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Travis State School Handbook

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Foreword

Travis State School's purpose is to provide service to clients and, by meeting clients' needs, develop their abilities to realize their potential. Employees are dedicated to this goal and responsible for its attainment.

This booklet tells you how this purpose is made real.



Prologue

A warm and accepting place, Travis State School is a community with camaraderie among people who know and care about each other. The clients, responding to all around them, see others as caring and worthwhile because the significant people in their lives treat them in ways that make them feel loved and important. Each client is encouraged to grow and is limited only by individual capabilities. Clients and employees often are friends for whom differences do not matter. Here they share and care about one another.

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History

Travis State School's 500-acre, scenic, tree-studded campus can trace its modern history to the colonization of Texas by Stephen F. Austin and his band of followers in the early 1830s.

A member of Austin's surveying crew who traveled to what is now Travis County was Reuben Hornsby who, with colonists like Josiah Wilbarger, John F. Webber, Frank Nash, Aaron Burleson and William Barton, played an important role in the founding and development of what is now the capital of Texas.

In 1832 Hornsby moved his family from a small trading post in western Bastrop County to a scenic valley along a big bend in the Colorado River. Hornsby's Bend, as it became known, was the first Travis County settlement. It was a stopping place for settlers moving into Travis County and it was here the county's first school was established.

Later another pioneering group, led by Joseph Rogers and his brother, James, settled around a hill overlooking Hornsby's



Bend and the fertile, scenic valley. It was then known as Rogers' Hill.

The State of Texas acquired the land in the early 1930s.

In 1934 the Austin State School opened a farm colony along the valley at Hornsby's Bend. The colony's headquarters, dormitories, dining halls and ancillary buildings were located on Rogers' Hill.

The farm colony served as home and work place for adult mentally retarded men for a number of years.

After farming operations ceased in the early 1960s, the facility name was changed in 1962 to Travis State School and 11 years later female mentally retarded citizens were admitted for the first time.

While the land is linked closely to Texas' history, its heritage and its use go back approximately 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

That was when ancient Indian tribes roamed Central Texas and lived, worked, fought and died on Rogers' Hill.

The curiosity and interest in the land shown by a school resident, Charles Allen, led to the discovery of the area's rich history.

In his spare time, Allen roamed the school grounds and valley area, picking up arrowheads and long-discarded tools, utensils and weapons. In 1977 he submitted his collection of artifacts to The University of Texas at Austin for study.

Dr. W.W. Newcomb of the Texas Memorial Museum researched and analyzed Allen's collection. He identified the period when the Indians lived at Hornsby's Bend and Rogers' Hill.

It was 3,850 years before Hornsby established his settlement at the bend in the Colorado River.

Enormous physical changes have been made over the years but the hill, the river and the valley are the same—untouched in their beauty, tranquility and serenity.

Preadmission Services

Travis is one of 13 state schools for mentally retarded people operated by the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Each school has a community services department which assists the citizens of a specific geographical area. Several Central Texas counties make up the area served by Travis State School.

The philosophy of employees of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and the Travis State School is that, depending on the need and availability, services should be provided for mentally retarded people as close to home as possible.

A broad range of services for mentally retarded citizens is provided in the counties that make up the school's geographical service area. These include infant development programs and group homes for adults who move from their family homes but require supervised living arrangements.



Other activities that help clients in their home communities are sheltered work, recreational and developmental programs, social services and consultation to public schools for special education classes.

Some communities may not provide the service a mentally retarded person needs for growth and development. Families may contact the nearest community service center to arrange for residential placement elsewhere.

The Application Eligibility Process

A person seeking any type service offered by Travis State School should contact the community service center in the county where that person resides. (Refer to the county mental health and/or mental retardation services listed in the telephone directory or telephone Travis State School.)



The center's social worker will assist the family and prospective client in locating the most suitable program available, including residential care or community-based day care.

If the mentally retarded person is an adult and not capable of giving consent for these services, that applicant's parent may need to become the legal guardian so that services can be arranged.

Only a court can appoint a legal guardian. If a guardianship cannot be arranged, other means for obtaining services such as a court-ordered commitment to a state facility can be sought.

The community service center's social worker is able to assist families in such legal matters.

When the community service center staff receive an application for service, the applicant is contacted to arrange for an evaluation. Called a comprehensive diagnosis and evaluation, the study combines information about the applicant's social and medical history, psychological and educational evaluations and other pertinent facts such as an assessment of speech. The summary includes the recommendations and conclusions of the professional staff conducting the evaluation and diagnosis.

After the diagnosis and evaluation report is completed the family and applicant join the professional treatment staff in selecting the most suitable services.

If the family and applicant do not agree with the results of the diagnosis and evaluation, they may request an independent study or an administrative hearing.

When the needs of the applicant have been determined, the client and family are invited to inspect Travis State School's many programs and services, including those offered at the school campus.

If the family and client decide Travis State School is their placement choice, they complete an application and submit

it to the school's Admissions Department where it is reviewed to determine that the applicant is eligible for admission and that needed services are available. The family and client again are invited to tour the campus for a final decision on whether school placement is what they want.

Clients' Rights

Mentally retarded people have the same human and civil rights as other citizens. Additional rights, including the right to be free from exploitation and to proper treatment services, are specified in the Texas Mentally Retarded Persons Act of 1977.

Travis State School clients who are capable of learning and understanding are taught their rights and the responsibilities accompanying these rights. The Resident Council, composed of clients and staff, meets monthly to talk about client concerns.

The school's five-member Human Rights Committee includes direct care workers and professional staff members. The committee meets at least four times a year to discuss any problems and develop procedures for any new client rights rulings. The committee advises the superintendent on issues concerning rights.

When a person is admitted to the school, the client and the family or guardian, receive from the committee a handbook that lists the rights of mentally retarded citizens.

Any client, family member or employee who believes rights have been violated may report this to the committee, a social worker, other staff members or to the Public Responsibility Committee.

Complete copies of the Mentally Retarded Persons Act and all other related legal

documents are available for review. When requested, the unit social worker will help interpret these documents.



Parent Involvement

Parents are an important part of the client's daily life. Parent involvement with the client's life at the school begins at the time of admission. Family members contribute to plans for the client's future. They are encouraged to make frequent visits to the school.

The family, working with the unit social worker, may plan for the client's home visits as often as possible. This cooperation continues as staff members share information with the parents about the client's progress. Parents' ideas about client services are shared with members of the unit treatment team.

Parent Group meetings are held quarterly. All parents and guardians are

encouraged to join these meetings and the Parent Group projects. The Group gives parents an effective channel through which they may express concerns and help improve clients' services.

Planning and carrying out various projects enable parents to make identifiable contributions to their child and the school. In addition to becoming involved with the clients and employees in the educational and informational programs, members of the Parent Group have the opportunity to share ideas and mutual concerns.

Discharge Planning

Planning for a client's discharge actually begins at the time the client is admitted to the school. Throughout the pre-admission and admission process, the family and client are involved in the decision to have the client move to the school.

Team staff members agree clients should remain at the school only until the problems which required school admission are solved. Many clients may spend most of their life at one of the school's dormitories because it is the most suitable place to meet their needs. However, a move to another school living unit or to a place in the community may be in the best interest of the client.

Before any move is made, a team of professional staff members meets with the family and client to make a decision. The wishes of the family and client are considered carefully, particularly if the client is to transfer to another state school, a group home or group living facility, or to return to the family.

When a school client enters a com-

munity program, the Discharge Planning Department and community service center staff members regularly check to make sure the client is receiving every service available to help the client adjust to community living.

Public Responsibility Committee

The Public Responsibility Committee is composed of private citizens who are not Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation employees. Committee members have the responsibility of checking activities at the school to protect clients' rights. Names and photographs of the committee members and the group's purpose are posted in the school's buildings.

Any client, employee or interested citizen may express concerns about the care and treatment services to any or all members of the committee by writing the Public Responsibility Committee, P.O. Box 522, Austin, Texas 78767.

Quality Assurance

Travis State School operates under the laws of the State of Texas, the Mentally Retarded Persons Act of 1977 specifically, the Rules of the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and federal guidelines. These require the school staff to provide a treatment program which is an

organized effort to help each client function at full capacity.

The treatment program, the product of a team effort, seeks to identify and devise ways to meet each individual's needs. These programs must be provided in a place as much like the community as possible and clients are encouraged to behave as others do in the community.

Records are kept to show the extensive individualized services given clients in the attempt to meet or exceed program expectations. The Quality Assurance Department and other professional staff teams regularly study each client's records. This never-ending process helps assure the availability of quality treatment in the least restrictive setting that meets each client's needs.

Residential Services

All dormitories and cottages are included in Residential Services and administered by a director. The areas are divided into units. A unit may include several dormitories or living areas with similar equipment and staff skills to help clients with particular needs. These needs may be medical, self-help, academic or pre-community living. The clients' ages are factors also.

Each unit has a team composed of a director, psychologists, social workers, program coordinators, nurses, trainers, secretaries, clerks, supervisors and direct care staff members. If needed, support is given by employees from other program areas.

The unit system allows the staff team to concentrate on a small group of clients. Teams members become acquainted with the clients and the close relationship

enables the team to provide quality, personal treatment programs.



At least annually the team reviews the progress each client is making in meeting personal goals. Parents or guardians, considered a part of the team, are invited to take part in annual staff reviews and, if capable, the client also attends.

This unit system of administrative organization was used first at Travis State School, beginning in 1969. Because of its success, this system is now used at all Texas state schools for the mentally retarded.

Special Services

Academic School

Certified teachers and teacher aides provide academic, physical and prevocational training for school-age clients. Adult education services are available to older clients. A principal, accredited by the Texas Education Agency, directs the

academic school. Educational specialists aid in client diagnosis and evaluation.

Barber and Beauty Shops

Licensed barbers and cosmetologists provide hair care to enhance the appearance of each client.

Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center

The Evaluation Rehabilitation Center staff measure the client's productive work skills and provide capable clients employment training in a sheltered work setting. Some clients work on contract projects for private companies. Tasks include assembling, collating, packaging and similar activities. There is also the opportunity to work with plants in the school nursery or on woodcrafts. Capable, trained clients participate in supervised job assignments at the school and in the community.



Food Service

The Food Service personnel prepare and serve three meals daily. This includes all diet food ordered by the medical staff for individual clients to

meet special physical needs. Snack and supplemental nutrients are served. Dietitians plan meals according to guidelines for meeting nutritional needs. Visitors and employees may purchase meals.

Medical Services

Staff physicians and nurses daily check each client's physical condition and provide needed treatment. The school's clinic serves outpatients and the infirmary is for inpatient care. Laboratory equipment and X-ray are available for diagnostic work. Pharmacists, operating a complete pharmacy, review and dispense medication prescribed for clients by staff physicians. Therapists treat the clients' physical and occupational problems. Dentists care for the clients' teeth and gums at the dental clinic and supervise unit training routines for proper mouth hygiene. Consultant services for medical, surgical and psychiatric care are available in the Austin area.

Religious Experiences

The chaplain conducts a non-denominational church service each Sunday morning. A Roman Catholic priest says Mass weekly. Transportation to community churches and synagogues is provided for clients who would benefit from these services. Religious education classes regularly meet on the dormitories. A client choir participates in church services.

Recreation Department

Recreation staff members offer clients a variety of programs, including arts and crafts, games, motor development, swimming, athletics, camping, scouting, movies, dances, community visits, music, music therapy and training for the Special Olympics.

Speech and Hearing Services

Each client's hearing and language skills are assessed by professionals who

provide speech, hearing aid and communication training. These therapists serve as speech and hearing consultants to staff members who conduct communication programs on the living units. Employees also are offered training in sign language by the speech and hearing staff members.

Financial Services

The Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation's Central Office has at the school a Claims Division staff to determine each family's responsibility for the client's cost of care. This includes a review of the family's assets and liabilities. Support, maintenance and treatment charges are based on the cost and the rate is set by the ability to pay. No one is denied services because of lack of money, nor does the ability to pay change the kind and quality of services a client receives.

Volunteer Services

Volunteer Services is the link between the school and the community. Family and volunteer gifts of money, goods and time enrich the clients' lives many ways. Volunteers become companions, aid programs, organize community visits and sponsor parties. They are major contributors to successful seasonal events at the school such as the Independence Day and Christmas parades, Halloween carnival, Easter egg hunt and the regional and state Special Olympics competitions. Volunteers plan and conduct fund-raising projects to meet special needs which are not provided by state funds.

Volunteer Council

Volunteer Council members organize and direct efforts of concerned community members who give much to improve life for the clients. The council decides how available volunteer resources can be utilized best, aids in developing new re-

sources and acknowledges contributions from individuals and groups.



Administrative Services

Superintendent

The superintendent is responsible legally and administratively for the school's operation. The superintendent works closely with the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Central Office and particularly with the deputy commissioner for mental retardation to provide the best possible service within the available resources and to plan the school's future direction.

Assistant Superintendent

The assistant superintendent supervises the Client Services Division and, in the superintendent's absence, assumes the duties of the superintendent.

Business Manager/Accounting

The business manager has responsibility for budget development and assurance that the school is operated within budgetary limits. Assistance is given by the Accounting Department which reviews and records all expenditures and income.

Biometrics

A permanent record of what happens to each client is kept by Biometrics personnel. The required information is submitted to the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Central Office for use in planning.

Personnel

The Personnel Section's responsibility includes posting notices of available school jobs, screening applicants, maintaining personnel records, administering employee benefit programs and distributing personnel policies to employees. The Equal Employment Opportunity officer helps to ensure equal treatment for employees and handles work-related employee problems.

Staff Development

Staff Development personnel train new employees in the basic skills and equip them with the information needed to begin work. Additional classes are available routinely in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, pharmacology and other skills. Refresher courses are required periodically for employees in specific service areas.

Fire and Safety

Fire and Safety Department employees review and enforce fire and safety regulations to protect and create a safe living environment for clients.

Security

Security Department personnel are responsible for keeping clients, employees and school property free from danger.

Switchboard

Located in the administration building visitor's reception area, the Switchboard employees are prepared to answer general information questions. Routine telephone calls should be made to the school weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Housekeeping Services

A clean, pleasant living environment is the Housekeeping Department staff's responsibility. All living units and buildings are cleaned daily.

Mailroom

Mailroom personnel distribute mail to clients and staff. If necessary, unit personnel help clients with the incoming and outgoing letters and packages.

Support Services

Supply

Supply Department personnel order, store and deliver all equipment, materials, supplies, food, medicines and other items for client use and the school's operation.

Maintenance and Grounds

The operation of the physical plant is done by the Maintenance and Grounds employees and their goal is to make the school a comfortable, pleasant and safe place for clients.

Clothing-Sewing Room

Clothing and Sewing Room personnel, with the cooperation of unit clothing clerks, make certain each client has an adequate supply of suitable, properly fitted clothing.

Motor Pool

Motor Pool employees maintain the school's vehicles, schedule needed

transportation and provide drivers for trips.

Canteen

Clients, visitors and employees may purchase snacks, beverages and simple meals at the canteen.

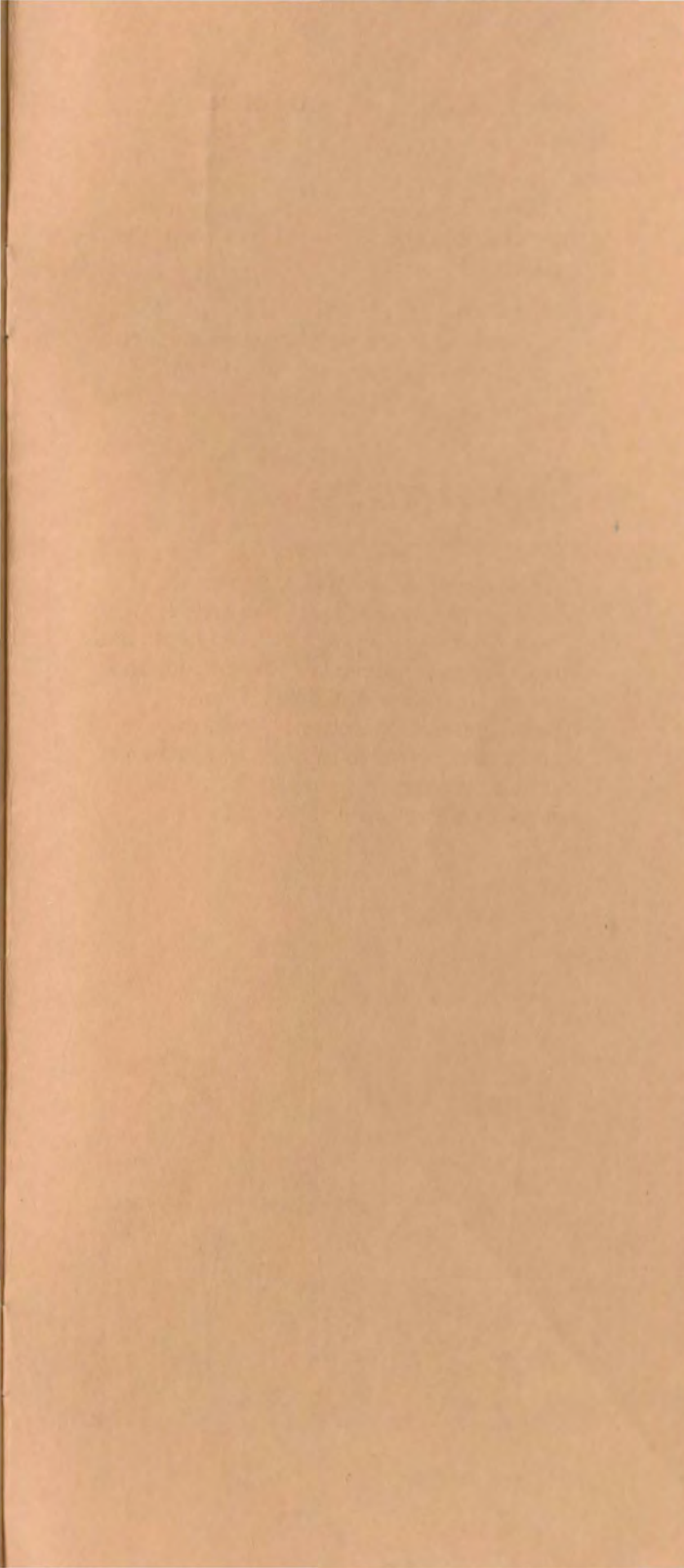
Laundry

Laundry Service personnel process the clients' bedding, towels and sturdy clothing at the school's modern laundry.

Summary

Travis State School is a community of many people in different roles. All are striving to create a place where clients and employees are valued, needs are met and growth is promoted. Clients, families, employees and concerned community citizens share in this effort. All this involvement of so many is to make life at the school rich and fulfilling for all.





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Published July 1982

Travis State School

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A facility of the Texas Department
of Mental Health and Mental Retardation