

Often they forget to take medications, or they are too tired to prepare proper foods, or forgetful of proper clothing. They are subject to the whims of their bodies which put them in our hospitals time after time because there is no one to drop in and make sure they have taken the one pill or had the insulin and proper diet that day, and also because they are too proud to give up their own independence and move in with their children.

The approximate cost in a hospital is \$350 a day plus any tests that might be taken. Our tax dollars pay for this. But hospital admissions such as these are often unnecessary. A daily visit by a caring community member has made the senior his or her responsibility could be unbelievably helpful.

The foster grandparent program has proven itself in terms of relationship to the DD. What could be better for both groups in terms of dignity and help than to have them living near by within walking or wheelchair distance?

Suppose the now-functioning senior were able to help young parents out with their children as another part of his or her contribution to this community. It would allow the parents to work and yet feel secure that their children were cared for. The concept of the extended community really works.

Beyond that, experience has shown that the DD and senior citizens more often than not require similar care medically, socially, in occupational programs and in physiotherapy. Working with established health facilities could not these services be developed for both?

The Institute for Basic Research is really under-utilized. What would be wrong if some of the staff lived in the community that worked in this facility? Coverage could be better for sick days and snow days. Parents would be more productive on the job. This component could be made available for any surrounding areas within a geographical area designated by the planners.

• Families and single persons with or without children could afford to rent or purchase dwellings if a financial arrangement or a trade-off in terms of service

(group home coverage, nursery, respite care, transportation for the DD, seniors or children) could be arranged.

The other advantages have already been addressed. But think how these families would learn to live with all the other groups described. This could serve as a model for other communities.

• Environmentalists. The community could be built so that Corson's Brook Woods would be part of the whole and could be preserved.

Any members of the community could serve as caretakers of the area under the direction of the environmentalists. Designated Community residents would be responsible for such chores as cleaning up the area, and pruning vegetation, as well as serving as guides and guards for the preserved sections.

Hopefully, the environmentalists could be enlisted to develop beautification programs for community and the college. Would it be improbable to visualize a plant or vegetable business growing within the community?

We have virgin territory and we have many needs. Instead of fighting one another, why not be courageous and build an ideal environment?

Of course there will be objections which should be considered and, if possible, overcome.

Of course there are large questions, such as: How much will it all cost and where will the funds come from (Private investors, government funds or a combination of government money with matched private funds)? How do we establish the level of need for various facilities? Do we really have enough land to work with? What about authority and maintenance for buildings, grounds, roads, sanitation?

Anything worth doing is worth fighting for. We think this is worth considering, modifying, improving, and expanding. But above all, it is worth doing.

(Beatrice Victor, an Advance Woman of Achievement in 1980, is a past chairwoman of the Staten Island Regional Retardation and Disabilities Council, and of the Staten Island Borough Development Services Office.)