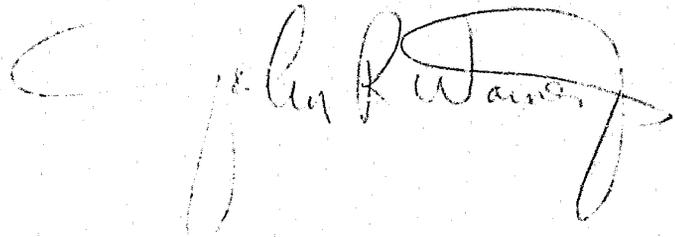


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ACQUISITIONS

Group Homes: Dealing with the Community

by

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Shortly after the Second World War a new movement developed in the philosophy of prison management. The movement was an "enlightenment" in which the emphasis was shifted from punishment to reform and rehabilitation. The traditional retribution theories, "an eye for an eye," were replaced by rational and utilitarian theories oriented toward making the criminal a better citizen. "Prisons" became "correctional institutions," "programs" were introduced which were designed to help the prisoners learn new vocations and new attitudes. Social science techniques were applied to measure the results in terms of recidivism, the re-entry of the criminal into the justice system after release from prison. Two decades later the evidence had accumulated and a verdict was pronounced. Prison "programs" do not work. Correctional institutions do not correct. Rehabilitation programs do not rehabilitate. And reform schools do not reform. By all measures the general conclusion drawn had reached a level of consensus. Recidivism rates are not noticeably effected by prison programs.

A second stage in this "enlightenment" began almost simultaneously with the first, but was fully two decades behind the first stage in public recognition and wide application. This second stage was the development of "community-based" corrections, and it gained support as evidence grew that the first stage had failed. While applicable to adults and juveniles, public acceptance has allowed for the growth of juvenile programs in the community at a much more rapid rate than it has done so for adult criminals.

In 1952 the first application of community based treatment for a small group of delinquents was constructed in the Highfields experiment in New Jersey (McCorkle, 1958), followed by other such experiments as Collegefields in New Jersey (Pilnick, 1967), Silverlake in Los Angeles (Empey, 1971), and Provo in Utah (Empey, 1972). Community-based corrections has taken a variety of forms, including the traditional probation and parole programs, half-way houses, drug addiction clinics, alcohol treatment centers, work-release programs and group homes.

Details of each program are naturally extremely diverse, but there is one thing which they all share. That is the emphasis on "community." This one feature suggests that a shift has taken place which might be characterized as the change from "psychological-medical" model to a "sociological-integration" model. Treatment programs within the prison walls called upon the skills of persons trained in schools of psychology: behaviorists, clinical psychologists, reality therapists and psychoanalists. The key professional in community based programs is more likely to be a social worker, and the program design calls more upon sociological than upon psychological terminology. If the prison is the epitome of life in a bureaucratic machine (Gesellschaft-type environment characterized by "affectively-neutral" relationships), programs in the community are certainly closer to the Gemeinschaft-"affective" model.

In this paper I want to deal with group homes and their relationship to the community. Group homes are attractive to those who wish to de-institutionalize correctional programs because they allow for supervision of persons caught in the "net" of the justice system, but in the context

of a small group within the community and in a "home environment." Group homes have been used particularly for juvenile delinquents, status offenders and pre-delinquents.

The growth of the group home movement has been nothing short of phenomenal in the United States. Since the State of Minnesota created the first group home program for juvenile delinquents in 1965, they have been adopted in at least 37 States and in Puerto Rico. Today there are more than 900 group homes in the United States, with about 225 in Massachusetts alone. The group home "movement" has been particularly stimulated by the "seed money" provided by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and by the requirement in the 1974 Act that money provided to the States be contingent upon the deinstitutionalization of "status offenders." Money provided by these two Acts of Congress and channeled through "State Planning Agencies" in every State and Territory gave the financial support necessary for the creation of most of the group home programs throughout the nation, although today the "seed money" is being withdrawn and continuation of such programs must now be the responsibility of state and local agents.

This paper grows out of a study of more than eighty group home reports and evaluation papers written, for the most part, for the several state planning agencies administering LEAA (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration) funds, over the first seven years of this decade. In this paper I want to share with the reader the issues raised and the answers sought -- or tentatively found -- by the authors of those eighty-plus papers, and I want to argue for an "integration model" for group home operation.

The issues are as follows: 1) what is a community-based group home? 2) should the delinquent or status offender be kept in his own community? 3) what has been the experience of group homes with community resistance? 4) what has been the experience of the group homes with community support? and 5) how can resistance be neutralized and support be built?

What is a community-based group home? The issue here is the term "community."

The concept of community basedness presents problems. There appears to be no clear definition as to what constitutes a community based facility other than that the facility not be on the grounds of a state institution and that clients not be locked in. It may be of little value to place a youth in a "community based facility" if all of the youth's time must be accounted for and he/she has relatively little contact with the community. Also, the very term "community based" may be somewhat of a misnomer because the youth may live in -- and hopefully be "rehabilitated" in -- a "community" far different from that to which he/she will return. (Delaware, 1977, 10-11)

I begin with this issue because it raises questions very much related to the strategies which go into the development of a group home. This is the deepest of all the issues raised, I believe, for to answer this question we must first decide what it is we are trying to do, and what it is that we are not trying to do.

I believe that the model for community based corrections must be that of integration, or re-integration. Community based corrections cannot be a panacea, and it is certainly not appropriate for all youngsters. But it seems like a place to begin when dealing with those young persons who have experienced "disintegration," who are not "at one" with their community, who are alienated from the institutions, the persons of power and authority, the folkways and mores of the community.

A community is not a medical treatment, although "treatment" terminology permeated nearly every report on group homes included in this study. The task is not to administer a treatment (the National Council on Crime and Delinquency listed ten treatment models commonly used in group homes (NCCD, Maryland Report 1974, pp 109ff)), but to assist the young man or young woman to find his way back into the community, to find his place in it in such a way that he is able to keep clear of the long arm of the Law. If integration is taken as the model for group home efficacy, we can straighten out our answers to several of the questions which follow.

A community based group home, then, is one in which there is a healthy interaction between the group home and the community and where children who have "fallen out" with that community are brought back into its bosom, are able to find a place within that community in which they fit--to their own satisfaction and to that of the community. Having set down this definition, let us proceed to the remaining issues.

Should the delinquent or status offender be kept in his own community? This question is implicit in the statement cited above from the Delaware report. It was dealt with directly by only one report, and there only in a brief way. The report of the West Virginia Governor's Committee on Crime, Delinquency and Corrections raised this question and sought to approach the answer by comparing recidivism rates of residents of group homes whose natural home is located in the same county as the group home with residents who live in another county.

Four group homes were used in the study. Admitting that this small study was "very unmethodological and non-scientific," the method is interesting, and suggests the possibility of further research. The results were as follows:

Residence	Recidivism Rates
"Local" (N = 36)	68%
"Foreign" (N = 42)	79%

No tests of significance were reported. (West Virginia, 1977, p. 15)

Certainly it would be a happy finding if it could be shown that recidivism rates were lower when the child was kept within his own local community while living in a group home. Using the integration model for group home operation, however, I believe that it is possible to argue for keeping the child in his/her own community even if it cannot be shown that this reduces recidivism rates (alas, if we should wait now for guidance from recidivism rates -- I do not know where we would be at all!).

Certainly we know that the child taken to another community cannot, by definition, be reintegrated into his own community through the group home. And if this is true I must ask again, what are we trying to do in the community at all? Is not an alien community another form of assylum? And if we send the child to a foreign community, do we not fall back upon a "treatment" model of corrections, expecting a dose of penicillin to cure the patient so that he can return and walk among us?

What has been the experience of group homes with community resistance? Like creating any new organization or agency, starting a group home is a difficult undertaking. Its place within the system of existing social agencies must be established, property purchased or leased, local officials must be convinced of the idea (the judge must be willing to commit offenders to the home), legal regulations must be dealt with (fire regulations, health and safety requirements, local school requirements, welfare regulations, state and local funding regulations must be met), financial resources must be found, and the community and specific neighborhood within which the group home is to be located must be dealt with. Usually the last of those tasks is the most difficult.

In Rhode Island eight of the fourteen group homes which had been attempted in the state experienced neighborhood resistance. In several cases that resistance had been sufficient to prevent the creation of the group homes. During the summer of 1973 a team of students, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, studied neighborhood resistance as experienced by those fourteen group homes. In that report one reads,

It is generally acknowledged that the largest problem encountered by those setting up group homes is community resistance.... Resistance is troublesome for group homes in the process of establishment because residents have the power to reject a group home. Resistance manifested through local channels, public pressure, or personal influence may affect zoning hearings, fire and building inspections, and sale or rental of a house or may, in itself, discourage the organizers enough to give up the attempt.

A home that does become established (in spite of community resistance) can find the effectiveness of its program diminished. Community hostility toward the group home may be translated into resentment toward the children in the home and, as a result, preclude the development of a supportive atmosphere which may be desired by the home. (Jones, 1974, pp 2-3)

Neighborhood resistance was a problem in other states as well. In New Jersey ten of the eighteen group homes surveyed in the 1977 report had experienced such resistance. (Shostack, 1977, pp 30-31)

The most common obstacle was neighborhood opposition . . . Neighbors were said to fear that residents of the home would be delinquents, attract undesirables to the neighborhood, and be a bad influence on local children. In a couple of cases neighbors were concerned about the introduction of Black youngsters into the area. At least one home was picketed. Several were involved in court or political battles. Three homes reported that they had to give in to local pressures and move to different locations.

Zoning regulations were the primary legal weapon used by opponents of the homes. They contended that the group homes were being located improperly in areas zoned for single family dwellings or non-institutional uses. The operators, on the other hand, generally felt that group homes should be placed in a wholesome family neighborhood. They were reluctant to locate in remote, transient, or business neighborhoods lacking schools, recreational facilities, and opportunities for informal interaction with non-institutionalized young people.

The difficulty in getting the foot in the door led the author of the Illinois report of 1972 to ask

If the community resists community corrections, can the state camouflage its real intentions and operate for a period of time without publicity or community relations until the neighborhood accepts the presence of the programs? (Illinois, 1972, p. 3)

In a study of many factors which seem related to community resistance, the Rhode Island study, using a multiple regression, found that the following characteristics tend to be present in neighborhoods which give the greatest resistance to group home entry. Resistance communities are characterized by a high percentage of married persons, homeowners, car owners, persons with good educations, persons who have children, who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time, who feel a sense of pride in their neighborhood, who feel a sense of efficacy in terms of community

decisions, who feel that their neighborhood is peaceful and orderly, and who feel that a group home would be a menace to their neighborhood. In other words, unfortunately, those neighborhoods which are most characterized by the very qualities used to describe "community" in sociological terms (Gemeinschaft, affectivity, diffuse obligations, role or status ascription, orientation toward the collectivity) may put up the greatest resistance to community-based group homes.

What has been the experience of the group homes with community support? Here I must begin with my own experience, for as a member of the incorporating committee which founded the New Dawn Youth Center in Upshur County, West Virginia, I watched a team of three young persons (not yet graduated from college when they began) build the support of a small Appalachian community and together led that community in the development of one of the first group homes in West Virginia. From October, 1973, until the doors opened to the first client in August, 1974, Nancy Wolfe and Glenn and Kathy Smith sold a strange idea to the community leaders. Now I know that they violated almost every rule for creating a group home. They were too young, they looked like "hippies" with their long hair and beard, and they were supported by no parent organization. They did not "sneak" or use "low profile," but through commitment and dedication to an idea, and with an investment of money which came from their own personal resources, they won the support of the people of Buckhannon. (See Warner, 1976)

The group home reports tell more stories of community support than of community resistance. A letter from the Montana Board of Crime Control reports:

For the most part communities have not violently resisted the group home effort. Some communities have responded with tremendous degrees of support. I believe this is directly related to the fact that the local non-profit board consists of community members and for the most part there is a great deal of community ownership in the group homes.
(Nelson, letter of Dec. 28, 1977)

Support was gained in Georgia, at the DeKalb/Clayton Girls Group Home and at the DeKalb/Clayton Boys Group Home.

Community organizations, neighbors and local merchants have provided financial assistance to the home, including buying a pump for the pool, fixing the sewing machine and outfitting the kitchen. The local mental health clinic, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Foundling organization and the Social Security Administration have helped with individual problems. Planned Parenthood educational programs and materials have been used extensively. (Georgia, DeKalb Girls, 1977, p. 4)

The group home staff have developed a very good working relationship with DeKalb Technical School and with the public school system. . . . The group home's relationship with the local public schools has been very productive. The schools have cooperated with the group home in terms of placement and supervision of the youth. . . . Community organizations such as the Rotary Club and the local CB Club have been very supportive of the group home and have made numerous contributions of both material items and services. . . . The staff has been active in speaking to community groups about their program and what parents can do to prevent delinquency within their own families. (Georgia, DeKalb Boys, 1977, p. 2)

Communities have been more than supportive. They have been responsible for the creation of group homes. This is particularly illustrated in the story of the Attention Home in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Planning for Attention Home began with a special community activities committee of the XJWC Federated Women's Group early in 1973. By May of that year the committee decided to recommend it to the larger group, and the incorporation papers were filed in July of that year. Shortly thereafter plans were implemented to develop bylaws, procedures, financial plans, and to secure houseparents and an adequate residence.

Under the sponsorship of the Women's Group a house was purchased in January, 1974, and a support grant of \$6000 was provided to move the project forward. Two requests for aid from the Wyoming Governor's Committee on Criminal Administration were turned down, but the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Lutheran Church of America provided a grant of \$5000 to remodel the house, and between July 1 and September 15, largely due to many hours of voluntary labor, construction was completed. In all some two thousand volunteer hours were donated and approximately \$14,000 were raised. The residence was officially opened on November 22, 1974. The LEAA grant was awarded after the home was officially opened.

(Wyoming, 1977)

Three reports from New Hampshire tell of community support.

An integral component of the Friendship House /Manchester/ is community involvement. Considering the poor relationship that the previous group home had established in the community, this aspect of the program was most important. The residents are always available to assist in community affairs. They have on numerous occasions helped the local church officials, the elderly, non-profit organizations, and the local neighbors. A great deal of goodwill has been fostered, and continued support from the community is being demonstrated. (Clark, 1977, 5)

The Exeter Group Home in Stratham, N.H., had community support.

Through donations from the Rotary Club and Stratham townspeople, the upstairs hallway and bedrooms have been carpeted. (Mason, 1976, 6)

And there was community support for the creation of the Dover Odyssey House in Dover.

The Dover Program was welcomed with enthusiastic support by the town fathers and important political figures of the town of Dover. Even a cursory examination of the grant application will reveal a battery of letters that were supplied by important people in the Dover community welcoming and urging the Crime Commission to support the Dover program. (Gabriel, 1977, 3)

Now what have we got? I started out reporting community resistance, with an analysis of the kinds of communities which put up the greatest resistance, and followed that with a series of reports which demonstrated strong support from communities which, ostensibly, fit the pattern (suggested in the Rhode Island study) of community-type which should be expected to resist the establishment of group homes. The communities reported in the West Virginia, Wyoming, Georgia and New Hampshire studies seem to me to be just the sort of communities predicted, by the Rhode Island Study (Jones, 1974), to be most likely to resist group homes. Yet these group home projects were not concerned with neutralizing resistance but with mobilizing community support.

I suggest, tentatively, that there may be a radically different experience in establishing group homes in urban areas (Eastern Seaboard metropolitan states) when compared with that same procedure in rural areas, even when the group home is established in a relatively large town or small city (Cheyenne or Manchester). I will discuss this further at the end of this paper.

Community yes, neighborhood no! There is yet another insight which grows out of the group home studies. It is well stated in the League of Women Voters' pamphlet on group homes, and in the Rhode Island study.

Almost everybody believes in group homes, provided they are located in another neighborhood. (LWV, 1974, 1)

Although people respond favorably to the idea of a group home on the conceptual level, without some persuasion, very few react favorably to the establishment of a group home in their neighborhood. (Jones, 1974, 160)

We find two very separate tasks involved in creating ties to the community. The first is to sell the idea to the community leaders. The second task is to sell it to the people who must live next door to the group home. The first task is usually manageable. The second task can be impossible. This problem is illustrated in the Chatham Group Home Report (Georgia, 1977).

The Group Home has been very successful in gaining support from fraternal organizations and businessmen. These have donated furniture, records, tickets, and money to the home. . . . The Savannah Braves donate season tickets for their games, and free tickets are given to the home for movies and rock concerts. . . . /Yet/ the group home has been located in inadequately maintained houses in the central city because of the unwillingness of residents in the other neighborhoods to accept a Group Home.

The Rhode Island report lists the most common complaints which neighbors voice in opposing a group home. Neighbors complain because they feel that their neighborhood "becomes a dumping ground for the city's problems," that the group home will lower property values, lower the stability of the neighborhood, increase crime in the area, that the group home will be a negative influence on the children, and that it will disturb the peace. Racially homogeneous communities fear that the group home will bring non-whites into the neighborhood, and the parents of a neighborhood often doubt that the group home staff, particularly if they are young, will be able to guide the children properly. At times they complain because the staff members look like "hippies," and if the group home property is not properly kept up, neighbors complain on this account. (Jones, 1974, 171)

Many of these complaints are valid complaints, and members of a stable neighborhood rightly are concerned with any threat to the values which they hold and which make the neighborhood desirable for the location of a group home in the first place. The staff of a group home must take care not to seem callous to neighborhood concerns. The racial issue is a difficult issue and must be met head on. The laws of the Nation and the States support racially inclusive neighborhoods. But care must be taken that the group home does not, in fact, create unnecessary problems for the neighborhood, not only because the neighbors have power, in many cases, to force the group home to leave, but because without the support and positive involvement of good neighbors a group home is not a community based program at all. but simply another asylum isolated from the world which has, in the first place, alienated the child. If the task of a group home is to reintegrate children into the community, this cannot be done without the support of good neighbors.

Again this supports the view that the children should live, as much as possible, in a group home in their own neighborhood. This may suggest that the group home should not necessarily seek a middle class neighborhood, particularly when the children to be placed come from lower class neighborhoods. When the group home is located near the neighborhood from which such children have been drawn, no one can complain that problems are imported or that their presence lowers property values, etc. But more important than these complaints, the reintegration takes place where the children live.

How can resistance be neutralized and support be built?

The first duty of a prospective /group home/ director is to identify a problem. This means literally hours spent talking to community people as to how they view the problem of the offender returning to their own community. This serves two purposes. One, it includes the community in the "pre-planning" stage and two, it identifies areas of support and direction within the community. Community people should be afforded the opportunity to have real input into the type of programs they will have to live with and may eventually support. This process additionally can act as a "recruitment" period for prospective members for the board of directors or volunteers. (Maine II, 1976, IV 1-2)

Often the community presents a problem in accepting a group home. Since this is a new idea they really don't know what to expect. Their first impression is that "criminals" will be in their neighborhood. Also since group homes are not prejudiced, blacks and whites will be living together. This leads to social interaction and many people still consider this taboo. These problems are being dealt with in various ways. In one case an opposing citizen was asked to join the Advisory Board. After he realized that the group homes would not create any unusual conditions his suspicion, and the suspicions of other neighbors, were expelled. This is a new idea and it will take time for the community to realize it's benefits and it's lack of threat to them. (North Carolina, 1976, 53)

The problems related to neighborhood resistance and the importance of building community support have been the research topic of two recent studies in New England. The first study was conducted under a grant from the Massachusetts Governor's Committee on Law Enforcement and Administration and Criminal Justice, and was published first in 1973 (Coates), and in a revised version in 1977 (Coates). That study compared three communities into which a group home had successfully been established with three communities in which the efforts to establish a group home had failed.

The second study, mentioned above, was the student-originated project at Brown University, a comparison of eight communities which had resisted the attempts, in some cases successfully, to establish a group home with six communities which offered little or no resistance. (Jones, 1974) The two studies are complementary, and the results support each other. There were no contradictions in the two reports, and the main results of those two studies will therefore be presented here together, without distinguishing which report, if not both, came to which conclusion. I will present the results of the two studies in the form of guidelines for successful work in the community. The first guidelines are for group homes in any community, followed by specific guidelines for "disorganized" communities and others for "organized" communities.

Guidelines for group homes in any community.

- Know clearly what your group home plan and program will be before community leaders are approached.
- Study the community before entering it. (See above characteristics of communities which gave greatest resistance - Jones, 1974) Has the community recently organized to resist any other "controversial" project. If so, beware.
- Prior to meeting with members of the community, choose a name --or acronym -- which will be acceptable to the community. (One group home project which failed called itself BURN!)
- It is best to have at least one member of the planning committee -- preferably a highly visible member -- a resident of the community into which the group home seeks to be established.
- Do not assume that an established organization, respected in the community, will have an easier time selling the idea than a newly formed organization. However, an established and respected organization may lend "reputation" to the project, and help to avoid the threat that the neighbors might fear it is a "fly-by-night" project.

- Begin building support with community leaders, town fathers, a local judge, the attorneys who deal with juvenile cases, leaders of organizations, etc. Only after support has been developed here should the plan be taken to the neighborhood in which the project will hopefully be located.
- Find property which is suitable for the group home. If it is unsuitable in any physical way the neighbors can use that as ammunition against the project. Find a building with adequate space for bedrooms, bath, kitchen, etc., and which will meet, with the least repair necessary, fire, health and building requirements. Determine what the zoning laws require, and whether the home can enter the community without a change in those laws.
- A "buffer zone" will reduce community resistance. That is, the ideal group home should adjoin a vacant lot, a school playground, a parking lot, etc., as this will reduce the number of immediate neighbors who may not want the group home adjoining their property.
- The proposed houseparents will be "inspected" by the community. They should give the appearance of being able to handle children. The community will resist houseparents who seem too young, or give the appearance of being irresponsible or careless. If the houseparents are known to the community, live in the community, and are respected members of the community, the chances of gaining community support are greatly increased.
- Although a religious organization may be a good sponsor, there may be problems if it intends to guide the home along "sectarian" lines unless the community is largely of the same faith (i.e. a Roman Catholic church in a Roman Catholic neighborhood would not experience neighborhood resistance if it attempted to "indoctrinate" its clients; in a heterogeneous neighborhood it might face resistance).
- Avoid conflict wherever possible, and attempt to avoid making the group home issue a battleground in the community.
- Where conflict is unavoidable, avoid absolutely a moralistic or quasi-religious attitude which throws the opposition into the "unchristian" or "immoral" camp. Do not argue that the group home is "the Christian thing to do," implying that opposition is opposing "the Christian thing."
- Where conflict cannot be avoided, it should be faced at the level of "real issues." The issues are probably related to property, fear of crime, fear of disorder and instability in the neighborhood. Do not allow battles to be fought over false issues.
- Do not make false promises or false assurances.

- No mass meetings. Use a one-to-one approach.
- The first few months of operation of a group home will establish a "track record." If, during that time, community fears can be alleviated, the group home may survive. If, however, in those first few months, house parents are not able to give adequate guidance, if the property is not kept up, etc., the community may well force the home to move.
- If possible, design the group home to serve youths from the community in which it is to be located, and perhaps preferably even in the immediate neighborhood (in an urban setting).
- Develop adequate channels of communication between the group home and the community. Include persons on the advisory board who will be able to represent the attitudes of the community, and make this person known to the community as their representative to the group home. Allow for community input into policies of the group home. And make it clear how complaints can be heard and dealt with.
- Involve community members in volunteer work on the property, painting, cleaning up the yard, etc. Their involvement will help them to identify with the home.

Strategy for entering a disorganized neighborhood. The Rhode

Island study found that those communities which put up the least resistance are characterized by a low percentage of married persons, a low percentage of home owners, a low percentage of persons who have lived in the neighborhood more than five years, a low percentage of persons who feel that they have any input into the decisions which effect their neighborhood, a low percentage of persons who feel a sense of pride in their neighborhood, and a high percentage of persons over 65 or under 18. Such neighborhoods are unlikely to put up great resistance, and here it is possible to use a "low profile" approach, planning the group home with appropriate community leaders or city officials but not announcing the group home to the neighborhood until it is already "in." Coates writes:

The low profile approach is most appropriate for the mobile, pluralistic community.

It might be argued, however, that the other approaches discussed below are also appropriate for such communities, since the community will probably be unable to stop the group home from entering by any rational method.

There are other important issues related to entry into such a neighborhood. The group home director is faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, a "community-based" operation ought, I believe, to be located in the same community from which the clients are drawn, wherever possible. Otherwise the youth cannot be reintegrated into his own community through the group home, and the term "community-based" loses much of its meaning. Many group home residents will come from such communities.

On the other hand, a delinquent may not cause trouble because he is "alienated" from his community, but because he is too well integrated into it, and because he has learned "an excess of definitions" which lead him to break the law, "definitions" which he has learned through associations with a peer group whose norms are contrary to the law (Sutherland, 197 , ch.). Here it is even questionable whether "community-based" programs are appropriate.

Again, the neighborhood characterized by heterogeneity, an excess of single persons who are highly transient may be not a "community" at all (affective, ascriptive, diffuse obligations, oriented toward the collectivity--Parsons, 19), and again "community-based" seems not to be the appropriate term. Here, perhaps, the group home must be some-

other than a community-based operation, and must be effective through its own internal program. Or, the role of the group home in such a non-community neighborhood might well be that of building community where there is none. (Probably that over-defines the task of the group home.)

Strategy for entering a "residential community where the local residents are not particularly capable of organized opposition, but where the town and civil leaders are playing an active role in redirecting or shaping the image of the community" (Coates, 1977, p. 88). Again we are in a problem neighborhood, where social change may be disrupting the lives of the residents. Nevertheless, this may be the sort of neighborhood from which the clients are drawn, and to which some will return.

Here Coates recommends "the significant few" approach, where the community leaders are included in the planning, but where there is no extensive effort to inform the neighbors of the proposed group home. Problems of integrating the youth into a disintegrating neighborhood are similar to those discussed above under "disorganized neighborhood". It may not be difficult to locate the group home in such a neighborhood, and civic leaders might support the plan with enthusiasm. Yet will the group home be "community-based" where community is lacking in the neighborhood?

Strategy for entering a "community that has the ability to organize itself in support of, or opposition to, issues" (Coates, 1977, p. 88).

Here Coates recommends a "combined approach, which stresses communication both with significant leaders and the grassroots residents." Such communities are most likely to resist, and prevent, the establishment of a group home in their neighborhood. On the other hand, if this community is willing to support a group home, it is able to offer the greatest support, both for entry and for continued maintenance of the home. And

such a community may offer a greater sense of "community" than the other two types. Children from the neighborhood of such communities might best be reintegrated into the community, but again that is not very meaningful unless the children will return to this community after completion of group home life. It is probably not very useful to pull youths from disorganized communities into a group home in an organized middle-class neighborhood and attempt to integrate them into the social fabric of this environment.

Well organized middle class communities may well protest, truthfully, that few children placed in group homes live in such a neighborhood, and that it is inappropriate to bring them into their community. Group home directors, probably middle class persons themselves, may resent the resistance from middle class communities, and may feel inclined to take a moralistic stance against such resistance. The present research argues that such a stance is self defeating. A group home located in a neighborhood where it is not welcome can hardly argue that it is a "community-based" operation.

The Rhode Island study lists three types of approach, appropriate to different kinds of communities: the "sneak approach", similar to Coates "low profile"; the "limited publicity"; and the "community education" approach. There is something pretty crafty with a sneak approach, although probably "low profile" is just an euphemism for "sneak". Although such approaches probably do work to get a group home into a neighborhood, I doubt such a group home can ever become a "community-based" home. Both studies agree that this approach will not work in

a well organized community, and that the "sneak" will only backfire when neighbors do discover that something was put over on them. The community education plan, along with planning with a significant few, and beginning before entry but continuing throughout the life of the group home, will probably give the best results in an organized community in the long haul.

Discussion.

It seems to me that there emerge two very different sorts of group homes: those which are community-based and those which are not. It may be too much to claim that all group homes are community based agencies, and in fact while some group homes are able to rely heavily on real community support, others seem to struggle against the possibility that their neighbors will, or will attempt to, close them down.

Group homes have their own validity regardless of their relation to the community. Certainly a home atmosphere, kind and understanding house parents, and a small group setting is better for some children than an institution such as a reform school or a forestry camp. It may be necessary to place some group homes in neighborhoods where at best they are tolerated or where, because of lack of organization, attempts to close the home are unsuccessful. But I think that such a home is less than ideal, and that where possible the group home should rely heavily on community resources, particularly including good neighbors, voluntary help from local residents on the block.

A community based group home is preferable, I believe, to an isolated group home. This suggests that the so called "sneak approach" is less than ideal, and that the group home is willing to live in isolation from the community and its volunteer resources when a "sneak" is

attempted.

It is possible that group homes have a better chance of developing a community base in such states as West Virginia, Wyoming, New Hampshire and Georgia than in New Jersey, Connecticut or Massachusetts.

Perhaps it is only an American myth that the sense of community has been lost in the urban areas of the Eastern Seaboard. The group home reports seem to support a bit of that myth, however, for it is the reports from those regions which Tonnies would have characterized as "Gemeinschaft" which tell of the most enthusiastic support from the community in developing and maintaining a group home. Resistance, conflict, and lack of involvement seem to characterize the relationships of neighbors of the group homes located in areas of the country which Tonnies would have labeled "Gesellschaft."

APPENDIX A

NEUTRALIZING COMMUNITY RESISTANCE TO GROUP HOMES¹

This is a summary of the study by Coates and Miller in which three group homes which successfully gained the support of their community are compared with three group homes which failed because they did not gain community support. The study, undertaken in Massachusetts in the early 1970s, analyzes the six group homes on the following characteristics.

- Who established the group home?
- How was the community selected?
- What was the strategy for entering the community?
- What sort of site was selected for the group home?
- How was the name of the program selected, and how was that name perceived by the community?
- How was the program content presented to the community?
- Where did the clients and staff live?
- Was the group home perceived as serving the community?
- How was conflict resolved?

Results.

- It did not seem to matter whether the organization which established the group was a well established and respected organization or an organization newly formed for the purpose of establishing a group home.
- Successful group homes were established by organizations which made a greater effort to know the community prior to an attempted entry.
- Generally speaking, neighborhoods characterized by lower class qualities, transient residents, and lack of community organization gave less resistance than did middle class and well organized communities.
- Where sites selected were too small or seemed inadequate, neighbors protested that the site was inappropriate and were able to use this as a part of their ammunition against the home. Larger and more adequate sites -- particularly where the youths participated in improving the property -- were chosen by successful group home planners.

- The selection of the name seemed important. The name or acronym seemed important to neighbors, and a neutral or positive name was more desirable than one which implied a negative program. One unsuccessful organization was named -- an acronym -- BURN!
- Program presentation seemed to make a difference, and the successful group homes were more clear in their understanding -- from the beginning -- of what they were trying to do and how they were going to do it.
- Neighbors protested when staff persons lived in another neighborhood and drove across town to work in the group home. "Put the group home in your own neighborhood," they protested. It seems preferable to have staff members live in the home or at least in the neighborhood. Similarly with the clients. Neighbors could not claim that "problems" were imported if the home served children from their own neighborhood.
- The neighborhoods where the group homes were welcomed all felt that the group home would serve their own neighborhood. Conversely, those which prevented a group home from moving in, or which forced it to leave, did not feel that a group home would serve their neighborhood.
- The resolution of conflict distinguished successful from unsuccessful group homes. Two of the three successful homes avoided creating issues, and one successful group home faced the issues head-on. The most dangerous approach to conflict was a "righteous" or "holier than thou" approach. The report particularly discusses the important distinction between "real issues" and "unreal issues" which often camouflage underlying issues. One successful group home dealt directly with "real issues" -- property values and the influence of delinquent children on the neighborhood -- by brushing aside false issues where the lines of battle were at first drawn. The discussion drew heavily on conflict theory developed by Dahrendorf, Coser and Simmel, and on community organization theory recommended by Alinsky.

Strategy for approaching the community.

The essay recommended different types of strategy for differing types of communities.

- The "low profile" approach is most appropriate for the mobile, pluralistic community.

- The "significant few" approach may be adaptable in a residential community where the local residents are not particularly capable of organized opposition, but where the town and civil leaders are playing an active role in redirecting or shaping the image of the community.
- The combined approach, which stresses communication with both significant leaders and the grassroots residents, seems to be one of the few strategies with potential for gaining access to a community that has the ability to organize itself in support of, or in opposition to, issues.

¹Robert B. Coates and Alden D. Miller. 1977. Neutralizing Community Resistance to Group Homes. In L. Ohlin, A. Miller and R. Coates, Juvenile Correctional Reform in Massachusetts. Washington. National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. LEAA.

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING A GROUP HOME¹Recommendations regarding the organizations representing group homes.

1. Organizations with no prior contact with the community or neighborhood in which they are attempting to establish a group home have, in effect, a "clean slate," and must be extremely careful in their approach to avoid unfavorable impressions from being formed.
2. Any established organization interested in setting up a home should assess its reputation in the community/neighborhood for which the home is planned. Depending on this assessment, organizations should either stress or deemphasize the home's affiliation with the organization.
3. A group home organization should be well organized and definite in its plans before any representatives talk with community/neighborhood members.
4. A clear leader (or group of leaders) should be visible to the community and it should be emphasized that this person (group) is responsible for correcting any problems which might arise.

Recommendations regarding decision makers and representatives of the group home. (Note that the study defined two types of leaders: decision makers and representatives, and that rules for one may not apply to the other.)

5. The home should not be represented by people who might be seen as outsiders in the neighborhood or town proposed for the home.
6. It is preferable to use persons from the neighborhood, or at least from the town, proposed for the home to help plan strategy for acceptance of the project.
7. No community/neighborhood contacts should be made by individuals who cannot empathize with the concerns of the residents, or those who, for any other reason, make poor salesmen.
8. It is advisable not to have the home represented by very young people, especially those who may look "anti-establishment."
9. Representatives who are presented to the community/neighborhood as the eventual house parents or caretakers must appear capable of controlling children.

Recommendations regarding the choice of sites for the group home.

10. A site should be chosen, for optimum chance of locating a group home, in a neighborhood in which there is a prevalence of individuals who are:
 - a single
 - b rent their house
 - c new residence to area
 - d have few children
 - e do not own autos

- f lack pride in their community
- g feel a sense of inefficacy or noninvolvement
- h teenagers or over 65 years of age
- i do not feel that the community is peaceful and orderly
- j feel that a group home would not be a menace to their neighborhood

11. It is advisable that a site be selected which is not surrounded by private residences; the larger the "buffer zone" around the site, the less likely are residents to resist the establishment of the group home.

Recommendations regarding the selection of the approach in dealing with neighborhood and community members.

12. Group home representatives must quickly inform leaders and residents once a site is selected. Community leaders such as officials, police, social service personnel, and influential local leaders should always be contacted first, prior to any discussion with neighbors.
13. Representatives must be honest about the type of youths to be served by the home. They should stress that clients will be selected because of their readiness for the program as well as for the advantages the program has over other alternatives.
14. If it does not conflict with the goals of the group home, a board with respected local resident may be established to aid in the selection of the home's residents. Otherwise representatives may wish publicly to self impose limits on the type of children they will take.
15. In some circumstances it may be advantageous for group home organizers to agree to a trial period for the home, after which local residents would have the option to vote out the home if they found it objectionable for any reason.
16. By granting preference to local youths in the selection process, the group home may be able to mitigate or avoid opposition. It is advised that this is done wherever possible.
17. Mass meetings should not be held to explain the group home; support should be sought on an individual basis.
18. Residents should be encouraged to bring any grievances to an appropriate representative of the home.
19. Representatives of the group home must be prepared to answer questions and objections.
20. Representatives must be consistent in what they tell neighbors and community members.

21. Religious or moralistic arguments should never be used to answer group home opponents.
22. Emotionally charged labels, such as "half-way house," "pre-delinquent youths," etc. should never be used to describe the group home or its residents.
23. If possible the home should be prepared to pay property taxes or school tuition to avoid resentment by members of the community where these objections arise.
24. Ways in which the group home will benefit the community/neighborhood should be strongly emphasized.
25. The best approach to use in dealing with local residents depends upon the type of neighborhood in which the home is to be established and whether a zoning change is necessary.
 - a. In areas with high transience, low property values, low income, and low education achievement, where communication links are weak and there is little concern for the future quality of the neighborhood (areas which have been referred to as "lower class"), a sneak approach is recommended if no zoning change is necessary.
 - b. In similar areas, if a zoning change is required, a limited publicity approach contacting only the legal abutters (those who own property near the site) for zoning advised.
 - c. In areas with low transience, high property values, high incomes and high educational levels, where communication links are strong or potentially strong and residents are greatly concerned with the future quality of their neighborhood (areas which have been referred to as middle to upper class neighborhoods), or in highly ethnic areas, a limited publicity approach is recommended regardless of whether a zoning change is needed. The number of people who should be contacted by a group home representative increases as the strength of communication links and concern for the neighborhood increases. It should be carefully considered that "middle and upper class" neighborhoods are more likely to resist the establishment of a group home in their areas.

¹Jones, M. L., M. Feragne, G Karpinski et al. 1974. Neighborhood Resistance to Group Home Establishment in Rhode Island. A student-originated studies project. Brown University. Sponsored by N.S.F.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR GROUP HOMES IN MARYLAND

One of the very finest evaluation papers written in 1977 was prepared for the Department of Juvenile Services of the State of Maryland. The report was prepared by International Training, Research and Evaluation Council, of Fairfax, Virginia, under the direction of Dr. Knowlton Johnson. International Training developed a community survey in order to "determine the extent of support for group homes held by members of the surrounding community." Research focused upon three specific issues, for each of which data were gathered:

- the attitudes of community residents toward the concept of community-based treatment;
- the actual behavior of community residents as related to specific group homes; and,
- characteristics of the group homes in relation to the communities of which they are a part.

Data were gathered by use of a questionnaire instrument developed for the community survey. Among the types of information collected were:

- the community's familiarity with group home program operations;
- the visibility of the home in the community; and,
- the amount of contact community members have had with group home staff and residents.

Eleven communities were selected for study, eight of which had existing group homes operating at the time of the survey, and three of which had recently had a group home terminated. 188 persons were surveyed. The results were as follows:

- 67 respondents, or 36%, were unaware of the existence of a group home in their neighborhood.
- A majority of those surveyed supported the group home concept and saw it as a valuable tool in combating juvenile delinquency. In every case, the majority of those who did not feel this way lived in neighborhoods where group homes had been closed.

- The majority of the respondents felt that it is very important to inform neighbors of intentions to establish such homes, although this had not been done in the cases of most of the respondents.
- Taken as a whole, involvement of community residents with the group home programs was found to be minimal. A majority were never given an opportunity to ask questions about the home and never participated in a facility-sponsored event. Among neighbors of terminated homes, this lack of involvement was even more pronounced.
- Community contributions of money, time, etc. to the homes has been slight in general and nonexistent from neighbors of terminated homes (i.e. during the period in which the homes were in operation).
- Contact with individual residents of the homes has been extremely limited, both in terms of the respondents themselves and their children.
- Survey respondents were most concerned about crime, noise and disorderly conduct. Of those respondents that indicated concern in these areas, 26, 24 and 41 percent, respectively, attributed these concerns to the presence of a group home.
- The majority of community members have neither spoken favorably about group homes nor complained about these facilities to their friends. (Maryland, 1977, 38-41)

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