

CMU Picks Supervisor

FARMINGTON Dr. George Bowman, past president of Glen Oaks Community College, Centerville, has been assigned to serve as university supervisor in the Farmington area by Central Michigan University.

The position involves placing and working with CMU student teachers assigned to Farmington area schools, and helping teachers plan local in-service workshops.

Dr. Bowman joined the CMU faculty this summer. An Air Force veteran, he served as president of Glen Oaks Community College from 1966 to 1971. He also has been an elementary and high school principal, special education director, and community college dean.

He earned his BA degree from Grinnell (Iowa) College in 1948, an MS from Drake University in 1951 and his Ed.D. from the University of Nebraska in 1963.



EDITOR'S NOTE: This series of articles explaining the purpose and operation of Farmington area's drug prevention program is written by Mrs. Betty Arnold, executive secretary of the Farmington Area Advisory Council.

By BETTY ARNOLD, FARMINGTON Farmington Area Advisory Council (FAAC) was incorporated to offer assistance and guidance to young people in the Farmington area for problems they face during their developing years. Recognizing the fact that drug abuse is a primary problem among today's youth, FAAC has as its main objective curbing substance abuse.

To accomplish this purpose, FAAC serves as the parent organization for five separate program areas. The Rap Line crisis intervention telephone service was the first program area and is the most widely known.

The second area is therapeutic individual and group counseling provided by professional staff. The third area involves Rap Groups, group discussions led by skilled volunteer paraprofessionals.

Educational programming for youth and adults is the fourth area and the fifth, and newest area, is development of a pilot drop-in center program which began operation Aug. 17.

In an effort to provide a well-rounded total program, each of the five areas approaches the objective from a slightly different angle, beginning with open communication between people and broad thinking with education, prevention, and alternative attitudes and actions.

This first article in the series will define the Rap Line operation by responding to questions which have been asked by various people in the community.

What is Rap Line? Rap Line is a crisis intervention telephone service sponsored by Farmington Area Advisory Council; it is FAAC's prime source of contact in the Farmington area for problems of communication with youth. Who answers the Rap Line telephones? High School and college age young people who have completed seven weeks of intensive study with a professional social worker and who have satisfied the criteria set by a screening committee composed of FAAC staff and experienced Rap Line counselors.

There is no pretense that the counselors are junior psychiatrists, amateur psychologists, or any other type of make-shift therapist. They are, instead, eager young people who have been carefully trained in the skills of effective listening so they are able to collect clear information about the caller's problems, and with the caller, outline a specific plan for reducing those problems.

WHAT IS the rationale for having young people man the phones?

When appropriately trained, non-professionals have proven extremely useful in improving problematic situations of others. Dr. Gerald Self, formerly of the Continuum Center of Oakland University, uses the term "therapeutic peer" to refer to the use of youthful non-professionals in the helping position.

One of the philosophies of therapy at the University of Michigan involves the training of non-professionals for the purpose of developing a supportive system for creating change in individual's behavior.

The young counselors at Rap Line are in key positions for effective communication with other young people who have drug-related problems. These counselors are aware of the current jargon being used by the adolescent segment of our population. They are

familiar with the types of drugs which are commonly used in the community. Some of these who counsel have previously used drugs and have an experiential perspective of problems related to the drug situation (though they must be given up the use of illegal drugs before they can become telephone counselors). These counselors who have never directly experienced with drugs are aware of the "drug scene" through their training and the experiences of their peers.

An additional factor is that many of the area's drug users are "muddled" by traditional helping agents and by adults in general. The Rap Line counselors are viewed as untraditional and peers of the "new generation". Thus, assistance, for legal advice, etc. Rap Line has complete its own reference listing of more than 20 pages naming agencies and professional people who have volunteered to serve as referral agents, satisfying a vast range of needs for the caller.

When intensive counseling is indicated, callers are referred to the FAAC professional staff. The staff is composed of a minister and two social workers. All three have had extensive training in counseling skills and have earned their master's degrees. Staff members also make referrals in cases when a need for additional specialized help is determined.

WHAT SUPPORTS are available to counselors? Since the telephone service was initiated, there has always been an adult on duty at the Rap Line center during hours of operation. Adult volunteers have given more than 7,000 hours to the program as counselor support at the center and through participation in other program activities.

At least one professional staff member is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in case the Rap Line counselors encounter a situation requiring his services.

Does Rap Line provide a worthwhile service? Rap Line is an important part of the total FAAC program. The telephone service has established direct communication and credibility with youth who need assistance and who have been unable or unwilling to seek help from traditional sources.

Some 5,000 calls have been logged by the Rap Line counselors. As the program has developed over the past year, record keeping has been refined to provide a comprehensive view of the type calls received and the action taken. Of the 5,000 calls ap-

proximately one-third were specifically drug-related.

This does not mean that the other calls were unrelated to the purpose of the program. Once telephone communication has been established with Rap Line, the counselors have an opportunity to introduce the caller to services provided by FAAC in education, prevention, therapeutic discussion groups (Rap Groups), professional counseling, and activities at the drop-in center. These areas of the FAAC program will be defined in detail in future articles in this series.

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