilitation Studies, 1971, p. 1]." A realistic work setting is a very important aspect of this approach. If the disabled individual is to become a member of the working community it is felt to be important that he be trained in a realistic work setting. The staff should have some background knowledge of the social sciences as well as be knowledgeable in the area of business and production.

The handicapped individual is worked with not only in regard to his work performance and production, but also receives assistance when he encounters problems dealing with his behavior. The problems with which the individual is confronted during his day at the facility are dealt with on the spot as they arise. "The concept, is basically one of milieu therapy whereby the psychological procedures operate simultaneously and in conjunction with the dynamics of the client's work experience in an environment that is both realistic and controlled [Morgenstern, 1973, p. 59]."

The terminal, transitional and vocational adjustment workshop were only briefly described here in an effort to give some indication as to the types of programs which are available to the handicapped adult. All three types of approaches are utilized and needed with the mentally retarded. It is often the case with the larger sheltered workshops that all three types of programs are used if the population of the facility dictates the need. Such is the case with Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. The remainder of this chapter will deal with the description of the operation, financial aspects and the philosophy of this agency. The information was obtained by personal visitation to the agency and interviews with agency personnel including the executive director, assistant director, director of vocational rehabilitation, director of residential services and other key personnel.

Operation

Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. operates a relatively large sheltered workshop with an average enrollment of 265 clients for the calendar year 1974. For this same year there was an average of thirty staff members who were responsible for the training of clients, administration and maintenance of the facility. The staffing pattern reflects the dual nature of a sheltered workshop program--half business and half vocational rehabilitation. There are sixteen trainers who work with and supervise the clients on a day to day basis within one of the work/training areas. The trainers are responsible not only for the production of marketable items, but must also train the clients to become job ready. The remaining fourteen staff positions are divided equally between production and rehabilitation services with directors for each. The rehabilitation services staff consists of an intake caseworker, a personal-social adjustment counselor, a work-adjustment coordinator, vocational evaluator, job placement counselor and a secretary. These individuals are concerned primarily with the vocational rehabilitation aspect of the program. The production staff consists of a plant manager, workshop foreman, production scheduler, secretary, truck driver, and shipping and receiving. These individuals are concerned primarily with

the production aspect of the program. However, each staff member, whether considered rehabilitation, production, or trainer, are all aware of the importance of the emphasis which must be placed on all portions of the program. This combination of rehabilitation and realistic work is the "sine qua non" of a sheltered workshop program. The supportive staff include food, psychological, health and administrative personnel.

Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. will accept referrals from any source. The majority of referrals come from the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, the public schools, teachers, vocational and adjustment coordinators, physicians, psychologists, parents, friends or relatives. Once a client is referred to the program, it must be determined if he will benefit from the program. First of all, the prospective client must be at least seventeen years of age (there is no upper age limit) and have had a recent psychological examination to determine his level of intellectual functioning. Next a general medical examination is needed to determine if the individual possesses any contagious diseases, to discover any secondary handicaps which may cause limitations on training and to insure that the client has received a tetanus shot. If emotional problems are involved, a recommendation from a psychiatrist is necessary. Whether or not an individual is accepted into the program is

based primarily on need and availability of a place within the program. Although there is no definite cut-off point regarding the intelligence quotient of any particular referral, the workshop prefers to accept those clients who are currently functioning within the range of mental retardation. (According to the American Association of Mental Deficiency, an intelligence quotient of seventy or below is considered to be within the range of mental retardation.)

If it is determined that a client qualifies for the program, an intake interview is conducted by the intake counselor with the client and his parents. A Texas Rehabilitation Commission counselor is generally present to determine if the client qualifies for funding by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. The intake includes obtaining a social history of the client and his family, orientation to the program and a tour of the facility. If the staff at the workshop, the parents and the client feel that he will benefit from the program, he will be accepted and will spend his first month in the evaluation group.

Within the evaluation group the client is assessed to determine his appropriate placement within the workshop. The evaluation is designed to determine the client's assets and liabilities in both his work adjustment and personal-social adjustment. Both areas receive equal

emphasis because if the client is to be expected to function within the community, he must possess the appropriate behavior and attitudes in each area. Following the evaluation period, the client will be placed within the appropriate work/training area. The time spent working and training each day will vary according to the amount of work available and on how the individual trainer utilizes the time when there is no specific work activity scheduled. Generally, each client receives approximately six hours a day in work/training. Regardless of the amount of work available, the client must follow a work schedule. The day begins at 8:00 A.M. with one hour for lunch, two fifteen minute breaks and work ends at 4:30 P.M. Therefore, the client is learning to work by a definite schedule.

Two types of progress reports are kept on each client: a personal-social adjustment report and a work-adjustment report. This is the trainer's responsibility. Because of the amount of time they spend with the client they are considered to be most knowledgeable of the client's skills. These reports are utilized to show the client's progress, to determine if he is placed within the proper area and to determine if the client is ready for job placement.

There are nine separate work/training areas within the workshop. Each area is responsible for the production of work and for the training of clients. The first area

is known as the light assembly area. The clients who are assigned to this area are responsible for such tasks as putting labels on boxes, counting and packaging nuts and bolts, the assembly of objects, packaging small items, i.e., mostly simple, routine repetitive work. The second station is the printing area. Here the clients use a small addressograph, postage meter and a small printing press which is used for printing newsletters, bulletins, annual reports, et cetera. They also stuff envelopes and do zip code sorting. The third area is the lapidary shop where rocks are cut and polished for use as pen and pencil sets, bookends, et cetera. The fourth area concentrates on ceramic items such as lamp bases and seasonal items. They also make a great many custom ash trays, beer steins, et cetera. The fifth area is the wood finishing station where spray paint and lacquers are applied. The sixth area consists of two wood shops: one for cutting and stripping wood and the other for making souvenir baseball bats for major league baseball teams and also making furniture parts. The seventh area is the wood assembly area where bed frames and tables are assembled in addition to cutting and gluing formica to particle boards and assembling other furniture items. The eighth area concentrates on office maintenance and general janitorial services. These eighth area clients are responsible for this type of activity throughout the workshop. The ninth

area deals with outdoor maintenance where the clients are responsible for grounds maintenance and beautification of the agency.

In addition to the training the client receives at his work station, there are also other areas of training available to him. Individual or group counseling services are available based on the need of the client, including problems in connection with adjustment, personel-social adjustment, job placement, et cetera. Counseling is also available to the families of the clients if needed. There is a boy scout troop which is available to all mentally retarded males in the workshop program. The workshop also encourages its clients to participate in the special olympics for the mentally retarded. It also serves as a referral source and advocate of the mentally retarded. There is no direct recreational program sponsored by the workshop. It is the belief of the workshop staff that their primary responsibility to the client is to prepare him to function as independently as possible within the community and this includes the use of community recreational facilities rather than separate programs for the mentally retarded. It is recognized by the staff that adult continuing education is needed but it has not yet been decided if this should be the responsibility of the workshop or some other program.

Job placement within the community is the goal of the workshop staff for those clients who are judged to be capable. The decision to place a client on a community job is made by a staff team composed of the trainer, counseling staff involved, vocational adjustment counselor, the director of rehabilitation services and the job placement counselor. The task is coordinated by the job placement counselor who goes from trainer to trainer to determine who will be considered for placement. Once it has been determined which clients are to be considered for placement, the team meets to decide who is actually ready for placement. When the determination is made, the client receives counseling in an effort to prepare him for the transition from sheltered workshop training to actual community employment. The parents are notified and counseling is often needed to help them make the transition from the security of the workshop to the competitive community. The client is then taken for personal interview with the prospective employer. This is considered to be an important aspect of the job placement process because by allowing the client to become involved in obtaining employment he is experiencing a portion of the real problem of employment which he will have to face at a later date. The types of jobs which a client may receive are wide and varied. These may include positions within the food service industry, general

maintenance, almost any job requiring aides or assistants, pet stores, assembly work, service station attendants, et cetera. The limitations regarding the type job the mentally retarded can perform stems more from lack of staff creativity in finding jobs than from the client's ability to perform.

Once a client is hired and placed on a job, the workshop continues to assist the client and his employer should any adjustment problems occur for either. The first week is considered to be the most critical period and the counselor may even spend some time on the job with the client during this week. During the first three months the counselor will attempt to make on the job visits to the employer and client in an effort to avoid or solve any problems which may arise. Maintaining a close personal relationship and giving support to both the employer and client seems to be a very important aspect for successful job placement. In addition to the visits made by the counselor, the employer and client are each made to feel free to contact the counselor if the need arises. Approximately 60 per cent to 65 per cent are successfully placed on a job on the initial attempt.

Most of the clients spend an average of eighteen months with the workshop before they are considered for competitive employment. Generally, if a client has not been considered for employment after completing eighteen

months of training, it will take him four years before he will be placed on a job. It is not certain why this is so, but this has been the pattern in the past. The workshop does have certain clients who at this time do not appear capable of ever maintaining a job in the community. These clients are usually assigned to what is known as the work activities center. Here there is less emphasis on quality and quantity of goods produced and more emphasis on training. The philosophy is that no individual is expected to complete the program in a specified period of time and that there will always be a place in the workshop for those clients who are not capable of competitive employment. This aspect of the workshop program is similar to the terminal workshop that was described earlier in the chapter.

Within the workshop program at Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., there are approximately 206 clients attending on any one day. Many of the clients have a great deal of difficulty coping with their handicap, learning to associate with their peers, learning to follow the instructions of their supervisor and other related daily requirements. Therefore, improving behavior and interpersonal relationships are considered to be an important aspect of the program. The trainer will attempt to deal with the minor problems at the work station. If the problem cannot be dealt with by the trainer because of

the severity of the problem or because of the time involved, the client will then be referred to one of the counselors.

The counseling session may be a one time effort or the problem may call for more intensive scheduled counseling sessions. These counseling sessions may be on either a one-to-one basis with just the client and counselor present or they may take the form of group counseling sessions with one or more other clients who are experiencing similar difficulties. If the counseling sessions fail to resolve the problem, then a token economy system is utilized in an effort to remove or enhance behavior. All clients in the shop are normally given tokens by their trainers when they exhibit positive behavior. These tokens are then used to purchase items in the "Country Store" which is operated by Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. and is located on the grounds. This same token economy system is used to help modify behavior by making the receiving of tokens contingent upon the client's eliminating or exhibiting a specific behavior. If the client continues to exhibit negative behavior, a behavioral contract is drawn up in the presence of the client, the director of vocational services, the counselor and the parents. All those present, including the client, must agree to the terms and sign the contract. In essence, a behavioral contract states certain

types of behavior in which he should or should not engage and the consequences of those actions. It should include rewards for certain positive behavior and punishment for negative behavior. A definite time limit is stated for which the contract is in effect. The contract is made in such a manner that the client is responsible for his actions and any consequences he suffers are brought about by his own actions. The behavioral contract has proved to be 90 per cent successful and seems to be more powerful in modifying behavior than the token economy system. However, some clients will continue to exhibit negative behavior and must be either suspended or terminated from the workshop rolls. This happens to a very few and only after every other resource has been attempted.

There is no ongoing structured parental involvement with the workshop program. The director of vocational services utilizes an open door policy whereby the parents may consult with him at any time. Counseling is also available to the parents on an individual basis as the need arises and they are also involved in the intake and job placement procedures.

The fee or salaries which the clients receive while in training must comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act which apply to the handicapped. The Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division serves as monitor for this process. A productivity assessment is conducted on each

client to determine his rate of pay. This is determined by the volume of work the client is capable of compared to a non-handicapped individual. For example, if the client is capable of performing 46 per cent of a certain task in the same amount of time that it takes a non-handicapped individual to complete the task, he is paid 46 per cent of the hourly wage for that specific task. During the client's first twelve months with the program, he is considered to be in training status. Following this twelve month period, he must be placed in a work program in the workshop where his pay must be equal to or greater than 50 per cent of the minimum wage or placed in a work activity center where his salary can be at any rate. However, if the salary is less than 50 per cent of the minimum wage, the workshop must get approval from the Department of Labor via an individual pay rate which is between 50 per cent and 25 per cent of the minimum wage. Since the clients are considered to be in training, but are training within a work setting, it is reasoned that they should receive training fees or salaries for the work they produce. Each trainer keeps a time sheet on each client and records the time the client spends in actual work activity. The client is not paid for the time spent in counseling sessions, breaks, lunch, et cetera. Although the clients do not receive a great deal of money, in most cases this is the first and perhaps the only pay checks

they will ever receive. This helps the client develop a sense of pride in what he is doing and makes him feel he is accomplishing something as well as exposes him to budgeting and banking procedures.

Since the workshop does serve a large metropolitan area, transportation is a problem for many of the clients. Some client's families provide transportation, many are capable of using the public transportation system, yet there are many instances where neither are available. The workshop does not provide transportation services itself, but does either train the client to utilize existing public transportation services when possible or will help to arrange transportation with other clients or with existing transportation services, i.e., the Red Cross, State Department of Public Welfare, et cetera. Learning to become mobile within the community is considered to be an important phase of the workshop's training program and will often determine whether or not a client is ready for job placement.

In addition to the sheltered workshop program which is available to the young mentally retarded adult at Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., residential services are also provided for many of these handicapped individuals. The recently constructed residential facility, which resembles a modern, high-rise apartment complex, offers the client an opportunity for learning to live independently

within the community. At the time of this study (May, 1975), there were 114 residents housed in the facility and the capacity of 212 was expected to be reached by August or September of 1975. Of the 114 residents in the facility, approximately 100 are receiving vocational training in the sheltered workshop. The others are employed in the community. The emphasis at the residential facility is to teach the clients how to live independently or semi-independently within the community. The client's freedom is restricted only when it begins to interfere with his training or work. Each room houses from one to four residents and they each have a key to their room. The activities at the facility include evening educational programs with classes such as "Basic Mathematics," "Group Problem Solving," "Voting Behavior," and "Comparative Shopping." These educational programs are offered in the evenings Monday through Friday and during the day on Saturday and Sunday. Recreational programs, full-time psychological and counseling services are also available to the residents. At the time of this study there were thirty paid staff members at the residence with approximately 80 to 100 staff members expected when the facility reaches capacity. The residence is also currently utilizing approximately twenty-five part-time volunteer workers.

In order to be accepted as a resident in the

facility, the individual must be at least eighteen years of age, diagnosed as functioning within the moderate to mild range of mental retardation (I.Q. 35-70) and must be able to function within the facility's environment. The admissions committee, which consists of a nurse, two counselors, the program developer and the director of residential services, review all pertinent information concerning the client to determine whether or not he qualifies for acceptance. A fee of \$325.00 per month includes the opportunity to participate in all educational and recreational services that the facility offers, three meals a day, housekeeping services, and practically all services except medication, personal effects and spending money.

For those clients who are involved in both the sheltered workshop program and residential program, Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. offers a comprehensive program in the vocational rehabilitation and the attainment of independent living skills for the young mentally retarded adult within the Houston metropolitan area.

Financial Aspects

Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. operates as a non-profit corporation and therefore depends to a great degree upon outside sources for its income. The total operational budget for the sheltered workshop for the 1974 calendar year totaled \$560.328.00. The residential facility,

which was in operation for approximately four and one-half months during the 1974 calendar year, maintained an operational budget of \$174,046.00. The sources of income for the sheltered workshop were as follows:

State Department of Public Welfare	\$80,340.00
Harris County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority	41,016.00
Texas Rehabilitation Commission	96,396.00
United Fund	80,340.00
Workshop Sales	300,000.00
Parent Tuition and Fees	2,004.00

The sources of income for the residence were:

Harris County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority	\$33,800.00
Monthly Fees of Residents	140,346.00

The workshop expenses for this period totaled \$513,746.77 and the residential expenses totaled \$174,046.00. The cost per year for training an individual client in the workshop totals \$2,233.68, and the cost per day equals \$8.90. The \$325.00 monthly residential fee covers the cost for maintaining a resident in the residential facility.

The funding for training a client in the sheltered workshop can come from any one of or combination of the previously mentioned sources of income. Although the majority of the income for the operation of the workshop comes from workshop sales, obtaining the additional

necessary income for the facility's operation is an on-going administrative battle. Continuously demonstrating the need for the service and being held accountable for the funds received presents an ongoing challenge to the administrative staff of Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc.

Goals

The basic general philosophy which is evident throughout the agency is to provide the mentally retarded adult with the training necessary for him to become a contributing, involved member of his community. The information contained in this section is a condensed version of the responses received from the previously mentioned personnel who were interviewed. The questions asked of these staff members reflected their long and short range goals for the agency, their reasons for using the sheltered workshop approach, the main goals for the individual client and whether or not they felt that they were providing an important service to both the individual and to society. The long range goals include those objectives the staff would like to see accomplished within the next ten years.

The long range goals for the workshop include an effort to establish a cooperative work program with industry. The rationale for establishing this type of program is two-fold. On the one hand it has been demonstrated

that there is a need to expand the workshop program and on the other hand, it is felt that the program could reach more clients and improve its effectiveness if the training were conducted on the job in the community rather than in the separate facility as now exists. The proposed program would bring the clients initially to the workshop for an evaluation period and then send several clients along with a staff member to an industrial setting to receive their training. If the clients proved to be qualified and worthwhile workers, hopefully the industry would hire them. By developing this type program it will be possible to serve more clients and yet the expense would be less than constructing new facilities.

The short range goals, those to be accomplished within the following year, include the final expansion of the workshop's physical facilities. The final expansion will be designed so that those clients who are currently involved with evaluation and training will be separated from those who are engaged in work activities and production. This will be done in an effort to increase the effectiveness of the flow of clients through the shop. Hopefully, the workshop will also be able to hire additional staff members in order to provide more individualized training for the clients. The increased use of audio-visual equipment will be utilized by filming actual industrial settings to be viewed by the clients.

The use of the sheltered workshop approach for training mentally retarded adults has proven very successful for Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. Due to the fact that the workshop is located near downtown Houston and serves a large metropolitan area, the sheltered workshop approach seems to be a very appropriate means for serving the population. With limited space available to the operation and with the type jobs which are available to the clients, this approach has developed out of need and resources available. Within the workshop setting the clients are able to learn through actual operations within the context of a work setting. They have the opportunity to learn new behavior, to develop social skills and a proper self-concept within a non-threatening environment.

The goals for the individual client within the workshop program include an effort to move the client to his maximum capacity as a human being and to assist him in learning to cope with the various problems which arise concerning work and behavior in the community. Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. provides almost all the services which are available to the mentally retarded adult in the Houston metropolitan area. The workshop provides services for approximately 350 clients per year. This also includes placing approximately 100 clients a year on jobs within the community. If the sheltered workshop program did not exist for these individuals, there is practically

no other alternative available to them than the life of boredom and idleness which was mentioned in the introductory chapter. The staff at the sheltered workshop of Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. feels that it is much better to help people contribute to society than allowing them to become a burden both to their families and to the community.

In this chapter the importance of work, both to the individual and to the community, has been discussed. Even though we are considered to be a competitive society, we continue to be a humane society which concerns itself with our handicapped individuals who are not able to compete without assistance. The three types of sheltered workshops: the terminal, transitional, and work-adjustment workshop, all play an important role in training the disabled to become productive members of society. The sheltered workshop of Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. plays an important role in assuring the mentally retarded adult of the Houston metropolitan area that he is not a forgotten member of our society. For this reason, the opportunity for growth and learning does not have to end when a mentally retarded child leaves the public school. For those clients at the sheltered workshop of the Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., there is a continuing opportunity for growth and self-fulfillment.

CHAPTER III

MELWOOD HORTICULTURAL TRAINING CENTER, INC. HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

Man's relationship to the plant world is well known in one respect--man could not survive without the oxygen which is produced by plants. The aesthetic value of trees and flowers projects the plant kingdom into many poems, paintings and photographs. Plants have been sought after for centuries because of their medicinal value. There is one area of man's relationship to plants that has a long history, but has only recently begun to receive widespread attention--the psychological impact that growing, living plants have on people. Horticulture, the science or art of cultivating plants, was one of the early treatments prescribed for the mentally ill.

In 1798 Benjamin Rush announced that he was convinced that digging in the soil had a curative effect on the mentally ill. Hospital staffs in Spain, as early as 1806, emphasized that agricultural and horticultural activities were beneficial to mental patients. Daniel Trezevant writing in the American Journal of Insanity in 1845 recommended keeping mental patients busy at some trade or on the farm. Outdoor labor in the gardens, on the grounds or on the farm was used as one method of treatment at the Pennsylvania Hospital in Bethlehem and other hospitals in that state [Weston, 1960, p. 6].

During the twentieth century, the use of horticultural activities as a therapy technique, spread to include the treating and re-education of disabled soldiers of World War I.

Between 1920 and 1940, almost all books on occupational therapy mentioned gardening. After 1940 Garden Therapy was discussed more as a separate treatment and during the forties the term 'Horticultural Therapy' became recognized as horticultural skills were used in rehabilitating the injured from World War II [Weston, 1960, p. 7].

Today, horticultural techniques are being used in practically every area of rehabilitation. The Union Correctional Institute in Raiford, Florida instituted a horticultural program in 1958 and is currently being studied as a model by other correctional facilities because of the positive results it has obtained (News and Views, 1974). Drug treatment centers, jails, institutions for the mentally ill and mentally retarded, veteran's hospitals, geriatric homes and retirement communities have all boasted successful results with the use of horticultural therapy. The Menninger Foundation utilizes horticultural therapy extensively in working with the patients admitted to them for psychiatric care.

The use of horticultural techniques is now beginning to spread beyond the confines of treatment and rehabilitation facilities. Charles A. Lewis of the Morton Arboretum recently conducted a national survey of programs that aim at increasing contact between people and plants. He found that gardening programs in inner city areas produced new insights into human and social values. In inner city housing projects, the addition of plantings and floral color resulted in a drop in vandalism and brought about a

new sense of neighborhood unity. Lewis concluded that programs which increase the contact between people and plants can also lead to an improvement in the quality of social relationships. In cities where gardening programs were instituted, the residents not only tended the garden, but they also painted, cleaned up trash and refurbished their houses as well. Lewis also states that the more depressed the area and the more disadvantaged the residents, the higher the enthusiasm seems to run. "Plants are non-threatening in a hostile world," Lewis states. "They respond equally to all without reference to age, race or social class. In an ambiance of failure, they offer paths to conspicuous success [Congressional Record, 1974]."

Why is it that plants seem to have such an effect on the poor, the mentally ill, mentally retarded, drug addicts, and other individuals who exhibit adjustment problems in society? Although this question remains to be answered conclusively, social scientists have offered some explanations for the powerful influence of plants on human behavior. One researcher notes that the mentally retarded or mentally ill often "are totally dependent on others for assistance in even the smallest tasks ... a living thing depending on them for care and sustenance can give them the will to go on and an interest in the future [Fogg, 1973]." The fascination with plants may

lie in the fact that "the sprouting seed has many human connotations and parallels in human development," another researcher theorizes (Fogg, 1973). Dr. Hugh Iltis, taxonomist at the University of Wisconsin, believes that the answer may lie in the study of human genetics and is conducting research in this area. He states the rationale for his study in this way:

Man, the animal evolved in nature among plants, shrubs, trees, flowers and fruits, in a seasonal climate in which the living ecosystem was an integral part of his most basic being and functioning. Thus, civilized man needs these facets of the environment not as luxuries and amenities but as absolute and inalienable rights of his biological body [News and Views, 1973].

At this time there appears to be no concrete evidence which would indicate why plants have such a powerful influence over people, but the evidence does indicate that the influence is present. How this influence is used and manipulated is what horticultural therapy is all about.

Horticultural therapy can best be described as helping people achieve a better understanding of themselves and of the world around them through the media of working in horticultural activities. But what does this mean? The philosophy of the horticultural therapy program at the Menninger Foundation best describes what horticultural therapy is:

We hope that a patients working in a group, learning to adjust to and consider others; learning to be responsible for living plants dependent upon him;

learning and understanding his dependency on nature and plant life; developing a greater appreciation and enjoyment in the plant world which surrounds him, no matter where he may live; being able to accept the disappointments that inevitably come when working with living, perishable materials; developing a tolerance to the frustrations of a partnership with nature (and thus to other disappointments)--we hope that these things are therapeutic [McCandliss, 1967, p. 3].

How a particular facility utilizes horticultural therapy within its treatment/training curriculum will depend primarily on the population the agency serves and the resources which are available. The Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. has developed its entire program around the use of horticultural activities and work programs in an effort to provide an opportunity for mentally retarded adults to become contributing members of the community. The remainder of this chapter will describe the operation, financial aspects and philosophy of the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. The information was obtained by personal visitation to the Center which included touring the facility and conducting personal interviews with the key personnel.

Operation

The geographical area which is served by the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. is large in size, but is not densely populated. The majority of clients come from small towns, suburbs or rural areas.

For the 1974 calendar year, there was an average enrollment of 133 clients with an average staff of forty-eight members employed by the agency. The areas of expertise and knowledge of the various staff members reflect the nature of the program at Melwood. For those staff members who work with the clients on a daily basis, some knowledge of horticultural skills is almost a necessity. Many of these staff members have degrees in horticulture. When working with the mentally retarded, knowledgeable people in the fields of both the behavioral sciences and special education is needed. Certified teachers and professionals within the behavioral sciences are both employed by the facility. Not only must the agency be concerned with training the clients, but they must also concentrate on the business aspect if they are to remain in operation. Therefore, Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. includes staff members who are trained in the area of business and are able to capitalize on the financial aspects of operating a horticultural training center. Horticulture, psychology, sociology, education, business and administration combined make up the staffing aspect of the program at the Center.

The facility receives referrals from many sources including the school system, psychologists, psychiatrists, the courts, families, friends, individuals, or any interested individual or agency. In order for a client to

be accepted into the program, it must be determined if he will be capable of functioning within the environment at the Center in the areas of intellectual ability, emotional stability and physical activities. Only those individuals who are at least sixteen years of age will be considered for acceptance. There is no upper age limit. A questionnaire, which gives a general indication of the client's level of functioning, a recent medical examination and psychological exam are required prior to admission. When these forms are completed, an intake interview is conducted with the parents, prospective client, referring agency and a staff counselor present. If it is felt by all those attending that the client will benefit from the program, and there is space available, the client will be accepted into the program.

The client's first four to six weeks in the program will be spent undergoing evaluation. During this time the client will receive exposure to all areas of the program and will be evaluated by the staff members in each training area, with regards to work skills, social skills and level of intellectual functioning. This is done in an effort to determine the client's strong points as well as his areas of weakness. Following the evaluation period, the client will be placed with a training crew in an area where he has exhibited the strongest potential and has the greatest chance to experience success. He will later be rotated

through other training crews as is indicated by both his needs and the needs of the various training crews.

Each client spends approximately six and one-half hours per day with a training or work crew. The day begins at 8:30 A.M. and continues until 3:30 P.M. Thirty minutes are allowed for lunch and breaks are given at the discretion of the supervising staff member.

Monthly evaluations on each client's performance in the areas of attendance, training, behavior, and work skills are completed by the individual instructor. The monthly evaluations are submitted to the Supportive Services staff (staff members trained in the behavioral sciences). From these monthly evaluations, the director of Supportive Services completes progress reports following the client's first, third, ninth and twelfth month and annually thereafter. The progress reports include the client's background information, behavioral, work, social and academic assessments, a job readiness report and recommendations for his future training and/or work. These progress reports are then reviewed by all staff during a regularly scheduled staff meeting in an effort to obtain any additional feedback or recommendations.

At the time of this study (May, 1975), Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., operated two facilities for the vocational training of mentally retarded adults and is in the process of organizing a third. The two facilities

which are currently in operation are known as the Dower House Center and The Farm. The Dower House Center has the largest population of clients and staff and serves as headquarters for the entire agency's operation. Ninety clients receive their training from this center which is located on seven acres of land. The vocational training/work program at the Dower House Center can be broken down into three broad areas of concentration: training, production and day care. When a client is receiving training at the facility he will either be placed on the training crew within the community or will receive his training in the greenhouse complex which is located at the Dower House Center. The community based training crew leaves the Dower House Center each morning and travels by truck with all necessary equipment to a rest home for elderly citizens. Here the client learns various landscaping and grounds maintenance skills as well as proper work habits. A vegetable garden is located on the grounds and each client is given his own plot in the garden to care for while in training. This plot is utilized as a reinforcer for exhibiting good work habits and performance. If a client performs well, he is rewarded by allowing him to work his plot in the garden sometime during the work day. Besides vocational training, this community based training crew also emphasizes recreational activities, socialization, physical education and

survival academics (learning about the community and how to utilize available community resources; i.e., washateria and theater). Even though the clients with this crew are considered to be in training, Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. is paid by the rest home as if they were a professional landscaping firm and therefore the work the clients perform is not just something to keep them busy.

The green house complex at the Dower House Center also serves as a training area for many clients. Here the clients learn horticultural skills, proper work habits and some grounds maintenance skills. The duties of the clients include watering, pruning, growing plants from cuttings and from seed, floral design, and other horticultural activities. The clients are able to view the concrete cause and effect which is brought about by their acceptance or negligence of the responsibility which is given to them for the care of the plants. Recreational activities, socialization, physical education and survival academics are also emphasized in this portion of training. As was true with the community based training crew, the work performed by the clients is meaningful work. The plants that the clients tend are sold in one of the Center's retail outlets.

Another phase of the training program which is located at the Dower House facility deals with independent living, home economics and arts and crafts. The independent

living center concentrates on assisting the client with the day to day activities of keeping a home; i.e., washing dishes, clothes, paying bills. The home economics program allows the clients to learn how to prepare meals. Hot meals are cooked and served in the Center's cafeteria three days a week by the clients. The clients in the arts and crafts area perform tasks such as silk-screening Christmas cards to be sold, using dried flowers for various decorative pieces, and other related activities.

The production phase of the program at the Dower House Center consists of community work crews, which perform contract landscaping work for businesses and industries throughout the area, and greenhouse work crews. Those clients who are involved with the production aspect of the program perform essentially the same tasks as the clients in training. However, they are not given as much supervision, do not receive the "frills" of the training crews (recreation, physical education, socialization, et cetera.) They are expected to accept more responsibility and do more work. In essence, those clients who "graduate" from training to production have attained a higher degree of self-sufficiency and do not need the constant supervision. Those clients who are capable of performing well in the production phase are generally considered ready for community job placement after a period of time. However, there are some clients who are not capable of

functioning within one of the regular work crews and will probably never be capable of competitive employment. These clients are generally placed in the day care program, which means essentially that they continue with the same type of activities and supervision as the training phase of the program.

The Farm is the second facility which is currently being used by the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. as a means of vocational training for mentally retarded adults. Forty-three clients are currently receiving training at this 138-acre site located in a rural farming area in Charles County, Maryland. The Farm follows a similar type of training/work program as the Dower House Center except that it does not utilize community work or training crews because of its rural location. The greenhouse complex on the Farm is the major area of training for the clients and is operated in the same manner as the Dower House complex. Independent living skills, recreational activities, survival academics and physical education are also included in the training phase of the Farm program. In addition to the greenhouse training, the clients are also exposed to and learn various farming skills. The care and feeding of livestock is included in the Farm's training/work program. Learning to use farm equipment and machinery, growing and tending the vegetable crops and the herb garden, and canning vegetables and

preserves are also used as a means of training and work for the clients at the Farm.

Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. is currently establishing a third facility which is called the Four Seasons. This facility will be used strictly as a work facility for those clients who have "graduated" from the other programs. The mentally retarded adults at this facility will be actual employees of the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., and will be treated as employees rather than clients. They will work in the community as a crew just as any private landscaping grounds maintenance firm. This is an actual job for these clients just as if they were employed in the community.

Each of these three facilities maintains its own retail outlet where the various products are sold. In addition to their own retail outlets, there are thirty-two retail stores in the area which purchase the products on a wholesale basis. The Dower House Center sells 50 per cent of its products retail and 50 per cent wholesale. The Farm sells 80 per cent wholesale and 20 per cent retail. The Four Seasons facility also operates a strawberry patch where customers pay to pick their own strawberries.

Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. does not concentrate its entire efforts on vocational training,

Recreational activities are considered to be an important aspect of the program. Camping trips, overnight trips and visits to other cities and states are utilized in an effort to expose the clients to as many new situations and places as possible. These trips are also helpful tools in the in-service training of staff members. Recreational activities are also provided on a local basis. The clients are taken to and learn about the various recreational facilities which are available to them within and around their own community. How to utilize leisure time effectively presents a problem to many mentally retarded adults. Learning what is available and how to take advantage of leisure time opportunities provides another area of learning for the clients. Counseling services are also available to the clients and families primarily on a need basis and in conjunction with the job placement procedure. Survival academics, physical education, independent living skills and home economics which are all conducted on a regular basis in the training areas, can also be considered additional training outside the realm of strictly vocational training.

One of the primary goals of the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. is to prepare the individual client for competitive employment and to place him on a job in the community. After the progress reports have been reviewed by the staff members during a staff meeting,

and it has been determined that a client is ready for job placement, it is the responsibility of the job placement counselor to locate employment for the client and to notify the parents. The client is taken for an interview with the prospective employer, and a visit to the job site is provided. If the client is hired, he will remain with Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. until he actually begins work. During this time, a great deal of emphasis will be placed on preparing him for the type of work he will be doing. Following his placement on the job, the job placement counselor continues to remain in contact with both the client and employer until it is felt that both have adjusted. The employer is also encouraged to visit Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. Approximately two clients are placed on jobs each month with an estimated success rate of 80 per cent for the Dower House Center and 50 per cent for the Farm. For those clients who are unable to compete in community employment, the day care program which was discussed earlier in the chapter, offers a place of semi-independent employment.

Due to the impaired intellectual functioning of these mentally retarded adults, behavioral problems and difficulties in coping with day-to-day living are not an unusual occurrence. The problems of the clients are dealt with on an individual basis depending on the client and

the problem he presents. Initially, the client's instructor will attempt to deal with the problem. If the instructor is unsuccessful, the client will be referred to the Supportive Services staff where a counselor will work with the client. This may include individual counseling, group counseling, working with the family, establishing a behavior modification program, i.e., isolating the problem and working with those variables which are involved. The problem will also be discussed at one of the staff meetings in an effort to obtain additional information and recommendations from all staff members. If the problem remains unsolved, suspension or termination is the last resort. If these latter alternatives appear to be the only means of recourse, the family, client and referral sources are brought in for a conference to explain the situation and the reasons for the decision.

Parental involvement in the work/training program of Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. is not limited to the intake procedure, job placement procedure or to the times of crisis and need. Individual parent meetings are conducted each month in order to inform the parents of their child's progress and to obtain feedback from the parents regarding the client's progress and/or problems in the home. Occasional parent meetings are conducted with all parents invited to attend. All parents are also urged to contact the agency at any time they feel

there is a need.

Since the clients are producing work and salable items, it is necessary to compensate them for their effort. The clients are compensated according to the Fair Labor Standards Act with the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division monitoring this process. The rate of pay each client receives is determined by conducting work/study samples every six months. This process consists of timing an instructor while performing a work/training task and then timing a client at the same task. The client's rate of pay is then based upon the amount of work he was able to perform during the same amount of time that the task was completed by the instructor. For example, if an instructor is able to complete a task in one hour and a client is able to complete 50 per cent of the task in one hour, the client is paid 50 per cent of the minimum wage for that task. The average salary for a client is approximately \$15.00 per week.

Due to the large geographical area which is served by Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., it is necessary that transportation services be provided for the clients. The client is responsible for arranging his own transportation from his home to a specific "pick up" point where he is picked up by an agency bus and transported to one of the three work/training centers. The agency is provided funds by the Mental Retardation Authority

and by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to cover the expenses of paying drivers and leasing buses. The agency currently operates three school buses with a sixty person capacity and one van with a fifteen person capacity.

As the various needs of the mentally retarded adults become known to the agency, expansion of services practically becomes a necessity. Thus is the case of the residential program at Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. The residential facility, known as the White House, was developed out of the need for an alternative to institutionalization and to provide a place to prepare the older adults for the time when they would no longer be able to depend on their parents or guardians for their residential needs. The White House facility employs a married couple who serves as full-time house parents for the operation. Two other couples are employed on a part-time basis to work as substitutes for the full-time house parents on their days off. The house parents are responsible for supervising the day-to-day activities of the household and instructing the residents in the area of independent living skills; i.e., cooking, cleaning, washing clothes. The White House facility is housed in a two-story frame house located in a residential area near the Dower House facility. The Mental Retardation Authority provides \$60,000.00 annually to fund the program. Currently,

there are five mentally retarded males in residence at the White House, with a capacity of eight expected to be reached in the near future. All residents are involved in the work/training program at Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. The residents are responsible for all of the day-to-day operations of running the household and taking care of their personal belongings. The house parents supervise and supply instruction where needed. Group counseling sessions are conducted twice a week by a member of the Supportive Services staff of the Dower House Center.

In order for an individual to be accepted into the residential program, he must be at least eighteen years of age, currently functioning as mentally retarded, possess no outstanding additional problems, be capable of independent transportation within the community, and must show a need for the residential placement. An admissions board reviews each application and makes the final decision regarding the applicant's placement within the facility. The admissions board consists of a psychologist, a social worker, a couple who has served as house parents in the past, a parent, and a counselor from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Each area of the operation at the Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc.--training, production, day care and residential,--provide many opportunities for

personal growth and maturation for those young adults who are involved with the program. Unlike the young, mentally retarded adult who is dependent upon others for his well-being, those individuals who are participating in this program are learning to become self-sufficient, contributing members of their community.

Financial Aspects

The Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. functions as a private, non-profit organization and is dependent to a large extent on outside sources for its income. The figures that are reported in this section were obtained from a financial report which was conducted for the six-month period of January 1, 1974 to June 30, 1974. Each figure from this report was doubled in an effort to approximate the total income and costs of the operation for the entire 1974 calendar year. The operational budget for the 1974 calendar year totaled \$859,564.26. The sources of income are illustrated in Table 1.

The operational costs for the 1974 calendar year, using the same procedure of doubling the figures in the six-month report, total \$768,730.50. Information regarding the specific expenditures for this total could not be obtained. Using this figure, the cost of training an individual client per day comes to approximately \$15.87.

The White House residential program was not yet in operation during the 1974 calendar year and is therefore not included in this section.

TABLE 1
Sources of Income

Sources	Amount
Contributions	\$ 12,249.80
Fees and Grants from Government Agencies	381,465.82
Sales of Products	122,219.46
Sales of Services	132,525.56
Program Service Fees	5,298.00
Miscellaneous	618.86
Health and Welfare Council Allocations	136,708.76
Charles County Contribution to Farm Deficit	68,478.00
Total	\$859,564.26

Goals

The primary philosophy and goal of Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. is to provide mentally retarded adults with the necessary social skills and work habits which will allow them to become productive, well-adjusted members of the working community.

This section deals with some of the specific objectives and philosophies of the Center as obtained from the various personnel during the interviews.

The long range goals of the Center include those objectives the staff would like to see accomplished during the next ten years. It is becoming a well known fact among the professionals within the field of mental retardation that the mentally retarded individual is capable of realizing a greater degree of self-sufficiency if institutionalization can be avoided. The current trend among state institutions for the mentally retarded is two-fold:

1. To admit only those individuals who can show a definite need for institutionalization due to their low level of intellectual functioning or personal situation,
2. to release those individuals from the institution who are capable of benefiting more from community based programs than from institutional care [Sheerenberger, 1974, p. 3].

This situation has created the need for an expansion of community based residential programs for the mentally retarded. Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc.

will be expanding its residential program within the next ten years in an effort to help meet this ever increasing need. The Center also hopes to develop a cooperative program with the state institutions whereby programs will be developed to assist the institutionalized adult in making the transition from an institutional setting to a community based residential program. This program is being developed because it has been shown that many individuals who have become accustomed to the highly structured institutional lifestyle, exhibit many difficulties in adjusting to the greater amount of freedom they will have upon their release to a community based program.

Since the Center is dependent on outside sources for the funding of its operation, a great deal of administrative time and effort is spent seeking financial support for the Center. In an effort to alleviate a portion of this burden, the Center hopes to expand the business aspect of the operation by developing more of its own retail outlets throughout the various neighboring communities. Hopefully, this will increase the amount of income received from the sale of Melwood products and will provide the Center with a greater degree of self-sufficiency.

The training programs which are currently being utilized by the Center will be constantly re-evaluated to assure they are meeting the ever changing needs of the

Center's client population. The Center hopes to possibly expand their training program to include an industrial, factory type of setting where the clients would be involved in such activities as constructing aquariums, bagging fertilizer, and other related activities. This expansion is being considered because the Center would like to concentrate more effort toward assisting the lower functioning mentally retarded adult. The public school system is becoming increasingly involved with training the mentally retarded individual up to age twenty-one years, which will mean many clients who are currently receiving training from the Center will be involved in public school programs. Therefore, the Center will be able to devote more time to those individuals who function at the lower level of mental retardation.

Some of the other long range goals of the Center include the establishment of a satellite program in another part of this country or possibly in another country. This program would be utilized to initiate an exchange program between the satellite center and the existing facilities. With the exchange program, the clients would be allowed to broaden their knowledge of other parts of the country or world by actually receiving a portion of their training in that setting. This expansion would complement the Center's future concentration on increased socialization trips. The Center hopes to begin taking more of its

clients on more educational trips in an effort to enhance the socialization aspect of the training program.

The short range goals of the Center include those objectives the staff is planning to accomplish within the coming year. The residential aspect of the program will be expanded to include a second residential facility which will be located near the Farm and will be able to provide residential services to those clients who receive their training at the Farm. The White House residential facility will concentrate on improving its current program and will reach its client capacity during this year. The enrollment of clients for the Center's entire operation will expand from the current enrollment of 133 to 175. The Center will also begin to initiate its involvement with the state institutions by developing an on-site horticultural program at one of the state institutions.

The Center is constantly receiving requests from interested individuals and agencies regarding assistance in establishing similar types of programs. In order to meet these increasing requests, the Center plans to develop a consulting service which would provide consultation for those individuals or agencies who show a genuine interest in establishing horticultural training programs. And finally, during this year, the Center will be concentrating on improving and re-evaluating all areas of its current operation.

Each client at the Center is treated as an individual, but the Center does have some common goals for all of its clients. It is the Center's ambition and hope that each client will develop to his full capacity, feel important and needed, develop a positive self-concept, and learn to become a responsible, productive member of the community. If, through the Center's training program, these goals are only partially met, the clients who leave the Center will become an asset rather than a liability to the community.

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the plant world plays a significant role in today's society. The medicinal, environmental, and aesthetic value of living, growing plants has been written about and highly researched for many of man's years on earth. However, the therapeutic value of the plant world may be the most important and least publicized of all. Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. has capitalized on this very important aspect of the plant world by providing mentally retarded adults with the opportunity to grow and learn through the media of living plants.

CHAPTER IV

COMPARISON AND CONCLUSION

In the past, the problems surrounding the mentally retarded adult have received little exposure. Most were either institutionalized or parents kept them at home. However, many parents began to question the lack of services provided for the mentally retarded adult. The public school system did not fully prepare them for competitive employment in the community. There were few, if any, services available following graduation. According to many parents, their children's potential and capabilities were not being fully tapped or explored. The mentally retarded adult, although permanently limited intellectually, is capable of learning throughout his lifetime. Also, unless mental stimulation is received regularly, the individual will begin to regress. Being aware of this, many parents began to organize and formulate plans for establishing programs which would provide the much needed services for their children. It was through such efforts that Harris County for the Retarded, Inc., and Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. were established.

Although the population size, geographic location and approach taken by each agency obviously differ, the overall philosophies and goals of each are essentially the same. Each agency strives to provide the mentally retarded

adult with the necessary social skills and work habits which will enable him/her to acquire an independent or semi-independent position within the community. By providing the client with the opportunity to spend his time in a meaningful way, and at the same time teaching him proper social skills and work habits, the agencies are fulfilling a definite need of each client. The peer group is present and the idleness has disappeared. Mental and physical stimulation received on a daily basis, replace the regression. A place where they belong, coupled with productive activities, brings meaning to the lives of the clients. Each agency was established with the above philosophies in mind and continues to operate within this same frame of reference.

If each agency strives to achieve identical goals, why has one agency chosen the sheltered workshop approach and the other selected the horticultural therapy approach? Rather than teaching the clients specific skills and then attempting to locate employment which would match these skills, the two agencies concentrate on teaching appropriate work habits. Therefore the approach is important only to the extent that it is utilized in such a manner as to prepare the client for employment in his community. For Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., the clients are living in a large, urban metropolitan area and will be seeking employment in this area. The large sheltered

workshop approach prepares these clients to deal with their environment. For Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., the clients live in small towns and urban areas and will be seeking employment in this type of environment. The horticultural therapy approach is preparing these clients for their environment. By viewing the client in respect to his current situation and in regards to his future employment possibilities, each agency utilizes the approach which maximizes the use of available resources toward achieving their goals for the clients.

The clients entering each program are carefully screened and interviewed in an effort to assure that they will benefit from the program and will be able to function within the agency's environment. Facts concerning the client's current situation, social history, medical and psychological information are all obtained prior to admission to the program. The more information that is gained initially, the better equipped the staff will be to design an effective training program for each individual. By knowing some of his assets and liabilities at the beginning, the staff will know the areas on which they should concentrate or avoid. The sometimes difficult transition for both the client and his family when entering the program is eased by this careful information gathering process prior to admission.

The intake procedures are only the beginning of this constant information gathering process. Each agency begins collecting its own data regarding the client's performance as he enters the evaluation group. From this point on through training, production and job placement, progress reports and records are kept on a continual basis. The staff soon learns the areas of strength and deficiency and can map out a plan of strategy for each client. Many times it is a trial and error process. However, for every error there is always another trial.

Since job placement is the eventual goal that each agency has for its clients, the training received must be such that it resembles actual community employment as much as possible. Therefore, work schedules are established and must be followed by the clients. There is a definite time to be at work, a time set for lunch, breaks and a definite quitting time each day. Following established procedures, learning to accept and follow the instructions of the supervisor and learning to work with others in a cooperative manner are all areas of concentration for the clients. Each agency believes that both the staff and client time is spent much more wisely by concentrating on establishing proper work habits rather than attempting to teach/learn a specific skill. This is not easy and quite often the behavioral problems

of the clients take up a great deal of staff time. Very often a client will have spent years at home in a totally unstructured situation with very few demands being placed on him. This fact, coupled with a learning deficiency, can make the transition to a structured program very difficult for the client. He must not only conform to the daily work routine, learn to accept responsibility and follow instructions, he must also be able to associate with his peer group in an acceptable manner. Each agency believes that dealing with the behavioral problems as they arise in the closely simulated work setting provides the best learning situation for the client. Hopefully, the client and staff will have worked through all the problems prior to job placement.

Not all of the clients who are accepted into the programs will be capable of functioning within a community work setting. However, these clients can and do receive services at each agency. As do all the clients who are receiving training, these lower level clients receive monetary compensation for their efforts. Therefore, even the client whose intellectual functioning is at a very low level can benefit from involvement in either of the programs. He is not simply sitting around the house watching T.V.; he is performing a useful task, associating with a peer group and is achieving a certain degree of semi-independence.

The majority of time at each agency is concentrated

on working with the clients during the day. After the training has ended for the day, most of the clients return to their homes and families. However, the agencies realized that there was also a need to establish programs whereby some of the clients who were capable would be able to learn independent living skills. Therefore, residential facilities were established at each agency. Even though the residential programs differ in size and scope, they were both established under the same premise, i.e., to provide for those who are capable and in need, a place to live semi-independently and to learn independent living skills. The problems which arise in day to day living often cause difficulties to people of normal intelligence. For the mentally retarded, these day to day problems are compounded by a learning deficiency. Therefore, the residential programs were established to assist the mentally retarded in learning to cope with day to day living rather than being totally dependent on family, friends, or others.

By taking a broad general view of each agency, as has been done so far in this chapter, the similarities of the two programs have been pointed out. However, there are some differences which need discussion. For instance, there is a significant difference in the client/staff ratio. For Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., the ratio is 8.83 clients to each staff member and for

Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., there is 2.77 clients to each staff member. These ratios are based on the average number of clients for 1974 calendar year and the average number of all staff for the same period as stated in Chapters II and III. Staff member is defined to be every staff member of each agency. An explanation for this discrepancy in client/staff ratios is that Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., provides training for its clients in one setting, whereas Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc., is divided into two training centers, in addition to having work and training crews spread out through the various surrounding communities. Therefore, by having all clients and staff members in one centralized location, Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. is able to utilize fewer staff members. In addition, Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. incorporates social skills training, recreation and parental involvement programs as a regular function of their training program. This also requires additional staff.

Even though the two agencies are similar in terms of sources of income, there is a difference in the cost of operating each. The operational costs for Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc., for the 1974 calendar year totaled \$513,746.77, and for Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. the total operational cost totaled \$768,730.50.

These totals result in a training cost per day per client of \$8.90 and \$15.87 for each agency respectively. This increased cost in operating the Melwood facility is due in part to the higher cost of living in their geographical location. Another explanation stems from the centralized vs. decentralized training programs. By training its clients in two facilities and in the community, the Melwood facility must utilize more staff members and vehicles. One last explanation is that the Melwood program provides transportation to most of its client population. Therefore, they suffer an additional cost in terms of vehicles, maintenance, and drivers.

Now that a comparison has been made between the two agencies, can it be said that one is better than the other? On the basis of this study, it is doubtful that either of the agencies could be designated as superior to the other, nor was it an objective to determine such. A brief review of what has been stated in the earlier chapters is necessary at this point in order to clarify the last statement.

The mentally retarded individual in our society is fairly well provided for during his first twenty-one years. Pre-school and public school programs are provided in most communities. These programs enable most of these children to gain valuable and much needed skills

in the areas of self-help, peer group relationships, social skills, rudimentary academics, some pre-vocational skills, et cetera. However, once these children complete their stay in public school programs, most of them are not yet equipped to secure an independent position within the community. This would require that they obtain employment, and be capable of living independently in a residence. Most are not yet capable of this. They could stay at home and place the burden of care on their parents or guardians. They could therefore never be considered an asset to their community. In addition, sooner or later the parents will become too old to provide the necessary care. Then the mentally retarded adult would, in all probability, be placed in an institution. This time span between graduation and need for institutional care may be as great as twenty years or more. That is twenty wasted years for the individual and for the community.

If, on the other hand, vocational training programs are available to those who need further training, this problem would be greatly alleviated. Acceptance into a well organized vocational training program will give most mentally retarded adults the opportunity they need to attain a certain degree of self-sufficiency. Both Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. and Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. provide the mentally

retarded adult with this opportunity. Therefore, each program achieves the same results and neither can be considered superior to the other. The differences which do exist between the agencies stem primarily from the geographical area served. One center serving a population which comes from an extremely large metropolitan area, has designed its program to meet the needs of the mentally retarded adult in the manner which is the most beneficial to its client population. The other agency which serves primarily a large rural area has done the same. This brings up an important point. Even though each agency is confronted with the same problem, i.e., to provide vocational training to the mentally retarded adult, the client populations are coming from two exactly opposite geographical areas. Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. has a client population derived from a large urban area and Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. has a client population which comes from a large rural area. However, each agency has developed its own approach to the problem and they are both capable of achieving the same results.

Throughout this study, some of the problems which confront the mentally retarded adult have been discussed. The fact that most mentally retarded adults have the same hopes and ambitions as an individual with normal intelligence creates a need to provide these individuals with the

necessary training which will enable them to achieve their goals. By providing vocational training programs for the mentally retarded adult, Harris County Center for the Retarded, Inc. and Melwood Horticultural Training Center, Inc. are giving the mentally retarded adult the opportunity to become a contributing member of the community.

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