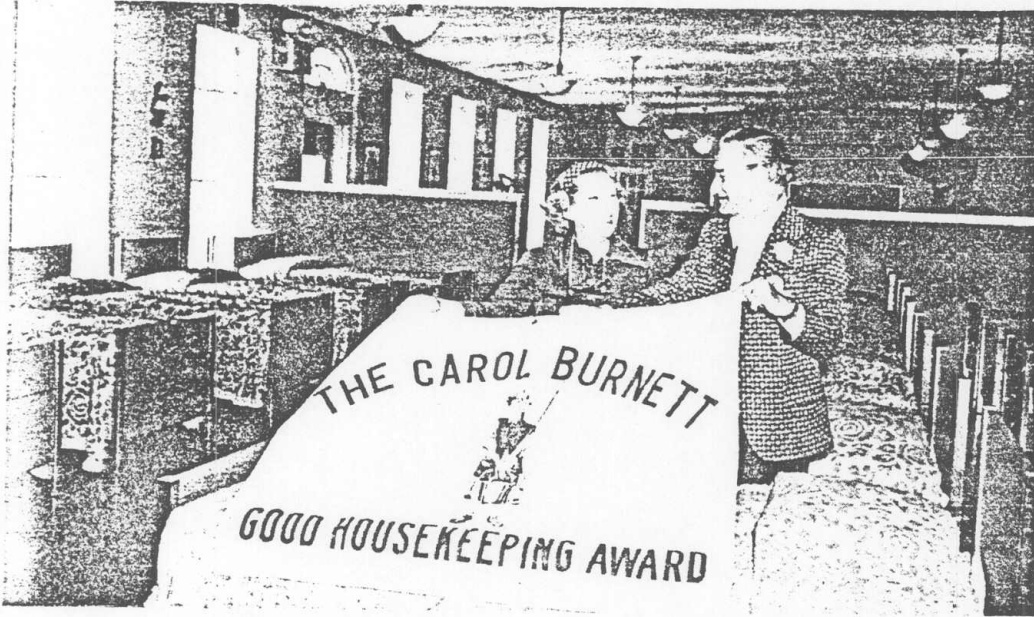


## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

ymmer finish and we experimented with twice daily floor moppings—and thrice daily too.

There was not the slightest resistance from any of our employees, despite the

*With the blessings of T.V. comedienne, Carol Burnett, Willowbrook initiated an incentive program based on her char-woman character that revitalized sagging spirits and productivity within the housekeeping department and throughout the Center.*



increased work load that we had imposed on them. They had lived through a rich experience with us, and they were as eager as we were to complete our fight against odor. Enthusiasm and pride in achievement were no longer classroom phrases; they were everywhere evident and abundant.

And it was infectious! Our nursing personnel got into the battle too. More frequent bathings of each patient seemed no longer to be the useless task it once had appeared to be. A healthy competitive spirit developed between our different building personnel and the cleaning crews, with each trying to outdo the other. We had licked the enemy and we were riding an emotional high.

### A Set-Back

Then, in late 1972, fate intervened and dealt us an almost fatal blow. Drastic budget cuts caused personnel and supply cut-backs. And these in turn forced us to drastically reduce our cleaning frequencies.

Odor, once again, began to rear its ugly head, and along with it, morale went into a disheartening tailspin. Reversing this crushing turn of events seemed to us to be too monumental a task. Our only recourse was to increase our already very high per-employee

work load, but no one was psychologically up to it. The road ahead seemed darker than it had ever been before.

We knew that the only way to keep our heads above water was to stop this serious erosion of morale—that was gradually approaching the point of no

return—so that once again, increasing each employee's work load would be practical. And we couldn't wait until the seriously reduced budget situation improved. It might never happen!

Many a sleepless night was spent tossing and turning and thinking. What could be done to re-ignite the spark that might develop the flame that burned so brightly once before? But months passed, and things were rapidly going from bad to worse.

### Enter: Carol Burnett

And then, one night it happened! We were watching television at home. A lovely lady, a great star, Carol Burnett, was going through one of her famous char-woman routines. The thought burst upon us! Would she, could she, be prevailed upon to approve our use of her characterization of the char-woman as our symbol for cleaning superiority? Would she approve of our awarding, on a monthly basis the "Carol Burnett Good Housekeeping Award" to the cleanest building of the many buildings at our institution? And, if she did, would the impact on employee morale even begin to equal the impact we were then experiencing just by thinking about it? The adrenalin was really flowing. Maybe we were just dreaming! Miss

Burnett was a very busy professional and would probably never even get to see any letter of appeal that we might write. But desperate times breed desperate acts.

So write we did, and a shock wave was soon to rock our institution. She said yes, go ahead, with her blessing! Deliberately, we let the word leak out as we excitedly began making plans for the Big Day, the day we were to first present the Carol Burnett Good Housekeeping Award (a large banner featuring Carol as the Char-Woman) to the cleanest building, a trophy to that particular cleaning crew and lapel buttons for the patients involved (some patients and most ward attendants were pitching in to help their cleaning crews).

Tuesday, September 24, 1974, was selected as the date for the opening ceremony, and visiting dignitaries, political and otherwise, promised to attend, as would members of the press and television. A gala event—a memorable day was a certainty, and the excitement that was generated was contagious to all. Everyone, personnel of all types, were eager to assist their particular cleaning crew to do its best possible job. The most difficult job on the 24th was the selection of the winner.

It would be accurate, we're sure, to say that we don't know all that there is to know about motivational forces that are available to us to use in improving our cleaning programs. Suffice, for now, to say that it's a powerful force worthy of the full attention of any Executive Housekeeper. Quite frankly, we don't know to what extent our present high state of morale will diminish as the newness of this exciting program wears off. It will diminish to some extent we're sure. But of one thing we're certain: the degree of effective motivation that can be realized is far greater than we had ever thought possible. ○



Mr. Fontano, Executive Housekeeper at Willowbrook Developmental Center, Staten Island, N.Y., was awarded second prize in the Health Care Category in the Soap and Detergent Association's 1974 Environmental Cleanliness Achievement Contest.