

*Circuit  
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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF FLORIDA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF DADE

SPRING TERM A. D. 1972

FINAL REPORT OF THE GRAND JURY

Filed

November 14, 1972

*Recommendations  
on last page*

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## EVALUATION OF SEED PROGRAM OF DRUG REHABILITATION

A good deal of confusion and anxiety has been created in the minds of the people of Dade County by the fact that certain persons now question aspects of the Art Barker Seed Program of Drug Rehabilitation. In order to put this problem into the proper perspective, the Grand Jury undertook a study of The Seed.

" The Seed is a non-residential drug abuse treatment program focusing on the rehabilitation of young(average age 16) poly-drug abusers. It is one of the 93 drug abuse programs licensed by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services Drug Abuse Program. "

It was started approximately two and a half years ago by Art and Shelley Barker. They used as the basic outline for the program the general treatment model developed by Alcoholics Anonymous - however, adding several modifications of their own. Its principles rest squarely on the shoulders of developing, through the counseling and leadership of Mr. Barker and his key staff, love of self, understanding of self, self-respect, total honesty, and finally, true love of others. This spiritual love of child-for-child may be the subtle difference between The Seed program and all the other forms of group therapy, many of which tend to rob the individual of dignity.

### Staff

The counselors, or staff members, are rehabilitated drug offenders. They are successful graduates of The Seed's program. After having gone through the program themselves, they are selected by Mr. Barker as having the necessary skills and motivations. These basically consist of the ability to empathize with others, the strong desire and dedication to help others and themselves, and finally, the ability to become skillful group leaders. Having once been a "druggie"

*Quotation marks in red indicate sections lifted from our report a.g.*

themselves, they are able to pierce the protective shells of self-deceit that each druggie throws about himself. The Grand Jury does not feel that this detracts from the program at The Seed, for we are not aware of any drug rehabilitation program using professionals that has achieved any degree of success. It should be noted, however, that The Seed does have a special medical advisory board which includes a number of medical doctors and psychiatrists.

### Seedlings

" Applicants accepted by The Seed, the "Seedlings" range in age from nine years to thirty years, with 68% of the clients being 17 years old or less. (<sup>60% of the records noted race - 78% black, 96% white</sup> Statistics are not kept as to race,) but there are approximately 53% males and 47% females." When the program first started, most participants came from Broward County, but currently over 500 young people on the program are from Dade County.

" Applicants accepted by The Seed are placed on a 12 hour a day regimen for an initial period of 14 days for voluntary admissions, and 30 days for court placements. The daily routine consists of morning, afternoon and evening rap sessions with approximately 500 to 600 participants, conducted by staff members using a microphone." Critics of The Seed say the rap sessions drum points home in brain-washing fashion, taking away a person's individuality. But the quest for love and respect are the same goals that society has always set for its members, often with far less success than at The Seed.

" While undergoing this intensive initial phase of the program, members are totally removed from the home environment and live in Foster Homes provided by families having a child in the later phase of the program, or who has completed it. Upon successful completion of the first phase, the "Seedling" is required to attend evening rap

sessions three nights a week and one full day on the week-end. He may have returned to school or job and perhaps to his own home. This decision is made by the staff and is based upon the individual's circumstances.

" Clients come to The Seed from a variety of sources. Their own outreach program is the primary source of clients, with most being referred by a Seedling currently in the program, a friend, a sibling, or self-referred with knowledge of the program being obtained from the news media. The next two major referral sources are the courts and the schools. Parents bring some, the Division of Youth Services counselors and the police are other referral sources." One aspect of The Seed that distinguishes it from other drug programs is that it admits even those who do not voluntarily join.

#### Drugs Used

Use of drugs by youth is almost at the point of a virulent epidemic. In the past few years, it has proliferated yeast-like to a concern of major proportions. There are many experts who believe the percentages range from 50 to 70% in high school and middle school, with drug use infiltrating alarmingly into elementary schools.

36%

Most Seedlings have never been arrested, but the data on the type of drugs used reveals a tremendous and frightening population of poly-drug users; that is people who have used more than one drug. These drugs include Marijuana, Mescaline, LSD, barbiturates, amphetamines, glue, cocaine and Heroin. As to the degree of involvement with drugs, as measured by time in months, it ranged from six months or less to in excess of 5 to 8 years. It must be noted here that a small percentage of the people admitted to The Seed were for an attitude problem, and denied using drugs. In order to identify

*percentage*

11%  
17%  
4%

Copying error

any variable which might be correlated with drug users as opposed to non-drug users, age, race, sex, (religion, broken homes or good homes, poverty or affluence) or city of origin do not appear to have any bearing whatsoever." However, there was virtually total agreement by participants of all in The Seed program that Marijuana should not be legalized.

Parents

*The Committee*

The Grand Jury was impressed by the degree of involvement, interest and participation on the part of the parents. " These same responsible citizens willingly appeared before the Grand Jury with no fear of Social Stigma to report to us their actual experiences within their own families. Thankful for the results in their own lives, they do work which consists of taking other children into their homes - the Foster Parents Plan - preparing food seven nights a week, car pooling those not having transportation, and providing medical and nursing care at no compensation." Parents whose homes have been demoralized and made socially and spiritually destitute because of one or more of their youngsters are on drugs, now have genuine help available. As one proud mother and father of a Seedling stated, "We had tearfully and despairingly watched our child deteriorate from a normal and healthy child into a druggie, and again watched him come alive through the efforts of The Seed program. We would gladly have chanced the possibility they would have come off the program "unwound" because lovingly helping them to again enter the human race is indescribably better than burying them."

Funding

Although The Seed operates without staff psychiatrists or psychologists, it has been awarded a grant from the National Institute

of Mental Health, and from the Law Enforcement Assistance Act. Local government in Broward County and church and civic organizations have also contributed. Funding of the program is a continuing and major problem. The cost per child is figured at the incredibly low figure of \$250.00 per child for the whole program. Parents are not asked to pay anything, though contributions are accepted, and grateful parents have donated a multitude of money, time and help.

#### Why It Works

To quote from the report of the Blue Ribbon Committee of the State of Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services:  
"This program appears to have a great deal to offer young drug users and is utilizing the resources of the community optimally in its effort to help young people. Some outstanding strengths of the program are based on the principle of guided group inter-action and positive peer group pressure. These techniques are used to instill awareness of individual responsibility, direct the individual toward goals, and orient him toward love and "turning on to life."

This same peer group philosophy is what involves most youngsters with drugs in the first place. Peer pressure at The Seed is a kind of reverse twist which has the youngsters helping each other kick the habit instead of starting it.

The atmosphere in which this guided group inter-action and positive peer group pressure takes place is basically made up of absolute honesty, affection, empathy and, for lack of a better word, love. Affection for others is a powerful tool in the hands of the skilled staff. Love is the byword of The Seed, exchanged eye-to-eye between the kids, the staff and the parents.



The ingredients Art Barker has blended to offer those addicted to drugs and hope of return to normal living produce results.

The program has been criticized and there are disputes as to the percentage of successful graduates. Statistics are always subject to manipulation, but we have seen the results. We have heard from grateful children and parents. The Seed has succeeded in situations where other programs have failed.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend that the Art Barker Seed program be expanded to Dade County and throughout the State of Florida.
2. We recommend that Federal, State and local governments fund the program.
3. We recommend that school systems should not be financially penalized by the absence of Seed enrollees from daily attendance in the schools.
4. We urge participation and cooperation in The Seed program by medical associations throughout the State of Florida.

Obviously, the fight against drug abuse should be carried on at three levels - education, enforcement and rehabilitation. In the area of enforcement, any thinking person favors the most stringent prison terms for drug pushers. We look with favor upon a mandatory commitment program for those addicted to drug usage. It must be kept in mind that opium is a plant not grown in the United States. Therefore, heroin and other derivatives of opium are imported from foreign nations. We strongly support Federal legislation which will cut off foreign aid to those countries who continue to grow poppy crops from which opium is derived.