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Liquor Industry Division Plans All-Out Campaign To Help Retarded Tots

New York City — The child you help may be your own! And it is with this sobering thought, and in this fostering spirit that the Liquor Industry Division of the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children, Inc., currently is launching its Drive for the necessities of life—and the funds with which to procure them—for these unfortunate youngsters, passed by somehow in the rush to aid other no more worthy causes, charities and philanthropies.

"Their great need", the industry Appeal Letter says, "is mental medicine". Sponsors of the industry effort, headed by Irving Lesnick, president of the Society and circulation manager of the BEVERAGE RETAILER, are giving of their time, money and most of their otherwise leisure waking hours to provide these mentally retarded children with "mental medicine".

Some of this "medicine" will be in the form of warm clothing, toys, radio sets (to bring in to these shut-ins the laughter that rings in the shouts of outside children at play), sound movies; ice cream and cookies—and merely bars of soap for face and hands, and bodies. But let the Appeal Letter now being distributed by the Liquor Industry Division of the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children, Inc. tell you the story of Willowbrook State School for Retarded Children on Staten Island (N. Y.).

"Dear Fellow Americans: We are asking for retarded, homeless children, with the perhaps sobering reminder that the child you help may (and could) be your own!

"The effort is non-sectarian and when we ask for help, we mean just that. We mean that you are expected to give something—anything. Give money, clothing, shoes, toys, old serviceable radio sets (there are 40 cottages and a hospital to furnish; but give something. That's the spirit! You will not say 'no' and give nothing—if in your heart there springs the joy that rings in the shouts of normal children at play, out-of-doors, in the sunshine, bright, gay and healthy.

"An estimated 70 per cent of the 2,000 retarded children confined at Willowbrook alone do not have parents or relatives. There is no one 'else' to visit them—even to take them cookies—or to take a personal interest in their care and welfare.

"Accordingly, we ask you to join us—in spirit at least—and visit Willowbrook, or 'elsewhere', and convey to these unfortunates a bit of hope, a ray of sunshine, a labor of love and a modicum of understanding.

"A gift of money goes directly to their most urgent needs: for it is expended for these specific necessities.

"As a donor to this cause, you will be in the most estimable of company; for the Society has merited the praises of such figures as Dr. H. Berman, Director; Dr. F. Glasser, Assistant Director; Catholic, Rev. Rayner Schramm, St. Francis Seminary, Staten Island, N. Y.; Jewish, Benjamin A. Tintner, Halloran V. A. Hospital, Staten Island, N. Y.; Protestant, Rev. Clifford B. Munn, 41 Renfrew place, Staten Island, N. Y.; Rev. Charles Bell, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Edward V. Curry, Member of Assembly, S. I.; William N. Reidy, Member of Assembly, S. I. N. Y.

Clearly, financial aid is urgently needed in carrying on the multiple programs for this most worthy cause. And the liquor industry's humanitarian hand never has been slow to lend itself—helpfully.

"And, if you love, or ever have loved a child, surely you will lend your support to this cause. . . unquestionably, it is a worthy one. You would help to give them the doctors, and nurses and the occupational therapy aids they so sorely need, if you had just once peeped behind their shut-in walls at any of the institutions mentioned."

Please send checks or donations to the executive offices of the BENEVOLENT SOCIETY FOR RETARDED CHILDREN, Inc., IRVING LESNICK, 1819 Broadway, New York City, 23, New York.

Willowbrook School

Not so many years ago Staten Islanders viewed with apprehension the construction of state buildings in Willowbrook. Some of the more fearful residents visualized the opening of a frightening insane asylum with maniacs escaping into the community every night.

Public opinion has changed considerably since those days. Sixty per cent of the Willowbrook tract is now used for a Veterans Administration facility, a fine successor to the Army's noted Halloran General Hospital. The remainder of the site is now a school for mentally retarded persons, under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Mental Hygiene.

Some passersby are suspicious of the Willowbrook school, but only because of the high wire fence surrounding the area. And any institution which remains relatively aloof from publicity seems to raise doubts and attract a stigma. But from a reporter's survey one gathers that the institution should attract sympathy, understanding and wishes for success.

Persons assigned to the state school are in need of help. They need special care; they can hardly be left to grow and struggle on in the community which they are not yet prepared to face. For some there is hope. They may be trained in the simplest of trades so that they will not be "lost" or abandoned to the gibes and cruelty of everyday living. The trick, eventually, is to find the environment that will accept these persons who can't accept just any environment. Trained personnel seek a level of adjustment for these persons.

Willowbrook State School obviously is a long way from being another "Snake Pit." Here are some of the latest in modern techniques in operation. Mentally-retarded persons, who need help are getting it.

Government funds seldom come easily for such projects. Lobbyists for other causes are more numerous and offer greater vote-getting possibilities. But this is a field that should not be overlooked.