

# **A History of Family Centered Early Support and Services**

# **Historical Developments And Forces That Have Shaped The Service System**

**Where did it all start? It started with the question:**

**“What do we do with the paupers?”**

# Elizabethan Poor Laws were established in 1601:

- ✓ **Outdoor Relief (“welfare”)**
  - **Food, fuel, clothing, etc.**
  - **Application made to “Overseer of the Poor”**
- ✓ **Indoor Relief**
  - **Room, board, clothing in exchange for work (e.g., stone breaking)**
  - **Required to enter a congregated workhouse/poorhouse**
  - **Men, women and children were segregated**
  - **Parents forfeited their rights and responsibilities for their children**
  - **Conditions were hard to deter people from relying on Indoor Relief**

# Poorhouses - Almshouses in the 1700s

- ✓ **First Almshouses in US were built in Philadelphia**
  - **In 1713 by William Penn (for Quakers)**
  - **In 1728 open to general public**
- ✓ **By 1850 the majority of people living in the almshouses were the aged, infirm, poor children (people unable to work)**
- ✓ **States began requiring the establishment of **County Poorhouses/County Farms****
  - **By 1866 NH had established that requirement**



**Strafford County Farm**

**Cheshire County Farm**



*Cheshire County Farm, Westmoreland, N. H.*

*February 9, 1893*

From the local news paper *The Republican*:

“The most terrible **calamity** that has ever fallen upon Strafford county occurred [sic] last night.”

“The Insane Asylum at the Strafford County farm was totally destroyed by fire and **40 out of 44 inmates perished in the flames.**”

“Large crowds of people have visited the place today, many of whom well remember the fire which destroyed the main building in January, 1881, by which **thirteen people lost their lives.**”

**A monument was erected in Strafford County in memory of the victims of the poor farm asylum fire. The inscription reads:**

***“In memory of those who lost their lives by the burning of the Strafford County Asylum Feb. 9, 1893.”***



- ✓ After the fire a **controversy** arose in NH about the conditions in the almshouses, particularly for children.
- ✓ 1895 - state **Board of Charities and Corrections** was created by the legislature
  - To oversee the care of adults who were housed in county farms and children in orphanages.
- ✓ The Board of Charities and Corrections recommended that **radical changes were needed** in the methods of caring for the poor and mentally ill.

✓ At this point in history, most people who were identified as “feebleminded” were cared for at home – (without supports!)

- There was only a small percentage of people, labeled “feeble minded,” that lived in the poorhouses (almshouses).

✓ But the significance of the almshouse is that it had become an acceptable form of care for devalued persons

- ✓ **At this point in history, most people who were identified as “feeble-minded” were cared for at home – (without supports!)**
  - **There was only a small percentage of people, labeled “feeble minded,” that lived in the poorhouses (almshouses).**
- ✓ **But the significance of the almshouse is that it had become an acceptable form of care for devalued persons**

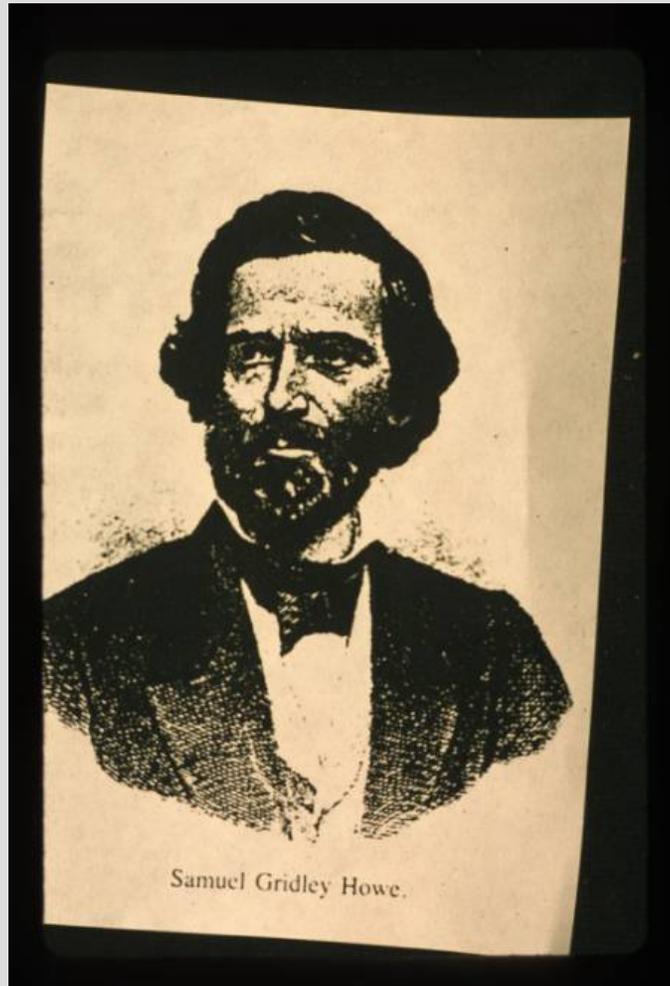
**Segregation and Congregation is accepted as a way to care for people.**

**50 - 60 years earlier the belief that the poorhouse was not a good place for children had emerged...even if their parents were there.**

**“This Indenture, made the tenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty five, Between ....the Superintendents of the Poor-house of the County of Washington, in the State of New-York....and Robert Foster, of the town of Jackson in the county of Washington, in the state aforesaid... witnesseth, that the said Superintendents... by these presents, do **put, place and bind Simeon Bingham, aged *seven* years old...who is now a pauper...to be apprenticed with said Robert Foster...until said Simeon Bingham shall come to the age of twenty one years.**”**

Waltham, MA 1842

**Samuel Gridley-Howe** established the first “public program” to educate young people with intellectual disabilities



## ✓ The price of success....

- Howe began with 8 young people who would reside for one year.
- His program over the years grew to over 100 young people
- Additional living space was added
- After 18 years, Howe gave up in frustration. He is quoted as saying....

*“Nowhere is wisdom more necessary than in the guidance of charitable impulses. Meaning well is only half our duty; **thinking right is the other, and equally important, half.**”*

-Samuel Gridley Howe,  
1860

**How we support people is crucial!**

# New Hampshire

- ✓ **1896 – A survey reported that 420 children lived in almshouses, (many were raised there.)**
  - **Within two years, all but 60 of those children were moved into foster care. Those 60 were “feebleminded” children, who were not considered appropriate for foster care.**
- ✓ **“Children 3 – 15 shall not be supported in the almshouse...unless mentally incapacitated for education.”**
- ✓ **What to do about “feebleminded” children?**

**NH Federation of Woman's Clubs  
Petition to the NH Legislature, 1901:**

**“Provision is made for the proper education of the normal child, but for the deficient child against whom the doors of the public schools are necessarily closed...it is believed that *it is better and cheaper for the community to assume permanent care of this class before they have carried out a long and expensive career of crime.*”**

1903 - **NH School for the Feebleminded** at Laconia opened.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE SCHOOL  
FOR FEEBLE-MINDED

LACONIA, N



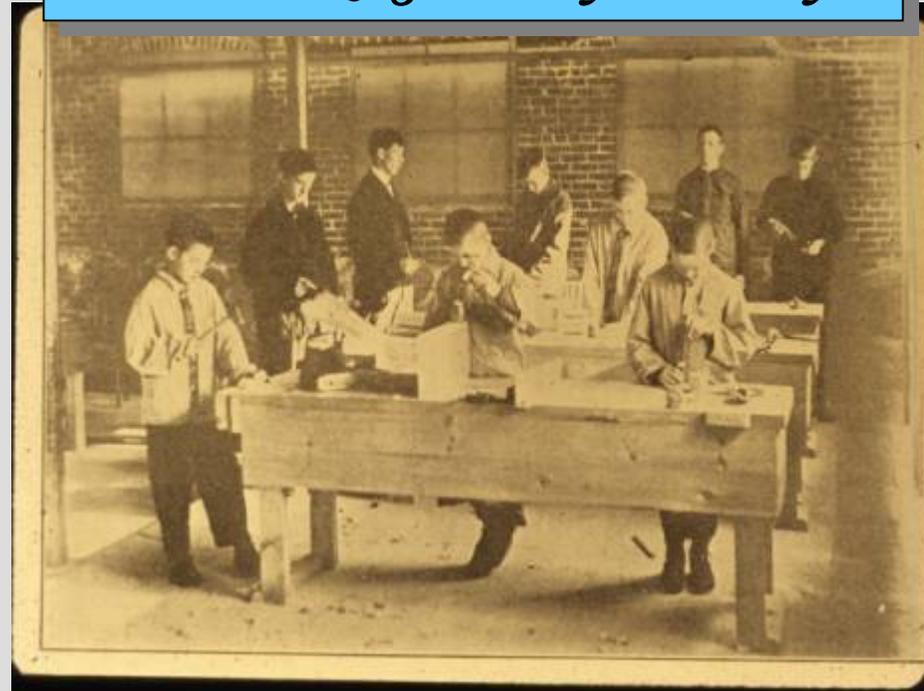
SCHOOL HOUSE





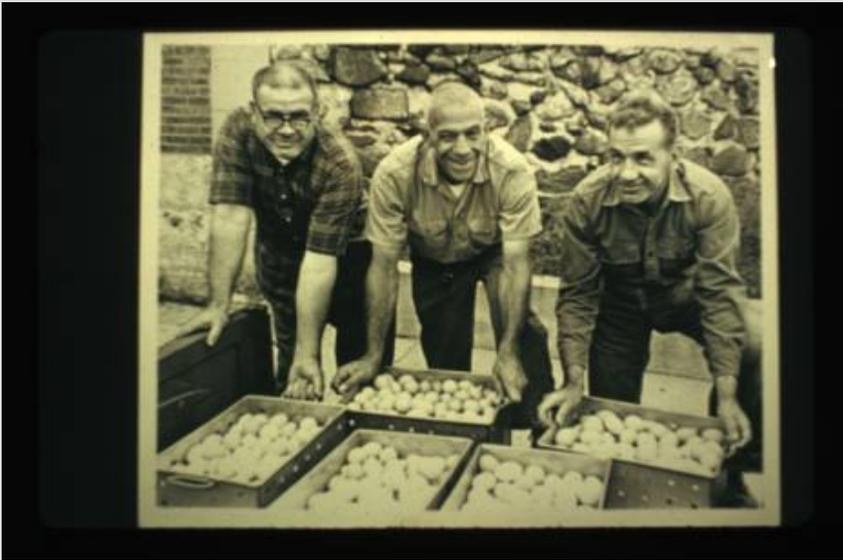
*Sewing classes for the girls*

*Woodworking classes for the boys*





*The Institution as a Self-Sufficient Farm*



# The National Scene

- ✓ 1910 - **Visiting nurse agencies** existed in most urban areas and initiated prevention programs for school children, infants, and mothers.
- ✓ 1913 - New York City teachers visited homes, becoming familiar with the neighborhood, attitudes of the people toward education, available school programs and services available.
  - Funds were allocated for **teachers to go out to homes** to work on “deficit scholarship, truancy, incorrigibility, adverse home conditions and neglect.”
  - These were the forerunners to **social workers**

Just as some positive things were happening... The **Eugenics Era** surfaces:

- “Improvement” of hereditary qualities of a race
- “**Sterilization of the feeble-minded** is logically the solution for the problem of prevention of the propagation of the mentally unfit where feeble-mindedness is due to heredity ”

**Cornell University, 1915**

- A prominent member of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Foster Kennedy, proposed a program of euthanasia for the “hopelessly unfit”

**--A major stumbling block in making this an official stance of the A.P.A. was the, “*Sense of the obligation on the part of parents toward the defective creature they have caused to be born.*”**

## Two schools of thought:

- ✓ “They” could be taught.
- ✓ “They” should be segregated and prevented from reproducing in order to protect society.

Within this developing *social* climate, “NHSF” began to grow.

- 1924 name changed to **Laconia State School**
- WW I, the Depression and WW II: more and more families sought placement for their children.
- Following WW II **parents begin to form advocacy groups for their children** with mental retardation and associated disabilities.
- 1950 The first **National Parent Conference** was held in Minnesota and the **National Association of Retarded Children** is formed.



## **1950 – LSS conditions “grim.”**

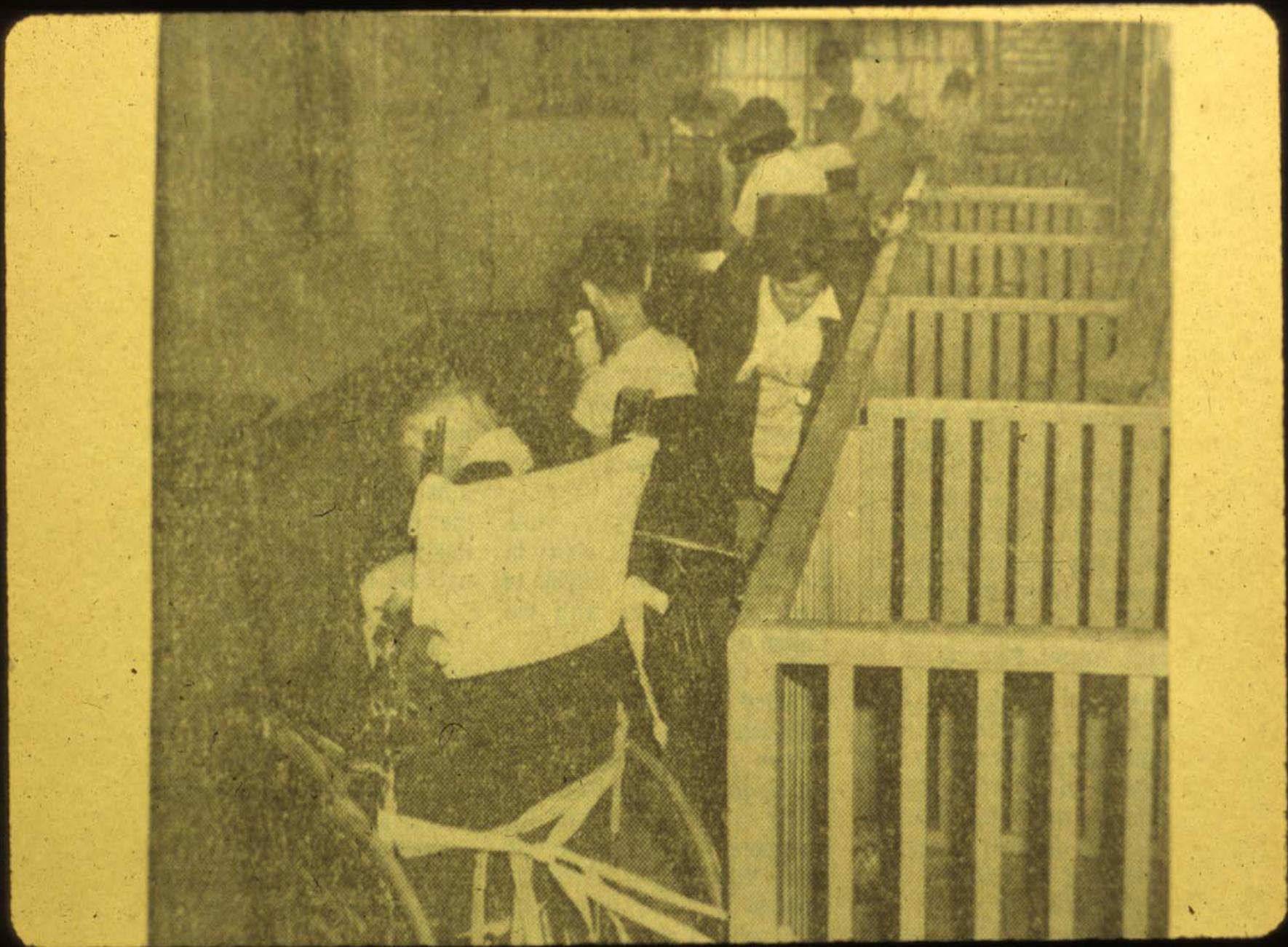
- **Overcrowding, some worked but most did nothing all day, no room for personal possessions, beds pushed together in rows, furniture selected for cleaning-ease, not comfort, no bathroom privacy.**
- **“Meds” in vogue to control “inmates” due to staffing shortages**







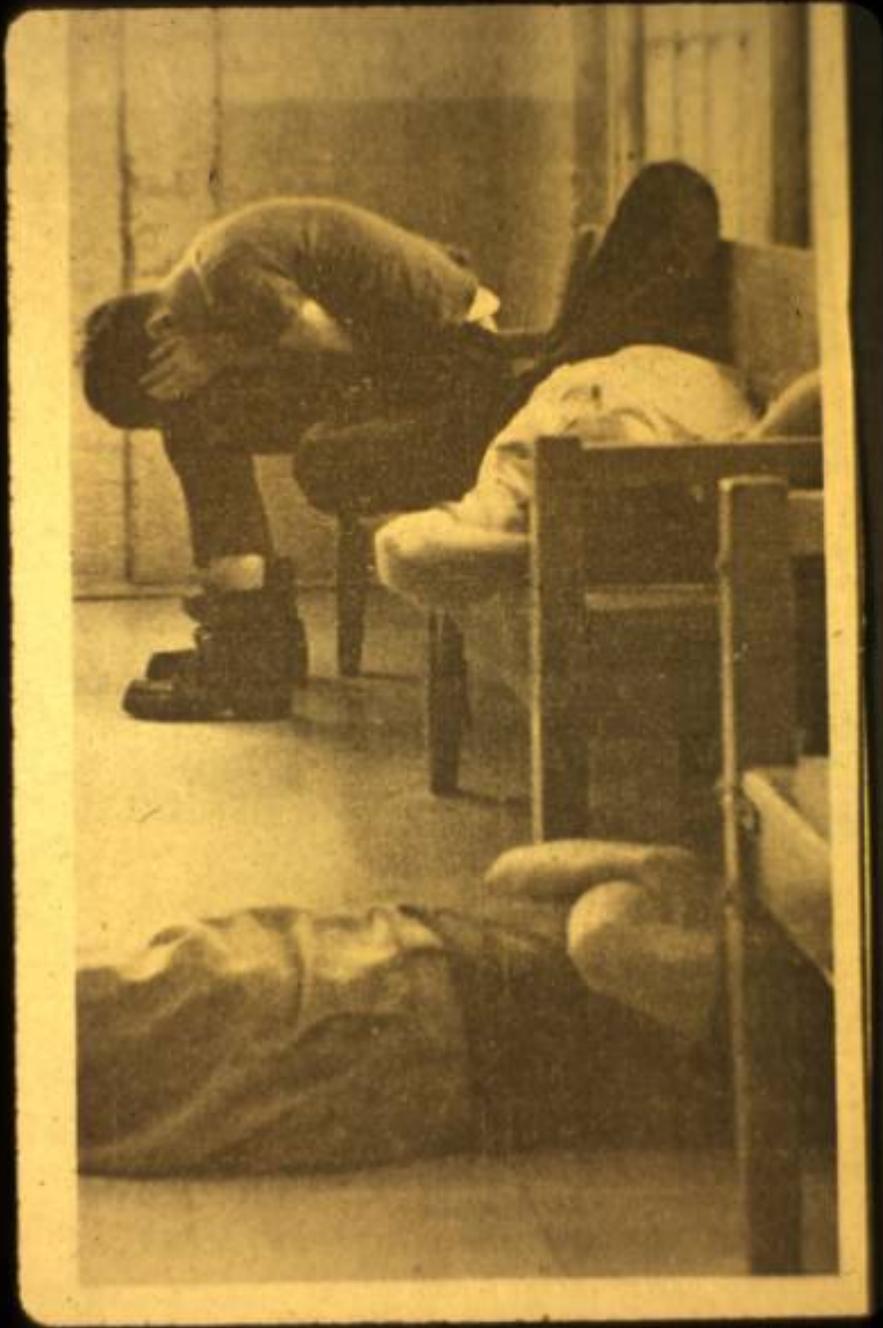
















*"When you're short of  
stuff and short of  
money, it's really  
depressing."*

*—Peter Ganscher*

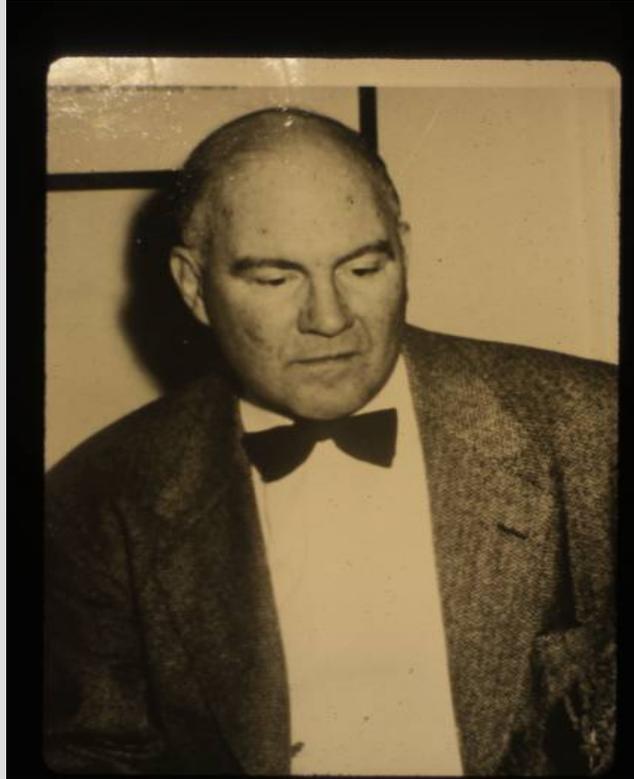








✓ **1952 an important appointment:**  
**new Superintendent [Richard Hungerford](#).**



- **He was a teacher – [Not a medical director]**
- **Invited parents to visit**
- **Recognized their political power for reform**

- ✓ **1953 The first NH Parents' Association was formed in Dover and called "The Great Bay Association;"**
  - **Parents started a school and workshop for their children. (Still operating today)**
  
- ✓ **1956 Film of the conditions at Laconia State School made by the Laconia Parents Association. The State continued to put most of its resources into the institution.**
  
- ✓ **The state committed limited resources to locally based Parents Associations for programs and services.**

- ✓ **1962** President John F. Kennedy created the **President's Panel on Mental Retardation** to create a national plan for addressing issues surrounding the mentally retarded.
  - This continues to exist today but is currently called **The President's Committee For People With Intellectual Disabilities**.
- ✓ **1965** **Project Head Start** was created to:
  - Provide supports and services to low income preschool children to assist them in attaining positive outcomes when they entered school.

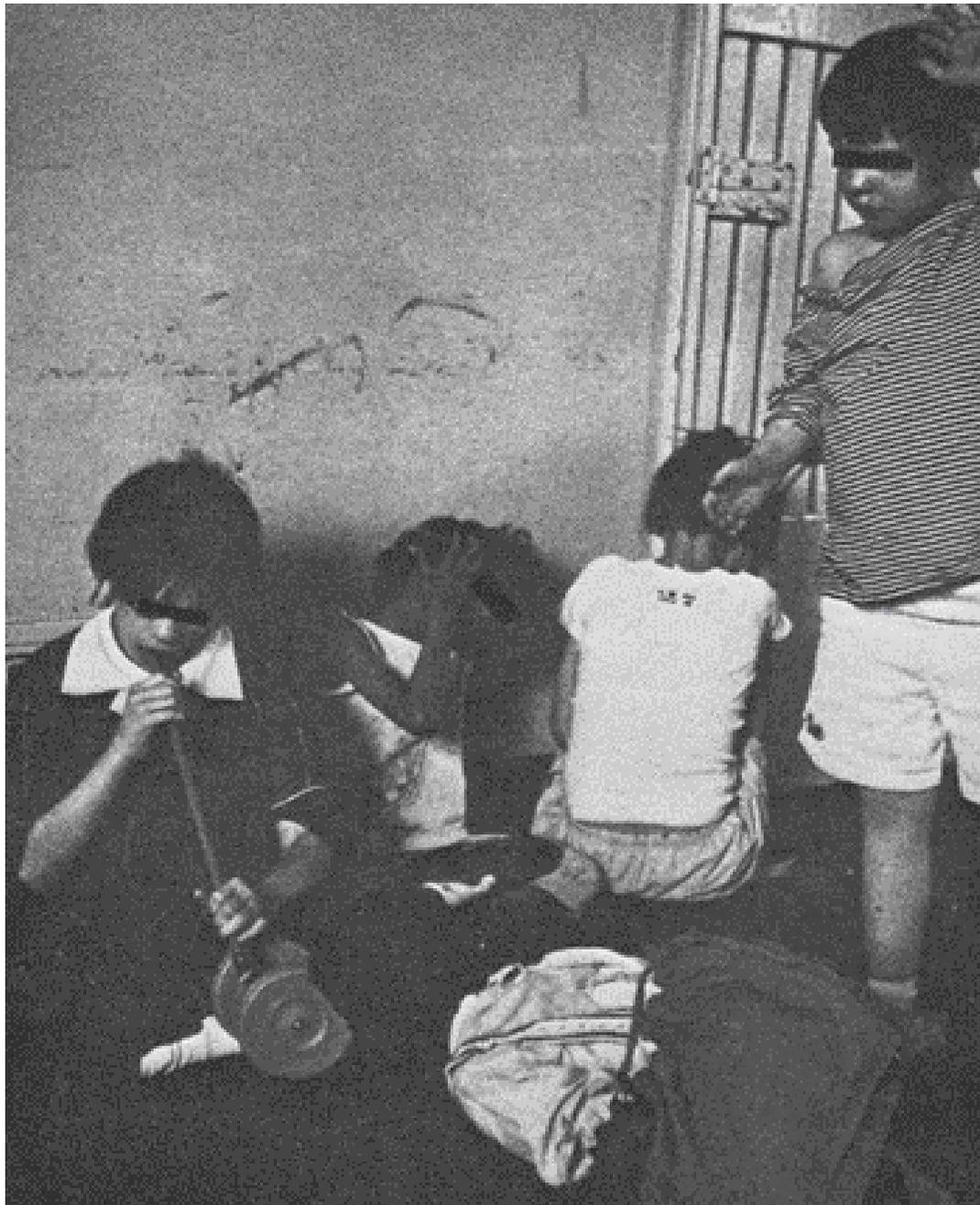
✓ **1966** **Burton Blatt** published *Christmas in Purgatory*, providing a pictorial account of life in state institutions for people with mental retardation in four eastern states.











- ✓ **Later part of 1960s: This is the time when people began to leave institutions nationwide. The institutions were terribly overcrowded and parents began to work to make room for them in the community .**
- ✓ **Parent groups in NH, supported with funds from the Division of Developmental Services, established local programs to provide supports to people with developmental disabilities.**

✓ **1967 Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program under Medicaid was developed to ensure early and periodic screening and developmental testing of children who qualified.**

✓ **1971 The Pennhurst class action suit was filed in Pennsylvania based on the right of all children, including those living in institutions, to receive an education.**

✓ **In 1972:**

- **The Wyatt vs Stickney law suit** in Alabama focused on applying the prohibition of involuntary servitude to include institutionalized individuals.
- **Willowbrook class action suit** was filed in New York based on the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment barring cruel and unusual punishment.
- **Children with disabilities were included in Head Start.** Home-based programs were added to the array services. (Head Start began in 1965.)

✓**1972** In NH sheltered workshops and **Early Intervention programs are funded** with Title XX (Social Services Block Grants) and NH DHHS/BDS dollars.

✓**1974** The **Model Infant and Toddler Project** was started in Hanover, New Hampshire.

✓**1975** **Federal law PL 94-142** came into effect mandating all states to provide free and appropriate education to all school aged children including those with disabilities.

- ✓ **1975** With the passage of **NH law RSA 171-A**, a comprehensive statewide service delivery system including early intervention was established
- ✓ **1977** More than half of the people nationwide who had mental retardation were living in the community (mostly without supports)
- ✓ **1978** NH parents filed class action law suit in Federal District Court regarding poor living conditions at Laconia State School

**Freda's tireless efforts led to the closing of the State School and sparked the creation of the community-based service system.**



- ✓ **1981 Area Agency system** was formed as part of the settlement, Garity vs Gallen law suit.
  - **The Federal Court ordered improvements at the institution and creation of a community system of services and discharge of 235 residents of the institution.**
- ✓ **1981 The federal government established the Medicaid Home and Community Based Care Waivers**
  - **Over the years this has become the primary source of funding for services for people with ID (MR)/DD**
- ✓ **1984 NH state standards for Early Intervention (He-M 510)** were adopted.
- ✓ **1986 PL 99-457 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included Part H**
  - **Gave states the option to participate in developing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs to provide appropriate early intervention services to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.**

- ✓ **1988 New Hampshire established an Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) to explore the possibility of adopting Part H of IDEA.**
  - Concerns about whether the State could support an entitlement program (there was a waiting list of 2 ½ to 3 months for services) and there was fear that many more children would be identified as eligible.
  
- ✓ **Federal government established the Katie Beckett eligibility category under Medicaid**
  - The parents' income is not considered for Medicaid eligibility

**Julie Beckett** and her daughter **Katie Beckett**. Julie is the one who single handedly convinced the Reagan administration to establish a new eligibility category under Medicaid so that children with severe disabilities can live at home and receive services.



- ✓ **1989** NH Family Support legislation was enacted into law, creating locally based **Family Support Advisory Councils**.
- ✓ **January 31, 1991 Laconia State School closed**
- ✓ **Until the passage of the 2010 state budget the former Laconia State School campus housed**
  - ✓ **A minimum security state prison**
  - ✓ **A treatment program for multiple offenders in impaired driving**
  - ✓ **An area agency**
  - ✓ **The prison is closed**
  - ✓ **The area agency is looking to relocate**

# Historical Themes

**Segregation**  
**Congregation**











**When community-based housing/service options were  
proposed in the 1980s...**

*It is clear that many communities are not yet ready to accept the presence of retarded people living in their midst.*

New Hampshire Times 11/80

## **Not in My Neighborhood**

*group homes  
for the retarded  
trigger an emotional debate*

*"I don't think it will work; and I don't think people are going to stand to have this shoved down their throats."*

—Harold Achber

*"All they want to do is take these people from a large institution and put them in a smaller institution."*

—A Laconia resident

**We have come a long way...**

**Different types of stories are appearing in the papers...**



## **Billy Hickey**

**From the 2/27/09 issue of Concord Monitor**

**Billy has done soccer, basketball, cross country running and swimming. According to his mom, **being engaged in sports keeps Billy from "the black hole of autism"****



**Billy's mom Martha: "We weren't going to let autism dictate how far Billy could go or what he could do... We knew we wanted our boys to have a **full life**"**



**Billy's mom Martha: "The kids we're bringing up in the world today are just so **naturally inclusive**...most of the time these kids are just doing the right thing on their own"**



Other students say "**He's taught us a lot...**He brought the cross-country team together and the swim team, too," [Billy is not only in the community but is helping to **build community**]





## Samuel Habib

[Including Samuel Project [www.includingsamuel.com](http://www.includingsamuel.com)]

# Samuel



# Samuel



# Samuel



# Samuel



# Samuel



# Samuel



# Samuel



**What is one of the most important lessons learned from the families of Billy and Samuel?**

**Both families have developed expectations and a vision about their children participating fully in community life and having a meaningful and productive life.**

**Think of the crucial role that ESS staff and providers can play in **helping families create important and positive expectations about their children's future.****

**ESS staff and providers give some of the “earliest signals” to parents about the condition of their children and what future may hold for them**

**The history of Family Centered Early Supports and Services in New Hampshire continues to be written...**

**...And, each ESS staff/provider has a critical role to play in shaping the outcomes for children with disabilities and their families**