A STUDY OF THE FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM IN THE GREATER LANSING AREA

LOUIS L. LOVETTE 1962

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FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM

IN

THE GREATER LANSING AREA

by

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine the need for, and the services performed by, the volunteer worker in the role of Friendly Visitor, as seen by the volunteer, the various health and social welfare agencies engaged in family and child care, and those individuals who are at present recipients of this type of service, in the Greater Lansing area.

Friendly Visitor programs appear to be a modern day continuation of the origin of social work in America. Concern for the less fortunate, the sick, the aged, and the needy family, has been and is, a large factor in our cultural heritage. Volunteers play an important role in assisting a community's social and welfare agencies toward fulfilling their designated function, and the establishment of a structured Friendly Visitor program, in the modern community, could conceivably make possible a more efficient and effective effort toward meeting felt needs that would otherwise go unmet or require increased financial expenditures.

PROBLEM

It has been recommended by Community Research Associates that the Greater Lansing Volunteer Bureau continue its active recruitment program and

encourage family and child welfare agencies to make use of the Friendly Visitor and volunteer who can carry cases requiring supportive help, under professional supervision.(1)

The Friendly Visitor program in the Greater Lansing area is a rather loosely structured service maintained by the Volunteer Bureau which is, in turn, under the over-all supervision of the Lansing Community Services Council. A number of health, social welfare, family and child care agencies have shown reluctance or complete apathy, in one form or another, toward using volunteers enrolled in the program to augment their services.

At the present time, the Friendly Visitor program is utilized by six nursing and convalescent homes, two family and child care agencies, one health agency, and one public assistance agency, for a total of ten agencies. As a result of materials gathered there seems to be twenty-three agencies in Lansing that could make beneficial use of this type of volunteer assistance. There is thus a valuable potential for service beyond what is now being done.

At the time this study was undertaken the Lansing Volunteer Bureau was in a stange of transition. A new Director had recently been appointed and was endeavoring to familiarize herself with the Bureau's many activities. It was found that records of the Friendly Visitor program, in regard to agencies, number of volunteers, and number of recipients, were inaccurate and misleading.

1. A STUDY OF SERVICES TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN Community Research Associates, Inc., April, 1956, Pp. 149-150.

Health, welfare, family and child care agencies cannot, within the limitations imposed upon them by definition of function and the budgeting process, meet the total requirements of the community's sick, aged, and needy families. Increased availability and reliance upon volunteers through the Friendly Visitor program should result in more effective agency and community effort.

In order to obtain an indication as to the current functioning and services being rendered by the Friendly Visitor program in the Greater Lansing area, and to gain some knowledge pertaining to the acceptance and/or rejection of the program, it was felt this study should be made.

NEED AND ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS

Social progress, in the Lansing area as elsewhere, depends a great deal on the social action of volunteer citizens who work for the realization of the democratic concepts of equality and freedom. However, as the helping services tended to become more professionalized, the continued need for and use of volunteers was either ignored or minimized by specialization. Mary Richmond early pointed out that " the world is not a stage upon which we professional workers are to exercise our talents, while the volunteers do nothing but furnish the gate receipts and an open-mouthed admiration of our performances."(1)

1. Colcord, Joanna C. and Mann, Ruth Z.S., (eds) THE LONG VIEW-PAPERS AND ADDRESSES BY MARY E. RICHMOND. New York, Russell Sage Foundation. 1930, p. 345.

As social workers and their respective agencies have matured professionally they have come to realize that regardless of training and specialization the need for volunteers still exists. An article in the Social Work Yearbook states, "Now that the necessity for professional competence is generally recognized, increasingly volunteers are serving as partners with trained social workers in the area of treatment and direct service to clients as well as continuing to act as board and committee members. This partnership has strengthened social agencies by supplementing limited staff, freeing trained workers for specialized tasks, interpreting the work to potential users and contributors of service, keeping the agency sensitive to community needs and reactions to program, and establishing confidence in the service."(1)

Grace Coyle describes four functions performed by volunteers which are characteristic of a democratic society:

1. They provide opportunity for social contacts
2. They provide channels for the expression of cultural and individual interest
3. They make for a decentralization of power and counteract a monopoly of political power
4. Volunteer activities provide another basis and means for the promotion of general welfare (2)

Eduard C. Lindeman wrote, "The act of volunteering is an assertion of individual worth. The person who of his own free will decides to work on behalf of the good of his community is in effect saying: I have gifts and talents which are needed. I am a person who accepts responsibility,

1. Kurtz, Russell H., (ed) VOLUNTEERS IN SOCIAL WORK. Social Work Yearbook. 1954. American Book-Stratford Press. Inc., New York. p. 538.

2. Coyle, Grace L., GROUP EXPERIENCE AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES. The Woman's Press. New York. 1947. pp.12-17.

not because it is imposed upon me, but rather because I wish to be useful. My right to be thus used is a symbol of my personal dignity and worth."[1]

The effectiveness and need for volunteers is determined, to a great extent, by the classification and assignment of volunteer roles. The specific tasks and functions of volunteers differ according to agency. However, there are considered to be two rather broad general categories of volunteers:[2]

1. The "administrative volunteer" who serves as a board or committee member, responsible for policy making and fund raising.
2. The "service volunteer" who assumes an active part in carrying out the purpose of the agency and who may or may not deal directly with agency clientele.

In a talk delivered at the National Conference of Social Work, Mrs. Robert Whitelaw Wilson emphatically stated that "There need be no arbitrary limitations on volunteer service. Many tasks require professional skills and training, others, and there are many of these too, can utilize volunteers if the work is carefully planned, supervised, and intergrated. Welfare agencies would be able to carry on a broader, more effective program if they could obtain services of more volunteers to release the professional worker for those aspects of the service in which they are the most indispensable."[3]

1. Lindeman, Eduard C., MOTIVATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS IN COMMUNITY SERVICE, WHY DO THEY DO IT ? Community Chests & Councils of America, Inc., New York. p.2.

2. Cohen, Nathan E., (ed) THE CITIZEN VOLUNTEER. Harper & Brothers, New York 1960. p.40.

3. VOLUNTEER PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHY. A talk given by Mrs. Robert Whitelaw Wilson at the National Conference of Social Work, Cleveland, Ohio, June 2, 1953.

The Social Work Yearbook, 1957, points out that "one of the major activities for volunteers in public assistance is the Friendly Visitor program established in old age assistance divisions. The volunteer Friendly Visitor serves under the general direction of a caseworker or supervisor. He functions at all times within the casework plan for the individual."(1) Similarily " in family and child care agencies, volunteers provide service as casework aides, escort children to clinics or doctor's offices, tutor children unable to attend school, visit shut-ins, and serve in numerous other capacities which help to extend and supplement the services of the professional staff of these agencies."(2)

GREATER LANSING VOLUNTEER BUREAU

A number of individuals and groups in the late 1940's began to recognize the need for a Volunteer Bureau in Lansing to afford the various agencies and organizations volunteer assistants and to utilize the free time, talents, and training of men and women who wished to give volunteer service.

At an executive committee meeting of the Ingham County Council of Social Welfare (now known as the Community Services Council) on November

1. Kurtz, Russell H. (ed) VOLUNTEERS IN SOCIAL WORK. Social Work Yearbook, 1957. National Association of Social Workers, New York p. 594-5.

2. Op. cit., p. 592.

14, 1949, the steering committee suggested that priority be given to establishing a Volunteer Bureau, stating that " all phases of the Council program, and agency programs, hinge on the active cooperation of well trained and interested volunteers."[1]

The Lansing Junior League, on February 15, 1951, agreed to sponsor the Volunteer Bureau for two years on a demonstration basis, and pledged $3,000 annually, for this period of time, to meet anticipated expenses.[2] Operating procedures that were adopted on June 6, 1951[3] set forth a three-fold purpose:

To coordinate and organize volunteer service, so that:

1. Community services may be continuously supplied with necessary volunteer workers.
2. All citizens may have full opportunity to participate.
3. Duplication of effort in the recruitment and selection of volunteers may be decreased.

On December 8, 1953, the Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board approved standards that were to be adhered to by agencies using volunteers recruited by the Volunteer Bureau.[4] These standards outlined the procedure agencies were to follow when requesting the Bureau to assign

1. THE LANSING VOLUNTEER BUREAU, News Release to Lansing State Journal. 1955.

2. Ibid.

3. Operating Procedures of Lansing Bureau. June 6, 1951.

4. STANDARDS RECOMMENDED FOR AGENCIES REQUESTING VOLUNTEERS. Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board, December 8, 1953.

volunteers to them and assigned the responsibility to agencies for volunteer training, supervision, reporting and selection of tasks. Agencies were to provide follow-up staff consultation on the service being performed by the volunteers.

LANSING'S FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM

At the meeting of the Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board, on February 16, 1953, " plans were discussed for training and orientation of volunteers in terms of specific training for special jobs such as Friendly Visitor and general training in community orientations such as Know your Social Agencies."[1] A special committee was appointed to make plans and recommendations to the board for meeting these objectives.[2]

This committee determined that it would be necessary to establish agency need for Friendly Visitors, and if need did exist, how many volunteers would be required to adequately meet the need. It was decided that a questionnaire survey, directed to public assistance agencies and convalescent homes would provide the Board with this preliminary information.

Secondly, it was recommended that as the volunteers were recruited, they should be screened to gain some knowledge of their limitations, special skills, stability, and reasons for wishing to become a Friendly Visitor.

1. Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board, MINUTES OF MEETING. February 16, 1953.
2. Ibid.

Some general training was recommended prior to assigning the volunteers to their respective agencies where they were to receive additional training in order to perform specific, assigned agency tasks. It was also recommended that each volunteer keep a brief written record of visits. After considerable discussion the Board voted to initiate plans for a Friendly Visitor program.(1)

PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The purpose of the Friendly Visitor program was defined as being:

1. "To visit patients at a definite time on a regular basis.
2. to do such things as writing letters, shopping, reading and simple crafts." (2)

The Friendly Visitor program was designed to serve as an organized community wide plan, or process, where-in health, welfare, family and child care agencies might provide additional service to their clientele by the involvement of community volunteers. These volunteers would have indicated their desire to assist in the meeting of community needs and would be trained to give understanding support to the sick, aged, and other needy families or individuals.

The Friendly Visitors were to be trained by agencies to perform certain specific tasks in regard to individual and family health and welfare needs.

1. Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board, MINUTES OF MEETING. May 10, 1954. p. 1-2.

2. Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board, MINUTES OF MEETING. December 14, 1954. p 2.

Sick, aged, and needy families whose physical or emotional well-being was impaired by loneliness and lack of personal attention were to be visited on a regular basis. They may, or may not, have been receiving public assistance, and could be living alone, with relative or in a boarding, convalescent, or nursing home.

It was hoped that increased availability of adequately trained volunteers, through the Friendly Visitor program, would permit agency professionally trained staff members to devote additional time toward working with clients whose problems were more complex, or to see new clients.

In addition, the Friendly Visitors were to serve as representatives of the community as they would be in an advantageous position to keep the agency better informed of client functioning and needs, as well as being able to serve as a "sounding board" for community evaluation of agency functioning.

RECOMMENDED TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

There were to be three two hour training periods designed to include:

1. "Orientation to nursing home facilities as well as general orientation in volunteer service.
2. Interpretation of the psychological needs of the aging and their attitudes.
3. A skit depicting the roles of visitor and patient."[1]

1. Ibid.

The committee expressed the feeling that volunteers must be under the supervision of some definite person in each home.[1]

By definition, the Friendly Visitor program was established to perform special jobs relating to persons residing in convalescent homes. However, one of the volunteers who completed the first training program was assigned, and placed under the supervision of the Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid. This Visitor was to work with recipients of Old Age Assistance, and was provided working space in the Bureau's office as well as being granted some clerical help.

The Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid would require the Friendly Visitor to visit clients on a regular interval basis, provide clients with transportation to the doctor when needed, deliver reading materials, stimulate client interest toward social contacts and/or physical activity, and submit written reports of visits for conferences and agency record purposes.[2]

1. Ibid.

2. Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board, MINUTES OF MEETING, May 9, 1955. p.2.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

METHOD OF STUDY

Data for this study were collected through the reading of minutes from meetings of the Volunteer Bureau Advisory Board, interviews with the Executive Director of the Community Services Council and the Director of the Volunteer Bureau, and by questionnaires.

Separate questionnaires were constructed and mailed with a covering letter to the various health, social welfare, family and child care agencies, the volunteers, and the recipients of Friendly Visitor service.

DESCRIPTION OF METHOD

Questionnaires were mailed to twenty-three (23) health and social welfare agencies, forty-four (44) Friendly Visitors and thirty-six (36) individuals that were listed as recipients of Friendly Visitor service. Stamped, self-addressed envelopes, along with an explanatory letter, were enclosed in the original mailing.

Agencies included in the study were designated by the Director of the Volunteer Bureau, who is charged with the responsibility of recruiting, training and placement of Friendly Visitors in agency settings, and by the Executive Director of the Lansing Community Services Council.

Friendly Visitors and recipients, included in the study, represent the total number of individuals recorded by the Volunteer Bureau as being involved in the program.

DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Three separate questionnaires were constructed for this study to determine quality and quantity of this program and whether the need for a Friendly Visitor program existed.

Agency questionnaires[1] were designed in such a manner as to gather responses from an administrative point of view, and give some indication of quantitative and qualitative needs. In recent years some professional agencies have shown a reluctance to use volunteers and it is conceivable that lack of understanding, in regard to the purpose of the Friendly Visitor program, and dissatisfaction with volunteer training, orientation, and availability have been major contributory factors in this reluctance.

Friendly Visitor questionnaires[2] sought to gather information on the social characteristics and motivation of the Visitors. Questions were asked on marital and educational status, satisfaction with the role of Friendly Visitor, confidence instilled by adequacy of training, and type of task performed. These were factors that were expected to affect the quality

1. See Appendix II
2. See Appendix III

of the Friendly Visitor program.

Recipient questionnaires [1] were designed to gather information on the social characteristics and physical condition of recipients and on their unmet needs as they saw them. Questions were asked that would obtain information on physical, educational and financial status. It was expected that this information would point to needs.

1. See Appendix IV.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this chapter to present the findings of the study of the Friendly Visitor program in the Greater Lansing area, and to discuss their implications in regard to the program.

AGENCY DATA

Twenty-three health, social welfare, family and child care agencies, were asked to take part in the study. Selection of these agencies was made by the Executive Director of the Community Services Council and the Director of the Volunteer Bureau, using the definition of agency program and function as a basis for their selection.(1)

Fourteen agencies completed and returned their questionnaires, as shown in Table I.

Six nursing or convalscent homes replied to the questionnaires. Four of these were taking part in the Friendly Visitor program. Two nursing or convalscent homes were not using the program but indicated they wish to do so if and when more Visitors became available.

1. Community Service Council, SOCIAL SERVICE RESOURCES OF INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN. Lansing, Michigan. September 1, 1959.

Five agencies offer counseling service to their clients. Two of these agencies use Friendly Visitors, but three do not take part in the program although one would if Visitors were available.

Three agencies offer health services to clients. One uses Friendly Visitors. Two do not, nor would they if Visitors were available.

All of the agencies indicated that they were offering either counseling, financial assistance, health or nursing/convalscent home services. One agency, the Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid offers all four types of service to its clients. The Lansing Child Guidance Clinic and the National Foundation offer diagnosis and referral service in addition to counseling.

Agencies in Study and Using Friendly Visitors

	Returned questionnaire	Type of service	Using program	Would if more available
American Red Cross	yes	C- F	no	no
Beadle Convalescent Home	yes	N	yes	yes
Bogue Nursing Home	yes	N	yes	yes
Capitol City Convalescent Center, Inc. # 2	yes	N	no	yes
Catholic Social Service, Inc.	yes	C -F	yes	yes
Fairview Convalescent Home	yes	N	no	yes
Greater Lansing Visiting Nurses Association	yes	H	yes	yes
Holt Homes, Inc.	yes	N	no	yes
Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid	yes	C-F-H-N	yes	yes
Ingham County Chapter, National Foundation	yes	H-R	no	no
Ingham County Hospital and Rehabilitation Center	yes	H	no	no
Lansing Child Guidance Clinic	yes	C-D-R	no	no
Michigan Multiple Sclerosis Society	yes	C-H	no	yes
Michigan Nursing Home Association	yes	N	yes	yes
Capitol City Convalescent Center, Inc. # 1	no	-	-	-
Family Service Agency	no	-	-	-
Ingham County Society for Crippled Children	no	-	-	-
Lansing Senior Citizens Drop-In Center	no	-	-	-
Muscular Dystropy Association	no	-	-	-
Recovery, Inc.	no	-	-	-
Rosalawn Convalescent Home	no	-	-	-
Shady Lawn Nursing Home	no	-	-	-
United Cerebral Palsy Assoc. of Lansing	no	-	-	-

C=Counseling D=Diagnosis F=Financial H=Health N=Nursing R=Referral

Agencies not using Friendly Visitors stated that they did not do so because:

1. Agency services do not require them.
2. Agency does not know how they would incorporate Friendly Visitors into their service
3. Agency auxillary service provides this type of program.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society is not using Friendly Visitors, but would if they were available.

The responses indicate that agencies offering nursing/convalscent home care tend to use the Friendly Visitor program more than any other type of agency. Five of the six nursing/convalscent homes which responded, indicated that all of their staff members were aware of the Friendly Visitor program.

Agencies listed a number of subjects which they feltshould be incorporated in the orientation program given to Friendly Visitors:

1. Need and responsibility for confidentiality(three agencies).
2. Acceptance of recipients as individuals.
3. Define what Friendly Visitors are, their purpose, responsibilities, and problems they will encounter.
4. Emphasize the need for the Friendly Visitor to be a good listener, have a sense of humor and to be prepared to read aloud to the client.
5. Teach some understanding of cultural differences, aging process, and individuals' illnesses.
6. Emphasize need for dependability and regularity.

Duties that Friendly Visitors could perform which would be most beneficial to agencies were stated as being:

1. Entertaining clients that are home-bound after surgery.
2. Perform personal services that are not within the scope of agency function, such as writing letters, shopping, furnishing reading materials, give shampoos, etc..
3. Provide client transportation

4. Help with diversional therapy, such as crafts, reading, showing picture slides.
5. Help educate the public in regard to clients' needs and the effect of illness on the entire family.

Three agencies indicated that they request Friendly Visitors for their clients through personal contact with the Director of Volunteer Bureau. Two make their request via telephone and one agency does not know how it obtained the Visitors assigned to it. Eight agencies did not answer this question.

None of the agencies that returned their questionnaires and that are currently using Friendly Visitors, provide Visitors with any form of agency supervision. One stated that after the first visit to a client the Visitor was on his own, another felt that supervision was the responsibility of another volunteer and a third stated that their agency did not feel that the Friendly Visitor required supervision.

Five agencies stated that a Friendly Visitor could not perform any of the services that are at present being done by professional staff members. These five agencies are:

1. Catholic Social Services, Inc.
2. Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid
3. Lansing Child Guidance Clinic
4. Michigan Multiple Sclerosis Society
5. Michigan Nursing Home Association

The Holt Nursing Home stated that Visitors could do diversional therapy which paid staff members did not have time to do. The remaining eight agencies listed personal chores, i.e., sharpoos, manicures, shopping as the services which they felt Friendly Visitors could perform.

The reason given for not using Friendly Visitors as a part of agency service, coupled with the list of subjects which agencies feel should be incorporated in the orientation program, and the lack of Visitor supervision all appear to indicate a lack of confidence in Friendly Visitors by professionally trained social workers specifically and social welfare and family and child care agencies in general. This is further re-enforced by the listing of duties which agencies feel that Friendly Visitors could perform which would be most beneficial to their agencies and the stating by five agencies that Visitors could not perform any of the services that are at present being done by professional staff members. It further appears that agencies are limited in their knowledge as to the defined purpose of the Friendly Visitor program, how to obtain their services, and the responsibilities of agencies to the community to involve volunteers where ever possible, in their programs.

VISITOR DATA

Questionnaires were mailed to forty-four volunteers that were reported to be active as Friendly Visitors. Twenty-four completed the questionnaire and returned them for tabulation, two returned blank questionnaires. Through investigation it was determined that of the forty-four Visitors listed as active in the program, four were no longer functioning as Visitors and did not wish to return their questionnaires thereby leaving a total active listing of thirty-eight Friendly Visitors. Of that number, six additional Visitors, although returning their questionnaires, do not wish to continue as volunteers.

Twenty-two of the total returns were from women averaging 57.6 years of age with the median age being 60 years. The oldest woman is 70 years and the youngest is 37 years of age. The two men returning their questionnaires are 74 and 72 years of age.

Seventeen of the women are married, two are divorced, two are single and one is a widow. One of the men is married and the other is a widower.

Education background of the Lansing Friendly Visitor, as shown in Table 2, shows that a relatively high percentage of these volunteers have received advance formal training and should be capable of performing other than menial chores.

Table 2

Education Background of Friendly Visitors

Formal Education	Number of Visitors
College Degree	8
1 or more yrs college	8
Completed High School	4
Less than High School	4

As might be expected from the data shown in Table 3, Friendly Visitors either have been or are currently employed in a variety of occupations.

Table 3

Former and Present Occupation

Former Occupation	Number	Present Occupation	Number
Teacher	6	House wife	14
None	5	Retired	4
Housewife	2	Librarian	2
Librarian	2	None	2
Office Worker	2	Office Worker	1
Social Worker	2	Teacher	1
Carpenter	1		
Plumber	1		
Sales	1		

When viewed together, both educational background and former and present occupation show that a number of the Lansing Friendly Visitors have received the type of training, and have held positions which would have prepared them to assume responsibilities that lie within the defined purposes of the Friendly Visitor program. Some of the Visitors (6) have received formal training and have been engaged in professional work that is considered to be closely related to social work.

Table 4 shows that three-fourths of the Friendly Visitors returning their questionnaires, feel that they were adequately trained, prior to being assigned to their respective agencies. Twenty-one were satisfied with their assignment while three expressed dissatisfaction

Table 4

Opinions of Visitors on Adequacy and Assignment

Feelings of 24 F.V.'s	Number
Adequately trained	18
Inadequately trained	6
Satisfied with assignment	21
Dissatisfied with assignment	3

However, during the past several years, the only training which the Friendly Visitors have had was the single session orientation arranged by the Director of the Volunteer Bureau. If additional orientation and training has been received this has not been reported to the Bureau, nor is there any known record of its having occurred. From the suggestions offered by agencies as to what should be included in the Friendly Visitor training program, it is apparent that no additional training has been given once Visitors were assigned to an agency.

Although only three individuals indicated they were dissatisfied with their assignment a number did report dissatisfaction in other areas for reasons reflected in Table 5.

Table 5

Areas of Dissatisfaction

Reason	Number
Lack of supervision	9
Wish to do more than just visit	4
Question the good I am really doing	3
No dissatisfaction	7
Persons being visited are too demanding	1

It may readily be seen that the major source of dissatisfaction on the part of Friendly Visitors is the lack of supervision. The reader will recall that none of the agencies indicated that they extended any supervision to the volunteers assigned to them. Although the volunteer feels that he has skills, time, and abilities to give to his community and although he feels adequately trained to perform tasks assigned him, he is dissatisfied with the lack of supervision and accountability which accompany his efforts. This might account for the dissatisfaction of four who wish to do more than just visit and the three who question the good they are really doing. It is apparent that more than half of the Friendly Visitors do not feel a part of the agency to which they are assigned.

Eight, or one-third, of the Visitors, state that the greatest source of satisfaction in this role is the realization of being needed by others. This and other areas of satisfaction are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Friendly Visitors Greatest Areas of Satisfaction

Satisfaction due to:	Number of times mentioned
Being needed by others	8
Being accepted as a friend	5
Having contact with older people	5
Obtaining recognition from those visited	5
Providing diversional activities	2
Giving others help and recognition	4
No comment	3

Thirteen Visitors indicate that they spend from one-half hour to six and one-half hours per week performing their assignments, thus

indicating an average of two and three quarter hours per week spent in doing Visitor assignments. This is mentioned to emphasize the satisfaction and willingness with which the Volunteer carries out his assignment and responsibilities.

Most people want to feel that they are needed and accepted. Only four of the Lansing Friendly Visitors in this study indicated that they are still gainfully employed and most are beyond the middle age bracket. By serving others, the Visitor is gaining recognition and satisfactions which, in part, meet his own needs. In addition to the stated purpose of the Friendly Visitor program, it appears that those actively involved are also receiving benefits.

Visitors are asked to perform many tasks during the course of a regular visitation. Table 7 shows some of the more common requests that the Visitor receives from the agency clientele.

Table 7

Frequency of Requests to Perform Certain Tasks

Tasks	Once	Occassionally (2 to 5 times)	Frequently (5 or more times)
Assist with household budget	1		
Administer medication		3	
Advise on purchase of food	2		
Advise on purchase of clothing		1	1
Perform some housekeeping chore		3	
Transport individual to doctor	1		
Transport individual to hospital			
Transport individual to a Social Agency	1		
Do some counseling		4	1
Take individual on an outing		3	1
Refer individual to a Social Agency for help		2	1
Other*			3*

* Supervise other visitors

RECIPIENT DATA

The questionnaire addressed to recipients of Friendly Visitor service was mailed to forty-six individuals who were listed by the Volunteer Bureau as recipients of the service. Seven questionnaires were returned unopened. These were stamped "unkown" or " moved no forwarding address." Three questionnaires were returned incompleted with an attached note stating that the recipient was deceased. There-fore a total of thirty-six questionnaires are considered to have been received by "active" recipients. Of these only sixteen completed questionnaires were returned.

One man and fifteen women recipients returned completed questionnaires. The man stated that he is 76 years old. Average age of recipient women is 76.7 years, with the median being 79 years of age. The oldest woman is 89 years and the youngest 60 years of age.

Three of the women are single, three are married, and nine are widows. The one man is a widower.

Table 8 lists the former occupation of the sixteen recipients, by number.

Table 8

Recipients Former Occupation

Former Occupation	Number
Apartment Mgr.	1
Bookkeeper	1
Farmer	1
Housewife	1
Housework	1
Practical Nurse	1
Sales person	2
Teacher	2
None	6

Formal education of those receiving Friendly Visitor services is relatively limited. Four categories of scholastic achievement are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Educational Background of Recipients

Formal Education	Number of Recipients
College degree	1
1 or more yrs of college	0
Completed High School	3
Less than High School	12

Recipients were requested to indicate what type, if any, public assistance, OASDI benefit, or pensions they are receiving. As indicated in Table 10, ten of the sixteen, were receiving public assistance.

Table 10

Financial Assistance and Recipient Numbers

Type Financial Assistance	Number
Aid to Dependent Children	0
Aid to the Blind	1
Aid to the Disabled	0
Company Pension	2
Old Age Assistance *	9
OASDI (Social Security) *	5
Other (private income)	1

* Two recipients receiving OAA and OASDI

The average age of recipients of Friendly Visitor services, their marital status, former occupation and formal education would appear to indicate that recipients, now old, alone, dependent, and with little formal educational background feel the need for services not within the scope of existing agencies. Advanced age, and poor physical health, prevents them from indulging in all but a few activities which can be undertaken with limited physical effort. Lack of formal education restricts intellectual interests, financial dependency, as shown in Table 10, serves to further instill a feeling of unworthiness, rejection, and loneliness.

Recipients appeared to be relatively uninformed as to how Visitors were assigned to them. Nine did not know how they acquired a Friendly Visitor, three attributed it to a social agency, two had requested a social agency to have a Visitor assigned to them, one stated that a friend made the request, and one said a business acquaintance had

obtained the Visitor for her. However, twelve recipients stated that they like the program, and of the four indicating they do not like it only one gave any reason for this dislike stating that visitations were not regular enough to suit her needs.

A table was constructed (see Appendix IV, Question 11) and recipients were asked to check which of four conditions they felt best described their physical health. Six indicated they classified themselves as being in poor health, four indicate fair health, three felt they were in good health while the remaining three indicated poor health. The fact that a majority of these recipients feel that they are in poor health reflects an earlier statement made in this study to the effect that nursing homes make a greater use of the Friendly Visitor program than other agencies included in the study.

Recipients were asked to list what they felt their Friendly Visitor had done which helped them the most. Their response is shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Recipients Opinions of What Helped Most

Friendly Visitor helped by	Times Mentioned
Just friendly calls	6
Did errands	2
Did Some reading	2
Gives real friendship	2
Did nothing to help	2
Provided company	1

A listing of tasks and activities where in assistance might be needed and given was compiled and recipients requested to indicate whether help was not needed, if they were receiving some help in these areas, or whether they needed help but were not receiving it. Table 12 shows recipient response.

Table 12

Listing of Recipient Tasks and Activities

	Help not needed	Receiving some help	Need help but not receiving it
Advice in buying clothing	15	1	
Advice in buying food	15	1	
Assist with household budget	15		1
Assist with house chores	13		3
Help with medication	11	1	4
Need to be taken on a outing	14	1	1
Transportation to a doctor	13	1	2
Transportation to hospital	15	1	
Transportation to Social Agency	16		
Other	16		

Recipients do not appear to feel in great need of assistance in performing their daily tasks and activities. Four recipients did indicate they needed help with their medication. Three feel they need help with household chores, three need transportation, and one needed budget help. None are receiving this type of aid. Six are receiving some help in other areas, such as, buying clothing, buying food, being taken on an outing, and transportation to the doctor or hospital.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was two-fold: (1) to determine the need for, and the services performed by, the volunteer worker in the role of Friendly Visitor, as seen by the volunteer, the various health and social welfare agencies engaged in family and child care, and by the recipients of this type of service, in the Greater Lansing area, and (2) to gain some knowledge pertaining to the acceptance and/or rejection of the Friendly Visitor program.

METHOD EMPLOYED

Due to the scattered geographic distribution and the different roles played by the individuals and agencies involved in this study it was decided that different questionnaires, should be constructed to obtain information on the problem from each group and circulated to them. Agencies were selected by the Director of the Volunteer Bureau and the Executive Director of the Lansing Community Services Council. Friendly Visitors and recipient were those individuals recorded by the Volunteer Bureau as being involved in the program.

CONCLUSIONS

In so far as the techniques may be valid, the following conclusions

seem defensible.

1. Three nursing and/or convalescent homes are currently using the Friendly Visitor program and the four that are not indicated that they would use Friendly Visitors if more were available. One counseling and health agency made a similiar response. This indicates that the Volunteer Bureau, that is charged with the responsibility of recruiting, orientating and assigning Friendly Visitors to agencies has not been able to meet the existing need for volunteers to work with those agencies in the role of Friendly Visitors.

2. Four agencies that list counseling and referral as the service which they offer their clients and which are considered to be casework orientated, stated that they were not using Friendly Visiter nor would they use them if more were available. These agencies appear to feel that either persons working with their program under auspices other than the Friendly Visitor can adequately supplement their service, or they are not aware as to how Friendly Visitors could assist in the service which they offer clients and therefore do not feel the need to use volunteers.

3. Nine of the agencies involved in the study, although having been long established in the Greater Lansing area, had not made their total staff aware of the existence of the Friendly Visitor program. It is felt that lack of total staff awareness of the Friendly Visitor program has prevented some of these agencies from taking part in the program and has caused them to limit beneficial volunteer involvement.

4. Responding agencies listed six subjects which they felt should

be included in the orientation program given to Friendly Visitors. Subjects listed appear to indicate limited knowledge, on the part of the agencies, as to the responsibility of agencies to provide training beyond the limited orientation given volunteers by the Volunteer Bureau.

5. Agencies listed eight duties which they felt that Friendly Visitors could perform. All of these duties fall within the defined purpose of the Friendly Visitor program, but Visitors indicated that they are seldom requested to perform these duties, although a substantial proportion did state they wished to do more than just visit and several questioned the good they were really doing. Agencies apparently have given Visitors little or no instructions as to what they would like to have them do when visiting clients and have not extended agency recognition for the efforts which they have made.

6. There is no regular routine which agencies follow when requesting Friendly Visitors from the Volunteer Bureau although a policy and standards were established in 1953. In addition, many recipients do not know how or who obtained a Friendly Visitor for them. Both the Volunteer Bureau and the agencies have been lax in not following established procedure.

7. Agencies do not provide Visitors with any form of supervision. The defined purpose of the Friendly Visitor program and the standards adopted by the Volunteer Bureau state the agency supervision of volunteer is a requirement if the volunteer is to be assigned to any agency and is to adequately carry out his assignment.

8. The reasons given by agencies for not using Visitors as a part of their program, complete lack of agency supervision and limited agency recognition extended to volunteers indicate a lack of confidence in the use of Visitors by professionally trained agency personal and a large amount of apathy toward the Friendly Visitor program. There appears to be need for the Volunteer Bureau and the various health, social welfare, family and child care agencies, to re-evaluate the Friendly Visitor program, in light of each agency service, in order to determine how the agencies might make positive use of the Friendly Visitor program.

9. Educational and occupational data in regard to the Friendly Visitor indicate that these volunteers are capable of assuming and discharging a reasonable range of duties and responsibilities to agencies and recipients. They are also willing to spend several hours per week in carrying out assignments given them. However, Visitors are aware of, and dissatisfied with the lack of agency supervision.

10. Most Friendly Visitors feel that the orientation given them by the Volunteer Bureau adequately trains them to carry out their assignments. However, agencies do not feel this way as shown by the subjects which they suggested should be added to the orientation program. The subjects suggested by the agencies that should be included in the orientation appear to be more properly a responsibility of the agencies rather than the Volunteer Bureau.

11. Lack of agency supervision and the non-existance of a uniform policy in agency request for Friendly Visitors have resulted in faulty

record keeping by the Volunteer Bureau as to which agencies are using Friendly Visitors, which volunteers are serving as Visitors, and the identity of the names and number of recipients being served by Friendly Visitors.

12. Friendly Visitors receive at the same time they are giving. This is shown by the number who express that their greatest satisfaction is in the knowledge of being needed by, and gaining recognition from those persons that they visit.

13. Recipients of the Friendly Visitors services are elderly citizens most of whom are past the retirement age, and the majority are widows. The individuals represent the need which the Friendly Visitor program was designed to meet.

14. Recipients have received relatively limited formal education and have not, for the most part, held jobs that would give them financial security in their later years. Recipient financial dependency is shown by the number of individuals receiving assistance from public agencies. These facts, coupled with their advanced age, poor physical health and the type of satisfactions they receive from the Friendly Visitor program, point out their need for the type of recognition and support which social agencies cannot give within the limits of their defined purpose. Friendly Visitors, appear to be meeting some of these needs, although the program is markedly limited by agency failure to properly train and make the volunteer a part of their "casework approach" and by their apparent apathy toward the program.

15. In general, there appears to be a much greater area for service by volunteers through the Friendly Visitor program than is being met. The Volunteer Bureau has not carried out the policies adopted by the Volunteer Board Advisory Council nor have agencies using Friendly Visitors accorded them agency recognition. Friendly Visitors have not been given agency training to perform specific tasks. They have been given a single session orientation and then assigned to visit without agency supervision and without being incorporated into the over-all casework plan for the recipients. This is borne out by the disclosure that a number of recipients do not know how they acquired a Visitor and is further emphasized by the failure of agencies to maintain staff contact with Visitors.

16. From data collected by this study it is believed that volunteers, through the Friendly Visitor program, can and should be trained to perform certain specific duties which are at present performed by professionally trained agency personnel, there-by enhancing the productive usage of professionally trained staff. However, it is felt that the Volunteer Bureau and the various health, social welfare, family and child care agencies in the Greater Lansing area should agree upon a more closely knit, formally structured manner of recruiting, assigning, and incorporating Friendly Visitors into the agency services which are to be offered to recipients.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I

The enclosed questionnaire is a part of a study being made to assist in the future planning for the Friendly Visitor Program in Lansing. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Your individual reply will be respected as confidential information and will not be subjected to public scrutiny or evaluation.

Your prompt attention in completing this questionnaire will make possible the completion of this part of the study by March 1, 1962.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Louis L. Lovette

Enc.

Appendix II

CONFIDENTIAL
Community Services Council
Lansing, Michigan
February 9, 1962

FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Agency _____

2. Type of Service (s) Offered

_____Financial

_____Counselling

_____Health

_____Nursing Home

_____Other (Specify) _____

3. _____ _____ Does your Agency use Friendly Visitors?
yes no

(a) If Yes, how many? _____

(b) If No, why not _____

_____

4. _____ _____If available, would your agency use more Friendly Visitors?
yes no

5. Please list in order of importance those subjects which you feel should be incorporated in the orientation program given to Friendly Visitors?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

6. What duties do you feel that the Friendly Visitor could perform which would be most beneficial to your agency?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

Appendix II Cont'ed

CONFIDENTIAL
Friendly Visitor Program Questionnaire
Page 2

7. How does your agency request a Friendly Visitor for your clients?

_____Via written request

_____Via telephone

_____Via personal contact

_____Other (Specify) _____

8. _____ yes _____ no Do all of your workers know about the Friendly Visitor program?

9. _____ yes _____ no Does your agency supervise the Friendly Visitors assigned to your agency clients?

(a) If No, who does supervise them?_____

10. What service does your professional (paid) staff perform, that you feel could be performed by a Friendly Visitor?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

Appendix III

CONFIDENTIAL
Community Services Council
Lansing, Michigan
Frebruary 9, 1962

FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ (optional) 1. Age _____ 2. Female _____ 3. Male _____

4. Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

5. Present Occupation, if any: _____

6. If not employed, please state last occupation _____

7. Please circle the number corresponding to highest number of years of education you have had:

Grade School	High School	College	Degree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	_____

8. _____ yes _____ no Do you feel that you were given adequate training to perform the Friendly Visitor duties assigned you?

9. _____ yes _____ no Are you satisfied with your Friendly Visitor assignment?

10. If dissatisfied, please number in numerical order of importance--1,2,3,etc.

_____ Lack of supervision

_____ Do not like persons that were assigned me

_____ Wish to do more than just visit

_____ Question the good I am really doing

_____ Do not feel that I am part of the Agency

_____ Feel inadequate to cope with others' problems

_____ Persons being visited are too demanding

_____ Other (Specify) _____

_____

11. What has given you the greatest satisfaction in your role as a Friendly Visitor?

_____

_____

Appendix III Cont'ed

CONFIDENTIAL
Friendly Visitor Program Questionnaire
Page 2

12. Please list, in order of importance, subjects which you feel should be included

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

13. _____ Please indicate the number of hours per week that you now serve as a Friendly Visitor

_____ (a) How many additional hours could you serve, if needed?

14. In your role as a Friendly Visitor, please check in the appropriate column the frequency with which you have been asked to perform any of these task.

Once	Occasionally (Two to Five Times)	Frequently (Five or More Times)	
_____	_____	_____	Assist with household budget
_____	_____	_____	Administer medication
_____	_____	_____	Advise on purchase of food
_____	_____	_____	Advise on purchase of clothing
_____	_____	_____	Perform some housekeeping chores
_____	_____	_____	Transport individual to doctor
_____	_____	_____	Transport individual to hospital
_____	_____	_____	Transport individual to a Social Agency
_____	_____	_____	Do some counselling
_____	_____	_____	Take individual on an outing
_____	_____	_____	Refer individual to Social Agency for help
_____	_____	_____	Other (Specify) _____

_____

Appendix IV

CONFIDENTIAL
Community Services Council
Lansing, Michigan
February 9, 1962

FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ (optional) 1. Age _____ 2. Female _____ 3. Male _____

4. Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____

5. Please state last occupation, if any: _____

6. Please circle the number corresponding to highest number of years of education you have had:

Grade School	High School	College	Degree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	_____

7. Please indicate by a check mark which of the following you are receiving:

_____ Aid to Dependent Children

_____ Old Age Assistance

_____ Social Security Benefits

_____ Aid to the Disabled

_____ Aid to the Blind

_____ Company Pension

_____ Other (Specify) _____

8. _____ yes _____ no Did you request the service of a Friendly Visitor?

9. _____ yes _____ no Did a caseworker from some social agency request the Friendly Visitor for you?

10. If No, who requested a Friendly Visitor for you?

_____ Friend

_____ Church

_____ Business Acquaintance

_____ Other (Specify) _____

Appendix IV Cont'ed

CONFIDENTIAL
Friendly Visitor Program Questionnaire
Page 2

11. Please check which of the following best describes your health at present:

_____Good--Able to maintain own home, dress self, prepare own meals do own shopping.

_____Fair--Cannot maintain own home, but can dress self, prepare own meals, do own shopping.

_____Poor--Cannot maintain own home, cannot prepare own meals, can dress self, can dow own shopping.

_____Very Poor--Cannot maintain own home, cannot prepare own meals, need help with dressing, need help with shopping.

12. What has your Friendly Visitor done that has helped you the most?

_____

_____

13. Please place a check mark in the space which you feel properly applies to yourself:

Help Not Needed	Receiving Some Help	Need Help But Not Receiving It	
_____	_____	_____	Assistance with household budget
_____	_____	_____	Need help with medication
_____	_____	_____	Advice in buying food
_____	_____	_____	Advice in buying clothing
_____	_____	_____	Assistance with house chores
_____	_____	_____	Transportation to doctor
_____	_____	_____	Transportation to Hospital
_____	_____	_____	Transportation to Social Agency
_____	_____	_____	Need to be taken on outing
_____	_____	_____	Other: (Specify) _____

_____

Appendix IV Cont'ed

CONFIDENTIAL
Friendly Visitor Program Questionnaire
Page 3

14. _____ _____ Do you like the Friendly Visitor Program?
yes no

Why?_____

_____

Appendix V

AGENCIES TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY

- American Red Cross
- Beadle Convalescent Home
- Bogue Nursing Home
- Capitol City Convalescent Center, Inc. # 1
- Capitol City Convalescent Center, Inc. # 2
- Catholic Social Service, Inc.
- Family Service Agency
- Fairview Convalescent Home
- Greater Lansing Visiting Nurses Association
- Holt Home, Inc.
- Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid
- Ingham County Chapter National Foundation
- Ingham County Hospital and Rehabilitation Center
- Ingham County Society for Crippled Children
- Lansing Child Guidance Clinic
- Lansing Senior Citizens Drop-in Center
- Michigan Nursing Home Association
- Muscular Dystrophy Association
- Recovery, Inc.
- Roselawn Convalescent Home
- Shady Lawn Nursing Home
- United Cerebral Palsy Association of Lansing

* Returned questionnaire

Appendix VI

AGENCIES REPORTED TO BE TAKING PART IN THE FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM

- Beadle Convalescent Home
- Bogue Nursing Home
- Capitol City Convalescent Center, Inc.# 1
- Capitol City Convalescent Center, Inc.# 2
- Catholic Social Service, Inc.
- Family Service Agency
- Greater Lansing Visiting Nurses Association
- Ingham County Bureau of Social Aid
- Roselawn Convalescent Home
- Shady Lawn Nursing Home

- Returned questionnaire