

QUARTERLY REPORT  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
PENN COMMUNITY SERVICES, INCORPORATED

April, 1967

The past winter has seen an intensification of activities at Penn and in the communities. Much of this has been brought on by the presence of Peace Corps volunteers, both in residence at Penn and later in the communities. The staff is also preparing for a period of transition into the training phase of the work.

ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST FIVE MONTHS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Three communities have made plans to construct day care centers and two communities to renovate old buildings for day care center; the communities have been raising funds and expect to provide labor, assisted by Peace Corps volunteers to begin the project.
2. The detailed training proposal in community development has been worked out and is awaiting funding.
3. Penn has contracted with Dartmouth College to train Peace Corps volunteers for Gabon.
4. The six-month community workers program terminated in December with excellent results.
5. Work on the water district in the Burton area is picking up again with house-to-house survey being made.
6. Contact with representatives of the Small Business Administration has resulted in three loans already with five other good possibilities.
7. In county-wide activities, the staff has assisted with the Food Stamp Program and in the planning of the Low-Country Resource Conservation and Development District, under the Department of Agriculture.
8. In OEO activity, the staff is represented both on the Board and on the Advisory Committee of the Beaufort-Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission and has assisted in promoting elections of low-income representatives to the Board.
9. The community development program was the subject of a feature story in the Savannah Morning News.

ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL:

1. A long-time interest in providing day care for their children became alive for five communities with the coming of the Peace Corps training session at Penn. In Big Estate, Bluffton and Gray's Hill, the people are beginning the construction of new buildings which will be combination day care centers and community centers. In Sheldon and old school building and on Hilton Head a former "beer joint" will be renovated for day care centers. Peace Corps trainees planning to go to Gabon

## ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL

will provide labor to help residents of the community begin the construction and renovation of the buildings. Money is being raised within the local communities, and from other parts of Beaufort County, and other interested individuals and foundations. Labor for the buildings will be furnished by residents of the communities, assisted by Peace Corps trainees. The three communities where buildings are to be constructed have hired carpenters to supervise the work during the two-week stay of the volunteers.

A number of communities submitted plans to the Beaufort-Jasper EOC last spring to operate day care centers. A proposal for three was sent through OEO channels on May 22, 1966. So far, there has been no funds available. The communities plan to approach OEO again when the facilities are completed in order to get help with the staffing.

2. A proposal has been sent to a foundation for training residents of rural Southern communities at Penn in community development work. Emphasis will be placed on training lay persons who are already involved in community work and would return to their former jobs and communities. The training will enable a person to know of resources, both private and public, available for individual and community needs, and to learn how to involve residents in collectively meeting these needs.

The two-year training program will include three fifteen-week sessions per year for trainees. In addition, a number of individuals will be trained for professional work in community development. It is felt that this training will help fill the gap in leadership in rural areas, thus helping communities to obtain resources that should be available to everyone: Decent homes, sanitary facilities, skilled employment and a voice in the decision in community affairs.

3. The thirty-eight Peace Corps trainees presently on Penn campus are training for service in Gabon, West Africa. Penn was selected by Dartmouth College as the site to train the volunteers because of the community development program here, as well as housing and classroom facilities. The bulk of the first five weeks on the campus has been spent in French language study, with some exposure to skills and community development. During the last two weeks of the program, the trainees will live in seven communities in the county for a more intensive experience in community development work. In five of the communities, they will be assisting the residents in construction and renovation of day care centers. The presence of Peace Corps has been a definite asset to Penn, not only in giving the community development staff an opportunity to be involved in a training experience, but also in providing a boost to activity within the communities.

4. The six-month training program for three community workers concluded in December. The entire staff was stunned by the tragic death of Ed Givens, in February, one of the workers located in the Pritchardville Community.

Among the specific accomplishments of the community workers were an increase in voter registration, wider participation by individuals in

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community projects and an increase in the number of families contacted about specific programs. The program enabled the staff to gain practical experience in field training.

5. Following the failure last May of the referendum for the water district in the Burton area, plans were made for working toward another referendum. This time house-to-house surveys had to be made to secure signatures from each family interested in joining the water district. Help which was expected from the Neighborhood worker program of the Office of Economic Opportunity Commission was not forthcoming, and, until recently, a Penn field director was not available regularly to the community. Activity has picked up, however, and over 100 families have so far signed up for the water.

6. As a result of the contact with the Small Business Administration, Penn was chosen as the place for interviewing people of the area for Small Business Administration's Economic Opportunity Loans. Representatives from Columbia came to Penn to interview 12 people the first day. Since that time, they have come to Beaufort County once a month. To date, three loans have been made and five are in the process. Loans are being sought for shrimp fishing boats, a laundromat, retail stores, and a meat distribution facility.

7. The community development staff has been involved in several activities of county-wide interest. The Low-Country Resource Conservation and Development Board, a six-county development organization of the United States Department of Agriculture, has been devising proposals for total planning and use of resources. The staff has met with the Beaufort Committee as well as Washington representatives of the USDA in Washington to make suggestions about the development of human and geographic resources. In particular, emphasis was put upon including community residents in the planning and implementation of the proposals.

The staff assisted in the distribution of the Toys For Tots at Christmas time, a county-wide program to bring toys to children of low-income families. The Food Stamp Program has begun in Beaufort County and the staff has brought information about it to low-income people. Many recipients are raising questions about the value and efficiency of the program as it now stands, and we are encouraging discussion of the problems.

8. In accordance with a directive from the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, the local Economic Opportunity Commission was required to promote an election of representatives of the poor to serve on the Board and the Advisory Committee of the Beaufort-Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission. Penn was instrumental in encouraging community meetings, at which time candidates were considered and selected prior to the one county-wide meeting where election process took place. Penn staff is well represented in the OEO organization now with Field Director Joseph McDomick, a Board member, and Coordinator Everett Gill on the Advisory Committee. Mrs. Frieda R. Mitchell, our secretary, is also a board member as a representative from her community and Courtney Siceloff is on the Advisory Committee of the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

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9. The coming of the Pece Corps has provided a way for more positive publicity than Penn has got in a long time. The Savannah Morning News carried several stories on the Peace Corps training at Penn, as well as a feature story about Penn's community development work. The local radio station has carried news items about the Peace Corps and fund-raising drives for community centers, and several interviews of Peace Corps personnel.

### ACTIVITY IN SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES:

Daufuskie Island - The tragic drowning of a man on his way back from Savannah in a small boat accentuated the transportation problem on Daufuskie Island. Considerable newspaper publicity was given the drowning and the basic problem. The Beaufort-Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission has prepared a proposal for transportation service to Daufuskie Island. The plan is to use one of the excursion vessels based in Savannah for a bi-weekly trip to Savannah.

Due to the strong appeal from the residents of Daufuskie Island, the VISTA volunteers on the island were reassigned for their second year.

Bad weather and numerous break-downs of the mailman's boat have presented a problem to the field director in visiting the island this winter, but the Daufuskie Island Improvement Club continued to meet regularly.

Due to the impracticality of traveling to Bluffton monthly to purchase food stamps, the residents of Daufuskie Island are negotiating with the Welfare Department to make other arrangement for buying Food Stamps.

A lady who completed the nurses aide course under the Manpower Development and Training Act in Beaufort has been able to practice her skills since there is no doctor on the island. She is now employed by the School Board to look after the children with common illnesses.

Another person obtained an Economic Opportunity Loan to buy a chain saw to cut firewood for himself and others.

Hilton Head - Peace Corps volunteers will assist the community in renovating a building for use as a day care center. The community is raising money for the project and has arranged for volunteers to live with families in the community. Two families have secured Farmers Home Administration loans to repair and build their houses. After two years of negotiation, a group of citizens finally obtained telephone service with the encouragement of the field director.

Bluffton - The Bluffton Eagles, a semi-pro baseball club organized by residents of the community, has constructed a diamond and nearly completed the fence around a regulation playing field. Every indication is that the field will be ready for the regular season play. Money for the project has been raised in the community, chiefly through monthly entertainments.

Two families on Welfare have applied for FHA Improvement Loans through a new system whereby the Welfare Department repays the loan. One 90-year

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lady has received a loan. A family of 13 with a hospitalized husband was denied the loan because they are receiving the \$99 a month maximum allowed through the Welfare Department.

Considerable activity is going into the drive to raise funds for the day care center with the help of Peace Corps volunteers. Fund-raising for this project was discouraged by the local OEO representatives when the proposal for day care centers was submitted and it has been difficult to build enthusiasm for the project again. The foundation for the building, however, has been poured and the interest is increasing as the work progresses. Homes have been secured for the Peace Corps volunteers.

Pritchardville - The community was shocked by the untimely death of Mr. Ed Givens, a Penn community worker and a community leader in the area.

The self-help housing project has been going slowly because of the reluctance of the people to commit themselves to the expense.

Two families have received Farmers Home Administration Improvement Loans. The people of Pritchardville will participate in the Bluffton day care center.

Low Bottom - This is the newest of the communities in which Penn has been working. Much time has been spent in getting acquainted with families and building up a sense of community at the weekly meetings. The income is quite low and the community is geographically isolated from the rest of the county. The community spans the line between Beaufort and Jasper Counties, enabling the field director to work in Jasper county and becoming familiar with the agencies there.

Since the day care center proposal has not yet been funded, the community has maintained contact with the local OEO and has written letters to Washington and Atlanta, hoping to speed up the process. The Economic Opportunity Commission has a Neighborhood Worker serving the Low Bottom Community, but cooperation between the OEO and Penn remains difficult. The community sent several people to the OEO meeting which representatives of the poor were elected.

Two ladies from the community have taken courses under the MDTA program. Several Peace Corps volunteers will be living in the community.

During the summer, 6 wells in the community went dry, and the community has tried unsuccessfully to get help from Jasper County Farmers Home Administration.

Burton - Work has been resumed in Burton with major emphasis on the water district. For several months there had been little work in Burton, due to the staff changes and the demands of other activities. A field director is now working there regularly, and survey is one-half completed. The survey that is being required by the FHA calls for a house-to-house visit with signatures from each person who is willing to join the water district.

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Due to the size of the water district, the work in Burton covers a much larger area than the community where the Penn worker concentrated.

Gray's Hill - From a survey, an overwhelming majority of the residents have expressed interest in participating in a water district here as well as in Burton.

The foundation has just been poured for the day care center and the community is looking forward to the Peace Corps volunteers' helping with the project. Several new homes have been built with FHA loans.

Big Estate - The foundation for the day care center has been laid and considerable effort has been put toward raising money for the construction. The field director assisted the family of a boy who was arrested and kept in the penitentiary for two months awaiting trial on a charge that was eventually thrown out for lack of evidence.

Because of the terrific drainage problem in the community, numerous letters were written to the County Board of Directors requesting help. This led to a study of the drainage problem in the entire county.