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President's Address

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TRENDS IN PRWAD

ROBERT R. LAURITSEN

Man has been offered a variety of challenges throughout history. Opportunities for accepting a challenge do not always just happen. Charles A. Lindberg expressed the thought well when he said:

Find something new---a field that needs research and hasn't been well studied. Without a challenge a man isn't getting the most from his life.

Needs for service, or service delivery systems, arise from vacuums, or near vacuums. In the first half of the 20th Century, rehabilitation services to deaf people operated in near vacuums. Few states offered rehabilitation services to adult deaf persons. One exception would be my native state of Minnesota where Dr. Petra F. Howard labored continually from 1915 until the late 1950's. On the national scene sporadic efforts to serve deaf people were to wait until Boyce Williams became the National Consultant for Rehabilitation for Deafness in 1945. Boyce, without question, since 1945, has been a true leader and catalyst in the multi-faceted roles of Rehabilitation. Organizational efforts directed exclusively towards the rehabilitation of deaf adults were to wait until the 1960's.

The purpose of this paper is to direct attention to our organization, PRWAD, that emerged as something new in an area that had not been well studied and to set trends for the future of the organization.

Mager in *Instructional Objectives* stated in effect that "If you do not know where you are going, any route is just as good." A

corollary statement might be, "If you do not know where you have been, you may not really know where you are now." To gain perspective for trends of PRWAD in the Decade of the Seventies, let us take a brief look at where PRWAD has been in the past, and where PRWAD is now as we view our Conference Theme, "Deafness in the Seventies, a Decade of Service in Depth."

The initial ground-swells for the establishment of a professional organization serving adult deaf persons were felt during the 1950's. The advent of the 1960's increased the magnitude of these ground-swells as larger and larger number of professionals saw fit to dedicate their activities towards the total betterment of deaf persons in our society. One formal bench-mark and beginning towards an organizational structure took place in an after-hours session at the Hotel Andrew Johnson, Knoxville, Tennessee, October, 1964. A time table of 19 months evolved from the Knoxville meeting. During these 19 months a steering committee was able to devise goals, purposes, objectives, and an organizational structure to present to yet another after-hours meeting at the Sheraton-Jefferson Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, May, 1966. Rehabilitation Workers for Deaf People gathered at the St. Louis meeting supported the work of the steering committee and on May 25th, 1966, PRWAD became a reality.

It can be said that PRWAD has among its qualities a feature of responsiveness. The activities leading up to May, 1966, were marked by a responsiveness to a scattered professional community. Activities since 1966 reflect this same quality. A significant difference lies in the fact that the scattered professional community has rapidly become more populous.

The responsive qualities of PRWAD can be measured by the purposes of PRWAD as stated in the By Laws as follows:

1. To promote the development and expansion of professional rehabilitation services for the adult deaf;
2. To provide a forum and a common meeting ground so that the organization may be instrumental in bringing about a better understanding of deaf people as a whole by encouraging students, professional persons and laymen to develop more than a super-

ficial understanding of the needs and problems of this group--especially the problems related to communication techniques needed to work effectively with the adult deaf in a rehabilitation setting;

3. To promote and encourage scientific research of the needs and problems engendered by deafness which inhibit in important ways the successful overall functioning of a deaf person;

4. To promote and develop recruitment and training of professional workers for the deaf;

5. To sponsor a professional publication for the promotion of inter and intra-disciplinary communication among professional persons primarily concerned with deaf adults and others interested in such activities;

6. To cooperate with other organizations concerned with deafness and rehabilitation of the deaf and with allied services in promoting and encouraging legislation pertinent to the development of professional services and facilities for the adult deaf.

PRWAD has been active on a variety of fronts in pursuing its goals and purposes. Let us briefly review each of the objectives of PRWAD. The development and expansion of rehabilitation services for adult deaf people can be viewed in one light by the number of active members of the organization. As of September, 1970, there were in excess of 700 active members. In other ways, the activities of PRWAD have resulted in a variety of communications being directly transmitted to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Numerous members of PRWAD are regularly involved in all levels of government and in a variety of community organizations, thus providing a high degree of visibility.

The second objective of PRWAD calls for the provision of a forum and common meeting ground. This objective is being met and in part can be measured by National Conferences, and frequency of Executive Board meetings. The First Conference, attended by 88 members, was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in October, 1967. The Second Conference was held in Hot Springs, Arkansas, May, 1969, with over 160 members in attendance. Our

Third Conference is now underway with 254 persons registered. It is interesting to note that the first conference was "piggy-backed" on a national workshop, while the second conference was free-standing. The Executive Board has met 13 times, and by the time we depart Rochester, the 14th meeting will have taken place.

The third objective calls for the promotion and encouragement of scientific research. This objective is best met through the membership of an organization. A review of the literature will reveal that numerous members of PRWAD are conducting research in their various settings.

The fourth objective calls for recruitment and training of professional workers for the deaf. The visibility of PRWAD through its membership, its conferences, and its publications has enhanced the development and recruitment of needed professional workers. Numerous letters are received at Box 125, Knoxville, Tennessee, making serious inquiry into deafness as a field for professional endeavor. These inquiries are responded to individually and personally by the 2nd Vice-President.

The fifth objective calls for the sponsorship of a professional publication. PRWAD produces three publications. The quarterly *Journal of Rehabilitation of the Deaf*, and the *Deafness* monographs are professional publications. In addition, the *PRWAD Newsletter* is issued bi-monthly. At this very moment a Research and Demonstration application is pending in HEW which is designed to make *Deafness* an annual professional publication, similar to the annual *Blindness*. The acceptance of the *Journal* is reflected in the total subscription which approaches a distribution of 1000 per issue. This figure includes both membership and subscriptions of non-members. On a subjective basis, it is interesting to note the bibliographies of a number of recently published papers, and the bibliographies of graduate students' papers. In these papers the publications of PRWAD are found with increasing frequency.

Finally, a mandate for PRWAD is cooperation with other organizations concerned with deafness. This cooperation has been implemented by:

1. Co-sponsorship of several workshops organized by the National Association of Hearing and Speech Agencies;

2. Co-sponsorship of the National Census of the National Association of the Deaf;

3. Co-sponsorship of the Third Forum of the Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf;

4. Membership in the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped;

5. Membership in the Council of Organizations Serving the Deaf;

6. Participation in meetings with Gallaudet College viewing long range goals and objectives of the College;

7. Developing and maintaining relationships with other professional organizations such as the National Rehabilitation Association.

A second part of this final mandate calls for cooperation with other organizations in encouraging legislation pertinent to the development of professional services and facilities for the adult deaf. In this area individual members of PRWAD have enjoyed a high degree of participation.

PRWAD, as other organizations, has a variety of committees. Those committees functioning as a mandate of the By-Laws are the By-Laws Committee, the Nomination and Elections Committee, the Membership Committee, the Editorial Advisory Committee, and a Conference Committee.

Additional committees serving at the pleasure of the membership through the Executive Board are: Media Committee, Committee to Investigate the Feasibility of Name Change, Manpower Committee, Religious Work Committee, and a Committee on Severely Handicapped Deaf Adults. Additionally there is a special committee concerned with *JRD* subscriptions and business matters of the publications of PRWAD.

This, very briefly, is PRWAD. The organization grew out of responsiveness for the need of an organized approach to meeting the

rehabilitation needs of adult deaf persons. Through publications, conferences, individual and collective efforts of its membership, through Committees and through action of the Executive Board PRWAD has attempted to meet in part, needs of adult deaf people. The emphasis has been on service delivery systems which have been enumerated. There are numerous benefactors who have provided a variety of vehicles for the accomplishments of PRWAD. Not the least of these has been the excellent working relationships with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Countless individuals have contributed unstintingly of their time and talents to the growth of PRWAD.

PRWAD has been, and currently is, a voluntary organization. As a professional organization, we are in our infancy, just four years old. Yet, with some sense of pride, the membership can boast of the total members involved, of the publications, of the National Conferences, and the activities of its various committees.

The question before us, then, is, what lies ahead in the 70's? Some answers simply stated are:

1. Continued responsiveness to the needs of the professional community to better serve the needs of deaf persons;
2. Maintenance of an openness of professional behavior in seeking ways and means of strengthening the organization;
3. A critical review of the Publications Policies to strengthen the trend of promoting inter- and intra-professional communication;
4. A critical review of membership qualifications designed to strengthen the total functioning of the organization;
5. Continued emphasis on cooperation with other organizations concerned with deafness and with allied services;
6. Investigation of a move away from a pure voluntary status. The implication is that the current awareness of the total rehabilitation needs of deaf persons would be better served through permanent staffing patterns.

This listing represents in part some of the issues facing the Third Conference of PRWAD. Your responsiveness to these issues will set the trends for the role of PRWAD and Deafness in the Seventies.

Reaching the total objectives of PRWAD and needs of deaf people may remind us of the couple that collected antique grandfather's clocks. After making a rare "find," and spending countless evenings and weekends putting the clock in working order, John and Martha sat back to admire the clock placed conspicuously in the living room. The clock began to chime the appointed hour. Martha, counting the chimes, reached a grand count of 32. Somewhat distraught, she asked John, "What time is it?" John responded, "I don't know, but it is later than it has ever been."