



Hawaii Association to Help Retarded Children: The Agency

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The private agency serving retarded children and their parents in the 50th state is the Hawaii Association to Help Retarded Children, affiliated with the National Association for Retarded Children. Associations are located on each of the five major Hawaiian Islands.

This agency's role is primarily to spearhead a continuing drive for public and governmental understanding of mental retardation and to help solve the problems of children and parents in the total spectrum of education, social adjustment, prevention, health, recreation and economic improvement. It also assists in the exciting break-throughs of research on a national level.

Functions

The HARC was organized in 1954 by a group of parents and became a functioning unit in 1957. Following the pattern of similar groups throughout the country, the Association has grown in membership, influence and accomplishment with each passing year. While the major role has remained the same, HARC's functions

have changed as new goals are met and new challenges are offered.

In the field of education and training, the Association has been directly responsible for the establishment and continued expansion of programs for the retarded in the public school system and other government agencies by encouraging Legislative action.

While striving to increase Legislative support of public school classes and other programs for the mentally retarded, the Association operates centers which augment and supplement classes now within the Department of Education and Health.

The two major government departments involved in education and training of the retarded—Education and Health—have combined forces with the association on each island to provide services to as many retarded youngsters as possible and avoid program duplication.

Programs

The association operates a number of pre-school, or day care programs. These facilities serve as a "jumping

off" point to public school classes, where the acceptance age is eight years. The association centers, in turn, are fed by Department of Health programs where necessary physical control and socialization are stressed to fit the child for an HARC program.

Children unable to enter a public school class either because of the severity of their handicap or lack of classes, are retained in other association centers, going up the line until adulthood, where a terminal program is available.

Day care, pre-school, "grade" school, activities center, and vocational habilitation programs are offered the retarded from three years of age up to adulthood by the joint programs of the departments and associations. A recent innovation—free government transportation—has uncovered a multitude of retarded never before in programs, or "drop outs", thereby taxing present facilities.

Programs presently operated by association, ages served, and location of facilities are as follows:

	Location	Number of Children	Ages	Staff
Honolulu	Kinau I	17	4 - 6	2
Honolulu	Kinau II	15	6 - 8	2
Honolulu	Kinau III	11	8 - 12	2
Honolulu	Kinau IV	6	6 - 8	1
Hawaii	Hilo	6	4 - 12	2
Maui	Puunene	8	4 - 12	2
Kauai	Kapaa	7	4 - 12	2
Honolulu	St. Francis	16	4 - 8	2
Honolulu	Happy Hale	16	8 - 15	2
Honolulu	VDC	69	15 - 21	8
Honolulu	Wahiawa	12	5 - 14	2
Honolulu	Kailua	15	5 - 12	2
Honolulu	Waipahu	17	4 - 12	2

To meet the demand for services, a number of new programs may be opened in the near future if finances permit. It may be noted that a state grant-in-aid has allowed the associations to upgrade personnel, add new supervisory positions and thus raise standards in all programs.

In the field of education, as in the other aspects of its role, the HARC has a primary responsibility to obtain rather than provide programs and services for all the mentally retarded. The Association is working toward this end, but meanwhile continues to offer the services described until their phasing out is justified.

Teacher Recruitment

To help meet the overwhelming need for teachers in the field of special education, the HARC functions in several areas. It sponsors a scholarship program on the graduate level for those interested in obtaining necessary credits for certification. To date, 218 scholarships have been granted at the University of Hawaii.

The Association has sponsored summer workshop sessions at the University of Hawaii for teachers in special education and others interested in this field.

The HARC also conducts a continuous in-service-training program for its personnel, numbering approximately 40.

One of the most stimulating phases of the HARC program is its effectiveness in attracting young people of high school age into special education as a career. Ahalui Opio is a recognized junior auxiliary to the Association. These students serve as volunteers for teen canteens, holiday parties, picnics, athletics and summer fun activities. They obtain first-hand knowledge of mentally retarded children through this volunteer experience and many have gone on to academic pursuits in this field.

Parent Education

The HARC has from its inception considered parent education one of the most important aspects of its role. The majority of parents have come a long way from the sharing of despair which motivated their first coming together a decade ago. In spite of progress in parental acceptance and adjustment, the Association faces many challenges in the field of parental and family education.

Currently the Association has organized four parent education teams which offer highly specialized infor-

mation to the families of the mentally retarded.

Two of the teams are composed of the following: an attorney, a social worker, a clergyman and a fiscal advisor. They conduct forums on "What Happens to My Child if Anything Happens to Me?"

The other two teams include a pediatrician, psychologist, educator, vocational rehabilitation representative and an Association representative. Their topic is "What Future Does My Retarded Child Have?"

The Association also sponsors Mothers Mutual, or Hui O Kokua. This is a group of young mothers of retarded children who have accepted their problem and who are being trained to visit new mothers of retarded children to help soften the shock and to give aid, help and understanding.

Although much has been accomplished in education for the mentally retarded, the HARC is aware that there is still a lack of public understanding. Complacency and ignorance of the problem continue to exist even among educators, legislators, and others in key community positions. The Association will continue to place education of the public as one of its most important goals.