



# REMEMBER ME

THE DOCTOR JOSEPH H LADD CENTER

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A brochure chronicalling  
the life and work  
at the  
Doctor Joseph H. Ladd Center

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Doctor Joseph H. Ladd Center  
Post Office Box 9  
North Kingstown  
Rhode Island 02852

L A D D C E N T E R



# I N T R O D U C T I O N



The philosophy of the Dr. Joseph H. Ladd School is a belief in our responsibility for the conservation and development of human abilities. This belief is rooted in the knowledge that retarded individuals are influenced by their surroundings, in ways both obvious and subtle. We maintain as our primary goal the development of each retarded person's understanding, skills, knowledge, and capacities. We strive to achieve this goal not only by refining and improving formal educational programs, but by brightening the resident's living space, and providing direct-care staff of enlightened, responsive employees.

Each resident receives an individual program describing the specific ways in which this goal of personal development is being sought. These programs are implemented through four units within the administration of the Ladd Center. The four units are:

Adult rehabilitation — which administers residential activities, educational programs, and vocational rehabilitation.

Child development — which assists residents under 21 years of age. The primary emphasis is on stimulation of basic developmental skills through formal school programs.

Medical program — which provides the nursing services necessary for both long and short term medical care.

Support services — which consists of a full staff of dedicated individuals who are not involved in providing direct resident care.

The individuals involved in these four service areas are constantly striving to provide a warm, loving atmosphere, consistent with the philosophy of quality care for the retarded individual.

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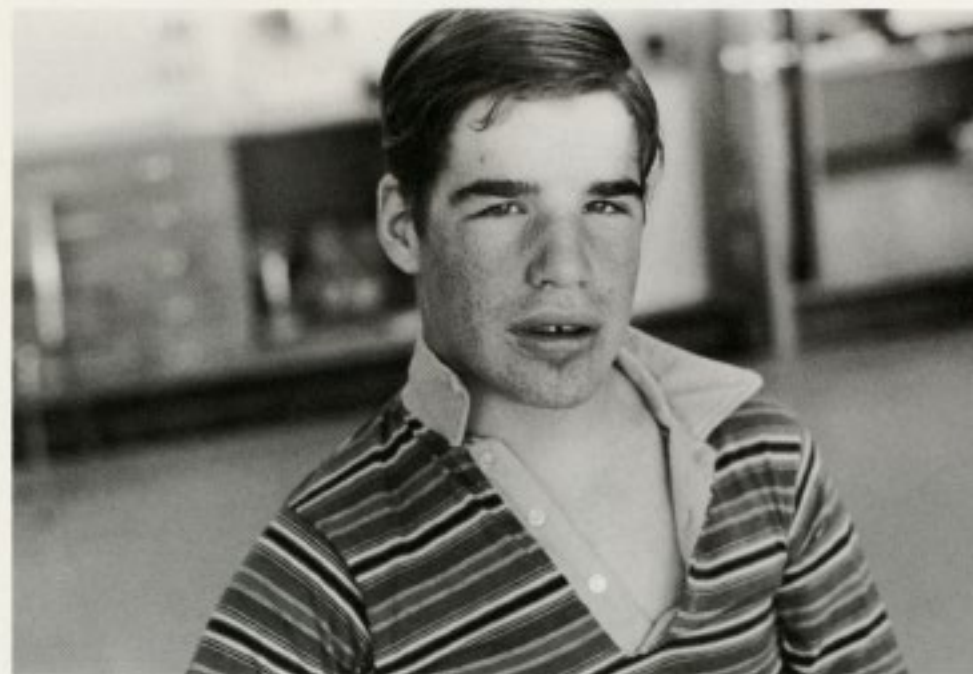


In 1907, four adjoining farms in Exeter, R.I. were purchased for an experiment in education which is still blossoming. Work with retarded children was being enacted in Massachusetts, so a committee was appointed, from Rhode Island, to observe this undertaking. When it was decided to start such work here in Rhode Island, Dr. Joseph H. Ladd — assistant superintendent of the Massachusetts facility — was hired to do the job. In February of 1908, eight young men arrived to become the first residents of the Rhode Island School for the Feeble-Minded. Thus was the school referred to until 1916, when the name was changed to the Exeter School. In 1958, the name was again changed — to the Dr. Joseph H. Ladd School.

From its humble beginning in an ancient farmhouse, the Ladd Center has grown to a facility which encompasses 10 residential buildings, a large and modern clinic, a school which houses 14 classrooms, a large gymnasium with a pool, an administration building, a fire station, and 600 acres of wooded pastureland. This mini-village is the home for the 703 residents of the Ladd Center.



## Myths and Misconceptions



There are various misconceptions regarding mental retardation. Myths conceived years ago continue to circulate among us. The notion that retarded individuals are unable to learn, and the idea that they cannot become useful members of society are among the misconceptions which have continued to undermine their image. The fear that retarded individuals are dangerous, and unable to function within our culture, has biased the attitude of the general public.

Our purpose at the Ladd Center is an attempt to dispel these misconceptions and myths. We work towards personal goals for each resident. These goals constantly aim towards helping the retarded individual to work towards his, or her, potential as a functioning member of society. Sometimes this society is as small as the confines of the Center. More often the goal is geared toward placing the individual in our larger culture.

Their presence in our everyday world is, we feel, the best method of undermining the ancient fears and myths which have shrouded the mentally retarded in a general spirit of misunderstanding.

## Educational



The educational heart of the Ladd Center is focused in the school building. There, residents under the age of 21 utilize the 14 classrooms, 3 vocational rooms, and home economics area, in order to learn skills which will enhance their native abilities. Each classroom has a roster of six students, and a staff of two. One is a teacher, certified in mental retardation. The other is a program aide, also normally certified to teach the mentally retarded. Most of the teaching staff hold Master's Degrees.

The multi-handicapped students are taught in two special classrooms, designed for this use, within the Rehabilitation Center. Four staff members work with them, on a two to one ratio.

Physical education, fine and gross motor skills, academic skills, and socialization skills are all parts of the Ladd School day. Students attend classes for 230 days out of the year. In addition, many extra-curricular activities are scheduled so the students will have access to the learning experiences within the community. Hopefully, this community involvement will help the Ladd School student to adapt more readily to our society as a whole.



## Recreational



The recreational facilities at the Ladd Center are many and varied. Each cottage has its own playground with swings, equipment, and climbable sculptures. There is also a large community play area at the rear of the school building. These facilities are used during the free times before meals, and after school.

Within the school complex itself are two large and well-equipped gymnasiums, as well as two swimming pools. These facilities are constantly in use during the regular school day, both for pure recreation, as well as physically therapeutic purposes. A staff of carefully trained athletic instructors and aides monitor the activities in these areas.

In addition to these myriad physical education facilities, the Center also maintains a summer camp on Watchataug Pond in East Greenwich, R.I. There, the students, on a daily or weekly basis, come to enjoy fresh air and beautiful country. The pond is, of course, the focal point of the camp, and many happy hours are spent splashing in the water, or sitting on the dock.

Physical education is a most important component of the operations at Ladd Center. It both brightens the day through fun, and teaches the gross motor skills which the students need in order to strengthen their chances for a more normal life.

## Residential



The residential areas at the Ladd Center have

been designed to provide comfortable living environments. There are 5 cottages where the school-aged children live. Each has its own kitchen and dining facility, a community living area, and an outdoor patio area with recreational equipment. Also, there are private bedrooms, as well as provision for a nurse's quarters. These cottages are tastefully decorated, and most rooms are brightened by the occupant's favorite group of toys and personal objects.

Residents who are multi-handicapped live in the Fogarty Center, which is located within the hospital. Semi-private rooms are the general rule, and around-the-clock nursing care is available for those whose handicaps are too severe for self-help.

Residents who live at the Ladd Center over the age of 21 live in spacious brick buildings, surrounded by greenery. While some wards are still in existence, they are gradually being phased into more personal spaces.

These residential areas are home to the individuals at Ladd Center. Their meals are taken in their cottages, and supervised recreation is prevalent, after the day's activities are completed.



## Medical



Health services at the Ladd Center cover a wide variety of diagnostic and treatment specialties. Physicians provide primary-care medical services for each resident at the Center. Because each physician has a relatively fixed case-load, via building assignment, continuity of care is possible. Physicians also participate in the annual review process, in order to provide accurate diagnostic information, as well as formulation of plans for care of anticipated needs. A group of physician-extenders (nurse practitioners) perform similar functions, under the supervision of a physician, in order to broaden the scope of available medical care.

For those residents too ill to be managed successfully in their residential unit, there is a 16-bed infirmary, where more intensive medical services can be provided. Occasionally, new admissions to the Center remain in the infirmary, where initial evaluations can be performed, and decisions made regarding placement.

Ancillary health services are also available. There is a new dental clinic. A complete x-ray department is available. Laboratory services provide a range of bacteriologic, chemical, and hematologic studies.

Medical services at the Ladd Center are one of its finest features. They are constantly growing, in order to reach the goal of providing first-quality health care.



Support services are perhaps the largest entity at the Ladd Center. They encompass volunteer services, media services, speech pathology, and physical/occupational therapy. Each of these services is available to all residents at the Ladd Center.

Volunteer services provide development in three broad areas — education/therapy, socialization/recreation, and entertainment. The department recruits, places, and equips volunteers with the skills and knowledge to perform their assignments effectively.

Media services are offered through a modern, well-equipped media center. Books, audio-visual materials, and training equipment are utilized by the residents and staff, under the supervision of a full time media specialist.

Speech pathology services are rendered by nine full time staff members. Their job is to provide language enriching environments, as well as specific communicative skill development. The pathologists perform evaluations, create therapeutic management programs, train relevant staff, and participate in total program planning.

Physical and occupational therapy are very extensive programs at the Ladd Center. Treatment takes the form of tasks which an individual performs under the supervision of a therapist, in order to improve his function or performance. Some of the services which provide this therapy are: co-ordination programs, swimming programs, gait training, range of motion programs, reflex development, neuro-developmental treatment, and physical habilitation.

The ultimate goal of these therapies, indeed of all the support services at the Ladd Center, is to enable the resident to function to the maximum of his capabilities, and to achieve maximum potential.

## Support Services



## Social/ Psychological Services



A full range of social and psychological services are available to the residents at the Ladd Center. Nine clinical psychologists, one psychometrist, 7 social caseworkers, and one case aide provide evaluations and counseling.

The guiding philosophy in these areas is that each individual human being has dignity and worth. Because of this, each individual has the right to assistance in development of as full and independent a lifestyle as possible.

In the area of social services, caseworkers evaluate and review each case on an annual basis. They serve as liaisons between the resident, the facility, the family, and the community. They also, when possible, place the Ladd Center resident within the community — in a group home or foster care facility.

Psychological services also work under the premise that normalization is a desired goal. To this end, the staff works at assessment of individual needs, supportive counseling, family support and training, and service consultation.

Social and psychological services are complex entities which must be as flexible as individual needs. This is the nature of the discipline, both direct and indirect. The thrust of these programs is normalization in terms of the total person.



## Placement

There is a broad spectrum of individual abilities which are evidenced by Ladd Center residents. Some, such as the multi-handicapped, are painstakingly geared towards what to us would be very simple goals — such as personal hygiene. These goals, however, may take years to achieve. Other residents have innate abilities to function on a broader scope. These individuals are the backbone of what has become a very active placement program.

The placement program, as it relates to the broad scope of society, is twofold. First, there is the possibility of residents participating in sheltered workshops. These workshops are designed to give those residents with modified fine motor skills an opportunity to create — often on a piece work basis — objects which are components of industrial products. They are paid for these efforts, thus are able to supplement their lives with desired objects, such as radios, or bicycles.

The placement program's second offshoot is that of placing advanced individuals directly into the community. This community placement can take the form of living in group homes, or foster care centers. In this instance, caseworkers and social workers play an enormous role, as they follow the individual's needs as he progresses through the adjustment of de-institutionalization.

We wish to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the faculty and staff at the Joseph H. Ladd Center for their unceasing desire to help the retarded individual live up to his, or her, potential. The hours are long, the work is heavy — but the rewards are immense.

**This brochure  
was made possible  
through a  
Title I Federal Grant  
Operation Child Development**

Project Director: **Sr. Mary Sullivan**  
Text and photographs: **Alma Davenport**  
Design: **Tom Ahern/Alma Davenport**  
Printed by: **Foremost Lithograph**

Digitized by The Ladd School Historical Society  
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