

CAMP No. 92



ADDRESS

VINELAND TRAINING SCHOOL
VINELAND, NEW JERSEY

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Dear Elmer,

I'm on duty this evening in a cottage of older boys -- waiting for the epileptic to have a fit and the insane boy to have a spell. The regular attendant's sister died Saturday night, and since it's my evening off I'm taking her place. The boys don't require my undivided attention so I shall write you a personal letter on the state of affairs.

We've got a measles epidemic on right now, and so it's rather tough going. The boys don't go to school at all so they are in the cottage all day so I have an even heavier load than in the past. I'm finding broader areas in which to work, new interests in what can be done and should be done for the children, more joy in working with the boys, and consequently less time for and opportunity for educational program. The need for more activity and planning in the boys' recreation in the cottage becomes more evident every day.

That brings me to my confession of my feelings of guilt. Of late I have been more and more convinced that I haven't been doing the unit justice in my handling of the educational program. Outside of getting a few speakers I have done nothing. Even arrangements and reports are sloppily handled -- witness that my quarterly report is seven weeks late. It's very difficult to be adequate in both the cottage situation and education planning and arrangement. Last Monday was my day off but I spent it at the meeting of the American Association of Mental Deficiency. That's the way every day off is. I spend the

day maintaining friendship contacts and doing cottage jobs or educational program jobs that I haven't the freedom to do the rest of the week. Now you see why I'm always tardy.

In spite of my doing so little, I ~~still~~ have recently acquired a conviction that we here can have a big place in the shaping of training school policy. Although we have long been dissatisfied with our situation, it appears (especially since the recent T.S. -- CPS conference in Phila) that Vineland is still considered pre-eminent and that our practice is more liberal than that of most institutions. Moreover, most of us have been here for over a year and have gained the confidence and trust of our superiors in such a way that we have been given greater freedom in carrying out our own programs. For that reason we have greater opportunity to change bad conditions. But we must do it in a very gradual manner.

I'm looking forward to the coming of the new unit leader since Paul tells me he's leaving. We need some one who sees the boundless possibilities for good work with and for the children, for unit educational opportunities, and for informing the menaunte constituency of the immense area of need in human lives. Moreover, he must be one stimulating enough to arouse us older members here into seeing the possibilities before us they are here -- believe me! And still yet he must be a man patient to await the workings of red tape, tactful enough to disagree without arousing anger, conscientious enough to prove his sincerity, and pleasing enough to meet people well. Where there is such a paragon of virtue I don't know, but I'm beginning to wish Edwin Goering were in detached service. I'm beginning to think this unit has possibilities of production IF we get down to business. Somehow though we haven't within ourselves what it takes to pull ourselves together to do anything. Perhaps a strong leader is what we need. It's discouraging sometimes because

3 there is so much to be done, so little time, and not too much interest.

Recently we did take a ~~step~~ step forward, however. At a special meeting we agreed to set up a recreational program for the boys. We arranged for an hour one night a week. I'm hoping that we can expand it later if it works out well this way. The boys have been awfully difficult to handle this spring with a terrific upsurge in anti-social behavior. To be prepared for next fall and winter, I have cleared up the basement here. I intend to manage a work bench and tools for there. Out of my next check I'm sending for samples of various types of craft work with the hope of expanding that angle.

I've finished the last half of this letter over a period of three or four hours from two-thirty this afternoon (Tuesday) until six-thirty. I had to stop after the end of the last sentence to take up at nine after watering lawns and gardens; calling the boys in from the ball game; supervising showers, prayers, and climbing in bed; and making an unsuccessful attempt at beginning a Bible story only to give up when a couple of fifth columnists disrupted the effort.

Mr. and Mrs. Ross Murphy, of the Phila Church of the Brethren and B S C, spoke to the unit tonight. I missed the talk although I did get there in time to shake hands.

I must stop now.

P.S. I got a V-mail letter from "H.B." yesterday. His rank is Technical Sgt. He's with the engineers (Army) in India and he says he's now melting.

Sincerely,

T Boyd