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CURE

CITIZENS UNITED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

3944 ½ Third Avenue, San Diego, California 92103

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New Approaches in Education

MINNEAPOLIS MOVES AHEAD

Minneapolis schools are moving toward integration, toward alternative schools, and toward decentralization all in one fell swoop. However, the process is an evolutionary one. While changes are taking place in all of these areas simultaneously, total change is not happening immediately. Instead, change is progressive. Not only is it progressive, but it is happening at different rates in each of these areas and in each of the four geographical areas of the district. It began with an experimental project in one area of the district, and is being expanded into the other three areas. It appears to be both exciting and successful.

The Minneapolis Public Schools have about half the student population of the San Diego Unified School District. The Minneapolis district is divided into four administrative areas of about equal size: Southeast Area, East Area, North Area, and West Area.

The problems of the Minneapolis schools are not too different from those of San Diego. They also are faced with the problems of desegregating their schools, replacing old buildings, financing their programs, increasing parent participation, and, of course, meeting the continuing challenge of education itself, with particular attention to the basic skills of reading and mathematics.

The alternative program began in Minneapolis in 1971 when they received a $7 million federal grant as part of a national "experimental schools" project. This money was used to initiate the Southeast Alternatives program in the Southeast Area. A five-year project, it has already reached one goal of having alternative schools for all elementary students in the Area. It is used as a model for the programs being developed in the other three Areas.

In March 1973 the Board of Education instructed the Superintendent to initiate feasibility studies and the planning for implementation of a city-wide program of educational choices for Grades K-6, with a goal of full implementation by 1976. Other major goals established at that time were desegregation/integration, decentralization, inservice and human relations training for staff, teaching of basic skills, and replacement of old buildings. In the spring of 1974 a federal court ordered the desegregation of the elementary schools by that September. As a result of the court order, plans in the East Area were put into operation a year earlier than originally planned. In the fall of 1974 22 of 40 elementary schools were offering alternative programs.

A distinctive feature of the program is the careful planning and preparation, which includes the total community. A high priority is given to the preparation of administrators who are, or will be, implementing the alternative programs. This preparation includes conferences, and participation in courses which cover the concept and philosophy of alternatives, an overview of existing models, and site visits to alternative schools in the vicinity. For teachers there are workshops on teaming, individualizing reading, individualizing social studies, language experience approach to reading, and on the basic skills of reading and mathematics. Teachers also make visits to nearby alternative schools.

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SMALL BUSINESS AID AVAILABLE LOCALLY

CURE readers may be interested to know of the existence of the National Economic Development Association (NEDA) which has a San Diego office at 2725 Congress Street. NEDA is a non-profit, federally funded business development organization whose goal is to provide guidance and assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged businessmen. This primarily includes loan packaging as well as marketing, management, and technical assistance. Simply, NEDA's business is helping others to succeed in business.

With government funding from the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) and the Small Business Administration (SBA), NEDA currently operates 20 offices in cities located throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

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MINNEAPOLIS MOVES AHEAD

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A city-wide alternatives task force meets monthly. It is concerned with extending the program into the secondary schools, with evaluation, with further decentralization of its own functions, and other broad policy matters. In addition, in each of the four geographic areas the community is intensively and intimately involved in developing plans for their own area and implementing them.

While the planning process has been basically the same in each area, the rates at which plans have developed and the nature of the plans have been different in response to the different community needs. Initial impetus sometimes comes from parents, sometimes from staff, and sometimes from just part of a staff. As a result, there are about ten different models now operating throughout the district. Each model is similar to one of the five basic models described below, but they are not necessarily identical.

Five Models

One of the five basic models found in Minneapolis is the traditional or contemporary school, the typical school of today. There may be grouping within the class in reading groups or special mathematics groups. There may be aides or assistants, paid or volunteer, in addition to the teacher. There may be visits to learning centers and field trips. But by and large students spend most of their time in a single classroom with a single teacher.

Another model is the continuous progress school, also called ungraded or non-graded. Students may be formed into groups of 120 to 150 with a team of four or five teachers assigned to work with them. Within the large group there will be several subgroups and much regrouping around different subjects. The student moves ahead at his or her own pace. Some may complete the seven year elementary program in six years, others in eight. The basic curriculum is developed by the district and the teachers, though some variety in the form of mini-courses may be offered for the students' choice.

A third choice is the open school. In an open school several "interest centers" are offered in a number of classrooms. There is no grouping by age. Students and teachers work together to decide what and how fast each student will learn. The student visits and participates in the appropriate "interest centers" under the guidance of the teacher in order to achieve the objective chosen. There is no prescribed curriculum. There are many field trips and much use of adult volunteers.

Another option is the modified open school. It is similar to the open school in that there are choices available to the student, except in the areas of reading and mathematics. In those two areas there is a prescribed curriculum and students are often grouped according to age and ability. Some disagree that this type is a basic model, but rather a combination of others.

The last type found in Minneapolis is the free school. This school gives the greatest freedom and great responsibility to the student. The student often decides what, where, when, and how he or she wants to learn. The teacher is there to support, instruct, guide, counsel, and to be a friend. There is only one free school in the district, and that is in the Southeast Area.

Interest is about evenly divided between the contemporary, the continuous progress, and the open and modified open schools.

The Southeast Area, having had the first alternative program, has the first and, at present, only secondary school offering alternative programs for students who have participated in them at the elementary level. A transitional open or continuous progress program is offered in Grades 6-8 at one high school. In other Areas secondary programs are being implemented as pilot projects, or are in the preplanning stage.

Results

An outside evaluation team, utilizing reading and mathematics tests, found a high level of performance on all tests by students in the alternative programs. An educator selected by the federal government to evaluate the program, after a three-day visit observed that an "openness, lack of defensiveness, a sense of purposiveness and potency . . . pervade the staff and provide handsome models for children and youth." Community support is impressive and substantive.

At one time concern was expressed that integration would be difficult to achieve through alternative programs. However, no significant differences have been found between the interests of majority group and minority groups in their choices. In 1971 only 25% of the students chose to go to school outside of their neighborhoods. By 1973 45% of the students were choosing to go to school away from their neighborhood. The choice of alternatives seems to have strengthened the integration of schools.

CURE

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a forum for the dissemination of information and the expression of opinions among those concerned with combating racism. CURE believes the opinions herein need to be expressed, although they may not represent official policy of CURE.

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U.N. FORUM

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discuss grassroots problems. The Forum will be conducted at a different Vancouver site but concurrently with the official Habitat Conference, where official U.N. delegates from each country will be dealing with the same urban problems on national and international governmental levels. World-wide involvement is expected in both meetings by delegations from both developed and developing countries. The goal is the global exchange of practical ideas, systems, and techniques that have been tried or contemplated to solve urban problems.

The goal will be facilitated by workshops, lectures, and audio-visual displays and presentations as well as the provision of the most important opportunity of all, that of talking to people with common interests from all over the world.

The many workshop topics will include: housing, transport, waste disposal, energy conservation, environmental safeguards, innovative government structures, quality of life, land-use and ownership, the man-made and the natural environment, and social justice and the question of differing values and cultures. Any group or organization will be provided display space, but prior reservation of such space is required.

Vancouver is a fascinating city of natural and man-made contrasts and contradictions. Its people-oriented, neighborhood-directed atmosphere enhanced by an international conference should provide an unforgettable experience for all those attending.

The San Diego Tour is open to any person or organization--community or governmental--wishing to attend the Habitat Forum. We will leave from San Diego May 30 and return June 12. The price will be kept as low as possible--approximately $350 to $400, which will include round trip airfare plus lodging for 12 nights. Hotel space is severely limited, so if you are interested let us know immediately. Call the San Diego U.N. Association (233-3970) or Gladys Galian (277-6075) for more information and reservations.

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES For Fiscal Year June 1, 197 to May 31, 197
(includes a newsletter subscription)

Student . . $2	Contribution . $25	Donation . $____
Individual . $5	Sustaining. . . $100	
Family . . . $8	Organization. $15	

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I am unable to send money now, but want to remain on the mailing list. ____

SMALL BUSINESS AID

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Each office provides assistance to entrepreneurs in the various facets of a business operation. Those applying for assistance may be already in business but in need of aid, or they may be ready to start a new business. NEDA's particular emphasis is upon the Spanish-speaking population. Mr. David DeCima, who heads the San Diego office of four professional staff and clerical help, says that the present ratio of Spanish-speaking clients is 60 percent to 40 percent of other origin, in the local office.

NEDA offers the following services at no cost to its clients: (a) prepares financial assistance proposals for new or existing businesses, (b) provides management and technical assistance to businesses in all phases of their development, (c) provides assistance in securing government or private contracts, (d) sponsors management and business seminars for locally based businessmen, (e) serves as an information source for business opportunities and resources available on a national level.

The Company began operations in June, 1970, with nine regional offices in eight states. That year over 3,000 minority businessmen and women received the services of NEDA. The years that followed have been years of expansion. NEDA is proud of its record of success among those served. Nationwide, only 2.4 percent of the clients served have not succeeded in their ventures. In contrast, Dun and Bradstreet report that 65 percent of all small businesses in the U. S. fail before their fourth anniversary. The NEDA training program has received high praise from OMBE officials and other business development organization executives.

Where the Action Is

U.N. HABITAT FORUM--- VANCOUVER, CANADA

San Diegans have the opportunity to participate in a unique international forum on human settlements--called Habitat--sponsored by the United Nations in Vancouver, British Columbia, May 29 to June 12. Individuals are welcome as are representatives of any community or local governmental organization which is interested in the effort to promote human communication and create human cities. Much of the Habitat agenda will be devoted to the exchange of information, enabling each country to learn from the successes and failures others have had in dealing with problems of human settlements.

The number of towns and cities in the world is expected to double in the next 25 years. As described by the Canadian Minister of State for Urban Affairs while planning Habitat: "Massive migration to cities is taking place in advance of jobs, without housing, without water and sewerage, and without sufficient economic base to offer hope."

At a time when San Diego is seeking solutions to problems of high unemployment, urban sprawl, growth or limited growth, continued economic and racial segregation, limited industrial development, inadequate transportation, and many more unsolicited challenges, an international exchange of ideas about critical areas of urban development could be a helpful and rewarding benefit.

The Habitat Forum, in which San Diegans will participate, is what the U.N. calls the Non-Governmental Organization which enables each country's local governments, community organizations, and interested citizens to

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FOOD STAMP ALERT

The food stamp program is in desperate trouble. The Senate Agriculture Committee has reported S. 3136, a bill that would eliminate some 3 million needy people from the program and reduce the benefits of an additional 3 million.

The current recession has hit minority group Americans especially hard. Their unemployment is twice and sometimes three times greater than the general statistics. These deprived men, women, and children depend upon the food stamp program to provide their very basic nutrition. S. 3136 would harm literally millions of them.

Since Congress and the President have been generally unable to enact job creation legislation, we believe that S. 3136 is unusually harsh and untimely. The federal government says there will continue to be massive joblessness for years to come; yet, it would sentence millions of the unemployed and their dependents to hunger and malnutrition if S. 3136 were approved.

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights urges us to communicate with our senators immediately to express our concern in this matter.

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Reprinted from the Washington Star, March 7, 1976:

FOOD STAMPS SPUR BUSINESS ACTIVITY

An Agriculture Department study due for release will report that every dollar in food stamps given to needy people produces over $6 in new business activity, officials say.

Officials refused to make the full report, which has been delayed for several months, available on grounds they had not completed clearances.

The report, according to Dr. Alden Manchester an economist who heads the Economic Research Service which prepared the study indicates food stamps spur more economic activity than other types of aid. Department economists calculated the $2.7 billion in food stamp bonuses given out in 1974 produced $16.8 billion in business activity.

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