

*what is
Culham's
youth
Council?*

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ATLANTA, INC.
BOARD MEETING
JULY 16, 1969

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
T. M. PARHAM

PROGRAMS

Because people are poor due to many different reasons and circumstances, EOA has many different approaches. The money received supports all, a big part, or a tiny part of many activities ---

- ... Neighborhood Service Centers
- ... Concentrated Employment Program
- ... New Careers
- ... Operation Ready
- ... Atlanta Beautification Corps
- ... Manpower Training Center
- ... Neighborhood Youth Corps
- ... Gate House (Job Corps returnees)
- ... State Employment Service personnel
- ... Vocational Rehab personnel
- ... Rent-A-Kid
- ... Community Organization
- ... Consumer Services
- ... VISTA
- ... Recreation
- ... Creative Atlanta
- ... Start Now Atlanta
- ... VIP's (Very Informed People)
- ... Volunteers
- ... Full Year Head Start
- ... Summer Head Start
- ... Parent-Child Center
- ... West End Child Development Center
- ... Emergency School Lunch (4 schools)
- ... Summer Feeding (Snacks)
- ... Legal Aid
- ... Programs for the Aged
- ... Foster Grandparents
- ... Comprehensive Health
- ... Planned Parenthood
- ... Aide Training

These thirty program titles do not nearly exhaust the possibilities or give the kaleidoscopic effect. To expand the list, one could name all

fourteen neighborhood service centers and several extension offices, or list ten separate full year head start Centers, nine family planning clinics, five legal aid offices, and the seventeen delegate agencies carrying out summer recreation activities. One might name the 200 block clubs and list the CNAC and CCAC committees which make up the heart of the community organization program. The VISTA and volunteer projects could be listed individually. There would be still further ways to break it down, but suffice it to say, we have a lot going.

Furthermore, these program titles do not reflect Headquarters support activities like finance which handles payrolls, accounting, purchasing, inventory, retirement, workman's compensation, the credit union, group health insurance; or planning which handles proposal development, contracts and data retrieval; or personnel with its task of recruiting, processing, keeping time and attendance, handling grievances, etc; or public information which answers countless questions, guides tours, sends out literature, writes stories and seeks attention for us.

After this recitation, there's one thing that should be said: Be kind to Mr. Allison --- he will need it.

PROGRESS

In the past year, progress has been made in many ways:

- (1) The planning operation has been substantially improved and systematized under the leadership of Mr. Allison.
- (2) The MIS (Management Information System) report required by OEO has been facilitated by the diligent work of Mrs. Maynard Jackson and her assistant Mrs. Ann Sieffert. A regional OEO official recently called this achievement outstanding.
- (3) The Finance Department is in the best condition ever; according to our external auditors, Wolf and Company.
- (4) Neighborhood Service Operations, under the able guidance of Sue Crank, have become more clearly defined, and the Center Directors have established some exacting performance standards of their own. The accomplishments of our individual Centers have been recited here each month, and their importance to the total program cannot be over-emphasized.

- (5) Edith Hambrick has led a special effort to improve social service activities in the NSC's. Four master social workers now provide guidance and supervision to social service counselors in all the Centers, making our service more consistently adequate and improving the efficiency of our record keeping.
 - (6) The Community Organization Program, led by John Calhoun, established specific goals in a wide variety of areas, including education, housing, welfare, employment, health, recreation, etc., and citizen committees have worked diligently and persistently at them. The results have shown increasingly productive dialogues between representatives of the poor and community institutions.
 - (7) Manpower Programs, spurred by Clint Rodgers, have all registered gains. ACEP has been restructured with a much clearer understanding of its potentials as well as its limitations. All the cooperating agencies, EOA, the Georgia State Employment Service, the Vocational Education Division of the City Schools, and Vocational Rehab, have grown in their understanding of the needs of the hard core unemployed.
- The NYC Program under Charles Pierce has been complimented by the Regional Labor Office for its improved operation.
- (8) Public Information, with Mrs. Mitchell assisted by Pat Mason, continues to do outstanding work. They scored notable achievements initiating the Start Now Atlanta Program and the VIP's.
 - (9) The Volunteer Program, under June Sammons' energetic and resourceful leadership, has blossomed to 602 active workers and seems limitless in its potential.
 - (10) At long last, we have our Aide Training Program under way. Mrs. Anne Jackson is in charge and the goal is to give increased skills to all our aides and equip them for better jobs.
 - (11) VISTA has had one of its brightest, most able groups of volunteers. They have worked on a variety of community problems, and through a joint effort involving a large number of them, they hope very soon

to open a warehouse that will be a coordinating purchasing office for six buying clubs they have organized.

- (12) Recreation, with Harold Barrett and Duke Harrison leading, has been developed into a year-round rather than strictly summer activity. A total of ten youth-community centers have been assisted into being, and football, basketball, and baseball teams have been developed among otherwise unreached youth. One present goal that seems achievable is a year-round arts activity modeled after this summer's Creative Atlanta Program.
- (13) Child Development activities have been augmented by the successful beginning of the Edgewood Parent-Child Center for children from birth to age 3 and by the opening of the West End Child Development Center with its special emphasis on the use of older citizens as child care specialists. There is real hope how that our Full-Year Head Start Program can be vastly improved in coming months by the conversion of Summer Head Start funds.

PROBLEMS

In view of its assigned mission, EOA has several fundamental problems:

- (1) The basic community action program is under-funded and stretched too thin. Neighborhood target areas are far too large for the resources deployed. NSC's have too little staff to perform adequately their out-reach and community organization functions.
- (2) There is a need to further strengthen our planning and evaluation capacities. Close attention needs to be given to activities to determine what works well and why --- what doesn't work and why. Productive activities should be encouraged and disseminated; promising ideas should be exploited. Regular operations staff, burdened with daily duties, seldom have energy left for this.

- (3) A formal staff development program is needed. EOA has, as part of its agenda, the employment within its own program of persons who are not fully prepared for the responsibilities given them. This affords opportunities to many who have aptitude but little formal training and experience. Many persons have blossomed with this opportunity, but some have been overwhelmed and frustrated. More consistent performance would be secured if each staff member could be regularly exposed to a program designed to increase his understanding of the problems the agency is working on and the techniques it attempts to use.
- (4) Erratic, year to year funding greatly handicaps planning, program development, and staff recruitment. It is hard to persuade competent, widely sought personnel to come to a program the future of which seems constantly in jeopardy. It is hard to plan and build improved services with the constant threat of budget retrenchment. Congress should be encouraged to clearly define the program and to give it authorization and appropriations adequate and dependable enough to do the job.
- (5) Finally, the biggest problem for EOA, in my opinion, remains the inherent complexity of the task. You are expected to solve the problem of unemployment among the poor, but you do not control the jobs, the placement services or the training programs. You are expected to perfect the delivery of human services, but other agencies control welfare, health, education and recreation resources. You are expected to mobilize the poor in their own behalf but to do it without disturbing anyone.

In such an assignment, the array of forces, attitudes and circumstances which must be dealt with are infinitely complex and interwoven with the total fabric of society. To carry it off with any degree of success requires great sensitivity, tact, intelligence, determination, and courage. If success has been less than complete, as it obviously has, it should not, in any sense, be looked upon as failure. To have attacked these tough problems at all is a tribute to the program's audacity and to its willingness to risk itself on behalf of the poor. We need to remember that those of us who undertake to "wash society's dirtiest linen" seldom have happy customers.