

A PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INDIGENT AND HOMELESS MEN AND WOMEN IN NEW HAVEN

Submitted by Dwight Hall, May 19, 1977

Dwight Hall: A Brief History and Overview

Founded in 1886 as the Yale University Christian Association, Dwight Hall is an independent, non-profit, educational and religious organization committed to helping the University and the community respond to the needs of the poor and destitute. In 1907 the Hall sponsored a work in in New York City's Hell's Kitchen; in 1919 it raised \$100,000 in one week to assist students in war-torn Europe; and during the Depression it organized drop-in centers and soup lines.

During more recent years, Dwight Hall has helped students develop a counseling center for youth, a tutorial program that has served as a model for other universities throughout the country, an employment agency for the elderly, and the New Haven Halfway House--an organization that has helped hundreds of former mental patients adjust to life in the community. In addition to involvement with these and other educational, health, and social service organizations, Dwight Hall serves as a clearing house for 25 volunteer programs involving 800 to 1,000 students. Volunteer activity through Dwight Hall includes work in direct services (such as day care, work with the elderly, juvenile court, hospital visitation, group work, etc.) as well as social change oriented programs such as urban homesteading, and legal research on poverty related issues and concerns.

Project Proposal: Purpose and Outline

During the early part of this century, students working through Dwight Hall founded the Yale Hope Mission, an institution designed to help meet the needs of lonely and destitute men in New Haven. Recognizing Dwight Hall's tradition of student involvement in work to help the poor, the dispossessed, and the needy, the project described below attempts to provide a mechanism for:

1. meeting a community need through the development of services in support of the forgotten person in our society--the homeless man
2. fostering in students a concern for this population and offering opportunities to help meet the needs of the less fortunate in our society

- 3. developing programs that utilize University and community resources to offer aid to indigent and homeless people in New Haven

The proposed project will consist of working in the five areas outlined below:

- 1. Survey of Needs: In order to develop programs to aid the dispossessed, homeless, and destitute members of the New Haven community, we propose the assessment by students of the current needs of and services offered to the alcoholic in New Haven. Such an assessment will include a survey of services offered through
 - a. the courts and police
 - b. churches and religious organizations
 - c. downtown hotels and the YMCA
 - d. public and private alcohol and drug programs
 - e. city and state welfare

Because of the changing legal status of the alcoholic, research concerning HEW guidelines and legal rights will be included in the assessment process.

- 2. Drop-in Alcoholic: Members of the Yale community are frequently asked for money, assistance, and often a place to stay by dispossessed and homeless people from the community. Because there are at present no channels for dealing with this situation, the response is often destructive--both to the person who is sent away (and in some cases arrested) and to the students who frequently take on the burden of housing and maintaining people who feed upon their sympathy. (This past year, for example, one student--who was in the process of dropping out of school--reported that her roommates had been housing a very unstable woman who for the past year had been living with one group of students after another. The woman had been living in her quadrangle for two months.)

In response to this situation, we propose the development of a program in conjunction with the Downtown Cooperative Ministry, the Yale Religious Ministry, and the Campus Police to deal with the drop-in alcoholic and the homeless person. Such a program will include exploration in the following areas:

- a. assessment of the number and needs of the alcoholics and homeless people who are already in contact with the Yale community
- b. development of a referral program that maximizes available support systems (such as counseling); and minimizes situations in which the person is sent away ununiformed of available resources
- c. consideration of new ways in which the University and the community can respond to the needs of such people

3; Education: We plan to explore the possibility of the development of a seminar within Yale College on the problem of alcoholism. The course will include a field base component which will place students in local agencies dealing with alcoholism. Through this seminar students will:

- a. learn more about the problems facing the millions of alcoholics and problem drinkers in our society
- b. serve as resource people for the dispersement of much needed information about alcoholism within the Yale community
- c. develop the expertise and knowledge necessary for the implementation of student volunteer programs dealing with the alcoholic

At present there are no undergraduate courses that deal with this issue.

- 4. Women: An assessment will be made of the particular needs of homeless women in the community. Several students have already expressed an interest in the problem of battered women and how the community is responding to their need for assistance and shelter. We hope to develop a volunteer program through which Yale students can work with community organizations on this issue.
- 5. Dwight Hall Programs: In addition to the four areas mentioned above we plan to expand designated Dwight Hall programs to include a more adequate response to the needs of the alcoholic and homeless person. Through already established volunteer programs at the Hill Health Center, St. Raphael's hospital, Yale-New Haven, the New Haven Half-House and numerous mental health facilities, we hope to develop

a referral service which will apprise the alcoholic of programs available to assist him or her.

Other programs--such as Work with the Elderly, and the Undergraduate Legal Project--can be utilized to help meet the needs of homeless persons through the work of students interested in particular problem areas (for example, legislative proposals concerning welfare benefits; legal rights of the elderly; and the development of job programs for indigent men).

Staff and Support Services:

In order to implement this proposal in its initial stages, a minimum of six (6) students working part-time (10-15 hours per week) will be needed: one student in each of the project areas; and a Project Director who will be responsible for program coordination and administration. As individual projects develop additional manpower will be utilized through ten week Internships offered to qualified students who can devote full-time to the development of support services for alcoholics and homeless people in the New Haven community.

Students working on the development of this program will meet regularly with members of the Dwight Hall staff and consultants brought in from the community. Herb Cahoon, a psychiatric social worker and Director of Yale Volunteer Services will also serve as a supervisor for students involved in this program.

Support services offered by Dwight Hall include: staff personnel (4) with training and experience in psychiatric social work, clinical pastoral education, family counseling, urban education, and administration; office space; telephone; and secretarial services and supplies.

The following is a partial listing of organizations and agencies that provide services to alcoholics and indigent persons:

New Haven:

Alcohol Council of Greater New Haven, Katherine Battista, executive director,
37 Jefferson St., 787-2111

John Magee House, Inc., Ken MacCarthy, director, 84 Norton St., 776-2397

Hill Health Center, 428 Columbus Ave., 432-4400

Connecticut Mental Health Center, 34 Park, 772-3300

State Department of Mental Health--Orange Street Clinic (Campbell)

Dixwell Opposes Alcohol, Al Price (Call Human Resources Administration, 562-0151)

Shirley Frank Foundation,

St. Raphael Hospital Shelter Program

North Haven Alcohol Education Service

Connecticut Valley Hospital

Union of Indigent People (New Haven Alcohol Center), Ed Grant (corner of
Bristol and Ashmun St.)

Connecticut:

Bridgeport: Salvation Army Men's Social Service Center, 1313 Connecticut Ave.,
367-8621

Groton: Southeastern Council on Alcoholism, P.O. Box 962 (zip 06340)
447-1717

Hartford: Compass Club, Two Holcomb St. (06112) 566-5027
Salvation Army, 333 Homestead Ave. (06112) 527-9189

New Britain: Resurrection House, 586 Main St. (06051) 225-4641

Stamford: Meridian House, 710 Long Ridge Road, (06902) 322-8132

Waterbury: Morris House, 271 South Main St. (06702) 757-7211