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South Carolina Vocational
Rehabilitation Department

J. S. DUSENBURY
Commissioner



State of South Carolina

JAMES B. EDWARDS
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
POST OFFICE BOX 11450
COLUMBIA 29211

September 7, 1977

Mr. Joe S. Dusenbury
Executive Officer and Commissioner
South Carolina Vocational
Rehabilitation Department
301 Landmark Center
3600 Forest Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29240

Dear Joe:

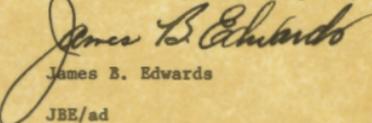
I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the other members of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department on the outstanding contributions which your department has made over the past fifty years to the citizens of South Carolina.

South Carolina has consistently been a leader in the field of vocational rehabilitation since the program first began in 1927. It is this spirit of accomplishment which should serve as a sterling example and high standard of excellence in the future.

This occasion should not be celebrated without serious consideration for the thousands of men and women who have now achieved a more active role in South Carolina. These special people deserve a large share of the credit. They have looked to Vocational Rehabilitation for their needs because they have faith - faith in God, faith in themselves, and faith in South Carolina.

It is a distinct pleasure for me to wish you many, many more years of continued service to the people of South Carolina. Please express my best wishes to all of your staff members and allied professionals on this, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

With warmest personal regards,


James B. Edwards

JBE/ad

A SEED IS PLANTED . . .

A large population of disabled veterans brought about by World War I created a need for a program to return the handicapped to gainful employment. On June 2, 1920, President Woodrow Wilson, by then a severely disabled man himself, signed into law an act making available financial aid to all states to help them develop programs of guidance, training, and placement for physically disabled persons who were vocationally handicapped. The legislation, known as the Smith-Fess Act of 1920, designated state departments of education as the administrator of state rehabilitation programs, since the main thrust of the program was centered in training.

Though funding was available immediately following this action, it was not until 1927 that such a program was started in South Carolina. The South Carolina General Assembly at that time authorized the State Superintendent of Education to accept the allotment of federal funds which was available for vocational rehabilitation and to establish the services in South Carolina. Thus the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the South Carolina Department of Education was created with a staff of two people.

The program operated primarily as a training division from that time, providing training for physically handicapped persons in vocational schools in Charleston and Greenville as well as through on-the-job training.

The federal training program for disabled people continued until 1935 as a temporary program perpetuated by short-term Congressional extensions. The Federal Social Security Act of 1935 endowed it with permanent status within the framework of United States social legislation.

THE PROGRAM GROWS . . .

Under the original Vocational Rehabilitation program, services were restricted to physically disabled people. This excluded the mentally retarded, the emotionally disturbed, the epileptic, the homebound, and handicapped persons confined in penal or correctional institutions.

This concept changed drastically with passage of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1943. It was at this time that rehabilitation services were extended for the mentally retarded.

The Act also provided that a rehabilitation client could receive any service necessary to realize his full employment potential. Federal funds were made available to provide handicapped clients with medical, surgical and other physical restoration services required to remove, reduce or stabilize their disabilities, with the ultimate goal of gainful employment.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program began with 50-50 matching funds to assist states with programs for its disabled population. Financing the program was improved under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1954 in order to help states improve their services. This act also made it optional for the program of vocational rehabilitation in the state to be administered by the Department of Education or by a separate Commission with the only stipulation being that the majority of the program funds be spent on efforts toward the vocational rehabilitation of the handicapped.

The South Carolina General Assembly, seeing this option as an opportunity for Vocational Rehabilitation to impact more fully on its handicapped citizens, passed legislation in 1957 to make Vocational Rehabilitation a separate State Agency with permanent Agency status.

It was at that time that South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation began seeing signs of full fruition. Steps were taken to develop a network of local offices to better serve the major population areas in the State. Through local interagency systems and the physicians in the communities, the network of referrals began to grow. In 1960 the first Area Vocational Rehabilitation Workshop was established in Greenville. As a prototype, the workshop was designed to better meet the needs of a diverse handicapped community in areas of job exploration and work adjustment.

As the local area concept developed, other expansion efforts were taking place in meeting the vocational needs of the handicapped in the institutions. South Carolina was the first state in the nation to set up a rehabilitation facility within a state hospital setting to provide services to the institutionalized mentally ill. And South Carolina was one of the first states to work with the mentally retarded in institutions. To better utilize the tax dollar, the Department began to enter into cooperative agreements with other state agencies and institutions including Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Department of Corrections, Department of Education and the Medical University. The cooperative agreement approach helped assure a complete service delivery system for the institutional population.

REHABILITATION TODAY . . .

The Vocational Rehabilitation program in South Carolina has grown from two employees traveling the state into a highly effective network of programs to serve a wide variety of disability groups in all locations of the state.

The Department operates 15 area offices which provide services to the handicapped from all over the state. Thirteen Vocational Rehabilitation Centers assist in the rehabilitation process by providing a comprehensive assessment of the vocational, personal and social needs as well as providing adjustment training with the goal of successful placement in employment. In addition, school projects and other youth programs around the state provide rehabilitation services to adolescents with vocational handicaps.

Specialized facilities and programs provide necessary services to different disability groups. Though the Department has for years served the deaf and hearing impaired population, a program of specialized vocational rehabilitation services has been developed during the past five years. This is accomplished through Vocational Rehabilitation facilities at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the South Carolina Opportunity School, as well as through specialty personnel in strategic locations to serve all areas of the state. Today, dozens of full-time staff serve, exclusively, deaf and hearing impaired South Carolinians.

To help cope with the ever-increasing problem of alcohol abuse, the Department operates two alcohol treatment centers, Palmetto Center in Florence and Holmesview Center in Greenville. Both Centers are designed to meet a broad spectrum of needs in the rehabilitation of the alcohol abuser.

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department serves numerous handicapped people with a variety of

disabilities. The Department has always placed emphasis on provision of quality services to its clients and was very successful in preparing them to enter into employment.

The mission of the Department was changed somewhat with passage of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This federal legislation placed emphasis on priority services for the severely disabled. In an effort to meet the needs of this group, the Department has recently opened the Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Center in West Columbia. The residential facility is designed to meet the special needs of this group through provision of physical therapy, occupational therapy and activities of daily living, all with the goal of employment.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DIRECTORS AND COMMISSIONERS

The Vocational Rehabilitation program in South Carolina has been administered by a director or commissioner (title changed in 1971) since the beginning of the program in 1927. The person in this position has the responsibility of carrying out policy set by the South Carolina State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The diligent efforts of the directors and commissioners through the years have made possible enormous growth in meeting the needs of the vocationally handicapped.

R. C. Thompson (1927-1928)

J. J. Ropp (1928-1929)

P. G. Sherer (1929-1960)

Dill D. Beckman (1960-1976)

J. S. Dusenbury (Since 1976)

THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE AGENCY OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Members of the South Carolina State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation, which sets policy under which the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department operates, are appointed by the Governor for seven-year terms. The Agency Board is reflective of a broad range of professional experience in business and medicine.

Through the guidance, leadership and direction of those who have served on the Agency Board since 1957, the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department has been recognized as one of the leaders in the nation.

*T. James Bell, Jr., M.D., Hartsville
(1976-1983)

William L. Byerly, Sr., M.D., Hartsville
(1957-1975)

E. H. Carroll, Rock Hill
(1957-1977)

James F. Daniel, Jr., Greenville
(1957-1959)

Herbert U. Fielding, Charleston
(1968-1971)

*Harry W. Findley, Anderson
(1968-1982)

J. C. Horne, Denmark
(Chairman, 1957-1968)

D. W. Johnson, Greenwood
(1957-1960)

*H. L. Laffitte, Allendale
(1957-1983)

*Daniel E. Martin, Charleston
(1971-1978)

*John A. Montgomery, Columbia
(1957-1980)

*E. Roy Stone, Jr., Greenville
(Member, 1960-1968)
(Chairman, 1968-1979)

*J. Hewlette Wasson, Laurens
(1977-1984)

A. H. Woodle, Greenwood
(1960-1966)

*Present members of the Agency Board, with dates indicating expiration of their terms.

WHAT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEANS . . .

TO THE DISABLED PERSON . . .

“With the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation, my dreams of personal satisfaction and financial security became a reality.”
(Harriet Rose Lowe, disabled by cerebral palsy)

“Vocational Rehabilitation provided me with financial assistance and encouragement to attend college, which, in turn, enabled me to pursue my chosen profession.” (Marion Hughes, confined to a wheelchair as a result of an accident while in high school)

“Vocational Rehabilitation has been a strong source of encouragement to me, has helped guide me into a job that I enjoy and I feel I am helping the deaf people in South Carolina.”
(Larry Baker, a deaf rehabilitation aide)

“It was the Vocational Rehabilitation program and wonderful counselors who have done a great deal in helping train me to be successful in working.” (Mose McFadden, an arm amputee from Dillon)

“Vocational Rehabilitation represents one of the finest expressions of human love . . . people not only caring for other people less fortunate than themselves, but actively doing something about it.” (Henry McElveen, Jr., with severe residual disability due to polio)

WHAT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEANS . . .

TO THE EMPLOYER . . .

“Just because a person can’t walk doesn’t mean he can’t use his hands,” says Russell C. Karpick, Industrial Relations Coordinator at AVX Ceramics in Myrtle Beach.

“We’ve had a mutually beneficial association with the Vocational Rehabilitation Department in placing handicapped people in employment, for a considerable number of years,” according to Frank Harling, Personnel Director, Graniteville Company.

“We have found our handicapped employees to be very dependable with the motivation and determination to perform their jobs most efficiently and become an asset to our company,” says Elizabeth M. Dallis, Personnel Director, U. S. Textile Corporation.

WHAT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEANS . . .

TO YOU . . .

The Vocational Rehabilitation program in South Carolina has had impact on more individuals than those with disabilities. It has taken a number of people out of institutions; it has returned a number of people to the labor force; it has removed a number of people from dependency . . . all resulting in better utilization of tax money.

REHABILITATION IS A ONE-TIME COST. Those disabled people who are employed as a result of vocational rehabilitation services then begin to pay taxes rather than using the tax dollar paid by other individuals.

During fiscal year 1977, the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department was successful in placing 12,307 disabled people in gainful employment in their communities.