

President Johnson Commends VRA Gains In Rehabilitation

EDITOR'S NOTE: *On August 10, 1965, President Johnson made the following statement as he released to the public significant reports on federal-state rehabilitation programs.*

August 10, 1965

"I am making public the attached reports from Secretary Celebrezze and Commissioner Switzer so that the public may be fully familiar with the valuable work being done in this country to help our disabled citizens become active and useful citizens.

"I can think of no better example of what this Administration is trying to accomplish for the American people than the federal-state program of vocational rehabilitation.

"However difficult the circumstances, whatever the burdens of poverty, whatever the deficiencies in educational opportunity that exist today, we must and we will find ways to offer full opportunity for a useful and satisfying life for all Americans.

"If we can do this for 135,000 of our people who, along with other problems, face the obstacle of a serious physical or mental handicap, then we can do it for other people as well. That is our goal."

Excerpts from the reports mentioned by the President in his statement above included this comment from Secretary Celebrezze: "I believe you will share my pride in the attached report of the Commissioner of Vocational Rehabilitation, Miss Mary E. Switzer. It shows that the federal-state program of vocational rehabilitation has achieved a new record this year, with about 135,000 disabled men and women rehabilitated into useful work.

"The total of rehabilitations for the past year represents an increase of nearly 13 percent over the previous year. The outlook for the future will be even more promising when the Congress completes action on the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments passed by the House of Representatives last week and now pending in the Senate."

The report from Miss Mary E. Switzer, Commissioner of Vocational Rehabilitation, HEW, points out that the gain in the number of rehabilitated persons in the past year represents almost 4,000 more disabled persons rehabilitated than the States estimated when they presented their 1965 budget goal figures.

Included in Miss Switzer's report is a table showing the numbers rehabilitated by States. Pennsylvania leads with 12,794 disabled men and women restored to activity and useful work. Others in the top five were New York (9,067), North Carolina (8,545), Georgia (7,221), and Florida (6,153).



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West Virginia led all States in terms of the number rehabilitated per 100,000 population, with a rate of 218, followed by the District of Columbia (178), North Carolina (176), Rhode Island (173), and Georgia (168). The national average was 70.

Concluding her report to Secretary Celebrezze, Miss Switzer stated: "I am deeply grateful for the consistent encouragement and direction which you and other officials of the Department have given to the development of the vocational rehabilitation program. I hope you will convey to the President our profound gratitude for his leadership and support, both in appropriations and in proposing legislation to expand and improve this work which so vitally affects the lives of millions of Americans."



M:55 MARY E. SWITZER

Human Resources Foundation Affiliated with NYU

A new affiliation between Human Resources Foundation and the department of physical medicine and rehabilitation, New York University School of Medicine, has been announced. Human Resources is the research-education affiliate of Abilities, Inc., the widely publicized organization in Albertson, N. Y., which employs 450 severely disabled and mentally retarded persons.

The relationship between Human Resources and Abilities, Inc., headed by Mr. Henry Viscardi, Jr., and the department of physical medicine and rehabilitation, has been one of long standing as Mr. Viscardi has been a departmental faculty member for almost 15 years. Departmental trainees have long made seminar and observation tours to Abilities, Inc., and Human Resources and many of the faculty have assisted in the planning of facilities at the Foundation.

Under a grant from the National Institutes of Health in 1960, the Foundation was able to put up its own building, which included special classroom and research laboratories to establish the Human Resources School devoted entirely to teaching handicapped children. Only those children considered "homebound" were acceptable. The success of this operation has now resulted in the erection of a separate building to house the school, allowing the Foundation to enlarge its program and expand research facilities.

With the growth of Human Resources and the new departmental affiliation, departmental residents will be assigned to the Foundation for research and observation, thus allowing the trainees a broader scope of experience than has previously been available. Under the new affiliation, the following general areas of study will be undertaken: Pediatric rehabilitation, energy cost studies, psychological studies, and verbal impairment.