

# *The* **child care worker**



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Tydskrif van die  
Nasional Vereniging van  
Kinderversorgers

Internasionale Geaffilieerde

**CWLA**

Child Welfare League of America

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The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-racial organisation which provides the professional training and infrastructure to improve standards of care and treatment for children in residential settings. Die Nasionale Vereniging van Kinderversorgers is 'n onafhanklike, nie-rassige organisasie wat professionele opleiding en infrastruktuur verskaf om versorging en behandeling standarde vir kinders in residensiële omgewings te verbeter.

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# NACCW/NVK



## How do you recognise a child care worker?

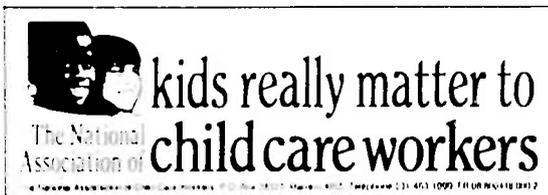
There's no way to recognise a child care worker, really. They look just like anybody else. There are no special clothes, no badge, not even a distinctive halo! He

might be that person waiting in that queue over there, or that lady there at the sports counter buy-

ing that swimming costume. Come to think of it, she does seem to have quite a few kids, and an odd selection of kids, now that I look more closely! I mean can that tall slim girl really be the sister of that pudgy little guy? And who on earth is she buying the swimming costume for! Oh now I see: Good Lord, they're being joined by another three kids. That's no ordinary lady. Too right. And chances are that lady is also doing a lot more than buying a swimming costume. She's

probably holding together a fairly difficult trip to the shops, but one which she knows is necessary for all those kids.

They're having fun, sure, but they're also learning (anything from no you can't have an ice cream through wow does that costume really cost R23.99 to yes its hard to



be patient and wait for your turn to have a new costume.

So child care workers could conceivably be recognised as the patient ones, the ones doing a lot of explaining, or maybe the flustered ones, certainly the ones with a lot of kids around them.

Or maybe we will just get to know them as those who have this new bumper sticker on their cars, available from any office of the NACCW in return for a R2 donation. Did you get yours yet?

## What books are child care workers reading?

A couple of months ago in this journal, we were all challenged by our National Director about our reading habits.

"There's a world of books available that can stretch out thinking, challenge our practice, keep us enthusiastic and affirm what we do" she claimed.

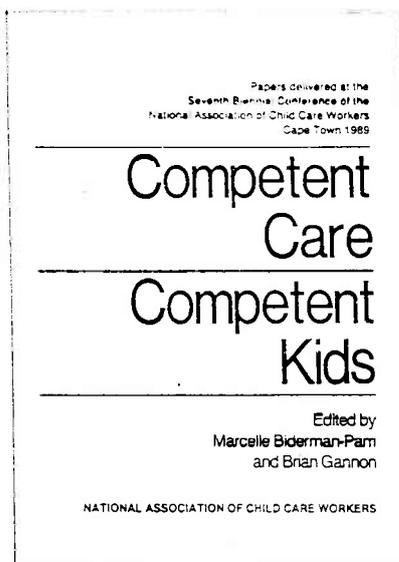
All those benefits are wrapped up in one package, in a new volume published this month by the NACCW. *Competent Care - Competent Kids* is a collection of important presentations and papers from the 1989 Biennial Conference of the Association. This book includes material of interest to child care workers, to social workers, senior staff and members of management committees. The chapters deal with shelters, children's homes and places of safety; with research, practice, structural models, clinical issues, administration, state policy, staff training,

programme evaluation and forward planning. This is a soft-covered 270-page book with contributions from child care people from all over South Africa and at all levels of practice. *Competent Care - Competent Kids* makes an ideal

group reading project for the staff of a children's institution, whereby each staff member undertakes to read and then present the material to the team in the form of a discussion at in-service training sessions.

The book is available from all offices of the NACCW at the price of R25.00 (no GST is payable) or it can be ordered by post from NACCW Publications Department, P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735, adding R2.00 for packing and postage.

Good child care books are rare enough in any country. Here is a South African publication to stand with the best, which will be stimulating to you the reader and helpful to the work of your organisation.



Two staff members recognise a common problem encountered by adults living and working with children ...

## Splits and Divisions in the Child Care Team

Alan Roberts and Janine Brunyee  
*Child Care Workers at Oranjia Children's Home in Cape Town*

Staff teams, like parents in families, are prey to splits and divisions, and child care workers who haven't been subject to this phenomenon are few. To illustrate in concrete terms how splits and divisions can operate, look for a moment at the family.

Louise asks her father if she may go to the shop. Father forbids her. "It's almost suppertime". Louise then approaches her mother behind father's back. Mother gives permission. As Louise is on her way out, her father spots her. "I told you you can't go to the shop, Louise". Louise replies: "But Mom said I could go". Father feels undermined, ineffectual, and impotent as a parent. Conflict occurs between the parents.

Does this sound familiar? This drama plays out in children's homes too, except that here the situation is significantly more complex and fraught with difficulties due to the artificial nature and larger size of the "parental" group (the staff team) and the "sibling" group (the children).

Splits and divisions between staff members occur also for reasons which do not directly involve the children: discordant conceptual frameworks, conflicting value systems, conscious and unconscious feelings of rivalry, incompatible work ethics — to name a few. Such staff divisions and tensions, while inevitable, are frequently aggravated when carried into transactions with the children as exemplified above.

The boundaries between different members of the staff team and the children can vary with one care worker preferring diffuse boundaries and being more enmeshed with the children, another preferring rigid boundaries and staying underinvolved with the children, a third enjoying clear boundaries and affiliating himself appropriately with the children. These different styles of relating can provide a rich breeding ground for splits, divisions and tensions.

Often, coalitions and alliances among staff and children proliferate because of this uncertainty over appropriate borders

and lack of clarity as to where overinvolvement or underinvolvement begin. Clear, well-defined borders, allowing for well-balanced, appropriate contact between staff and children, are essential for a functional system.

To state the obvious: It is important for the child care team to prevent splits and divisions as far as possible and to restore staff relationships damaged by splitting as soon as possible. Any dysfunction in the child care team negatively impacts on the children. They sense it soon.

### Prevention

The staff team ought to provide a model to the child about the nature of intimate relationships and about the transactions between men and women in general. The dynamics of this adult team are likely to affect the child's relationships later in life. How, then, can the child care worker work to prevent splits, and to restore relationships damaged by splitting?

1. *Awareness* of the dynamics of the phenomenon, described above, as they present themselves in your context. This is half the battle won.

2. *Three C's* — *Consultation, Collaboration and Communication*. Returning to

the above example, had Louise's mother asked Louise if she'd already asked her father, things might have happened differently. Louise's parents could have consulted with one another and come to a joint decision. In this way, no one feels undermined and no strain is placed on the marital relationship.

3. *Sensitivity group for staff*. Because of the stressful nature of child care work, it is difficult for staff members to nurture relationships between themselves.

One solution involves the establishment of a weekly group for staff led by an outside consultant. The objective of such a group would be group cohesiveness and to create an opportunity for child care workers to experience each other as *people* rather than only in their team *roles* as happens during work hours. Ideally, this group would provide staff members with a supportive, nurturing and regenerative time together which would contribute to the quality of worktime.

In conclusion, children in residential settings — especially — are walking a tightrope between childhood and the adult world. They are prone to slip and fall daily, and it is important that the safety net of the child care team be intact and not have weak links. Forgive the cliché, but the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The child care team needs to inspect and mend any damage to the safety net continuously — for the children's sake as much as for its own.

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*Just because your mother said "Yes" and I said "No" does not give you a casting vote — and 'the moral high ground of a democratic majority'.*



The second in a series on the Environment by Peter Slingsby

## Environmental Education and Children's Homes

My own experience of children's homes is exclusively Cape-based; other provinces please excuse me if a few observations are unfair to you.

Two items are relevant. The first observation is that, with a few notable exceptions, the children's homes I know are biological deserts, occupied only by humans, small creatures adapted to life in human habitations such as spiders, other smaller creatures which, despite the best efforts of the matron, inhabit their human hosts. And maybe a resident cat. Outside there may be a scrap of grass, often banned from use, and a seedy shrub or two. Trees, if there any at all, are often legacies of the previous occupiers. Gardens and growing things do not rate very high on management's list of what constitutes a suitable environment for caring for children; even lower on the list seems to be any inclination to involve the children in the wonder of growing things.

The second observation, even more important than the first, is that the few children I know personally who are in homes, and whom I visit as frequently as I can, always ask me to take them out whenever I visit them. This never fails to suggest to me that one of their urgent needs — mind-broadening experiences — is not being well-met by the home. Or else why are they always so keen to get out of the place, if only for an hour or two?

### Experience deprivation or enrichment

In a "normal" family home a number of things might happen when the child returns from school. In a middle-class suburban situation there might be simply bicycle visits to friends, or organized karate lessons, and there is bound to be some sort of weekend family outing. Even in a very deprived rural situation there will be play with friends in the street, a trip to the bush to catch tadpoles or to shoot birds with a home-made catapult.

What I'm trying to say is that it appears that, whatever other fine, caring qualities they may have, there seems to be a definite lack of means to address experience-deprivation in many homes, even to the point where the simplest means, freely available to the most

deprived child in his home community, are lacking.

Let us look at ways in which experience-deprivation can be met, relatively simply, in the context of a children's home (treating experience-deprivation = environmental education).

The first essential step will be a willingness to break out of the mind-set that requires, for purely administrative reasons,



a daily post-school routine that fills the entire afternoon with meaningless activities like eating, homework and bathing that really don't need that much formal time (how much time do kids spend hanging around or skidding up and down the corridors in between these things?) Condense these activities purposefully and you will have hours at your disposal.

The second step will be consideration of suitable programmes. Any programme that requires active involvement from the children will be valid, so use that as your criterion. How about starting off with growing things? How many of your children know that peas actually grow on plants, not in tins? The important thing here is not to get hung-up about produc-

ing lots of juicy vegetables. Kids have short attention-spans and for every one who gets really excited about market gardening there will be fifty who lose interest long before the product is ready. It's enough that they should germinate a seed and see the baby plant begin to grow.

You might have rural children in your home who have never ridden on a train; been in a lift; driven into a parking garage — you might have a group of such children and spend a few sessions enjoying these experiences.

### Available resources

How many different human and natural environments do you have near your home? Parks, factories, church-yards, rubbish-dumps, a nature reserve, a brick-works, an airfield, a beach, a dunefield, a five-star hotel, a rocky koppie? You might consider a programme that looks at these, that takes your children into them to experience them first-hand. You don't need a lot of expert knowledge to find, go to and be in such environments — if you need more knowledge, it's readily available.

The third step will be to allow your child-care workers to get to know their charges in ways other than who owns which underpants, or who desperately needs help to correct the school's inadequate maths teaching. It seems to me, as a mere father, not trained in child care, that to work successfully with children you need opportunities to get to know them in the most multi-faceted way possible. Informal programmes which require an input of adult imagination and the children to do the rest are finest ways to get to know kids. In other words, allow your child care workers scope to use their own imaginations to set up small programmes with small groups of children which will address the problem of experience deprivation. They might need transport occasionally: why not let the children's home's combi be used in this important way from time to time?

Finally, you might consider, especially for your older children, a challenging "outward bound" programme — not something that happens once, in one holiday, but regularly — every Tuesday afternoon or every Saturday morning. A programme that challenges them physically and imaginatively in ways that school games never did — climbing, abseiling, canoeing, camping, hiking, building something — need not be as expensive as you may think.

In the third and final article in this series I'll be looking at the many and varied resources, including outside help, which are available to you almost wherever you are.

## FOCUS ON THE NACCW'S BORDER REGION — I

# Roger Pitt's Report to the Biennial General Meeting on 8 October

The recognition that a distance of over 250 km between members of the old Eastern Province region was not conducive to effective functioning, led, during the period under review, to the establishment of two separate regions. The Border region was established on 23rd May 1989 and it gives me pleasure to report on its activities since that date. It was with mixed feelings that we lost the services early in 1990 of the Regional Director we had shared with Natal for some two years. A sense of sadness and loss was real, for we had come a long way with Lesley du Toit over a period of some six years. Our sadness, however, was tinged with excitement at the knowledge that she was to become the National Director, and we rejoice in the wider contact and influence she will have in that post, and the fact that we still have some claim upon her time and talents! To Lesley we express our very hearty thanks for the leadership given during her years with us. Her four visits a year to our area, for periods of ten days or more, involved not a little sacrifice in being away from her home and its comforts. We were frequently ashamed of the long hours to which we subjected her during her visits. Each Home in our area drew benefit from her visits, and her teaching skills were greatly appreciated as she led us time after time into new discoveries of ourselves and our task. As a Region we also grieved the loss of Brian Gannon — a remarkable and true friend who had helped us over many years to a deep understanding of the purpose of our existence. We do appreciate his continued involvement in the NACCW, but sorrow over the way in which his years of service as National Director came to an end. To Brian likewise we express our sincere thanks for his nurturance of the Border region over many years. We can never forget the principles he taught us with such enthusiasm.

### Training

Twelve training weekends have been held during the period under review — six for the teaching of the BQCC and six with senior groups. We congratulate those who have qualified with the BQCC, and hope during the year to continue with the presentation of the course so that others may complete or commence

the course. The senior group looked at various models for child care practice and looked also at the challenges facing us in a new South Africa. (The request of the newly formed Eastern Province region that they be allowed to attend one of our training week-ends each year was enthusiastically approved and we enjoyed the renewed fellowship of our weekend together in May). In addition some four regional workshops were held. We were privileged at one of these to have Ashley Theron, the National Chairman with us. The Regional Executive committee has met on five occasions during the period, and has sought to address some of the issues confronting our practice in this area and nationally. Full regional meetings, at which items of business were discussed, were held only twice, and we are concerned that this imbalance should be rectified in the new period of office. We are gratified that the Child Care Worker Forum is receiving enthusiastic support. While the social workers' group was discontinued we believe there could be value in its resurrection now that more social workers are involved in this field.

One thing that has become very clear to us during this period has been the fact that strong need exists for us to provide training in the mother tongue of child care workers. We have experimented briefly with teaching through interpretation — on one occasion doing a dual interpretation in Xhosa and sign language. The ideal would certainly be to train the large number of Xhosa speaking child care workers in our area in their language, and sponsors are being sought to make this possible.

The King William's Town team has used with enthusiasm the Problem Profile Approach of Masud Houghugh and is convinced of major benefits flowing from its use. The Regional Executive is looking at ways of training other Homes in its use. It is hoped also that special training for working with sexually abused children in residential settings will be offered during the coming year.

The recent visit to our country by Masud Houghugh was one of the highlights of our year. We were privileged to be able to host a workshop in our area under the title *The Continuum of Care*, and some 120 people gathered on this occasion from as far afield as Humansdorp and

Aliwal North to be challenged regarding the place children are given in our society. It was a special day also because we were able to reach a much wider group than is usual in our meetings, and we believe that we have cemented new friendships which will help us to further the cause of disadvantaged children.

### Future Planning

We have reason to be excited, I believe, at the opportunities confronting us in the near future. The many week-ends spent together by representatives from each home in our area, coupled with the fact that we spend every Monday morning together in training, have served to bind us together in the common purpose of doing the best that can be done for children away from home. It was the growth of this spirit of trust and confidence in one another that led to the very successful networking of the resources we have between the King William's Town and East London Children's Homes during 1990. The value of this sharing process is undoubted and has been conclusively demonstrated with remarkable results in both homes. When an approach was made by Woodlands Mission to include them in the networking of resources from 1990 it proved an easy decision to make. As of January 1991 the King William's Town Children's Home will set its present Principal free for involvement in three Homes with a potential enrolment of 200 children. It is regrettable that the request from the Khayaletumba Children's Home for the same involvement has had to be declined for the moment if this programme is to be successfully implemented and consolidated. In addition the King William's Town Home has made representations to enable it to open its doors from January 1990 to coloured children. The challenge of cross-cultural care therefore looms excitingly before us, and the full support of members of the Association is highly valued. We need each other so much and will be learning from one another in a new way as we step out together in these ventures. I commend to your prayerful consideration the needs at Khayaletumba, and ask you as members of this region to be reaching out to them whenever you can with the help they so much need. Spare a thought also for the King William's Town team as they attend to the required adjustments and re-structuring.

I thank the members of your Executive Committee, viz. William Adams (Treasurer), Sarah Burger (Secretary), Harry van Eck, Ronel van Zyl, Sr. Laetitia, Coletta Waterson and Corrie Theron for serving us well during this period of office. □

## FOCUS ON THE NACCW'S BORDER REGION — II

# Beyond the borders of civilisation: Talking to Sarah Burger and Roger Pitt of the King Williams Town Children's Home

Sarah Burger began as a child care worker at King Williams Town Children's Home six years ago. She has just been appointed Principal of the Home with effect from January 1991. Brian Gannon interviews Sarah and former Principal Roger Pitt.

*CCW: It's always good to talk to a newly-appointed principal who has worked her way up through the ranks, having started as a child care worker. What made you choose child care as a career?*

*SB: It was something my husband and I had wanted to do for some time. We felt that we had something to offer, but had no idea how to go about it. We actually considered moving to America to do child care, but then we saw the advertisement for houseparents right in our home town at the King Williams Town Children's Home.*

*CCW: That was six years ago — twice the dreaded average service period for the profession. What was it that kept you in child care?*

*SB: I think that comes with being part of a go-ahead team, a strong team where there is tremendous support from all quarters.*

*I started in an on-line position, and although we enjoyed this, it was heavy on us as a family. But we were always, as child care workers, listened to and made to feel that our opinions were important, and given the opportunity to make decisions and make changes. And when there were problems, we were really understood and helped with them, and that's what enabled us to stay where we were.*

*CCW: After a period of on line work, you were promoted ...*

*SB: ... Yes, to Programme Manager. There was no specific training for this position, apart from the NACCW courses and seminars which all of us attended, and the supervision and in-service training on the job. Being part of the King Williams Town Children's Home team was itself a pretty rigorous training: on the one hand, the leadership*



*Sarah Burger with Brian Gannon*

*modelling we were exposed to was always of the best; but also, from leaders and colleagues alike, there were always the highest expectations of us, and this helped one to gain confidence.*

*CCW: Did you ever feel isolated being in King Williams Town?*

*SB: As a child care worker in my job, no. I was always aware of and supported by the team. But there was of course the lack of facilities nearby; there is no university near us, for example, and few human service agencies. There was also the feeling that more happened in the big centres, and we felt a little removed from the excitement of all that. Then again, we were always given the encouragement and the opportunity to attend conferences and functions in other centres.*

*CCW: I am on record as having said on many occasions that the King Williams Town programme was one of the two or three best in the Republic. How would you react to that?*

*SB: That's encouraging for us to hear. Certainly we always wanted to be abreast of developments in the country — and maybe even ahead from time to time! There was never any resting on our laurels, and I think we were a group of very keen learners.*

*We made the opportunities to learn: the regular NACCW weekends which, as far as the senior staff were concerned, went well beyond the existing coursework available; the weekly staff training for the Border Region; our own training on the team ...*

*CCW: Tell us about your new job, and what you hope to bring to it.*

*SB: The appointment is effective from January 1991, but it has really already started. As to what I shall bring to the position, I am not planning any major changes at the Home. Fortunately, for the time being my work will be largely confined to the professional child care side of the Home, and I shall only gradually move into the administrative role. What is going to be important for me, and for all of us, is that Roger Pitt will remain in an overall Director position, and we welcome that very warmly indeed. We are, all of us, involved in much exciting forward planning for the homes in the Border Region, and there is close co-operation between our home and two others. Otherwise, there are challenges enough, for example, we are entering the period of cross cultural child care work, and learning to do that well is going to be a new experience for many of us. Also, we will continue to struggle to find child care workers in a place like King Williams Town. It is a luxury to be able to stipulate certain criteria when looking for staff: we usually have to start with untrained people and turn them into child care workers — which is after all the way I started. So we will go on ...*

**Roger Pitt was formerly on the Management Committee and has subsequently been Principal of King Williams Town Children's Home since 1979. During the past year he has accepted consultative/executive responsibilities at the East London Children's Home which was without a principal, and to this he is adding a similar role at the Woodlands Missions Children's Home near Stutterheim.**



*Marie Cremer with Roger Pitt and Lesley du Toit*

*CCW: You are moving into what will effectively be a leadership position in three children's homes, and this seems to be a new idea in child care — apportioning skills across a number of institutions.*

*RP: It probably all started six years ago when a certain gentleman called Brian Gannon challenged our Management Committee on the whole matter of staff*

structures, and particularly middle management structures: "What would you do here?" he asked of them, "If tomorrow your present Principal walked under a bus?" This made us look very seriously at the need to ensure that we had a *team* here, more able to share responsibilities. This last year I took on the task of part-time Consultant Principal at East London Children's Home, and was able to devote a few days a week to this — but I made a lot of use of the team at King Williams Town Children's Home. This has been valuable, not only for East London Children's Home in that they were able to draw on the resources at 'King', but also for the team here at King in that they themselves felt extended in having new opportunities to assist and teach and lead elsewhere. They grew a lot from the experience. It was good to be able to use staff from here temporarily as a programme manager and an on-line supervisor at East London — but a viable middle management structure has grown in East London now, and from 1991 we will no longer need the input from my team here in King.

*CCW: How did you approach the various aspects of the work in East London? The Home had been without a Principal for some time — where did you start?*

*RP: I began, naturally, with the child care side. We were lucky to be able to bring some new resources on to the team, including a psychologist and later a social worker, and the child care came together well. Then it was possible to look at the business management aspect of the home, the funding, the administration, etc. I will continue to hold a watching brief over these in the year to come, but the new staff structures will be largely independent and autonomous.*

*CCW: Subsequently you have been asked to assist similarly at Woodlands, which is a facility for black children. Is there some administrative or corporate link being planned for the three homes?*

*RP: We had gone a long way in exploring the possibility of a new umbrella body perhaps to be known as the Border Children's Homes. This type of structure would be feasible and would, for example, have some built-in safeguards against such problems as staff changes, particularly at senior staff level. However, we decided to wait and see what types of welfare and child care policies are going to emerge in the future South Africa, so that whatever we eventually plan will fit in and be acceptable. So at this time East London Children's Home and Woodlands are buying some of my time as a consultant from King Williams Town Children's Home. I shall be*

spending one-and-one-third days each week at East London (mostly working on the business administration), and two-and-one-third days at Woodlands. At Woodlands I shall have to assess the size and shape of the task first, I shall have to listen carefully and be guided by those who know the situation. We have worked very closely for some time now with staff from Woodlands, but nevertheless the whole experience of cross cultural child care will be new for me; certainly exciting and challenging, but also unknown and scary. Here I will be able to use different staff from King Williams Town: two staff members will be joining me there two days a week.

*CCW: Your new perspective gives you a broader idea of the overall child care needs which exist in your Region.*

*RP: Certainly the needs for 'coloured' children are vast, in that the nearest available children's home is in Port Elizabeth — and that is a small facility — and most children are being sent very far afield to places like Tulbagh and Kamieskroon — which makes a nonsense of ecological treatment and family rehabilitation. Also, it is not true that there is no need for facilities for white children: youngsters are being referred out of this area to places as far as Bloemfontein and even further afield. There is clearly a need for East London Children's Home to be operating at its full capacity, and should we wish it, we could keep King Williams Town Children's Home filled with white children. Existing facilities for black children are full and they are turning away applications all the time.*

*CCW: In the mean time you are planning to admit coloured children to King Williams Town Children's Home?*

*RP: We need as a children's home to be addressing the needs of our area. I have mentioned the fact that now children are being shipped to the Western Cape and Namaqualand, and this seldom achieves sound child care goals. The House of Representatives is enthusiastic about our offer, and the House of Assembly has been approached. We will have to go about this with extreme sensitivity, one step at a time. We would need to understand very carefully what the children are going to need from us, and the futures we are preparing children for. In South Africa there can still be major differences between the realities of the rural and metropolitan situations. We would have to fine-tune our programmes, to develop our staff accordingly, to maintain our funding base ... There is a lot of work for all of us to do, but we are willing to tackle it in our Region. □*



ACVV Moreson Kinderhuis  
George, K.P.

### Voltydse Inwonende Hoof

**Pligte:** Oorkoepelende beheer-funksie van alle dienste

**Aanbeveling:** Opleiding in 'n geesteswetenskap

**Diensaanvaarding:**

- 1 Februarie 1991 of so spoedig moontlik daarna
- Salaris volgens ondervinding of kwalifikasies
- 3 Slaapkamer woning beskikbaar
- Pensioen en mediese fonds word aangebied

**Sluitingsdatum:** 7 Desember 1990  
Aansoekvorms verkrygbaar by:  
Die Hoof, ACVV Moreson Kinderhuis, Posbus 68, George, 6530  
Tel: 0441/744798

### Social Worker

Louis Botha Home for Children invites applications from registered experienced mature persons. Should be fully bilingual and preferably have had experience working in a children's home as well as in group work with both children and house parents. Duties include: counselling children and biological parents; supervising house parents; placement of children with due regard to the legal aspect; screening prospective holiday parents. Salary in accordance with Departmental scales. Medical aid and pension schemes available.

Apply in writing giving details of qualifications and experience to:  
The Principal, 5 Briscoe Lane,  
Queenswood 0186 Tel (012)  
73-6184

Jane Keen presented this paper at the South African National Council for Child & Family Welfare Symposium in September 1990.

## Dealing with street children



In looking for possible strategies for dealing with street children we need to bear in mind the special characteristics and needs of children as well as the present context in South Africa. We have heard estimates of the extent of the problem. Unfortunately it seems likely that the situation is going to deteriorate before it improves. We have a rapidly growing population, with people pouring into the cities, and a struggling economy which is unable to provide full employment. We have political turmoil and violence, particularly in the Transvaal and Natal, and it is the children who are liable to suffer most. We also need to consider the consequences of Aids which will hit us in full force in a few years time when thousands of children will be left without parents. Unless by then we have a much improved welfare system which can accommodate all these children they will be taking to the streets as the only option open to them. We need to be planning now!

In the past strategies for dealing with street children have been polarised. On the one hand the children have been ignored and treated as invisible. If a problem is not acknowledged, like so many in this country, it obviously does not have to be dealt with. This strategy of not seeing has been true for government, as it has been true for social work agencies and the general public. None of us likes to see children begging or sleeping out in the cold, and the temptation is to pretend that they are not really there, or to pass them off as someone else's problem. At the opposite end of the spectrum the strategy has been to overreact, punish and

control. Children have been (and still are) policed, imprisoned and sent off to state institutions in attempts to make them conform. As we know these tactics are also inappropriate and have been largely unsuccessful in dealing with the problem. Between these two extremes attempts have also been made to place street children in traditional children's homes, which have proved problematic for both the homes and the children. It is only in the last ten years that we have begun experimenting with other more appropriate strategies that are less formal and more child centred. In fact we have made tremendous strides in terms of the services now available to street children, public awareness of the problem and research. We need to build on this foundation.

### Solutions

We are dealing with a vast and a complex problem which needs to be tackled from a number of different angles; at government level, in the provision of direct services to the children on the streets, through contact with the communities of origin, through public awareness, and by co-ordination and research.

Major political change is needed to address the *causes* of children being on the streets. All we can do now is to highlight a few of the ways in which the state could address the issue directly.

In terms of legislation, the Child Care Act, which purports to work in the best interests of the child, is problematic when it comes to street children. It is a sophisticated document dealing with children on

an individual level, a first world solution to a third world problem. The Act needs to be amended to make provision for the registration of shelters which are appropriate for our target group, and to simplify procedures for processing street children through the children's courts. We also need legislation to control the sale of solvents to children to assist in the fight against drug abuse.

Another major area where we need government intervention is in funding for these projects. Throughout South Africa, shelters are caring for hundreds of destitute children, with minimal state support. We need to push for subsidisation based on the size of the shelter and the number of children it accommodates. We are told that 'subsidisation by programmes' is coming, but the delays would seem to indicate a reluctance by state welfare departments to take on this extra responsibility. Local authorities also need to be encouraged to take up the issue, since it is in the urban areas that the problem manifests itself. Councils are often in the best position to provide land and buildings for projects and must be encouraged to assist with funding. A local council can also play a useful role in liaising between government authorities (eg. the police) and private agencies.

Education is another area where government can play a role. In addition to the problems at home, children often have difficulties at school which contribute to their running away, and they are on average about four years behind the standard that they should be in by the time they are admitted to a shelter. Apart from the fundamental changes in education being debated nationally, we need far more remedial and special education classes both on a preventative level and to assist children to reintegrate into school. Social workers attached to schools could do much to help detect and deal with problems at an early stage so that the situation does not deteriorate to the point where the child drops out. Extra-mural activities and after school care, severely lacking in most black schools, could also play an important role in helping to keep children off the streets and in their own communities.

Yet another area where services are severely lacking is in psychiatric care. A small but significant proportion of street children have severe emotional and behaviour problems. They need specialised care and yet attempts to enlist the support of psychological and psychiatric services in Cape Town has been extremely frustrating. Because these children may not display the kind of symptoms which can easily be labelled by known psychiatric disorders they are not acknowledged to need help — again ignoring the problem. We

need continually to pressurise the relevant authorities until they *do* begin to research, recognise and provide services for the type of problems street children experience.

#### Direct services

Let us look at direct services for children on the streets. As we are still relatively new to working with street children much of our work is experimental. We often have the notion that there is *one* perfect model, the solution waiting to be discovered. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers, but there are a range of strategies we can adopt. In fact each project needs to be adapted to local conditions and needs, and a selection of facilities enables children to choose what suits them best. We may not have a blueprint for what to do, but there are some important principles in working with street children. Projects should be child-centred and founded on respect for the child and the development of self-esteem. Shelters should preferably be small, accessible and informal, with a warm atmosphere. They should not resemble the large institutions which many have run away from already, and admission must be on a voluntary basis. The staff are of course key players in the success or failure of a project. The ideal child care worker is warm, easy to relate to, accepting, non-judgemental and firm. He or she also needs flexibility, energy and the ability to work in a very busy and often chaotic environment. In addition to other training, child care workers in this field need specific in-service training to assist them with the extra challenges. Children need to be involved as far as possible in decisions affecting their lives. The skills they already have must be acknowledged and developed so that they not only survive, but can continue to take control of their lives. In our desire to give these children back the childhood they have lost we are in danger of overprotecting them and taking away their independence. It is much easier, more efficient and less costly and chaotic to do *for* the children, rather than to let them learn for themselves, but it is the process of involving them in running the projects and making decisions that is ultimately humanising and empowering. Finally, our strategies must aim to be *low cost* — if we are ever to meet the needs of these thousands of children we cannot afford expensive first world models of care. Many of these are principles for all children in care but they are especially so for street children.

#### Range of services

The ideal range of services in town or city where the need is big enough would include the following:-

1. *Street work*. This involves working directly with children wherever they are on

the streets, befriending them, building up trust and acting as a resource when necessary. Those who do not and cannot make use of any shelter are often the most vulnerable of all, and a street worker may be able to assist where no one else can.

2. *Soup Kitchens* or mobile vans are probably the easiest way of making contact with street children and this is the way many shelters have originated.

### The staff are of course key players in the success or failure of a project.

3. *Drop-in Centres*. A development of the soup kitchen is a more permanent non-residential drop-in centre providing cheap or free food, recreation, lock up and washing facilities and staff on hand to talk to if necessary.

4. *Night Shelters*. These would run along similar lines to those for adults, catering for those who cannot cope with even the most basic structure in another shelter and would provide safety and security, at least at night. Hours of opening would have to be negotiated as many of the children would no doubt want access as late as possible.

5. *Shelters*. This is the most common strategy adopted in South Africa today apart from soup kitchens. Some are officially registered as children's homes which enable them to qualify for subsidy for children officially in their care. However, this can also be a disadvantage as much time and effort is taken up in dealing with red tape. Again, a range of shelters providing for differing needs and children at various stages is ideal.

6. *Centres for 'Runaways'*. This operates like a small place of safety where children who have recently run away can be referred before they become streetwise. As such it plays an important preventative role.

7. *Homes in Communities*. If each community which 'generates' street children had a small informal home where children could take refuge in a crisis, many would not need to take to the streets. They could remain in touch with family and friends and their schooling need not be disrupted.

8. *Children's Homes*. A major dilemma for most shelters is what to do with children when they are ready to move on to something more permanent. Many will never be able to return home, are unsuitable for foster care (as it is at present in South Africa) and the only option then

seems to be a children's home if one wants to avoid Schools of Industry and Reformatories. Yet very few homes are flexible enough to cater for ex-street children. Their admission criteria and procedures are exclusive, their expectations high and their programmes inappropriate. It may be that we will again have to develop our own resources.

9. *Secure units*. For those children unable to return to school immediately, or ever, alternative non-formal education projects are essential. There are a number of excellent projects running, and we now need to expand into vocational training and job creation programmes.

#### Communities

While we have to work directly with street children wherever they are, it is also important to work with their communities of origin. Together we need to try to tackle some of the problems causing children to run away. Various strategies have already been suggested. Others might include work with gangs, improved recreation and sporting facilities, day care centres, and training and support for parents.

To supplement these strategies we need good public awareness campaigns — for education as well as for fundraising. In addition we need to target key groups for special input e.g. the police, teachers and social workers.

Then we need to evaluate. There has been a tremendous upsurge in research on street children over the past few years but very little as yet has focussed on the outcome of our programmes. Success as we all know is extremely difficult to measure which is probably why we have avoided evaluation for so long. However we do need some objective confirmation that we are on the right track, particularly when we face the many ups and downs in this work.

In our quest for the best child care let us co-ordinate our efforts, support each other and share resources. Let us not become exclusive and forget the most needy still on the streets. We have a long way still to go.

#### Relief Housefather

The Homestead and Patrick's House (Shelters for Street Children) have a vacancy for an experienced Housefather to serve both centres in a relief capacity.

This is a full time permanent post, and we are looking for a single man, who is flexible, energetic and capable of working with children who are considered difficult.

**Please phone the Principal at (021) 461-2381 or 45-1025. Starting date negotiable.**

# Besoek aan Aycliffe Centre for Children: Julie/Augustus 1990

Niel McLachlan

*Sielkundige, Hoërskool Kruiisig, George*

Aycliffe Centre for Children in County Durham is 'n inrigting wat voorsiening maak vir kinders en jeugdiges vanuit al die landdrosdistrikte in Groot Brittanje. Die kinders word opgeneem ingevolge Artikel 21(a) van die Kindersorgwet, 1980 en Artikel 53 van die Kinder- en Jeugwet, 1933. Elf aparte woonenhede huisves elk 11 tot 16 kinders. Ses van dié eenhede funksioneer as "open units" waar 'n oop beleid gehandhaaf word. Van die oorblywende eenhede funksioneer drie as "secure units". Jeugoortreders word hierheen gevonniss en daar word 'n beperking op hulle beweging geplaas in hulle eie sowel as die gemeenskap se belang. Royston is 'n bewaringseenheid wat ook gebruik word vir die assessering van nuwe toelatings tot Aycliffe. York House is in die finale stadium van voltooiing en sal dien as halfweghuis ter voorbereiding van jeugdiges wat Aycliffe sal verlaat en na ontslag weer in die gemeenskap opgeneem sal word. (Ek verwys u ook graag na 'n artikel "Kindersorgdienste in Engeland" deur Ashley Theron in *Die Kinder- versorger*, September 1989 waarin algemene inligting rakende Aycliffe Centre for Children vervat word en wat aanvullend tot my artikel is.)

## Woonhede

Ek en my vrou was bevoorreg om by ses van die 11 woonenhede as "personal tutors (care)" te werk. Kenmerkend van die eenhede is dat elke eenheid 'n unieke terapeutiese benadering, eie aan die personeel en die inwoners van die eenheid, inkorporeer. Kinders met dieselfde agtergrondsgeskiedenis, probleme en oortredings word sover prakties moontlik, saam in woonenhede gegroep. Vervolgens gee ek 'n kort beskrywing van elk van die ses woonenhede:

**Stammer:** Uniek aan die woonenheid is die feit dat gehoorgestremde kinders met gedragsprobleme hier gehuisves word. Die personeel verbonde aan Stammer ontvang dan ook spesialisopleiding in die hantering van gehoorgestremdes. Die kinders se gedrag word daagliks gemonitor en terugvoering tov. elke kind se gedrag en vordering geskied deur middel van daaglikse groepsbesprekings of "huisvergaderings".  
**Franklin:** Seuns tussen die ouderdomme agt en dertien jaar word hier geakkommodeer. Die eenheid funksioneer met be-

hulp van 'n "token economy"-sisteem. Vir elke seun word terapeutiese doelwitte geformuleer. Die realisering van die doelwitte bring mee dat "tokens" verdien word waarmee voorregte, soos om met 'n BMX-fiets te ry, gekoop word.

**Spielman:** Adolesente meisies met 'n geskiedenis van seksuele misbruik en molestering word hier gehuisves. 'n Kliënt-gesentreerde terapeutiese benadering word deur die personeel gevolg ten einde 'n klimaat van aanvaarding en wedersydse vertroue en respek te skep. Binne die klimaat kry die erg ontwrigde meisies die geleentheid om hulle onopgeloste emosies en konflikte te verwerk. Spielman skakel ook met die Durham Jeugklub. Die skakeling het tot gevolg dat die meisies die geleentheid tot aanvaarbare en gesonde sosialisering kry.

Die eenhede genoem in die bogenoemde drie paragrawe funksioneer almal as oop eenhede en huisves hoofsaaklik kinders wat ingevolge Artikel 21(a) van die Kindersorgwet, 1980 gekommitteer is.

**Royston:** Royston is 'n bewaringseenheid vir verhoorafwagendes. Die doel van die eenheid is dus in hoofsaak assessering en die orieëntering van nuwelinge. Die funksionering van die eenheid word volledig bespreek in Theron se artikel.  
**Sisken:** Die eenheid vorm deel van die drie sekuriteitseenhede waarheen kinders gevonniss word. Van die jeugdiges se oortredings is onder andere brandstigting, verkragting, gewapende roof en moord. Die terapeutiese benadering in Sisken berus hoofsaaklik op gedragsterapeutiese beginsels. Elke inwoner se gedrag word daagliks gemonitor en geëvalueer met behulp van 'n puntstelsel. Voorregte word verdien op grond van die totale aantal punte wat elke individu behaal.

**Heron:** Heron, wat deel vorm van die sekuriteitseenhede, huisves hoofsaaklik die meer senior jeugdiges, wat skuldig bevind is op aanklagte van verkragting en moord. Die eenheid funksioneer met behulp van 'n positiewe portuurgroep-kultuur en is as gevolg van dié stelsel tot 'n groot mate selfbesturend.

Die inwoners bepaal dus tot 'n groot mate self die algemene huisreëls, watter gedrag aanvaarbaar is vir die groep en watter gedrag onaanvaarbaar is. Indien 'n individu van die reëls sou afwyk, besluit die groep watter straf toepaslik sou wees. Die hele proses word egter deeglik deur die personeellede van Heron gekontroleer.

## Personeelontwikkeling

Aycliffe beskik oor die dienste van 'n eie personeelontwikkelingsdepartement. Die mees onlangse toevoeging tot die departement is die Centre for Adolescent Studies. Daar word beoog om kursusse vir die personeellede, in samewerking met die Universiteit van Durham, by die sentrum aan te bied. Die personeelontwikkelingsafdeling funksioneer ook as koördineerder vir die bestaande uitruilskema wat Aycliffe met soortgelyke instansies in Denemarke het.

## Sielkunde Afdeling

Aycliffe beskik oor die dienste van 'n Kliniese- en Opvoedkundige sielkundige. 'n Psigiater besoek die sentrum op 'n weeklikse basis. Wat teoretiese uitgangspunt betref, steun die sielkunde Afdeling sterk op die Kognitief-Gedragsterapeutiese denkskool in die Sielkunde. In die praktyk gebruik die afdeling egter 'n eklektiese benadering. Bo en behalwe hulle aandeel in die assessering en behandeling van die jeugdiges, loods die sielkundiges ook gereeld navorsingsprojekte. Een van die projekte het al vergestalt in die Aycliffe Problem Check List wat ook in die RSA van die NVK beskikbaar is. Die sielkundiges is ook verantwoordelik vir die formulering van terapeutiese programme vir die hantering van bv. enuresis, brandstigting en dwelmmisbruik.

## Samevatting

Die gunstige personeelid-kind-ratio verseker maksimale betrokkenheid van die personeel by elke kind wat na Aycliffe verwys word. Daaglikse groepsbesprekings in die onderskeie woonenhede en gereelde evaluering van elke kind se behandelingsplan deur kundiges verseker dat elke kind presies weet wat sy/haar terapeutiese doelstellings is en hoe om dit te realiseer. Baie dankie aan die direkteur, Masud Hoghughy en die personeel van Aycliffe vir 'n hartlike ontvangs en 'n aangename verblyf.

## Child care worker required

Driver's licence an advantage. For more information contact (021) 797-0262

**St. George's Home for Girls**  
WYNBERG, CAPE

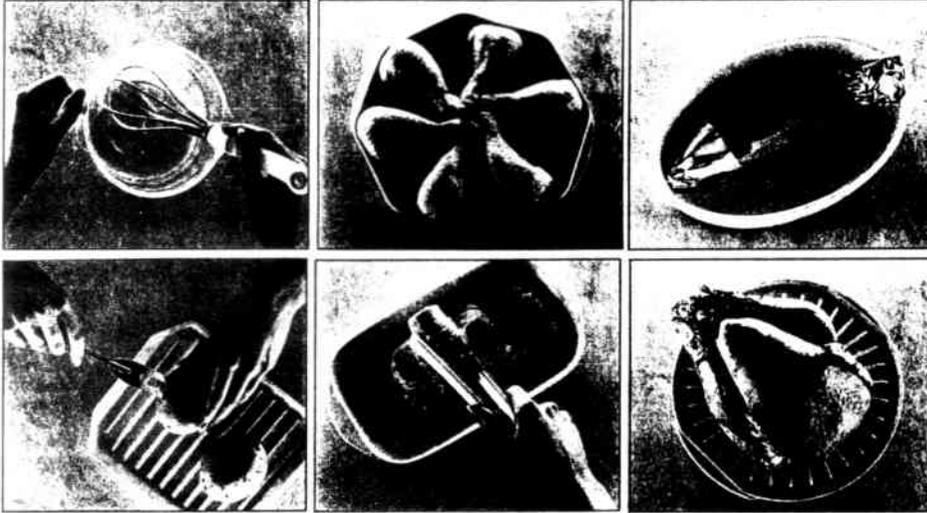
## Situations wanted

Mbongiseni Petrus Nzuza, St Mary's Seminary, Private Bag 545, Ikopo. Ph: (0336) 34-1153  
Qualifications: Matric, Completing NHCRC. Prefer position in Natal or Transvaal

Female (20 years old) completing 3 year Educare course at Technikon. Seeks child care position from January 1991. Preferably in the Western Cape area. Phone (021) 585-377.

For her BQCC assignment Sister Teresa Anne of Nazareth House in Johannesburg planned an activity group with some of her youngsters. The result offers an object lesson in effective and purposeful child care.

## The Dinner Party



I had chosen to let the children have a dinner party, mainly to teach them some basic life skills, such as shopping, cooking and social communication, and also as something they could all participate in and enjoy. I chose six of the older children: 2 girls of 16 years (I shall call them "Tammy" and "Jane") who did not usually get on well together because of totally different temperaments, attitudes and moral standards, yet used each other for company. Tammy is generally the leader in the whole cottage, always showing good example, getting on well with all, and helping others and myself. Jane, too, is a leader, but in a negative way. She tends to lead the others into her sometimes unhealthy habits, but at the same time can be very isolated and withdrawn in her "own world". Next there is Karl, a 13 year old boy: good looking, popular and a "gang leader". He sometimes joins up with Jane, but can also show sensitivity and helpfulness. Nikki is a 13 year old girl, with a lovely disposition but has struggled to be accepted within the cottage, as she is Afrikaans and speaks a limited amount of English. However, she has become more confident and is no longer the scapegoat to such a marked degree. Her friend in the group is 10 year old Mary, quiet and withdrawn, but who has begun to show more affection and to stand up for herself. Lastly is Danny, a 10 year old, who hero-worships Karl, and is "subject" to him and delights in being his "buddy in trouble!"

I first explained to them what had to be done and why, and asked if they would be interested in joining in. Their eagerness and enthusiasm were contagious

and made for an exciting atmosphere. This, I felt, was very necessary, in order for them to be motivated for a relatively long activity. I stressed that we were to have fun, and that I had thought of something to do, but they could change it or suggest improvements. I told them they could invite any six people, and they would do the shopping and preparing the meal. They were "chuffed" with the idea, and took to it like wildfire! There were many suggestions and a great deal of laughter. They chose their guests together, deciding not to invite their parents, for the sake of those who couldn't come, but did want to invite Tammy's mother, who is an alcoholic, whom the kids love, and with whom they share their ups and downs. This showed their thoughtfulness, sensitivity and generosity, for Tammy, who refused, saying it still wasn't fair for the others. This concern for each other is proper to a primary group. Danny said he had no-one special to invite, and I realised his deep sense of loneliness and isolation. Mary encouraged him, saying there were lots of people who were very fond of him. He wouldn't believe her. A young woman was suggested, who often comes in to visit or to take them out, who seemed to be well-liked by all. Karl retorted, "She walks in here and thinks she's so great!" — which was insightful — they resent being "pitied" and people who pat themselves on the back for their "kindness" to the children. They had also wanted to invite those who were special to me, for example, my brother or sister, whom they know, which I was touched by and thanked them for their thoughtfulness and kindness, but refused, gently stress-

ing that it was *their* party. They eventually decided on only four adults, whom they all knew and were fond of. They discussed whether to just serve them and not eat with them, but I remarked that in their own homes they would eat with their guests, serve them and entertain them (hoping that it would be an opportunity to learn socially acceptable behaviour and conversation). There was a lot of laughter and team spirit, as they felt specially chosen out of the whole cottage. It was interesting that the ideas and suggestions were not dominated by the usual leaders, but that all contributed and all felt involved. Danny seemed to be the isolate, but came out of himself with a little encouragement. They decided to use the vacant cottage for the party and started planning the decor for their "restaurant"

### Session

# 1

### Decorations

(Time: 2 afternoons)

**Preparation:** The floor was covered with newspaper, and the following items were left for them to use as they wanted: brown, white, and coloured paper, several jars of poster paints and brushes, colouring crayons, wax crayons, stencils, cardboard, scissors, glue, staplers, string, magazines, foam cups, hoola hoops, rulers, pencils, pens, prestik and thumb tacs, rosettes and ribbons of all colours, scrap material, doilies and paper cakecups and anything else that looked interesting!

At first they said they'd forgotten all the things they'd been thinking up all night! I explained the idea of "taking a string for a walk", which Karl took to and started painting the string different colours, saying he was going to do a butterfly, which was very imaginative.

He had to paint metres and metres, and then wait patiently for it to dry (while pestering the others!) I suggested using the hoola hoops for mobiles, so Danny painted the foam cups, attaching rosettes to each, then tying string (which he had also painted different colours) through holes in the tops, and then tying them round the hoola hoops, which he had covered in coloured streamers he cut from crepe paper.

He made two of these and the effect was lovely, beautifully bright and well balanced. Jane, who is quite artistic, chose a long strip of paper and decided to do a mural. She created a romantic atmosphere, with much care and effort.

(The others “kindly” helped her fill in the gaps by doing hand and feet prints — which they thoroughly enjoyed!) Jane was the supporter, helping the others get started, giving them ideas and assistance. Nikki said she couldn’t paint or draw, so cut up the crepe paper into strips, made streamers and stuck them on the walls and ceilings. She also painted the paper cups, stuck them on cardboard, making an interesting design. I do calligraphy and so asked who would like a lesson. Tammy volunteered, and quickly got the “hang of it”. She cut cards, decorating them and printed the invitations. They were very good, considering she only had one short lesson! There was a quiet, busy atmosphere — having a common goal and each one finding his own forté — and feeling confident and involved. The played music while they worked, sharing ideas and teasing each other. Danny was quiet and did not really join in the conversation, being absorbed in what he was doing, but I think he felt at home and at ease in the group. Mary tended to get on the others’ nerves. She couldn’t settle on something to do and then threw her picture away and didn’t want to try again, being afraid of failure — so then she made coffee for us all. At one stage they started painting each other — myself included — which brought lots of laughter, but had to be stopped before the group got out of control. Towards the end Tammy was helping Danny, Jane was helping Karl, Nikki and Mary were tearing recipes out of magazines, with a spirit of involvement and concern for each other. They themselves chose to continue the next afternoon, being eager to finish their works of art! I left them by themselves, and they showed themselves mature enough to finish and tidy up, Tammy being the initiator and organiser. They were proud of their accomplishments as a team and the results were bright and festive.

## Session 2

### Table Setting

(Time: Two-and-a-half hours)

I asked the children to make a list of the things they would need, (eg. cutlery and crockery etc.) and we went to the store room to collect it all. I explained the difference between soup plates and pudding bowls; appetiser and main course plates; wine/sherry — drinking glasses; soup, pudding and serving spoons; knives — butter, fish, meat and fruit; forks — fish, starters, pudding and main course

etc. Karl displayed quite a knowledge and delighted in explaining to the others, while the girls together chose beautiful table cloths and serviettes. Karl started to tease and mock Nikki, with the result that she went off in tears, saying no-one wanted her in the group. I let her cry by herself for a while, then went and asked her how she was feeling. I sympathised with her, but felt she couldn’t deprive herself of lots of fun just because of what Karl thinks. She will have to learn to accept what others say, but still be confident that she is wanted and needed in the group. She agreed and felt better, saying she would come back and just ignore his remarks, which she did. We then set the tables — after I had shown them what goes where, they then finished the rest, with very attractive and decorative results. Danny had strategically placed his mobiles where you couldn’t help but bump into them! I was impressed by their efforts and praised their hard work, time and enthusiasm. Once again, Tammy and Jane played the leaders, while Mary was the quiet one. Danny, usually the isolate, was full of laughter and nonsense — but it may have been because Karl was in a good mood with him. Karl has a very strong influence on the group’s climate, and on each individual, depending on his mood. He has the ability to bring out a person’s worst and to make him feel less than nothing. He himself was deserted by his mother and let down by his father many times, and several foster homes have broken down, hence his own rejection and feelings of worthlessness. He only feels comfortable when he’s humiliating others. Yet he is very sensitive, and also builds his self-image by occasionally helping other but this needs to be developed.

## Session 3

### Shopping

(Time: One afternoon)

Preparation: They decided among themselves on the menu, and who was to prepare each course — each found what he/she felt he could participate in and contribute. (They have a much greater ability to organise themselves than I ever had!) They wrote a long shopping list — I pointed out that it was going to cost a fortune, and explained how they could do without some things and choose less expensive and simpler foodstuffs. So off we went and invaded the hypermarket! I deliberately chose somewhere with lots of space and everything under

one roof! They got everything on the list, choosing cheaper brands, picking their preferences, and discovering the dairy, meat and other counters. Danny followed behind pushing the trolley and got rather left out — I made a point of asking his opinion, or the others would have ignored him. They were all shocked by the prices especially one leg of lamb for nearly R40 — they calculated what it would cost to feed the whole house and for only one meal! While I was trying to teach them that it’s not okay to run and shout in the shop, Tammy and Karl raced off round the corner — nearly flattening Di Levine (sorry Di!) Tammy took the lead, as she had had more experience (due to role reversal when looking after her mother) while Mary became very insecure, clinging to me and giggling nervously. I had to keep disentangling her and asking her and Nikki to go and look for something else. This helped her slowly to feel more sure of her surroundings. The kids also chose a present for Tammy, whose 17th birthday was the date chosen for the party. Great thoughtfulness and involvement — showing they really cared for each other! A few days before this, Jane had received news that her father was in hospital with advanced cancer, so she was allowed home for a couple of weeks to be of some comfort to her mother, so she was absent from the group for these last two sessions. Her absence changed the group dynamics and climate quite drastically. There was almost a sigh of relief among the others (even though they were sympathetic and supportive towards her). There was a much more trusting atmosphere as Jane makes everyone prove that they’re up to her standards before she accepts them. And Karl now fell under the good influence of Tammy.

## Session 4

### Cooking and Party!

(Time: One afternoon and evening)

Each one found their necessary utensils, and their “space” in the kitchen. Mary chose to do the soup — and faithfully stirred it all afternoon — until it was thick enough to walk on! Tammy prepared Avocado Ritz, in small glass bowls and neatly decorated with lettuce, tomato and parsley (which Karl had picked in the garden and also used for mint sauce). Danny heated the vegetables and Nikki made cauliflower with cheese sauce. (She went home the next weekend and prepared it for her family — she was

## Five Years Ago

For readers who weren't around then, this regular feature remembers items from the pages of this journal this month five years ago

November 1985

Front page news (the journal carried news on the front page then) was of the First International Child Care Conference in Vancouver. The NACCW's National Director Brian Gannon had been invited to give one paper and to speak at three international workshops. The forecast was made (and in the event to be fulfilled): "By far the greatest on-going benefit of the Conference will be the very many friends and contacts made for South African child care around the world."

□□□

A synopsis was printed of the 1985 National Conference Keynote Address given by Vish Supersad. While it was an ideal that each child should find in his family, then in his community and then in his country ever-widening circles of love, security, challenge and opportunity, "the reality of life for the majority of our country's children is far from the ideal. In great measure it has been the deprivations brought on by the inequities in our society that have precipitated the crisis we find ourselves in today." He challenged child care workers to look more consciously at their roles as socialisers of the future society, and to see their institutions as embryos of that future society rather than as continuing reflections of the present sick society.

□□□

Stephen Greenspan het oor Benaderings tot Dissipline geskryf. Hy het tussen die *affektiewe*, die *gedrags* en die *kognitiewe* benaderings onderskei. Die

eerste hiervan lê klem op die verhouding en die kommunikasie tussen die ouer en die kind. Die gedragsbenadering dui aan: "Wees konsekwent. Versorgers moet positief reageer op goeie gedrag en negatief op slegte gedrag." Volgens die kognitiewe benadering moet versorgers deur woord en daad kinders help om die redes onderliggend aan hulle reëls en verwagtings te verstaan "Kinders behoort die waardes van die versorger en die gemeenskap innerlik te besef en moet hulle eie begrip saamstel van waarom en hoe om hulle hulle te gedra."

□□□

Peter Harper wrote on *The Psychological Tasks of Adolescence*. He reminds us how important the *pre-adolescent* years have been. Like Karen Horney: "Man is born neither devil nor saint: he merely reflects in his behaviour the nature of relationships he has had since the time of his birth with people who were important to him. Crises are normal in this stage of development, says Harper: "Without doldrums, pain, hurt, experimentation, aggression, tenderness, boredom, excitement, defiance, exaltation, responsibility, concern, love, hate, mood swings and rebellion, it wouldn't be adolescence."

□□□

Jo Wastell reported on the establishment of a Halfway House at St Michaels Home. An innovative post was created in the "ally", which suggests a colleague and guide more than a staff member of supervisor. This role applied in practice, since all of the girls shared responsibility and authority.

### CAPE TOWN

#### Child Welfare Society

The Society has a management position for an experienced social worker to form part of a team providing services to street children.

Duties include

- Supervision of social workers
- Management of shelters
- Development of new projects
- Co-ordination of work with street children

Applications are invited from experienced, bilingual social workers, with supervision experience and management ability able to commence duty on 1 January 1991.

Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Normal benefits plus generous long leave facilities.

Apply in writing to Child Welfare Society, P.O. Box 18008, Wynberg 7800

very proud of her new skills!) Danny and Nikki helped each other, mainly by relieving each other from the stove. Karl made the pudding which required a lot of tasting (and everybody helped in this area!) and also roasted the potatoes. There was involvement by all in roasting the lamb and learning to make a delicious gravy. No one person was the helper — they all were — and the interest and enthusiasm were contagious. Danny once again became Karl's scapegoat, and was very hurt by his sarcastic comments, and said he didn't want to come to the party. I said he was free to choose, and that of course he felt hurt, but the rest of us needed him and would really miss his company. He went off, but came back after a while, much calmer — having dealt with his emotions by himself. I asked Karl if he realised that some of the things he said could upset others, whether he meant to or not, to which he replied, "Danny's just a softie," but seemed to be a bit more considerate for the rest of the afternoon. There wasn't time for anyone to be the isolate — all were too busy. I had to take the leading role for this session, in order to organise and help each one, while Tammy was a great help — organising the washing up! And all too soon our guests arrived!

The candles were lit, and delicious smells were coming from the kitchen, with everyone dressed up. All went reasonably smoothly. Earlier I had given them a brief lesson in table manners, unacceptable language and serving skills etc. and had encouraged them to take part in the conversation. In the beginning they were all quiet, but later livened up and had their guests laughing. Tammy was the centre of attraction, it being her birthday, but each one got the acclaim and praise they deserved for their course. Nikki became very quiet, perhaps feeling her inability to speak English fluently. The guests were impressed and each child particularly proud of their achievements. They felt "we've done it — together!" There was not as much enthusiasm when it came to the clearing and washing up (Karl developed a sudden stomach cramp!) but all got stuck in and it was done quite quickly. They gave the leftovers to the other children — which enhanced their feelings of being special and doing something special together, but still all one group, sharing with each other. I congratulated and thanked them for their enthusiasm, co-operation, hard work, team spirit, and for the chance to enjoy each others' company. They thanked me for allowing them to have so much fun, and asked when the next one would be!?

Next time — we'll order take-away hamburgers and chips! □

## The National Executive met on 10/11 August 1990

### Finance

In spite of the appointment of a fund-raiser and hard work from the National Office and publications department, the financial position of the NACCW remains precarious. The long period without a fund-raiser took its toll. At the request of the National Executive, a new, overall, fundraising plan is being formulated and will possibly include some involvement of Regional Executives, plus an increase in course fees. From the 1st September the new financial procedures went into operation. Regions now account for an imprest float (decided by Regional Executives), to the National Office. Finance is linked to the regional budget which includes projects such as cour-

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS

# Report back

from the National Executive Committee

ses, seminars and conferences. Project proposals initiate the process and project reports provide the necessary information for accountability, evaluation and follow-up. The Children's Foundation continues to be the NACCW's principal sponsor and we are deeply indebted to them for their consistent support.

### Membership subscriptions

A summary report from the Publications Department indicated that there are 94 metropolitan corporate members, 115 non-metropolitan corporate members and 730 in-

dividual members.

### Journal subscriptions

There are 85 non-member individual subscribers and 144 agency subscribers in addition to our members who receive the journal. The National Director reported on the international interest in the Journal and suggested that international subscriptions be explored. It was noted with some pride, that Dr Larry Brendtro, in a keynote address to 800 Masters and Doctoral students in Child Care, had praised the quality of *The Child Care Worker* and encouraged

everyone to subscribe to it.

### Policy and Structure

A number of changes to the constitution were discussed and minuted at this and previous National Executive Meetings.

Such changes refer to issues such as financial procedures, the staff/executive relationship and the election of a vice-chairperson on Regional Executives. The meeting agreed that the proposed changes are to be written into one document and circulated to the members for postal voting (as per Clause 6.6 in the Constitution). The meeting further agreed that the new Mission Statement should be finalised and that a meeting would be held on the 11 September at the National Workshop.

A proposal from this meeting would be taken to the Biennial National Conference in 1991.



## Backwards and forwards, as we come to the end of the year ...

From Lesley du Toit

While the title sounds suspiciously like a commentary from a rocking chair, this brief article is really intended as a revue, a greeting and a glimpse into 1991.

1990 has been filled with challenge, excitement, pain and hope. The NACCW wobbled into 1990, after experiencing a difficult conference and challenges which threatened to undermine the very existence of the NACCW staff, and the support encouragement and resilience of the NACCW staff, and the support, encouragement and optimism of the members which has

brought us through — battered, bruised but also strengthened and ready to move forward.

The year started with a change in leadership and a challenge for me which I felt ill equipped to handle. I am deeply grateful to the staff team for their patience and support and I am humbled by their dedication, hard work and sacrifice, in spite of coping with their own sense of loss.

### Looking backwards ...

We ran a PPA trainers course, changed National offices said hello to Brenda (secretary to

Brian), welcomed BG into the post of publications manager, started this year's BOCC modules, said hello to Moira and Kate (fundraisers) met in Regions to debate the Mission statement, started PPA courses, opened a new Region, divided the Eastern Cape into two regions, negotiated to open a Region in Kimberley, I went overseas, held national staff meetings, ran a National Workshop, opened an office in Cape Town, said hello to Jane (secretary to Vivian), said goodbye to Ernie and hello to Clive as Natal Regional Chairman, moved the National office (again!) said goodbye to Moira, said goodbye to Marcelle Biderman-Pam, developed the new course Diploma in Child Care Administration ... There's lots more, but you can see why a spell in a rocking chair wouldn't go amiss!

Probably a hundred Child Care Workers will graduate with the BOCC in November. Congratulations to them and best wishes for a long, fruitful life in Child and Youth Care. Thank you sincerely to the many lecturers who taught the modules over the past two years.

### Looking forwards ...

There will always be much to be done in Child and Youth Care — both for the children, and for those who take care of them. The changes in South Africa plus the aftermath of the tragic and widespread violence has increased the task for us all. I and the staff team, look forward to working more closely with the child and youth care workers, as we make changes to existing courses, plan new courses, advocate for better subsidies, set up work groups to look at salaries and service conditions, establish standards of practice and a code of ethics, begin to research the tasks of child care workers, advocate for integrated practice and one welfare department, investigate and plan for effective alternatives in black child care; research, study and train for cross-cultural practice and generally build a better future for our children, youth and child care workers.

Between the backwards and the forwards comes a break — The NACCW staff will be on leave for most of December. May you have a blessed Christmas and every good wish for the New Year. □

**Courses**

*The Problem Profile Approach (PPA) course* is presently being conducted in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, with a total of fifteen teams participating in the course.

The course is run in partnership with The Children's Foundation and this has allowed for more than one course to run in certain centres.

On the whole the courses are progressing well and should be complete by June 1991.

*The Basic Qualification in Child Care:* It was reported that this course is well attended throughout the country and is to be initiated in Kimberley and George in the near future.

*Supervision in Child Care:* Regional courses have been developed and a National course will be collated and considered for National implementation.

*Managing sexually abused children in the residential setting* The pilot study and development of the course have been completed by Jean Wright and Cecile Frankel and the course is now ready to run in 1991. A training seminar for the trainers will take place in February/March of 1991 following which, the course will be conducted in the various regions.

**Registration of Child Care Workers**

The committee discussed this concern in some depth, recognising that the need for registration is a priority and that registration of child care workers as Associated

Workers under the Social and Associated Workers Act (as has been suggested in some quarters) would be unacceptable and a step backwards for the profession.

It was finally decided that registration of Child Care Workers would be more appropriately done by the NACCW as the professional association and that discussions with the relevant state departments should be initiated as soon as possible.

**Advocacy regarding subsidies, integration and a single state welfare department**

After discussion, it was decided that a policy document on subsidies, one welfare department and integration of programmes, should be formulated and taken to the Inter-departmental Consultative Committee with whom the National Chairman and Director should seek to meet to negotiate on these issues.

**Alternatives in Black Child Care**

The committee agreed that needs in this area were a priority for the NACCW and the National Director should re-establish working groups to assess the present needs and plan effective alternatives. The documents prepared by the original work groups would be used as a basis for further deliberations as these groups had made a valuable contribution towards solutions.

*The National Executive Committee is scheduled to meet again in February 1991.*

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*Write for a full Bibliography of all NACCW publications (R1.00)*

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR: NATAL REGION**

The Association invites applications from suitably qualified people with extensive experience in residential child care for the above full-time post. The successful applicant, to be based in Durban, will be responsible for the promotion of the Aims and Objects of the NACCW in the Region.

Further information: NACCW, P O Box 28323, Malvern 4055 or Tel. 463-1033

**The National Association of Child Care Workers**



## TRANSSVAAL

**Assessment and Therapy Unit**

Justine MacKenzie of St George's Home reports that this unit was established to serve children both in our care and those from the broader community. Assessments assist the placement of children in appropriate schools and/or treatment facilities. This includes a problem profile to direct



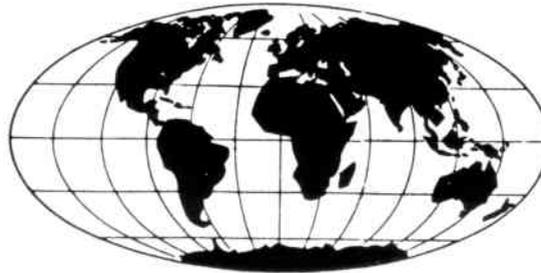
St Georges Home, Johannesburg

therapeutic or remedial intervention. A test library has already been established with an intern psychometrist in service under the supervision of Wits University. Within five months, 59 assessments have been carried out for children in our care, referrals from Transvaal Memorial Institute Children's Hospital and private remedial schools or institutions. Weekly psychotherapy and speech therapy is provided for our children by part-time therapists. We hope to establish links with a Clinical Psychologist ultimately to supervise the unit and also to involve intern Masters' students to extend therapeutic services to the community on an out-patient basis.

**Social Skills Course**

Michelle Theron — The Children's Foundation reports: The term 'Social Skills' is often used by many of us as part of our daily vocabulary. Recently eighteen child care workers learnt the real meaning of the term as they actively participated in a six-session course offered by the Transvaal Region of the NACCW. The course was run by Michelle Theron of The Children's Foundation. During the course child care workers were able to come together, share and exchange ideas, and learn how to run Social Skills Groups for the children in their care. The course was designed to allow them the opportunity to relax and enjoy the learning experience as well as to develop the necessary skills to enable them to:

- assess the level of Social Skills that the children in their care have;
- design and implement a programme to teach the children the necessary skills;



## Newsbriefs

Participants selected the skills they wanted to learn and during the six 3-hour sessions the following topics were covered:

1. Values and how they affect our thinking
2. Critical thinking
3. Decision making
4. Co-operation and working together
5. Being assertive in situations where others have violated rights.
6. Complaining effectively.
7. Principles of friendship.
8. Peer pressure.
9. Problem-solving.
10. Surviving loss.
11. Improving self-esteem and self-confidence.

The course was very practical in nature. All the activities could be taken and used with the children in their care. At the end of the course the participants handed in their Social Skills programme which they had designed and implemented as part of the course requirements.

**Johannesburg Children's Home Community Resource**

The Johannesburg Children's Home will be offering the following programmes for 1991.

1. Step Programme (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) which aims to assist parents with the following issues:- discipline and misbehaviour; how to listen to and communicate with your child; responding to your child through open communication. The programme is run weekly for nine consecutive weeks throughout the year. We will also offer a Step-Teen Programme for parents of adolescents depending on an adequate response.
2. Mother-Toddler Groups for mothers and toddlers who will benefit from this type of social and educational interaction. Activities, group discussions and lectures are offered for mothers as well as activities for the toddlers. These groups are run once a month in the mornings.
3. Counselling Service for Mothers of Young Infants. This will be a newly implemented service offering short-term counselling to mothers of young infants experiencing difficulties around parenting. We expect to be exploring inter-alia issues such as post-natal depression, sibling rivalry. Adjustments in terms of conflicts between career and child rearing; adjustments involved in becoming a parent for the first time.

For further information please contact the Director Joan Rubinstein at 648-1120, or Social Worker Michelle Gordon at 887-1779.

## WESTERN CAPE

**Disclaimer**

The Western Cape Regional Executive has dissociated itself from an ad hoc group purporting to investigate alleged cases of child abuse in Children's Homes. It was emphasised that it was not an official initiative of the NACCW, and people with information of this group have been asked to contact Leon Rodrigues on Telephone 02457-3930/1.

**Biennial General Meeting**

The BGM in October elected the following members to be on the Executive: Merte Allsop, Joy April, Basil Arendse, Coleridge Daniels, Derek Groep, Jacob Jacobs, Frank Kaminer, Marie MacDonald, Harold Malgas, Leon Rodrigues. Lyn Blair is the Social Workers' group representative. Leon Rodrigues was elected Chairperson and Merte Allsop Vice-Chairperson. Frank Kaminer is Regional Treasurer and Joy April is Regional Secretary. At the first business meeting portfolios were allocated.

**BQCC expands**

The BQCC is now offered to Schools of Industry and Reform Schools under the House of Representatives. After a period of negotiations the BQCC is now being presented to 28 students from Porter School, Faure School for Boys, Atlantis School of Industries and other Schools of Industries. National Chairman Ashley Theron with Denver van Heerden, Basil Arendse and Keith Balie are the trainers.

**BQCC Results**

The BQCC Module 4 results are available. All the students passed and employers have been notified. Thirteen Western Cape students will receive their BQCC certificates at the end of the year graduation ceremony. Congratulations!

**Focus on Child Care Skills**

On 25 October and 1 November child care workers gave 20-minute presentations on aspects of their work to colleagues. The subjects ranged from Weekend Relief Work, Orientation programmes, "Spare

the Child" to Communication with Kids and Conflict Resolution. All speakers were well received and answered questions from the floor. The hidden and often unsung resources and skills among the on-line child care workers shone out for two mornings! Unfortunately not many senior personnel attended, but the whole exercise was considered worth repeating in the future.

## NATAL

**New Premises**

The Regional office is now re-located to 18 Malvern Heights, Coronation Rd. Malvern. Moving days were a hoot; the rain held off long enough for furniture to be transported and interviews were conducted with staff in very informal attire! With enough goodwill, though, anything can be accomplished. A special thank you to Ethelbert Children's Home staff who assisted on the day. It is great having our own space and there is a feeling that one is part of a growth process. Telephones are installed and a wonderful firm donated blinds. Great things happening! There is an open invitation for members to come and see where we are and have coffee and a chat. See you soon.

**BQCC**

Lectures for this year are now over and evaluation papers being marked. Results will be in the post shortly. Please watch the diary for the dates of courses for 1991.

**Year end**

The Regional Office will be closed from the 10th December to the 7th January for annual leave. For those on holiday at this time of the year may this be a restful period and to everyone, a blessed Christmas.

**Biennial General Meeting**

This took place on the 26th October and was well attended. The National Director, who was the guest speaker, prodded each of us to think of our responsibility towards the growing of the profession of child care by asking "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The meeting produced a mixture of feelings. "Letting go" is always difficult and yet the Region had to do just this when Ernie Nightingale indicated he was not standing for Regional Chairman this year. How grateful the Region is for Ernie's guidance and knowledge over his past twelve years' involvement with NACCW. Our new Regional Chairperson is Clive Willows, the Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare. Clive's election engenders feelings of confidence and optimism for the future of the Region's affairs.

The Staff of the NACCW and the Editorial Board of *The Child Care Worker* wish all of our Readers the Compliments of the Season