

## FORUM

To the Editor:

After reading with keen interest the paper by Bowe, Watson and Anderson, regarding suitable models of service for the deaf community of New York City, it would seem that they did not do their homework very well, or are willing to throw out the baby with the bathwater. It is interesting to note that they could write pages and pages and not even cite, for better or for worse, the New York Society for the Deaf and the services it provides. There are, of course, still other significant facilities that were unmentioned. Are models seen only in ivory towers? Speaking very humbly, we have been too busy serving clients and have therefore been unable to do some of the writing we no doubt should have done.

The Jewish Society for the Deaf goes back to 1909 and is most likely, by the very fact that we are in New York City, the largest service organization working with the deaf community in the country. In 1966, the name was changed to the New York Society for the Deaf. Since Dr. Zabell became a staff member of the Society, more than twenty years ago, he has no doubt been a pioneer in the psychological evaluation of the deaf and has provided this service for the New York State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for many, many years. Our relationship with OVR has now been a very long one and while it is difficult for us to evaluate, without pride, we would say that it has been a very productive and beneficial relationship, which has provided very reasonable services to many of the profoundly deaf in the Greater New York City community.

Social casework and job placement have historically been very strong and significant elements of the services provided at the Society. This work has traditionally been done by well trained individuals who are more than able to communicate in the American sign language, very much at the client's level. We have been quite instrumental in demonstrating to other facilities such as sheltered workshops, that jointly or in some other combination, this population can be well served.

Social programs for special deaf groups have also been an integral part of our work and we have the only "deaf" Boy Scout Troop in the city, under our sponsorship.

In June, 1966, we received a three-year Federal Grant, for a demonstration project entitled, *A Unique Innovation in the Development of a Comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation Facility for the Deaf*, which ran through May 31, 1969. Fortunately, however, we have been able to maintain this program undisturbed and without any diminution of services provided. The Final Three-Year Report, synthesized by David Altschuler, has been distributed. Our work is very much in line with that of Hurwitz, with the exception that we work exclusively with the profoundly deaf community.

We have worked for seven years now very directly with all of the local schools for the deaf and have essentially served as the "bridge," or transition, between the school and either another specialized training facility or the

world of work. Concurrently, we upgrade the clients' academics and communication skills, and if nothing else, provide them with some formal sign language skills, which, unfortunately, they have usually not had a chance to learn earlier.

We have worked with the whole range of the profoundly deaf, intellectually and academically speaking, and have sent youngsters to NTID and Gallaudet, on one hand, and into sheltered workshop facilities on the other end of the spectrum. While we have placed and continue to place many in competitive employment every year. We have established a good relationship with the USPO, the Main Office, and they now do some special testing for our population right at the Society, and in this way more than twenty of our clients began working at this Post Office, at the beginning of the summer. Moreover, we provided interpretive services to help them on the site during their indoctrination period.

An analysis of our clientele is also very illuminating, since it is at least 70 percent black or of Spanish origin and a significant number of these are being maintained by the Department of Social Services. The so-called "ghetto" clients are known to us, have been identified as such; and served.

The New York Society for the Deaf is a training ground for many graduate college students and OVR trainees. We continue to provide them with a well-rounded opportunity to meet their future clients. They have participated in every area of our program and we can say with considerable pride that many have now joined the field and are dispersed in just about every key area of the country. We have indoctrination programs for church groups, and many major companies, who have visited the Society as part of their United Fund Program. In addition, we have had annual lectures—the Kugel Lectures—and certainly the educational leaders of the deaf have all participated and contributed fine papers with the goal of advancing the deaf community.

Granted that we are a traditional and "old" organization, but the model and the programs have changed with the needs of the times and our successes will require more articles to be written in the future.

TANYA TOWERS, housing built especially for senior citizens, deaf and hearing, will also add new dimensions to the model that the New York Society for the Deaf presents to every large community in the United States.

## REFERENCES

- Altschuler, David *A Unique Innovation in the Development of a Comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation Facility for the Deaf*. Final Report of Project Number X 29-67. May, 1971. Mimeographed.
- Bowe, F., Watson, D., and Anderson, G. *Delivery of Community Services to Deaf Persons*. *Journal of Professional Rehabilitation Workers with the Adult Deaf*. Vol. 7, No. 1, July 1973.

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Hurwitz, S.N. *Habilitation of Deaf Young Adults*, Final Report: RD-1804-S, Social and Rehabilitation Service, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. St. Louis: Jewish Employment and Vocational Service, 1971.

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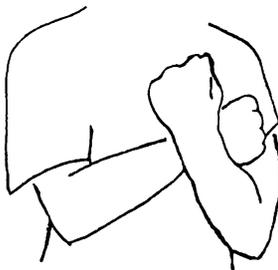
### LOVE SIGNS

*Your hands speak to me in meanings  
Which words can not express,  
Whether it be talk of love  
Or simple signs of jest.*

*They show a special meaning  
In everything you say,  
And I've learned to understand you  
In this very special way.*

*In a place where there's no hearing  
You can put your heart with mine,  
We can wrap ourselves completely  
In a world of loving signs.*

terri lynn dietz  
March 8, 1974



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Terri Lynn Dietz is a student at the Georgia Rehabilitation Center. She is a quadraplegic as a result of an automobile accident. She dates a young deaf man who has been deaf since the age of three.