

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

---

Theses

Theses & Dissertations

---

11-1979

## Life Skills: A Habilitation Program for Severely Retarded Adults

Margaret A. Hoven

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

LIFE SKILLS:  
A HABILITATION PROGRAM  
FOR SEVERELY RETARDED ADULTS

MARGARET A. HOVEN

November 1, 1979



Mary F. Smith, Faculty Sponsor  
Craig Eisendrath, Faculty Administrator

Submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Arts,  
The Lindenwood Colleges.

Thesis  
H8221  
1979

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	1
Setting the Context . . . . .	4
Historical Context	
Changing Status	
Program Description . . . . .	12
General Description	
Life Skills Center Curriculum	
Population Served	
Center Philosophy	
Center Goals and Objectives	
Teaching Procedures	
Co-ordination	
Facility Description	
Entry Criteria	
A Day at the Life Skills Center . . . . .	25
How to Start a Life Skills Center . . . . .	32
Getting Started	
Incorporation	
Bylaws	
Federal Tax Exempt Status	
Board of Directors	
Funding	
Setting up the Space	
Conclusion . . . . .	46
Disclaimers . . . . .	47
Appendices	
A - Personal Narrative . . . . .	49
B - Evaluation Checklists . . . . .	59
C - Center Responsibilities to Staff . . . . .	61
D - Job Descriptions . . . . .	62
E - Floor Plan . . . . .	63
F - Articles of Incorporation . . . . .	67
G - Bylaws . . . . .	73
H - Confidential Forms . . . . .	78
I - Fee Schedule . . . . .	80
J - Equipment List . . . . .	81
K - Client Forms . . . . .	82
Footnotes . . . . .	85
Sources Consulted . . . . .	86

Mental Retardation refers to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period.<sup>1/</sup>

Within this definition there are degrees of retardation which are not easily demarcated. The most common terms used to describe degrees of retardation are mild, moderate, severe, and profound. These terms do not have rigid definitions; instead IQ scores and Adaptive Behavior skills are used to make clinical judgments as to the level of retardation.

Adaptive Behavior, according to the AAMD, includes skills such as preparation of meals, household tasks, use of money, and the ability to go on errands and make purchases. In other words, it is often precisely the lack of life skills that make for "deficits in adaptive behavior" and the concurrent conclusion of social unacceptability.

The author does not advocate the use of labels, but does recognize degrees of retardation. For some, who are labeled retarded during school years, the impact of the label may diminish if, when they reach adulthood, they become self-supporting and socially accepted. For others the label is carried throughout their lives because they continue to need extra support and supervision. It is not the purpose of this paper or a Life Skills program to argue who is retarded and to what degree. A Life Skills program provides a specific training program for those individuals who carry the label "retarded" and who at the time they enter the program need daily supervision in such things as meal preparation, selection of clothing, grooming, use of money, care of personal space and travel. The

goal of the program is to provide each individual with the skills that will lessen the amount and kind of supervision necessary and through this help the individual to become more independent.

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

### Historical Context

Historically retarded people have not been highly valued members of society. Early educators such as Samuel Howe did believe that many retarded people could learn and, after a time in a residential school, return to the community to function in a normal fashion. It was with this goal in mind that the first state residential schools were founded in the 1850s.

Unfortunately, society's image of retarded people changed in the late 1800s from the positive one held by Howe to that which viewed retarded people as a deviant group of people from whom society needed to be protected. As the industrial revolution progressed more emphasis was placed on intellect and education. Those who were more limited intellectually were stigmatized. The residential schools soon became custodial institutions offering no training and little hope of ever returning to the community for those who lived there. The effects of this massive institutionalization of human beings are still evident today in every state in the Nation.

From the early 1900s to the 1950s little changed. With the advent of the IQ test more people were classified as intellectually deviant and the institutions continued to grow. Once entering, few people ever returned to the community. Many children were institutionalized because there were few services available in the community and because there continued to be

little understanding about mental retardation. Some parents institutionalized their children because the institution was the only source available for any kind of support, training or education. Others were told that there was not hope for their child and that it was best to put the child away. Parents with children who needed constant care and assistance had no other options.

During this time, some special education classes were established which emphasized standard academic subjects. Children who were more severely disabled were not included in these classes. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, parents of more severely retarded children started to band together in an attempt to secure the education and training they felt was the right of the children. The result was the National Association for Retarded Children (changed in 1973 to the National Association for Retarded Citizens) which started many programs and lobbied for the rights of retarded people. This group was also instrumental in changing the image of a retarded person from one who is stagnant and useless to one who can grow and develop. The changes made by the efforts of this determined group of parents started a revolution. A revolution that is not yet complete and is, indeed, threatened as budget cutting fever, symbolized by California's Proposition 13, dries up funds for social services. Thousands of retarded people remain in large institutions, continuing to spend lifetimes in unbelievable depravation. Many, not in institutions, sit idly at home.

### Changing Status

Legislation in recent years has affirmed the rights of retarded individuals and has opened some doors which previously had been closed. The "Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975" (PL 94-142) affirms the right to and requires a free and appropriate education for all handicapped children. This action will greatly benefit those children who are presently of school age and who reside in areas where funds are available in sufficient amounts to implement this right. Unfortunately, most individuals who are now adults cannot benefit from this legislation because they are too old for public school classes and therefore will never have a right to a free and appropriate education.

The Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Act (as amended), offers potential assistance to retarded adults. In Section III, it sets out the "Rights of the Developmentally Disabled." Among those rights is the right to "appropriate treatment, services, and habilitation."<sup>2/</sup> Any state receiving a federal allocation through the "Developmental Disabilities Act" is required to write a state plan which looks at the developmental disabilities service system within that state and especially includes those services which are needed but not provided. Developmental disabilities funds are then used to help create a more comprehensive service system which takes into account the needs of developmentally disabled people and especially those who have been without needed services.

The reality of the Developmental Disabilities program is, however, that most states have long neglected the rights of all



handicapped people, not just those who are mentally retarded. The services needed by all handicapped people cannot be implemented over night. It will take many years and huge amounts of money before mentally retarded people will finally secure the rights which are theirs.

Upon reading the Declaration of Purpose of the "Rehabilitation Act of 1973" (as amended by PL 93-516) one can find encouragement. It authorizes programs to

develop and implement comprehensive and continuing State plans for meeting the current and future needs for providing vocational rehabilitation services to handicapped individuals and to provide such services for the benefit of such individuals serving first those with the most severe handicaps, so that they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment.

and initiate and expand services to groups of handicapped individuals (including those who are homebound or institutionalized) who have been underserved in the past.<sup>3/</sup>

Funds are never unlimited, however, and choices must be made. People with the least vocational potential are often left out of vocational rehabilitation services. Again, as with the Developmental Disabilities program, there are wide gaps that will take years to fill.

Work is highly valued in our society and the kind of work a person does often determines the value society places on that person. Doctors and lawyers are highly valued people. One has to be "smart" to enter either profession and monetary reimbursement is more often than not abundant. Janitors and trash collectors are not highly valued. If, however, a less valued person supports his or her family successfully, they are, if not admired,

at least respected by other members of the community and considered good, responsible citizens.

Those people who are least productive and the least able to care for themselves are the least valuable to society. State vocational rehabilitation programs make this same kind of value judgment. In the District of Columbia, vocational rehabilitation funds have been the only government source of funded training for retarded adults. The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services makes the judgment as to who can work and who cannot. This could be acceptable as it is obvious that some people do not have the present skills or ability to work and others may never acquire them. But what of these latter? Do they have fewer rights because they cannot work? In a social and economic context that so highly prizes work and that so closely relates work to income and thus the ability to purchase, it certainly would appear so. Again, to cite the District of Columbia, its current non-vocational programs for retarded adults are limited to custodial care in an institution and to a limited part-time recreation program for those in the community and unable to work. The District of Columbia does not fund programs which attempt to teach the skills that could enable some people to work. It is not impossible for budget-makers to justify the expense of training someone who will eventually be able to work and pay part of his or her own way; it is more difficult, however, to justify the ongoing expense of training programs for a person who may continue to develop but may never be able to work.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI), mandated through the Social Security Act of 1935 (Title XVI, 1974) is available to financially assist those disabled people who have minimal earning power or financial resources. Those who receive SSI are also eligible for social services through Title XX of the same Act. The social services available through Title XX sometimes include specific training programs for adults. The goals set up by the legislation are general and do not require the state to provide services such as training, specifically for retarded individuals. States such as Virginia and Montana have used Title XX funds to set up programs serving lower functioning retarded adults. The District of Columbia, on the other hand, uses no Title XX money specifically for this purpose.

These pieces of legislation do not mean that all retarded adults who need training will receive it or that any state is legally responsible to provide training of any kind to those people over school age. Many people continue to fall through the cracks. Thousands of people are still left out of programs. This means that these people are given no chance to grow and develop to whatever level their true potential may be.

In addition to those retarded adults who presently reside in the community and receive no training, many people are being returned to the community from institutions. The institutional environment is now widely recognized as being restrictive of personal liberty. Some institutions, in fact, such as those in

Pennsylvania, Montana, Alabama, and the District of Columbia have been judged to be unconstitutionally violating the residents' rights. Combined with the now accepted principle of normalization which promotes small, community-based living arrangements, this means that the need for community based services is increasing.<sup>4/</sup>

People returning to the community from the institution have special needs. To live in an institution is to live in a culture different from that of the surrounding community. An institution is often violent, regimented and boring. Bizarre behavior is accepted or at least ignored, as long as it hurts no one. People who have lived in this world at the institution for many years and are suddenly released into another culture need to learn about the new culture and its ways. For example, in an institution food is most often served cafeteria-style; in a home or the community, it is not. In an institution, television is often the only form of entertainment and boredom is a way of life; in the community, much more than a "babysitting" television is available and the isolating boredom of life lived only in front of the tube need not be a way of life. A life skills program can introduce retarded people who where formerly institutionalized to the way of the new culture and help them to successfully adapt.

A look at the figures for the District of Columbia helps to clarify the need for programs such as Life Skills. According to the "District of Columbia State Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services, 1979" there are approximately 21,360

retarded people in the city. Of these approximately 11,881 are between the ages of twenty-two and sixty-four and 5,385 are considered to be substantially disabled. Of the existing day training programs in the District, a total of 232 people between the ages of 19-64 are served. In addition, there are 169 mentally retarded residents in that same age range at St. Elizabeth's Mental Hospital and 688 at Forest Haven, the District institution for retarded people.<sup>5/</sup> Of the four training programs available to mentally retarded adults in the District, three have a strong vocational orientation. The Life Skills Center is the only training program for those retarded individuals who function at such a level that they are unable to work. This lack of services means that large numbers of people are idle and lack the stimulation and training that can potentially lead them to be more dominant over their own lives and thus be more independent and self-sufficient. Life skills training offers continued stimulation, an opportunity to continue to learn and develop and through this have increased independence and self-sufficiency.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Life Skills Center, on which the following description is based, was established in the District of Columbia in 1974 as an attempt to assist those retarded adults who had no services because, according to the D. C. Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, they had little or no vocational potential. The program is unique to the District in that it is small and serves clients no other programs will accept.

### General Description

The Life Skills Center is unlike any other program in the District of Columbia in that it operates exclusively for the training and development of adults who are moderately or severely retarded. Many programs in the city only accept clients who are twenty-one years old or younger. Those programs which do accept adults concentrate on those who are more mildly retarded or on those who are able to participate in sheltered employment. No other program in the city operates with the main objective of more independence for severely and moderately retarded adults.

In a small home-like setting clients learn self-care, domestic, survival and pre-vocational skills. The program is deliberately small with twelve clients and three full-time staff and, in sharp contrast to the institution, parallels in some respects the current home situation of the client or what a setting for a community based group home might look like. The small setting offers participants an atmosphere that is calm and

supportive. The smallness also allows for the concentrated individualized attention needed by the clients, while at the same time offering a situation conducive to making friends and learning social skills.

The Center is located on a small commercial street serving a residential neighborhood and is open Monday through Friday, 9:15-4:00 p.m. The stores on the street offer a wide variety of experiences which are used daily for training. There are several small grocery stores, two drug stores, a hardware store, a bakery, several restaurants, two thrift shops, laundromats and a library. The location is also ideal for learning independent travel. There are many streets to practice crossing and there is access to three bus lines and the subway. Through a systematic process, individualized programs, and repeated exposure to the adult world and adult responsibilities, all Life Skills Center participants become more independent and self-sufficient and less child-like in their behavior.

#### Life Skills Center Curriculum

Self-care and Personal Adjustment Skills. The first step toward any independence is to be able to care for one's own body and one's own living space. In addition, socially acceptable behavior and appearance are especially important for a retarded person because without these skills his or her retardation is more obvious in social and public situations and can create barriers to independence. Therefore, clients learn skills such as dress, personal hygiene, care of personal space, conversation and public behavior.

Domestic Skills. As clients acquire the skills stated above, domestic skills are also taught. These include: planning and preparation of meals, grocery shopping, washing and drying dishes, care of clothing and household cleaning.

Survival Skills. In order to move independently outside of home, some survival skills are vital. The training in this area includes crossing streets, riding public transportation, recognition of public and safety signs and use of the telephone.

Prevocational Skills. In order to work in either sheltered or competitive employment the acquisition of certain skills is necessary. The training in this area includes attention span, some use of money, clocks and calendars, following directions, introduction to work and work rates and organization of work space.

As can be seen, it is difficult to divide the skills neatly into areas. The use of money is not only essential to the work situation but also to independence outside the home or training center. Without the ability to use money it is impossible to use public transportation or even to buy a bottle of soda. Meal preparation is not only a domestic skill but is the most basic skill for survival. Without the ability to find or prepare food, a retarded person is totally dependent upon someone else for existence.

#### Population Served

The Life Skills Center program is designed to serve twelve retarded adults who, generally, at the time they enter the program are unable to participate in sheltered or competitive employment.



Some clients, as they acquire new skills, are able to move from the program into more advanced training or directly into sheltered or competitive employment. It must be emphasized, however, that for some clients the Life Skills Center may be a long term or permanent placement. Clients for whom this is the case continue to develop new skills and benefit from daily stimulation and social contact.

### Center Philosophy

The philosophy that has and continues to guide the Life Skills Center is a firm and essential element of the program.

It says:

We at the Life Skills Center believe that all people are equal. We respect all human beings and believe that each person should be treated with dignity. We believe that each life is unique with something to contribute to society and the community. Each person, no matter what his or her intellectual or physical ability, has the right to education, vocation, habitat and the pursuit of happiness.

We acknowledge that each client at the Life Skills Center is an adult and that the program is helping to prepare them to participate in an adult world. We assume that each and every person who participates in the program can learn new skills and that each person has some preference as to what they learn. While one of our goals is to assist each individual to achieve his or her maximum potential, we acknowledge that the maximum potential is impossible to predetermine.

At the same time, we do not deny the retardation of the clients, but help to provide them with special skills and aids to help compensate for the retardation and thereby be more dominant over their own lives and live a more independent and satisfying life as an individual, as a family member and as a member of the community.<sup>6/</sup>

One of the key words in this philosophy is "respect." To respect is to value the humanity and rights of the other person. So often in a training situation the relationship between staff members and clients becomes a superior-inferior relationship with the authority figures holding all the power and making all the decisions. Even when exercised in a "benign" fashion for the "good of the client," this kind of relationship is nevertheless unbalanced and less respectful if not patronizing. The result is that the retarded person is left powerless and ultimately, devalued.

Respect means to acknowledge the abilities which do exist and to assist in strengthening these abilities so that each person can have some power over the decisions affecting their own life. Many retarded people have been so devalued and treated with such disrespect that they have never been given an opportunity to learn the skills necessary to make even simple decisions such as what to wear, what to eat or where to go for leisure time.

Child-like treatment of adults who are retarded is very destructive and disrespectful. Holding an adult's hand while they cross the street says, "You are a child and cannot do this yourself." So does calling a group of clients "children" or "boys and girls." Retarded adults are not children nor are they less fortunate by virtue of being retarded. To respect a retarded individual means the acceptance of that person as an equal human being despite and including all limitations and thereby setting aside intellectual capabilities as criteria for equality and adulthood.

### Center Goals and Objectives

Center goals and objectives set the direction for the program and help to put the philosophy into action. The goals of the Life Skills Center in the District of Columbia are:

a) to enable each client to assert more control over his or her own life; and b) to assist each client in achieving his or her maximum potential and through this become as self-sufficient as possible. To meet these goals the Life Skills Center pursues six major objectives:

1. To increase the level of each client's self-care and personal adjustment skills.
2. To increase the number of appropriate adult behaviors exhibited by each client.
3. To increase the level of each client's domestic and survival skills.
4. To increase each client's ability and motivation to act independently.
5. To increase the level of each client's prevocational skills.
6. To assist as many clients as possible to gain the skills necessary to work in either sheltered or competitive employment.

### Teaching Procedures

As has been stated several times, the program's goal is to assist each person to be more independent and self-sufficient. This quite often involves learning to use money, tell time, and read signs, grocery items and bus destinations. Life Skills clients generally have a very difficult time with standard

academic subjects such as reading and number comprehension, as well as adding and subtracting. The Life Skills program provides clients with skills and aids that help to compensate for that difficulty. If for example, a client does not count, add or subtract learning to understand money and its value will be extremely difficult if not impossible. Without the ability to use money in some fashion, however, independence for that person will be limited to the home, training center and the sidewalk. The Life Skills approach would be to teach that person to purchase specific items not totaling more than \$1.00. Clients can also learn specific coin combinations and what these combinations can purchase. The client does not need to know the coin names or their values in order to use them without assistance. While this method does not teach the client total independent use of money, it does enable the client to go into a store alone and purchase something that he or she desires. If a more complicated understanding of money were the criterion for independent movement, many Life Skills clients could never go into a store unaccompanied.

Telling time can also be simplified for those clients who cannot count or read numbers. Clients can be taught to recognize what the clock looks like when specific activities are to happen. Clients who have some number concepts can be taught time on the hour and half hour along with general concepts of before and after.

The alphabet is seldom taught to a client in the Life Skills program. If a client cannot read he or she is taught to recognize public and safety signs, some grocery items, and bus destinations.

For example, public restrooms most often are labeled by sex. Children are often accompanied by a parent through the correct door. Adults are not. The retarded adult who cannot choose the correct restroom in public is devalued and child-like. Life Skills clients learn to recognize several signs such as "Women" and "Men." If a female client is presented with a sign "Women" and responds "ladies bathroom", the answer is correct. She does not need to know exactly what the sign says. She only needs to know that she can go into and use a restroom with "Women" on the door. Indeed, knowing that the sign says "Women" means little if the client does not know that it means "You can use this restroom."

Each client is an individual with different needs and abilities. These are taken into account when goals and objectives are set for each client. How a skill is taught also depends upon the individual client. When a client has had little or no previous exposure to a particular skill, it is often beneficial to teach the skill with a systematic step-by-step process. Shoe-tying, for example, can be divided into at least twenty steps. The client masters each step before moving on to the next. When all steps are mastered the client is able to tie shoes.

Other times, while still teaching in a consistent manner, it may not be necessary to use intricate steps but to use stages of complexity as guidelines for teaching. For example, the first stage of complexity for meal preparation is making a simple sandwich; the second, pairing the sandwich with something such

as fruit or yogurt to make a simple meal. The most complex stage would be preparing several meals using a variety of ingredients and utensils.

Staff designed checklists are used to evaluate each client's skill level within the Life Skills curriculum. These checklists are also used to evaluate monthly client progress and to assist the staff in setting long and short term objectives for each client. These objectives are re-evaluated quarterly in consultation with the clients and their families. (See Appendix B for checklists.)

#### Co-ordination

The Life Skills Center has a staff of three full-time people and one part-time person who plan and carry out the program. In addition, volunteers are used whenever possible to assist in teaching activities. Professionals are available for consultation from the fields of social work, law, psychology and nutrition.

The executive director administers the program as well as teaches at least three hours a day. The executive director is also responsible for supervising the staff in setting objectives and designing training programs, grantsmanship, administration of the budget, supervision of staffing and client selection and representation of the program within the community. The executive director is also responsible for preparing and presenting regular reports to the Board of Directors and serves on all Board committees.

The teacher sets goals and objectives for each client, as well as training the clients in life skill areas. The teacher is also responsible for developing a rapport with the client families and making regular reports to the executive director and to the parents or guardians on the progress of each client. The teacher is a non-voting member of the Board of Directors and gives a "teacher report" at monthly Board meetings.

Two teacher assistants work in teaching of life skills and develop teaching programs and materials as designated by the teacher. (See Appendix C for "Life Skills Center Responsibilities to Staff Members" and the "Life Skills Center Philosophy of Teaching" and Appendix D for job descriptions.)

In addition to the staff who see to the daily activities of the Center, there is a seventeen member Board of Directors who meet monthly. The Board is responsible for policy making, fund raising, setting of fees and salaries, and expansion decisions.

#### Facility Description

All of the skills taught at the Life Skills Center are difficult to teach within the context of an ordinary classroom. Therefore, the Center is set up to provide an environment in which key skills can be learned in a realistic setting. The Center is home-like with a kitchen, living room, workroom, and storeroom/office. The kitchen could be found in a home. It is not large or institutional but has a standard stove, refrigerator,

counter and sink. Daily lunch is prepared and served in the kitchen. Once a week clients plan menus, make a grocery list and go to the grocery store with a teacher to restock the cupboards. The living room is used to talk, listen to records and relax. It is an ordinary living room with a rug that needs to be vacuumed and furniture that needs to be dusted. The bathroom has a toilet, sink and tub and like bathrooms found in homes needs to be cleaned regularly. The workroom is the only area that makes the space obviously not an apartment. This room is used for pre-vocational training and contains large tables and shelves. (See Appendix E for Floor Plan.)

It is important that the skills be learned in a realistic setting; for some skills that can only be done outside the Center and within the community. Use of money is taught by making real purchases in neighborhood stores as well as structured training within the Center. Travel training is taught by learning to cross real streets of various complexity. Recognizing public signs is taught at the Center and reinforced by excursions out into the community to, for example, find and use the correct public restroom.

### Entry Criteria

In setting up entry criteria for clients, a program must consider for whom it is designed to serve and the capabilities of the program. People who are mentally retarded have a wide range of needs and abilities. This is especially true for retarded adults, many of whom have never received any kind of training. Sometimes there are additional disabilities such as



cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or vision and hearing impairments. The design of the Life Skills program is to be very small both in size and in budget. This does limit the number of available support services and can therefore place some limits on who can be accepted into the program.

The following are suggested entry criteria:

1. Clients must be twenty-one years of age or older.

The program is designed to serve adults. All jurisdictions are now required to provide free and appropriate education to school age children. That responsibility must be taken by the state. The Life Skills program exists to help fill the services gap after school age.

2. Clients must be seizure controlled. No medical personnel are available on a regular basis at the Center. Clients who have uncontrolled seizures could be placed in jeopardy without this additional support. In addition, such a client places an unfair responsibility on the teachers.

3. Clients must have basic self-help skills: feed self, dress self (except for choice of clothing and closures) and be at least on a schedule for toileting (no more than once every two hours). This criterion exists for two reasons. First, it is questionable as to whether clients who do not have the very basic self-help skills can benefit from the Life Skills curriculum. Second, even though the staff to client ratio is good, clients who need to be taught to go to the bathroom or feed themselves, require a kind of individualized attention not available at the Center.

4. Clients must function at such a level that sheltered or competitive employment are not indicated at the time of entry into the program. The Life Skills Center is set up to serve a specific group of retarded adults -- those who are unable to work. Vocational Rehabilitation Legislation requires the state agency that administers vocational rehabilitation services to provide vocational training for those who have some vocational potential. This agency in each state must take that responsibility. The Life Skills Center exists to assist those retarded adults who are unable to work.

5. Clients must not be so violent as to potentially harm themselves, other clients or staff members. This is a question of program capabilities and the number of staff people available to deal with violent behavior. Such behavior often jeopardizes the training and safety of other clients.

Calvin and I come in and go upstairs. Over coffee, I slowly try to find out if he is to work today. If Calvin is confronted too quickly he is unable to speak. A call to his boss yields nothing. Apparently the work crew has already gone to the site. Calvin helps to renovate old houses by tearing out walls and carrying out the plaster. His skills are not needed for the whole renovation job so he works part-time. Calvin did not know where the crew was working so he would spend the day at the Center.

The two other staff people soon arrive. Joyce, the teacher, is a very calm quiet person. This is her second year teaching. She raised her family and went back to school. It has been so good working with her and watching her become more and more competent. Roslyn, the teacher assistant, is new to the program, but Joyce and I are impressed by the ease with which she interacts with the clients.

The three of us have a quick discussion of how we will handle the day. We will continue to tell John that he should leave the room and be by himself when he feels mean. Karl will walk as usual to shop with the other clients. He will come back the ten blocks alone on the bus. I will walk with Toni to the bus stop at the end of the day. Waiting at the stop and getting on the correct bus are the two things that worry Toni the most. I will assist her only if she really needs it, however.

9:15 A.M.

We hear the clients coming up the stairs. Toni is the first one up and heads straight for the bathroom closing the door with

a slam. Almost everyone else has something to say. Richard tells Roslyn that he went to the movies last night with his sister. Paula teases me about my blue jeans telling me she thought I would wear a dress today. John threatens Karl for "laughing" at him. Joyce suggests that perhaps if he is feeling mean he should sit alone in the living room for a while. Each of us tells the group surrounding us that we can talk as soon as everyone is seated in the kitchen. We ignore Toni in the bathroom.

I retreat to my desk for a quick half hour to make phone calls. Joyce and Roslyn join the group in the kitchen to finish started conversations and to make cooking and clean up assignments. Today is Monday so there is also a discussion about who will cook this week and what groceries are needed from the store. Anne insists that she never gets to cook and that she wants to make meatloaf. Patiently, Joyce explains that Anne does get to cook and that it will be her turn on Thursday, but that for now it is important that she be able to make a sandwich so that she can fix her own lunch at home.

The morning progresses with John continuing to threaten the others and himself. Toni moves from the bathroom to the storeroom when Richard tells her he needs to use the bathroom and that she has no business staying in there so long.

We find a rather vulgar note taped to the bathroom mirror (Toni is the only client who can read or write) telling us that she hates us and this school. Joyce responds by telling Toni through the door that she will talk about the note and Toni's

feelings if Toni will join her in the kitchen. Soon Toni appears and tells Joyce that she wants to go to another school so that she can learn some other things. Joyce explains that we have talked about it before and that Toni is ready to go to another program so that she can learn some skills for a job, but that unless she learns to ride the bus she will not be able to get to any new program because they don't provide transportation as we do. Joyce also talks with Toni about locking herself in the bathroom. It is not an appropriate way of telling people how she feels. Toni agrees to try the bus today after school.

Noon:

Gary and Pauline prepared lunch with Roslyn's assistance. We are having turkey sandwiches, salad and fruit. Gary is a good salad maker, chopping the vegetables into the smallest possible pieces while talking to himself. Pauline carefully prepared each sandwich setting the finished product on the plates on the table. When each plate has a sandwich she knows she has made enough.

"Lunch time, people," Gary announces to the group assembled in the workroom. They are learning to dial the telephone. He crosses the hall to the living room and repeats the announcement to the group learning to write their names. As usual we wait for Toni and Claire to come to the table. Richard impatiently says "Bless this food. Let's eat. It makes no sense to wait, it makes no sense."

John's occasional threats make lunch more subdued than usual. Karl is the first one finished. As he takes his plate

to the sink and heads for the living room to play records. Anne reminds him that they have the dishes today. I watch to see if he goes in the bathroom. For several years Karl would use no bathroom but his own at home. We finally got him to the point where he would use the one at the Center after lunch but he always needed to be reminded. Sometimes he was reminded very loudly by all the clients as he left the kitchen. Today he goes in without a word and emerges with a smile giving me the "ok" sign as he heads to the record player.

Richard, talking steadily about how everyone talks too much, goes from room to room collecting the trash. Paula, his girlfriend, helps him with this daily chore. She patiently puts new trash bags in the waste baskets while Richard tells her to hurry up and to stop talking so much. She rolls her eyes, but does not say anything to Richard. Their relationship is important to both of them and has lasted for four years. Paula would do everything for Richard and he would let her. They both need reminders that they need to learn to do things for themselves.

Karl and Anne start on the dishes. Roslyn supervises because while Karl washes well, he forgets to rinse. Anne is very unsteady on her feet and sometimes ends up on the floor. Because of this we get nervous when she dries the dishes and eliminate knives and glass from her chores rather than eliminate the chore altogether.

She and Karl tease each other while they work. We have learned that this is a form of communication for our clients. Conversation, as people with "normal communication" skills know it,

is very complicated and difficult. While the clients do talk to each other, the teasing comes easily and flows without hesitation or hard feelings.

1:30 P.M.

Joyce leaves with four clients to do the weekly grocery shopping. Karl is excited about the return bus ride. He has his bus fare, identification card and a card with the bus name and number stored carefully in his coat pocket.

Roslyn takes a group into the living room to clean and vacuum. I work with three others on tying shoes. John joins my group. Even though he can tie his shoes it is best if he is not in the same room with Richard who spares no words when telling John to stop his mean talk.

3:00 P.M.

Karl returns from the grocery store triumphant. He did it! He rode the bus alone. Cheers and pats on the back come from everyone. Karl's life as a totally dependent person is over. Toni eyes him from across the room. I hope she is thinking that she can do it if Karl can do it.

Joyce and the others soon return adding more cheers for Karl. As the shoppers put away the groceries, Claire brings the prize purchase into the workroom to show the rest of us -- a new broom and dust pan. They are admired and put carefully into the closet. In the workroom we are putting away our collating and will soon join the others in the kitchen for a coffee break.

3:45 P.M.

The bus arrives to take people home. It is early. No complaints will be heard from us today. Joyce, Roslyn and I breath a sigh of relief that John made it through the day without exploding. Maybe this time he will make it without having to go into the hospital.

Calvin helps us lock up and dashes to catch his bus wishing Toni luck as he goes. Toni is ready, bus fare in hand. As we walk to the bus stop we talk over the things she needs to remember.

Toni waits with the crowd at the stop while I stand some distance away. We have ridden this bus together many times. I know she can do it alone. The bus comes and Toni is the first one on taking the seat behind the driver. She waves and the bus drives away.



## HOW TO START A LIFE SKILLS CENTER

The logistics of setting up a Life Skills Center, or any new program, can baffle almost anyone no matter how good their intentions. Wading through the bureaucracy to find out about incorporation, occupancy permits, and tax exempt applications takes time, patience and sometimes good old aggression. This chapter is intended to help those people who have never gone through this process before by explaining some important elements involved in incorporating, applying for tax exempt status, budgeting and fund raising, as well as how to organize a Board of Directors. This chapter will also give some suggestions as to how to set up the space for the center.

### Getting Started

When considering opening a new program unrelated to existing programs, the first thing to consider is the commitment of the organizers. It will take several years to establish a solid organization and this will happen only if the people involved are willing to put in a lot of time and energy over several years. One of the unique aspects of a life skills program is its dependence upon human skills and energy, therefore, it is important that the people involved are willing to give of their time and skills.

Once a firm commitment has been made by the initial organizers the next step is to get other people involved by talking with friends, people in the business community, attorneys, money managers, fund raisers, members of the church community and people

knowledgeable about federal and state legislation as it relates to mentally retarded people. People with a variety of skills should be encouraged to participate in the development of the program. Once a group of interested people has evolved time for discussion is essential to help clarify what the program is to be, who it is for and how it fits into the spectrum of existing city services for mentally retarded people. It is also necessary to find out what kind of programs operate within the jurisdiction. This can be done by talking with mental retardation professionals. Even more importantly, parents of retarded adults should be consulted to find out what kind of services they feel are lacking. As the group discussions progress and as the spectrum of city services is clarified, a description of the new program should be written, program goals and objectives defined and a name decided upon. The next step is to make the program a legal entity.

#### Incorporation

Incorporation is a relatively painless step if the assistance of an attorney is available. The attorney will write the Articles of Incorporation which give a name to the organization, state its purpose and how it will be governed, as well as name the initial Board of Directors. The articles for non-profit organizations must comply with the state "Non-profit Corporation Act" which means that the language and form used in the articles are important. The District of Columbia Life Skills Center, for example, had to submit the articles twice because the term "Board of Trustees" was used instead of "Board of Directors."

If the help of an attorney is not available, copies of the Articles of Incorporation from other mental retardation programs can be used as guidelines. (See Appendix F.) A visit or a call to the Office of the Recorder of Deeds can also yield information as to how to write the articles.

Once the papers are written they are filed with the state Office of the Recorder of Deeds and a small fee is paid. If everything is in order a Certificate of Incorporation and an official date of incorporation will be issued.

### Bylaws

The bylaws are the specific rules by which the corporation is governed. It is possible to have an attorney write them, but it is helpful for the corporation to decide by what rules it will abide. Language is not as crucial to the bylaws as it was to the Articles of Incorporation. The two essential elements of the bylaws are a policy of non-discrimination and assurances that a small part of the Board of Directors cannot make decisions without the rest of the group knowing. In addition, the bylaws should include: minimum Board size, Board responsibilities, number of members required for a quorum, kinds of decisions which require a quorum, kinds of decisions which require a simple majority of those present, when and for what term length officers are elected, officer responsibilities and how amendments to the bylaws are made (See Appendix G). Once the bylaws are written and approved at an official Board meeting, they should be signed and dated by a principal Board officer. Minutes of the meeting should be kept to show that the bylaws were approved.

Federal Tax Exempt Status

Once the Articles of Incorporation and the bylaws are complete, the next step is to apply for tax exempt status. This is a complicated but necessary process. Once an organization has recognition of exemption under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, individuals and other private funding sources can give tax deductible donations to the program. Funding sources such as foundations and United Way will not consider giving funds to an organization that is not tax exempt.

An instruction booklet "Application for Recognition of Exemption" and application form 1023 are available from the Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service. It is advisable to also request form SS-4 which is an application for an Employer Identification Number. Submit this application with form 1023.

In the back of the instruction booklet there is a very long list of activities from which to choose three which best describe the applying organization. The activities chosen determine which sections of the application to fill out. There are no activities which describe a Life Skills Center very well. The Internal Revenue, however, determined that the District of Columbia Life Skills Center fit into the category of "special school for the blind, handicapped, etc. (013)." The key word is school. As a result of this determination extra information must be submitted. This information is to assure the Internal Revenue that the program does not discriminate against anyone. The information includes:

- Official signed corporate resolution stating the organization's nondiscriminatory policy as to students.
- Proof that this policy has been made public.  
(This can be done by publishing the policy on a well read page of the local newspaper. See Revenue Procedure 75-50 for specific wording and size requirements for the newspaper ad.)
- A numerical schedule showing the racial composition of the student body and the staff.
- A list of the incorporators and board members.

In addition to the application form and the nondiscriminatory information, a copy of the Articles of Incorporation signed by the incorporators, a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation and a signed copy of the bylaws must be submitted. A detailed statement of receipts and expenditures must also be included. The cover letter signed by the principal officer should state that all the submissions are true, correct and complete. Be sure that the application and all additional information are as complete as possible. If any part is incomplete the application will be returned with a detailed request for further information. If this happens it can add several months to the process.

Once a program has received its exemption under 501(c)(3), a yearly tax form (990) for non-profit organizations must be filed if the organization has gross receipts of more than \$10,000. In addition, the public notice of the nondiscriminatory policy as to students must be repeated each year. The Internal Revenue

Service also requires tax exempt organizations to notify them of all amendments to the bylaws.

### Board of Directors

An active hard working Board of Directors is essential to the success of a life skills program. The program depends upon volunteer time as well as individual donations for survival. The Board of Directors is responsible for all major decisions such as expansion, funding applications, purchase of major equipment and setting fees and salaries.

The Board should be made up of about fifteen members from a variety of professions. People who are actively involved with retarded people help to keep the needs and right of retarded people at the forefront when the Board makes decisions. Money managers can assist with bookkeeping and with financial questions. Attorneys can help solve legal questions. Hard workers and organizers help to see that things get done.

Contact with the actual day-to-day activities of the program helps Board members to identify more closely with the purpose for the Board's existence and helps members to better understand the financial needs of the program. One way in which this can be facilitated is to have a staff member as a non-voting Board member. (This is in addition to the Executive Director who is also a non-voting member.) The staff person can give monthly reports at the meetings which describe the daily activities at the Center, special events or special problems. This arrangement also allows the staff person to be involved in the decision making process of the Center.

Consumer participation is always beneficial in any organization. This can be easily accomplished by asking client parents or guardians to become Board members. One other question to consider, however, is whether or not there should be active client representation on the Board. There are no clear cut ways to handle this question except to consider it seriously. It could be fairly easy to include a client on the Board just to be able to say that there is real consumer participation. Considering the general level of functioning of the client population, this may be exploitive if the client has little or no understanding of the purpose for the meetings and is unable to actively participate in some way.

On the other hand, other people's expectations for mentally retarded people are often much lower than the person's capabilities. To simply rule out client participation because of low expectations is also unfair.

#### Funding

Funding is a never ending problem. It is possible to run a good program on very little money if there is a vast abundance of human energy and dedication. During the first five years, for example, the District of Columbia Life Skills Center operated on an average budget of \$10,000 a year. This meant that staff people worked for very little money and that donations of time and skill were essential. This is not to say that operating on so little money is the ideal way to do it, but to say it is possible.

The following is a realistic budget for one operational year. It is based upon costs in the District of Columbia.

I. Personnel

Executive Director	11,500
Teacher	10,000
Teacher Assistant	8,500
Teacher Assistant (Part-time)	4,000
Benefits (FICA & Unemployment Compensation)	<u>3,354</u>
Total Personnel Costs	37,254

II. Other Direct Costs

Food & Daily Supplies	1,760
Travel Training	1,340
Equipment and Teaching Supplies	<u>800</u>
Total Direct Costs	3,900

III. Indirect Costs (Overhead)

Telephone	220
Postage	100
Printing and Publications	110
Staff Training	365
Liability and Workmen's Compensation Insurance	310
Office Supplies	100
Occupancy	4,300
Bookkeeping and Audit Fees	1,500
Miscellaneous	<u>155</u>
Total Indirect Costs	7,160

Total Center Costs 48,314

Total Cost Per Client Per Year 4,026



## Budget Explanations

### Personnel

These salaries are competitive with salaries paid to similar positions by other non-profit private service providers in the District of Columbia. The number of staff positions offers a good teacher to client ratio which is needed by lower functioning adults. The benefits do not include health or life insurance.

### Other Direct Costs

Food and daily supplies are purchased with cash as a teaching experience with the clients. Money for travel training is also cash used for bus and subway fare. The cash in both cases is signed out via a petty cash slip. Equipment and teaching supplies includes major equipment purchases and small items such as pencils. This budget item can be reduced by asking for equipment donations when they are needed.

### Indirect Costs

Postage included four major mailings of a newsletter and funding appeals mailed to 150 people each time. The remaining \$10 is used for general postage. Printing and publication funds are used to print the letters and the newsletter. This is an essential budget item needed to raise funds.

Travel funds are used for staff members to attend helpful workshops and conferences.

Liability and Workmen's Compensation insurance are expensive but necessary. The cost may vary from location to location.

Occupancy and bookkeeping can be two of the most expensive items of overhead. Funding sources look for low overhead costs so it is advisable to attempt to secure these two items at the lowest possible rate.

### Private Funding

Fund raising is a major responsibility of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director. It is not necessary to depend upon government funds for major budget support. Perhaps it is better not to. If a solid financial base can be built through the private sector it can be there indefinitely. Government money is always subject to cuts and if a program depends upon those monies for its existence the program can die with the cuts.

Individuals, churches, and clubs can be a staple for funding. The District of Columbia Life Skills Center raises over \$12,000 annually from those sources. In any community there are people who, while not rich, do give small amounts of money (\$10-\$50) to various "charities." Individual church congregations and the national offices of church denominations generally have a fund for assisting programs which are directed toward benefiting people in need. Many clubs such as the Rotary and the Lions also have money to give. The needs of the center must be made known to potential donors through personal contact. A slide show of the program can be taken to church and club meetings. Special events such as dinners, bazaars and music concerts can be used not only to raise money but to interest new people in the program. A life skills program is small enough in size and in budget that

any individual or group who donates money or equipment can know that there really is a need and that their donation does go directly to benefit the retarded individuals who participate in the program.

A regular newsletter keeps donors or potential donors informed of the center's financial situation and also lets them know some of the daily activities of the center. In other words a newsletter can show people the benefit of their donation.

Membership in United Way can also be of great benefit to an organization. Once a member, a program can count on a regular monthly income. If the organization keeps proper records and follows United Way rules, the income can be indefinite. The competition for membership is great. For example, in 1979 nearly 100 new applications were made to United Way of the District of Columbia metropolitan area and only three new members were accepted. The process is long and must be repeated each year. There are several site visits to the center by United Way volunteers and a budget presentation in addition to a twenty page budget/application form.

United Way looks for strong Board participation, good use of volunteers and a need for the service within the community.

There are some drawbacks to being a participating agency. No fund raising activities are allowed for four months while United Way conducts its campaign for funds. Some fund raising activities are not allowed at all such as large mailing from purchased mailing lists and some activities must be approved by United Way.

## Federal Funding

There are a number of good possible federal funding sources available to programs serving retarded people. Each one is different and much too detailed to cover adequately in this paper. The Guide to Federal Resources for the Developmentally Disabled (available from the Federal Programs Information and Assistance Project, 1522 K Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20005 for \$15), is an invaluable guide to almost every possible federal resource available to mentally retarded people. It details the federal budget process and discusses the different kinds of grants and contracts. It also covers resources available in habilitation, housing, health, vocational training, food and nutrition, recreation, and protection of rights.

While each resource is made possible through federal legislation and funds, most are administered by a state agency. The state must also provide some of the funds. The strength of each federal resource within the state depends upon the state's ability to comply with the appropriate federal regulations and upon the emphasis the state places on services for mentally retarded adults. In other words, it is easier to get these funds in some states than in others. For example, the District of Columbia uses no Title XX money to provide direct training for retarded adults. Virginia and Montana on the other hand, use Title XX money to help fund work activity centers for adults. The Association for Retarded Citizens may be able to tell new programs which federal resources are used to assist retarded adults in a given state.

## Fees

While the program will not run financially on the fees alone, fees should reflect the true cost of running the program. This cost can be determined by dividing the total cost of the program, including in-kind services, by the number of clients. This amount should also fall in line with other mental retardation programs within the location. In the District of Columbia programs cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per year per client. The program will not receive that amount of money for each client, however. Most clients who are not sponsored by an agency, but pay from their own or their families income, will need a fee reduction. This can be done by having the client or client family fill out a confidential financial information form (See Appendix H). This form along with a simple fee scale can be used to set the fee (See Appendix I). Keep in mind that no one should ever be refused enrollment because of inability to pay. The program exists to serve.

## Setting up the Space

Location is of prime importance to the success of the program. In order for the people who participate in the program to develop and learn the skills necessary to function in the community, it is essential that the program be located where there is easy access to stores and public transportation. Space of this kind can be expensive because it often means locating in a commercial area. Because the space need is not large, it is possible to get it at little or no cost through a church group or private individual.

The physical setting should be as attractive as possible. Retarded people have historically been devalued human beings. The setting in which the clients spend many of their waking hours should say "You are valued". This does not have to be expensive, but some cost should be worked in, as well as some thought given to colors. A few hundred dollars for wallpaper is well spent. It lasts for many years and takes little maintenance. Much of the equipment and furnishings can be donated and with a little creativity made to look pleasing and comfortable. (See Appendix J for list of needed equipment.)

A few words about the kitchen. Ideally it should be an eat-in kitchen, if not, a dining room should be included in the space requirements. The kitchen should be equipped with the standard equipment -- stove, cupboards, sink, refrigerator and counter space. The equipment has to function well but does not have to be new. The whole kitchen in the D. C. Life Skills Center was donated, even the cupboards and the plumbers time to install the sink and stove. Even with donated appliances, the kitchen is lovely and cheery because of the wallpaper and the fact that everything is kept clean, well maintained and painted.

Kitchens can be touchy when it comes to health codes and each jurisdiction has different rules. The smaller the number of people served by a kitchen the fewer problems there will be with health codes. Health codes do serve a purpose and it is wise to remember that there are many dangers involved in the

kitchen. The center must take the responsibility to see that no one is harmed because of carelessly stored or prepared food, dirty dishes or careless use of knives and the stove.

The number of square feet necessary for a program again depends upon the number of people who will occupy the space and the requirements of a given jurisdiction. A certificate of occupancy will be required and it will state the number of people allowed in the building. The certificate of occupancy also includes requirements for fire safety. Stairwells may have to be enclosed with fire resistant wallboard and fire doors. There will also be requirements for exit lights and fire extinguishers. The inspections for this often seem tedious. They do, however, serve a purpose and that is safety. The center's responsibility for the safety of the clients and staff is large and should be taken seriously.

### Conclusion

In the overall system of services for retarded individuals the Life Skills Center is a much needed service. Its small size, home-like setting and commercial location offer an opportunity for training in useful skills in a realistic environment to a too long neglected segment of society: adults who are severely retarded. The concrete and feasible plan, with modifications, could be implemented in other communities with a minimum of government and foundation support. While not without financial needs this program depends upon human dedication and voluntary support.

Ultimately, in communities with a large number of mentally retarded adults in need of services, a network of small Life Skills Centers throughout the community would help serve more people while still keeping the small setting. It is doubtful that the private sector could totally support a series of centers. Perhaps it would then be advisable to go with larger amounts of government funding but with the programs still privately run.

It must be emphasized that the Life Skills Center serves adults who are severely retarded. While there may be some societal financial benefit in helping to bring some people who were thought to be unemployable into the labor market, many Life Skills Center clients will never be employable in the strict economic sense of the word. By participating in the Life Skills Center those clients who remain unemployable will have achieved a new dignity and wholeness as human beings.

#### Disclaimers

While it is hoped that the information contained in this paper can be helpful to others, it must be stated that much of the information on how to start a program came directly from one person's experience. This experience was an urban one and took place in the District of Columbia which does not have a state or country structure. Nor does the District have a coordinated service system. Because of this the Life Skills Center plays a vital role in providing services to adults in the District. The author assumes that many other areas, while



having a state-county structure, still lack services for lower-functioning adults.

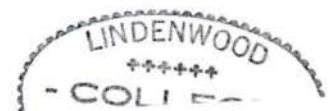
The author acknowledges that there is no discussion of transportation in the paper and that transportation can be a major obstacle for programs to overcome.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

When I started the Life Skills Center five years ago, I was very young, very naive, very shy and totally inexperienced in the management end of a program. I had an idea, a dream, to somehow help a group of people who, in my opinion had been ignored totally by the services provided in this city. It did not occur to me that to try to start a program from scratch in a city where I had taught but had absolutely no contacts with other managers, service providers and funding sources would be: a) unusual, and b) very difficult.

The first thing I did to start the process was to go to my church, a small ecumenical group of 30 people, called the Community of Christ, with my idea -- to open a small center for retarded adults who functioned at such a level that they were unable to work. My church said yes and budgeted \$1,800. Individuals signed up to donate everything from paper to the kitchen stove. A small support group was formed from the congregation.

With abundant encouragement, I started the difficult and bewildering process of trying to get started. After several false starts the Life Skills Center was incorporated as a private non-profit corporation in the District of Columbia. This cost \$120 for the lawyer who wrote and filed the forms and \$12 for filing fees. This did not include bylaws or an application for tax-exempt status, both of which would not get done until two years later without the assistance of a lawyer.



None of us involved knew anything about federal or state funding sources. We were told that a standard source for funds for programs serving adults in D. C. was the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation which contracts with centers to provide vocational training. We managed to find the right person to talk to, but were told that our client population would have no vocational potential and therefore vocational rehabilitation could not help us. It soon became apparent that the reason no programs existed for lower functioning adults was that there were no funds available.

We then tried foundations. With the help of a friend, foundations were researched and a proposal was written and submitted to several foundations with histories of interest in mental retardation. We thought that our proposal was well written and presented our program very well. The need for the services we were going to provide was so obvious we felt that we would have a good chance of being funded. We were wrong. Little did we know that it is important to know the right people in the right places and to have them respect what you are doing. That was a difficult lesson to learn, but one that I now understand. No one knew us, we had no reputation, good or bad, in the city. For a funding source to give money to a group that no one knows is like hiring a person for an important job position without checking job references (a lesson we also learned the hard way.) In addition to no references, we also did not have tax-exempt status nor did we have a strong Board of Directors. I cannot blame the foundations for denying our funding request.

On the other hand, the reality of the funding situation -- who you know and how well you can present yourself -- still disturbs me.

With funding uncertain we tackled the more comprehensible task of getting the Center ready for use. The Community of Christ donated the use of two rooms on the second floor of an old restaurant. The church had just purchased the building for worship space and to help provide inexpensive rental space to non-profit organizations. The church saw that the building as a whole met city fire and safety codes, but we had to ready our own space. The two rooms had not been used in nearly twenty years and as a result needed a lot of work. We scraped and steamed old wallpaper off the walls in ninety degree summer heat. We spent \$200 of our precious \$1800 on new wallpaper. Friends were called upon to help put it up. We even papered the ceilings (this should only be attempted if absolutely necessary, if all the workers are in good humor, and if there is plenty of beer and soda pop for reinforcement). After the paper was up, I spent many hours alone painting the woodwork, scrubbing floors and setting up the donated furnishings. Slowly the space became useable. The kitchen is a lovely green and yellow. The living room is purple, which, strange as that may sound, is pretty, but is a difficult color to work with when one must depend upon donated furniture.

We started in September of 1974 with two clients and myself as teacher, director, secretary and janitor. Our finances were bleak. We had what remained of the \$1800 plus \$35 a month from each of the two clients. What a year. Calvin was 31 years old,

225 pounds, over six feet tall and had a terrible temper. After 15 years in a different program, he developed a temper and was expelled because they could not handle him. Karl was 22, very nervous and too frightened to want to attempt anything new. He had "graduated" from the public school system at age 21 and had been sitting home for the last year. Together the three of us made up the new Life Skills Center.

The most remarkable thing about the year was Calvin's rampages. At first, because I did not know him well, I was anxious about possible physical violence so I hid all the kitchen knives. It soon became apparent that his anger did not include physical violence. It certainly was uncomfortable, however. The tantrums occurred 2-3 times a week and lasted for several hours during which time he would slam doors and stomp around the Center. I ignored his anger for the most part and spent a lot of time working on his communication skills. I felt one of the reasons for the anger was his inability to express himself. The program's small size made it possible to deal effectively and consistently with Calvin's anger each time it occurred.

The tantrums made Karl very nervous, but he too made progress. Slowly he became comfortable using sharp knives and the stove. When the first year ended Calvin's anger had diminished to a flare-up once a month and Karl had a whole new world of experiences he had never before dared to explore. Although we still were not funded or accepted by the city, I was very satisfied because two people now had new skills because of the program.

There were many discouraging times during those first couple of years. Funding continued to be a problem and the task of finding it fell squarely on me. The support group, while very supportive of me personally did not take on any responsibility for running the program. I left each meeting with them with a new list of things to do. Some tasks on the list scared me, such as calling Mrs. Hubert Humphrey to invite her to lunch. I never did do that. Others just led me in circles. Because I was teaching full-time any phone call was impossible because as yet the LSC had no phone and used the one belonging to the church on the first floor.

My list of things to do did occasionally hold something useful. Because the support group was made up of church members, we did have some contacts within that realm. As a result of knowing who to contact and who to ask to put in a good word, we received a \$5000 grant from the American Lutheran Church the second year and \$11,500 from the local union Presbytry of the nation's two major Presbyterian denominations our third. The grant from the Presbyterians was uplifting and refreshing. We requested \$5000 for general support. The committee liked what we were doing so much that they gave us \$11,500 with very few questions asked. With these two grants and the continued financial support from the Community of Christ, we stayed alive.

Word of mouth spread the fact of our existence to parents of other retarded adults and we were up to full capacity with six clients by the start of the second year. I say full capacity because we did not have money enough to hire staff to work with

more than six people. In order to work with six people we hired a part-time teacher's assistant and I went off salary for four months. My salary for the first year had been an occasional \$100 a month, so the new part-time person was not very well paid.

As I watched the clients grow and mature over several years, a philosophy began to emerge. We were like a small community; each person different from the other; each with special needs and abilities; yet we all were dependent upon each other and others for certain aspects of our lives. So often that label "retarded" is used to lump together all individuals who carry it, as if the label is all that is needed to describe that person. "Retarded" does not say anything about who that person is or what they like to do. It says nothing about how the person lives, who or how they love, or what they will become. "Retarded" does not say that Karl is a very nice person or that Calvin is dependable and gentle. It does not say that John struggles to overcome mental illness brought on by 20 years in an institution or that Paula talks too much but hugs and smiles freely.

The people who participate in the Life Skills Center will probably always carry that label "retarded". Many things are indeed very difficult. That label, however, does not tell anyone which things are difficult. I like to tell a story about Calvin to explain this. Calvin can neither read nor write, nor can he tell time or count change. He likes to work on mechanical things. During the first couple of years (when I first knew him) I would get very anxious when he attempted to fix something

like a broken record player. (Record players are hard to come by). I hovered around telling him to be careful not to hurt himself or to ruin the record player. Often I would end up attempting to fix it myself rather than let Calvin try. I must have felt that because of my higher intellectual capabilities that I could do it better even though I possess very few mechanical skills. When I finally relaxed, I found that Calvin can do it better. I don't understand how, but he does. Now we say "Give it to Calvin and see if he can fix it." Most of the time he can, if it is feasible without a new part.

Each person brings a unique dimension to our Center; to our small community. I think I can honestly say that we are friends, each bringing different things to that friendship. I am smarter. Richard is wiser. Calvin is braver. Paula is more loving. Karl is gentler. John is eager. Gary is funnier and Claire is more forgiving.

My philosophy comes not only from the love and respect I feel toward each person at Life Skills, but also from the anger, frustration and occasional violence I feel. Frustration and impatience are a part of working in this kind of situation. There are days when, after trying over and over again to teach a task such as dialing the phone, I want to scream "How can you be so stupid. This is so easy." There also are days occasionally, when Gary digs his fingernails into my arms and I want to hit him as hard as I can. When Karl's laughter and Paula's talking get to be irritating, I sometimes take advantage of my position of power and make everyone be quiet. Richard, who is 49, puts



me in my place. He has decided that I am the oldest person there. I am 30. This anger and frustration have taught me that I am human too and that a certain amount is normal. It becomes negative when it expresses itself in such a way that it diminishes the value of the people with whom I work. Each person at Life Skills is an individual with needs and abilities all their own. Each person can grow and develop and must be treated with dignity and respect.

We are about to start our sixth year. We have a real working Board of Directors made up of 17 members from many professions. Financially we are reasonably secure for the first time. With the Board helping all the way, we applied for and received membership in United Way. We are negotiating our first government contract with the city to accept four people from an institution into our program. We are discussing the possibility of opening another center in another neighborhood. Other service providers know and respect us. This acceptance and respect are important and help to ease the pressure. They are not the most important things, however. We exist to serve, to assist a very small group of people gain some control over their own lives. Hopefully our presence, perserverance and voice will help convince the city to create more programs for retarded adults. I measure our success not by these things but by the progress of my friends. Not by turnover, but by progress. Gary now makes a simple lunch, ties his shoes, and stops at street corners to check for cars. Richard can write his name, wash the dishes and stay home alone for several hours. Calvin

will be leaving us soon to start working full time. So will Karl and Paula as soon as they master riding public transportation.

I am often asked why I did this; why I have put so much time and energy into this program. I have no retarded sister, brother or child. The answer is complicated, but I can think of three reasons. First, it was needed. Secondly, it provides me with a work atmosphere that is small and personal where I can be involved in how the program is run, participate in the decision making and still remain in contact with the clients. Thirdly, I feel I have a responsibility to live my life not only to my benefit, but to the benefit of others. This work in this particular situation suits my skills, abilities, and personality while at the same time benefits others.

It hasn't been easy, however. These last five years have taken their toll. There are times when I think I cannot make it through another day. The isolation and loneliness from working in such a small place with little outside contact or stimulation are hard. The responsibility of directing and teaching is huge. The safety of the clients and other staff members are in my hands. I worry about the kitchen, fire drills, seizures and travel training. I worry that we don't work hard enough, that changes in client skills don't come quickly enough.

Am I burned out? Perhaps. But the option of quitting has not been there. With no funds to pay a replacement, to quit was to close. This year, however, things are different. The Board of Directors is strong and could hold the program together if I left. We have funds to pay a replacement.

I am so tired, but I'm always tired in June. Soon vacation will come. I will rest my body and reenergize my mind.

In September Karl wants to learn to ride the bus home from the Center.

Life Skills Center  
Checklist  
Functional Reading  
Stage of Complexity V

Client Name:

Teacher Name:

Reads from Card:

Entry Date

Exit Date

- "Hamburger"
- "Chicken Sandwich"
- "Barbecue Sandwich"
- "Ham Sandwich"
- "Coca Cola"
- "Pepsi"
- "Coffee"
- "Tea"
- "Milk"

Reads from menu and  
either selects item by  
pointing or reading aloud:

- "Hamburger"
- "Chicken Sandwich"
- "Barbecue Sandwich"
- "Ham Sandwich"
- "Coca Cola"
- "Pepsi"
- "Coffee"
- "Tea"
- "Milk"

Life Skills Center

Responsibilities to Staff Members

- to appreciate and acknowledge the contribution and worth of all staff members
- to assist and support staff members in making decisions and in assuming responsibilities that are rightfully theirs.
- to provide the environment and stimulus so that an atmosphere exists where creative ideas can be expressed, which will lead to job satisfaction and high staff morale.
- to provide opportunities for staff members to be part of the decision-making process of the center.
- to provide opportunities for staff members to learn through attendance at workshops, conferences, and in-service training.

## Philosophy of Teaching

Each client of the Life Skills Center is an adult and deserves the respect accorded to other adults in our society. When possible, adult behavior should be expected. When not possible, social and behavioral skills that help the client to be more socially acceptable in manner and appearance should be taught.

Each client of the Life Skills Center has needs and abilities different from each other client. These differences must be taken into account when planning teaching programs.

Each client has a unique style of living and different sets of problems. Their knowledge, experience and style must be respected. The families should be informed through personal contact of client progress at the center to assure skill generalization into the non-center environment.

It is understandable that clients and staff people alike sometimes get tired, impatient and angry. When this happens, physical action and verbal abuse are not acceptable. A few angry words, talking over the problem or time alone are acceptable.

Teaching should be done in a thoughtful systematic manner, keeping records on methods and client progress.

Helping each client to become as independent and self-sufficient as possible includes not only self-care, domestic and pre-vocational skills, but also includes social and recreational skills.

JOB DESCRIPTION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Responsible to: Board of Directors

Responsibilities as:

Executive Director

1. develop and maintain rapport with clients and their families.
2. supervision of staff in training and in program development for both the life skills and vocational phases.
3. exploration of and communication with potential funding sources.
4. preparation and presentation of reports to funding sources.
5. develop and maintain liaison with community organizations, adult mental retardation specialists, mental health specialists, and the Board of Directors.
6. familiarity with current thinking and trends in the field of mental retardation, especially those related to adult services in the District of Columbia.
7. planning and implementation of Life Skills Center expansion, with Board of Directors' approval.
8. supervision of physical rehabilitation of facility.
9. prepare regular reports on Life Skills Center developments and present them to the Board of Directors at the regular meetings.
10. participate in budgetary planning and implementation.
11. initial screening and recommendations for potential clients and staff members.
12. read and approve quarterly reports written by other staff members.
13. designate appropriate records of training activities and oversee their completion.
14. help plan and participate in some Life Skills Center outings, field trips, and special events.
15. find information and make arrangements for special services such as speech therapy and psychiatric counseling.
16. meet weekly with staff members to discuss client progress and help develop individual client objectives.

Staff Member

1. accept and support the philosophy of the Life Skills Center and the Life Skills Center philosophy of teaching.
2. attend weekly staff meetings.
3. demonstrate a sense of commitment to the clients and their families and to the Life Skills Center.

JOB DESCRIPTION

LIFE SKILLS TEACHER

Responsible to: Executive Director

Responsibilities as:

Life Skills Program Director

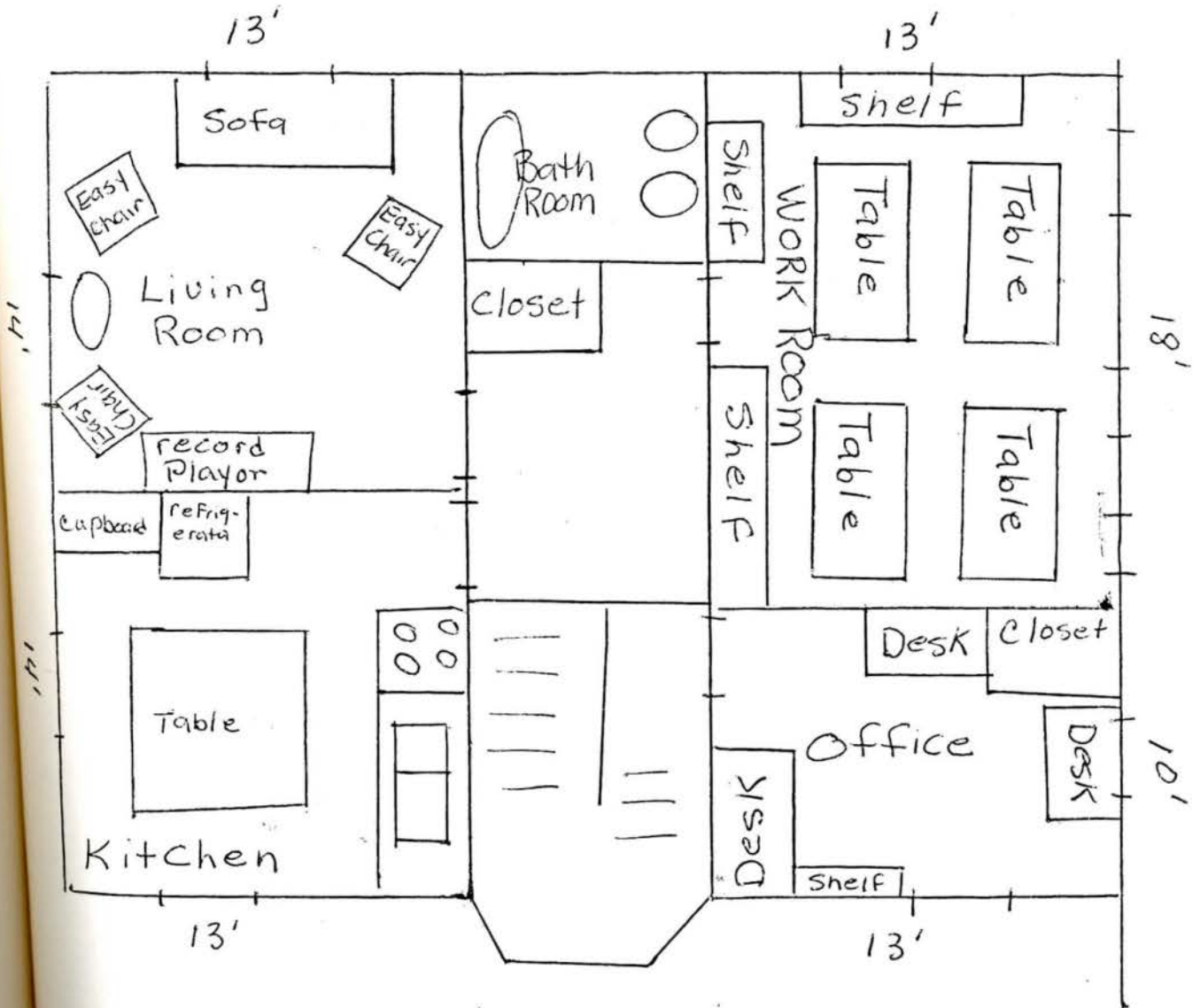
1. develop and maintain rapport with clients and their families.
2. develop programs and teach life skills to each client based on their individual needs, wishes and abilities.
3. keep appropriate records of teaching activities as identified by the Executive Director.
4. prepare quarterly reports on training activities to be explained to each client and sent to client families where appropriate, after review by the Executive Director.
5. help plan and participate in parent/teacher/client conferences.
6. help plan and participate in regular Life Skills Center outings, field trips, and special events.
7. contact the parent/guardian of each client regularly to discuss client progress.
8. when appropriate, develop through client and family suggestions, individual programs to be carried out in the home by the families.
9. along with personal instruction, provide written material and goals to assist the family members in the home training to assure generalization of skills into the non-center environment.

Staff Member

1. accept and support the philosophy of the Life Skills Center and the Life Skills Center philosophy of teaching.
2. attend weekly staff meetings.
3. demonstrate a sense of commitment to the clients and their families and to the Life Skills Center.



FLOOR PLAN



OFFICE OF RECORDER OF DEEDS, D. C.

Corporation Division  
Sixth and D Streets, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20001

CERTIFICATE

*THIS IS TO CERTIFY* that all provisions of the District of Columbia  
Non-profit Corporation Act have been complied with and ACCORD-  
INGLY this Certificate of Incorporation

is hereby issued to the THE LIFE SKILLS CENTER

as of the date hereinafter mentioned.

Date **July 22, 1974**

PETER S. RIDLEY,  
*Recorder of Deeds, D. C.*

*David H. Cole*

**David H. Cole**

**Acting Superintendent of Corporations**

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION  
OF  
THE LIFE SKILLS CENTER

To: The Recorder of Deeds  
Washington, D.C.

We, the undersigned natural persons of the age of twenty-one years or more, acting as incorporators of a corporation adopt the following Articles of Incorporation pursuant to the District of Columbia Non-Profit Corporation Act:

FIRST: The name of the corporation is THE LIFE SKILLS CENTER.

SECOND: The corporation shall have perpetual existence.

THIRD: The purposes for which the corporation is organized are as follows:

To establish, promote, and engage in charitable undertakings in the District of Columbia and in any other place for the benefit of mentally retarded adults;

To establish and promote programs to meet the needs of mentally retarded adults, especially social, intellectual, cultural, and vocational needs;

To gather, receive, and disseminate such information as may be helpful to individuals, groups, and organizations engaged in similar endeavors, and to assist the mentally retarded adult to fulfill his or her own needs;

To acquire, receive, and maintain funds, securities, and property of all kinds in order to accomplish any of the foregoing;

To work with other organizations and individuals of similar objectives;

To engage in all other activities necessary or incident to the accomplishment of the foregoing; provided that no substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall consist of attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office, nor

FILED

JUL 22 1974

BY: *Dtc*

shall the corporation carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by (a) a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or any corresponding provision of a future United States Internal Revenue Law) or (b) a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code (or any corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

FOURTH: This corporation shall not have any capital stock, and is organized and shall be operated not for profit. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall be distributed to or inure to the benefit of any Director or officer of the corporation or to any person having a personal or private interest in the corporation.

FIFTH: The corporation shall have no members but shall be governed by a Board of Directors as provided herein and in the By-Laws of the corporation.

SIXTH: The activities and affairs of the corporation shall be governed and managed by a Board of Directors. The number of Directors shall not be less than three (3), but may be greater as fixed by the By-Laws of the corporation. The manner and selection of the Board of Directors; the time, place, quorum, and notice requirements for meetings of the Board of Directors; and provisions for filling any vacancies on the Board of Directors shall be provided in the By-Laws of the corporation. The By-Laws of the corporation shall be adopted by the Board of Directors named herein at its first meeting and shall be amended thereafter according to their own provision for such amendment.

SEVENTH: Acting through its Board of Directors and its officers, subject to the powers and restrictions of these Articles of Incorporation and its By-Laws, the corporation shall have the powers to do all such acts as are necessary and convenient to the attainment of the objectives and purposes herein set forth,

within or without the District of Columbia, and to the same extent as any natural person might or could do.

The private property of the Board of Directors and officers shall not be subject to the payment of corporate debts to any extent whatever.

Upon dissolution or final liquidation of the corporation, the assets of the corporation shall be distributed in the following manner and order:

(1) All liabilities and obligations of the corporation shall be paid, satisfied, and discharged, or adequate provision made therefor;

(2) Assets held by the corporation upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements;

(3) All remaining assets shall be distributed, conveyed, or transferred to such organization or organizations which or organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational or scientific purposes as shall at that time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Directors shall determine. In no event shall the remaining assets of the corporation be allocated to the individual Directors or officers of the corporation or to any private individual or private purpose.

EIGHTH: The address of the corporation's initial registered office is 1813 Monroe Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20010, and the name of its initial registered agent at such address is Margaret Hoven.

NINTH: The initial Board of Directors shall consist of three (3) natural persons who shall serve until the first annual meeting of the corporation or until their successors are elected and qualified, whichever shall last occur.

The names and addresses of the said three persons who are to constitute the initial Board of Directors are the following:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Margaret Hoven	1813 Monroe St, NW, Washington, DC 20010
Judith Anderson	1310 21st St, NW, Washington, DC 20036
Nyla Rasmussen	1701 Kenyon St, NW, Washington, DC 20010

TENTH: The name and address of each of the undersigned persons acting as incorporators of this corporation is as follows:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Margaret Hoven	1813 Monroe St, NW, Washington, DC 20010
Judith Anderson	1310 21st Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036
Nyla Rasmussen	1701 Kenyon St, NW, Washington, DC 20010

*Margaret Hoven*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 MARGARET HOVEN

CITY OF WASHINGTON )  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ) SS:

I, Maurice Shochet, a Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia, hereby certify that, on the 21st day of May, 1974, personally appeared before me Margaret Hoven, who signed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation of The Life Skills Center, and who swore that the statements contained therein are true.

SEAL

Maurice Shochet  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Notary Public  
 My comm exp 3/3/76

*Judith Anderson*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 JUDITH ANDERSON

CITY OF WASHINGTON )  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ) SS:

I, Maurice Shochet, a Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia, hereby certify that on the 5th day of May, 1974, personally appeared before me Judith Anderson, who signed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation of The Life Skills Center, and who swore that the statements contained therein are true.

SEAL

Maurice Shochet  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Notary Public  
 My comm exp 3/3/76

Nyla Rasmussen  
NYLA RASMUSSEN

CITY OF WASHINGTON )  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ) SS:

I, Maurice G. Gherke, a Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia, hereby certify that, on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of May, 1974, personally appeared before me Nyla Rasmussen, who signed the foregoing Articles of Incorporation of The Life Skills Center, and who swore that the statements contained therein are true.

SEAL

Maurice G. Gherke  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires 3/31/76

BYLAWS

THE LIFE SKILLS CENTER  
A NONPROFIT CORPORATION

ARTICLE I

NAME AND LOCATION

Section I. NAME. The name of the Corporation shall be "The Life Skills Center."

Section II. LOCATION. The principal office of the Corporation shall be located at La Casa, 3166 Mt. Pleasant St., N. W., Washington, District of Columbia.

ARTICLE II

OBJECTS AND PURPOSES

Section 1. PURPOSES. The Life Skills Center is organized to establish and promote programs to meet the intellectual, social, cultural and vocational needs of mentally retarded adults.

Section 2. DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED. Within the limitations set by the purposes of the Corporation as enumerated above, the services of the Center shall be open to all, without regard to race, creed, sex, or national origin.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. MEMBERS AND GOVERNANCE. The corporation shall have no members but shall be governed by a Board of Directors as provided in the Articles of Incorporation and the By-laws herein.

ARTICLE IV

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. DUTIES AND POWERS. The Board of Directors shall supervise, control, manage, and direct the property, affairs, staffing, and business of the Corporation, shall determine its policies within the limits of its By-laws, shall actively pursue its objectives, shall manage the fiscal affairs of the Corporation, and shall have final authority to disburse and allocate any of its funds.



Section 2. COMPOSITION. The Board shall consist of not less than six (6) Directors. The Center Director and one Center employee shall be ex officio members of the Board and may attend all Board meetings. Directors need not be residents of the District of Columbia.

Section 3. MONTHLY MEETINGS. There shall be a regular meeting of the Board of Directors each month to transact the business of the Corporation.

Section 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS. Special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be called by the President of the Board upon the request in writing for such a meeting from at least two (2) Directors.

Section 5. NOTICES OF MEETINGS. No notice will be provided for the regular monthly meetings of the Board. Notices in writing of special meetings of the Board of Directors shall be sent to each Director at least seven (7) days in advance of the date of such meeting.

Section 6. ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING. There shall be an Annual Public Meeting of the Board of Directors during which the President of the Board, Center Director, and Treasurer will report on the state of the Corporation, and new Directors and Officers will be introduced to interested members of the public. The Annual Public Meeting shall be held in March.

Section 7. QUORUM. One-third of the Directors shall constitute a quorum at a regular or special meeting of the Board.

Section 8. BOARD DECISIONS. The act of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board, unless the act of a greater number is required by the Articles of Incorporation of these By-laws.

Section 9. ELECTIONS. Directors of the Corporation shall be elected by the Board of Directors at the regular monthly meeting in February each year. The Directors elected in February of 1978 shall be divided as evenly as possible into two classes by lot; one class to serve a two-year term and one class to serve a one-year term. Successor Directors shall serve a two-year term. The term of office shall commence with the adjournment of the next Annual Public Meeting following election and continue through the Annual Public Meeting two years hence, with the exception of the class of one year directors elected in February 1978, who shall serve only through the Annual Public meeting of 1979.

Section 10. ATTENDANCE. Any Director who is absent from three consecutive Board meetings may be removed from membership by an act of the Board of Directors.

Section 11. REMOVAL. A director may be removed from membership for cause by a vote of two-thirds of the Directors present at a regular monthly meeting. The motion to remove a Director must be moved at the regular monthly meeting immediately preceding the meeting at which the vote on removal is to be taken.

Section 12. VACANCIES. Any vacancy occurring in the Board shall be filled by the Board of Directors. Directors selected to fill vacancies shall serve for the unexpired term of their predecessors in office.

Section 13. COMPENSATION. Directors as such shall not receive any salaries. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any Director from serving the Corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefor.

Section 14. PARLIAMENTARY RULES. Roberts' Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the governing rules of procedure of the Corporation in all cases not specifically provided for by its By-laws or Articles of Incorporation.

#### ARTICLE V

##### ADVISORY BOARD

Section 1. OBJECTS AND PURPOSES. An Advisory Board may be created by the Board of Directors to advise the Board on the affairs of the Corporation.

Section 2. MEETINGS. The President of the Board of Directors may call the Advisory Board into session at any time, provided fourteen (14) days notice is given in writing to each Advisor. Individual Advisors may also be consulted independently of the entire Advisory Board on matters in which they hold a particular expertise.

Section 3. ELECTION AND TERM. Advisors shall be elected by the Board of Directors and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

#### ARTICLE VI

##### OFFICERS

Section 1. OFFICERS. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary by the Board of Directors. All officers shall be members of the Board of Directors.

Section 2. ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE. The officers of the Corporation shall be elected at the regular monthly meeting of February each year. The term of office shall be one year and shall commence with the adjournment of the next Annual Public meeting following election and continue through the Annual Public Meeting one year hence.

Section 3. REMOVAL. Any officer elected by the Board may be removed from office for cause by a vote of two-thirds of the directors present at a regular monthly meeting. The motion to remove an officer must be moved at the regular monthly meeting immediately preceding the meeting at which the vote on removal is to be taken.

Section 4. VACANCIES. A vacancy in any office may be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 5. PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board, and shall perform all such other duties as the Board shall direct. In the absence of the President his duties shall be performed by the Vice-President. In addition, the President shall be an ex officio member of all committees.

Section 6. SECRETARY. The Secretary shall keep true, sufficient and accurate records of all meetings of the Board of Directors, and shall be custodian of the Minute Books and other documents and papers of the Corporation, except those which particularly pertain to the fiscal affairs thereof. The Secretary shall attend to the giving of notice of all meetings to the members of the Board of Directors in the manner and at the time required by these By-laws.

Section 7. TREASURER. The Treasurer shall perform all the duties of a fiscal officer of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Board for the receipt of all monies, checks and drafts paid to the Corporation, the deposit of the same in such bank or banks as are designated by the Board of Directors, to the credit of the Corporation. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the maintenance of true and accurate accounts of all monies, assets and other property of the Corporation, and shall render to the Board of Directors from time to time such statements or accounts as may be required by them, and the books and accounts in conduct or control shall always be open to the inspection of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall be required to give a bond for the faithful discharge of his duties and the expenses thereof shall be paid by the Corporation. The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as may be required of him by the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE VII

### EMPLOYEES

Section 1. GENERAL PROVISION. The routine operations of the Corporation shall be conducted by a salaried staff which shall have at its head a Center Director and which shall consist of such employee positions as the Board of Directors may from time to time authorize.

Section 2. CENTER DIRECTOR. The Center Director shall be employed by and responsible to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall also have the power to authorize the employment of the Center Director by contract or contract renewal for a period of not more than two years, at such salary as may be fixed by it. The Center Director shall be the active managerial and administrative head of the Center, and shall have general supervision of its business and affairs, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors.

#### ARTICLE VIII

##### AMENDMENTS

Section 1. PROCEDURE. These by-laws may be amended or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted by two-thirds of the Directors present at any regular monthly meeting, provided that notice of the full text of such proposed alterations shall have been sent by the Secretary to each Director at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

LIFE SKILLS CENTER  
Request for Fee Grant  
Confidential Form

Name of Client \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Mother/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Salary \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name of Father/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Salary \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Employer's Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Names of Dependent  
Children in Family

Age

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other dependents? YES NO

If yes, Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Does the client have any kind of regular income? YES NO

If yes, from whom? \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any extraordinary financial obligations? YES NO

e.g., unusual medical or dental bills; outstanding indebtedness from prior year such as might arise from illness, extended unemployment, uninsured losses of property; substantial support to someone not qualified as a dependent, etc. (please explain and give an approximate amount.)

\*\*\*\*\*

CONDITIONS: It is to be understood that any assistance granted is for a period of one year only and applied only to the fee NOT to transportation. Application must be renewed annually. This grant in aid program is evaluated annually and its continuation beyond the present training year cannot be guaranteed.

I affirm that the above statements are correct and that the assistance asked for is necessary for \_\_\_\_\_ attendance at the Life Skills Center.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## FEE SCHEDULE

Gross Income Including SSI	# of Dependents			
	1	2	3	More than 3
Over \$60,000	- - FULL AMOUNT - - - - -			
50,000-59,999	200	180	160	150
45,000-49,999	140	130	120	110
40,000-44,999	110	100	100	90
35,000-39,999	90	85	80	75
30,000-34,999	75	70	65	65
25,000-29,999	70	65	60	60
20,000-24,999	65	60	55	55
15,000-19,999	55	50	45	45
10,000-14,999	40	35	30	25
5,000-9,999	15	15	15	15
0 - 4,999	10	10	10	10

FEE POLICY

- (1) Any sponsored client is asked to pay the full cost of service.
- (2) All other clients are asked to pay the full cost of service; however, if fee reduction is requested, such clients may pay fees according to above schedule.
- (3) If there are special circumstances involved, the fee is negotiable with the Center Director, subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

START-UP EQUIPMENT  
FOR A LIFE SKILLS CENTER  
SERVING 12 CLIENTS

stove  
refrigerator  
sink with garbage disposal  
counter and cupboards  
kitchen utensils (pots and pans, plates, cups, glasses,  
silverware, etc.)  
work tables (6)  
chairs (20)  
large clocks (2)  
shelving  
record player and records  
vacuum cleaner  
sofa (1)  
easy chairs (3)  
brooms (3)  
mops (2)  
dust pans (3)  
waste baskets (4 large)  
buckets (2)  
typewriter  
dish washer (optional)  
washer and dryer (optional)



## CLIENT RECORDS

The forms on the following two pages are helpful to have in each clients records. A parent/guardian release is essential. It is nearly impossible to get insurance coverage at reasonable cost to cover anything that takes place outside the center. Use of community resources is essential to the success of the program, therefore, the client families must be made aware of the risks involved and accept responsibility for them.

A medical release signed by a physician protects the center and lets the teachers know that the person is physically able to do such things as take walks, climb stairs and do simple exercises without fear of danger to the client.

It is also important to have a couple of emergency numbers for each person. A media release is also helpful if the center wants to use pictures of clients for giving presentations to funding sources, community groups or for use in the newsletter.

PARENT OR GUARDIAN RELEASE

Client's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Client's age \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned parent and/or legal guardian of the above named client hereby grant permission for the client to participate in all Life Skills Center activities, special events and field trips.

I know of no emotional or physical reason why the client should not participate in said activities.

I understand that many activities, special events, and all field trips involve leaving the Life Skills Center premises. I understand too, that the client while in attendance at the Life Skills Center often will be using public or private transportation, walking outside, crossing streets and entering public buildings.

On behalf of the client and myself, I acknowledge that the client will be attending the Life Skills Center and participating in all Life Skills Center activities at his/her own risk and I, on my own behalf, hereby release, discharge and indemnify the Life Skills Center from all liability for injury to person or damage to property of myself and client.

In the event that the client should for any reason require any minor medical or surgical treatment and/or medication during the course of his/her attendance at or participation in the activities of the Life Skills Center, I authorize such physician or medical staff as the Life Skills Center may appoint or designate to carry out necessary treatment, or to take the client to the emergency room of the nearest hospital, and I further authorize the hospital and its medical staff to provide treatment deemed necessary by them for the well being of the client.

It is understood, however, that if hospitalization or treatment of a more serious nature is required I will be contacted, if at all possible, by telephone for permission.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICAL RELEASE: TO BE SIGNED BY A PHYSICIAN

I have personally examined \_\_\_\_\_ and hereby certify that he/she is physically able to take part in general fitness and physical activities and to participate in the daily routine of the Life Skills Center.  
Comments and/or restrictions:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Physician's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

EMERGENCY INFORMATION:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

If the above named person cannot be reached please contact:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

MEDIA RELEASE: OPTIONAL

I hereby grant permission to record \_\_\_\_\_ likeness and/or voice while he/she is in attendance at the Life Skills Center or participating in Life Skills Center functions.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## FOOTNOTES

1. Herbert C. Grossman, ed., Manual on Terminology and Classification in Mental Retardation (Baltimore, Md.: Garamond/Pridemark Press, 1973), 1. 11.

2. "Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities Legislation", A compilation Prepared for the Subcommittee on the Handicapped of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate, (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1976), p. 53.

3. Ibid., p. 2.

4. For a full discussion of the Principle of Normalization see: Wolf Wolfensburger et al., The Principle of Normalization in Human Services (Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation, 1972). Versions of normalization are now accepted as the norm, as the proper direction of development for the habilitation of retarded individuals by the majority of professionals in the field.

5. District of Columbia, "State Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Program," 1979, pp. 38-40 and pp. 249-256.

6. Life Skills Center, "Policy Manual", 3166 Mt. Pleasant Street, N. W., Washington, D.C. 20010, p. 3.

## SOURCES CONSULTED

- Ames, Susan J., Income Maintenance Programs and the Developmentally Disabled. Federal Programs Information and Assistance Project, 1522 K Street, N. W., Washington, D.C., 20005. 1977.
- District of Columbia. "State Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Program," 1979.
- Federal Programs Information and Assistance Project. The Guide to Federal Resources for the Developmentally Disabled. 1522 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. 1977.
- Grossman, Herbert J., ed. Manual on Terminology and Classification in Mental Retardation. American Association on Mental Deficiency, Special Publication No. 2. Baltimore, Md.: Garmond/Pridemark Press, 1973.
- Life Skills Center. "Policy Manual". 3166 Mt. Pleasant Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20010. 1978.
- Litvin, Mark. Title XX and the Developmentally Disabled. Federal Programs Information and Assistance Project, 1522 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. 1977.
- Litvin, Mark E. and Browning, Philip L. eds. Public Assistance and Mental Retardation Through 1976. Monograph No. 7. Rehabilitation Research and Training Center in Mental Retardation, University of Oregon. February 1977.
- Paul, James L.; Stedman, Donald J.; and Newfeld, G. Ronald, eds. Deinstitutionalization: Program and Policy Development. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1977.
- President's Committee on Mental Retardation. Mental Retardation: Century of Decision: A Report to the President. DHEW Pub. No. (OHD) 76-21013. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. March 1976.
- President's Committee on Mental Retardation. Mental Retardation: Past and Present. Stock No. 040-000-00385-1. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. January 1977.
- Rosen, Marvin; Clark, Gerald R.; and Kivits, Marvin S., eds. The History of Mental Retardation: Collected Papers. 2 vols. Baltimore, Md.: University Park Press, 1976.
- "Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities Legislation", A Compilation Prepared for the Subcommittee on the Handicapped of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare United States Senate. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1976

- Stripling, Tom. The Developmental Disabilities Program.  
Federal Programs Information and Assistance Project,  
1522 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. 1977.
- U.S. Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service.  
"How to Apply for and Retain Exempt Status for Your  
Organization". Publication 557. 1979.
- U.S. General Accounting Office, Returning the Mentally Disabled  
to the Community: Government Needs to do More. Report  
to the Congress, 7 January 1977. HRD-76-152.
- Wolfensberger, Wolf; Nirje, Bengt; Olshansky, Simon; Perske,  
Robert; and Roos, Philip. The Principle of Normalization  
in Human Services. Toronto; National Institute on Mental  
Retardation, 1972.