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Neighborhood Youth Corps Enrollment May Hit 1,000

By PAUL JAMES

Officials connected with the operation of the Neighborhood Youth Corps yesterday said the program's enrollment may reach 1,000 underprivileged youngsters by summer.

This would be an enlargement of the present figure of 300 youngsters under a $342,000 federal allotment from the Department of Labor.

The statement was made after the Board of Supervisors yesterday proclaimed March 28 to April 4 as Neighborhood Youth Corps Week in San Diego County.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Supervisor DeGraff Austin, in presenting a scroll to NYC executives, called the corps "preventive medicine" for unrest by unemployed and disadvantaged youth.

Present for the ceremony were John Johnson, executive director of the Urban League; Leon Williams, county Neighborhood Youth Corps director; Robert E. Reynolds of Los Angeles, field representative of the U.S. Department of Labor for NYC work, and Frank Terry, also of Los Angeles, a labor department public relations specialist.

The NYC helped to provide a half million jobs nationally during its first year of operation. Of these, 75 per cent were for urban and 25 per cent for rural youths. Most were boys and all in the program are in the 16 through 21-year class, with an effort made to emphasize help to school dropouts.

Reynolds Williams

"Work in civic and non-profit agencies means a great deal to them (the youths)," Reynolds told the supervisors. "We hope to stimulate the youngsters to seek career-type employment in goverment."

Williams said in an interview that 50 youngsters already are at work in the program he is administering. About 50 additional youths will be put to work weekly in the civic and non-profit agency fields until the 300 quota is reached.

Reynolds said all hope has not been abandoned for a larger program in San Diego County. "We may be in a position to boost the project to nearly one thousand youngsters if we put all of the 300 to work by April 30," he said.

INVOLVES YOUNGSTERS

Figures have been changed again and again on the NYC project. However, an enrollment of 1,000 youngsters would require a federal grant totaling nearly $1 million.

"It is good to involve the kids in government projects," Reynolds said. "It gives them a chance to see what government is like and gives the people in government a chance to see what the kids are like. And it can change some kids' point of view."

NYC projects usually are work in government subdivisions which could not be done with the grants. No one is replaced by a youngster.

Williams said all agencies contacted in San Diego County have agreed to cooperate in the program with the exception of Oceanside. There, a dispute in the city council prevented participation, he said.

Leon Williams New Urban League Boss

A native Californian with a diverse background in public service has been appointed acting executive director of the San Diego Urban League, effective September 15, 1968.

Leon Williams of 3024 "E" Street was appointed by the Urban League's Board of Directors as acting director during the absence of John W. Johnson, who was granted a year's leave of absence to work with the National Urban League in implementing its "New Thrust" program.

FOR THE PAST two and a half years Williams has been Project Director, Neighborhood Youth Corps, a federally financed work-training project for San Diego youth which is sponsored in San Diego County by the San Diego Urban League.

Before this position, Williams had been employed as Administrative Assistant to the Sheriff of San Diego County who was responsible to the County Administrative office. Prior to that, Williams had been employed as a Supervisor with the San Diego County Welfare Department.

According to John Johnson, the person he succeeds, Williams is a "natural" for the position because of his familiarity with the Urban League and its programs. At the present time he is a member of the Urban League staff although his salary is underwritten by the Department of Labor.

JOHNSON FURTHER indicates that Williams has directed one of the most successful Neighborhood Youth Corps programs in the nation.

It is considered a showcase for federal grants which tend to alleviate the severe condition of poverty and provides some degree of hope for the hopeless. Williams was born in the San Joaquin Valley and received his education at San Diego State College. He is married and the father of two girls and one boy. His oldest daughter is currently enrolled at San Francisco State College and is a glooming folk singer.

Williams will assume his duties on September 15, and indicates that the current Urban League programming will be expanded upon with the employment of additional staff people provided the ban League by a supplen tal application from the U ed Community Services. will attempt to increase Urban League's relevancy the minority community views the assignment a challenge and an opportu for an individual to w toward the commitment the American dream for ev individual.

WILLIAMS
. . . appointed acting executive director