

1607 - 40th Avenue  
Seattle 22, Wash  
2 March 1964

Mr Sargent Shriver  
Office of the President  
Washington, D. C.

By the  
"mother" of  
CAMP

Dear Mr Shriver,

I should like to suggest that the War on Poverty is likely to be seriously hampered, if not lost, by the rigid, narrow, machine-like (i.e., if your card doesn't have the holes in the right place its automatically rejected) qualities of the bureaucratic mind.

Here in the Central Area of Seattle a neighborhood group has established a pre-school for educationally deprived children very similar to what Mr Deutsh is doing in New York except that we are members of the community, have raised money in the larger community, and operate almost exclusively with volunteers. We have received much praise, professional and otherwise, and have been urged to expand. For a variety of local political-economic factors no local governmental body can assume the project. We have been in vestigating the possibilities of a grant.

We believe that it should be possible to make a straight-forward presentation of what we are doing and how we would expand; we believe that what we are doing is demonstrably effective and sufficiently different in regard to degree and level of community involvement from other such pre-schools to make us worthy of consideration for a demonstration grant. We have investigated on our own and sought expert advice and have acquired a chilling awareness of the ~~situation~~. *university of their approach.*

In an attempt to take a straight forward approach, we sent a letter of inquiry to HEW requesting information of available funds and procedures. We knew there were funds in the Mental Health Institute but wanted complete information. The letter was referred to the Elementary Education section, where we knew there were no funds, and a letter came back saying so. We learned that to write to the Dept of HEW is a dead end.

In talking to experts, we learned that there is a class of people who are for all practical purposes professional grant-getters whose ability to get grants is not necessarily related to their ability to develop meaningful projects. We have consulted with one person who has been employed at a University for the specific purpose of writing grant proposals - one after the other. This person was actually sent back to Washington, D.C. to analyze successful grant-getting techniques, which approach presents an interesting contrast to that of starting with the needs of the community. There is apparently great importance attached to having people of prestige, with a record of success in getting grants, and usually from a University, attached to a project, even if it means drawing him in after the project is underway

needs of the community. There is apparently great importance attached to having people of prestige, with a record of success in getting grants, and usually from a university, attached to a project, even if it means drawing him in after the project is underway and proven. This is not only superfluous and deceptive, but will prove an insurmountable obstacle in many instances.

Whereas I have great respect for the university professor - I even married one - I am nonetheless acutely aware of the broad gap between most social and educational theorists and the kind of trench warfare that is going to have to be waged in a successful war against poverty. The front lines are going to be manned not by people who have to read the theories and adjust their thinking accordingly but by people who already know and on reading the theories say: "Yes, that's what I mean." These are the occasional educator, social worker, minister, citizen of a community who are racked with frustration because they are aware of the problems and have the vision, energy, and know-how to be able to work out solutions at the grassroots level, but don't have the know-how to busk the bureaucratic superstructure to obtain financial support.

I should like to raise serious doubts in regard to current procedures for allocating support for local projects. And this not on the basis of our personal situation which we can bring into conformity with prevailing standards, but on the basis of our experiences in investigating grant possibilities and our set-backs, none of which had any relationship to the merits of our project.

With full awareness of the urgency of an effective attack on poverty, I am making this protest on behalf of the many members of the many communities, professional people and others, who are capable of developing valuable projects and making invaluable contributions in community self-help, but who are completely overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the sophisticated and artificial routines required in order to obtain backing.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs Robert J. Richman