A husband, his wife, and their three children were going through some emotionally trying times. The youngest child was diagnosed as having Down's Syndrome (a symptom of mental retardation), and other ailments plagued the child, including diabetes and heart problems.

The medical expenses, amounting to thousands of dollars each month, were putting the family in an almost impossible situation financially.

As the Advertiser Milk Fund enters its 12th year, this is only one example of the thousands of persons who have been eligible for and aided by the Milk Fund since August 1962.

For the past 11 years, needy persons in Lafayette have been fortunate if they sought the aid of the Milk Fund. After being cleared by the Southwest Louisiana Education and Referral Center (223-HELP), they became recipients of the Advertiser Milk Fund, and enjoyed temporary deliveries of milk and other foods that could provide financial and personal benefits to them in another instance, which came to an end one year later, a young couple was trying to make ends meet after the husband suffered a broken back in an auto accident. They were uncertain as to when the man could go back to work, and the wife was working but earning only a small salary. The medical bills were piled up and in time the man received no medical benefits from his previous job.

These persons, too, are only a part of the 75 to 100 families each month in a survey taken by social workers and health department personnel who found themselves in a situation where they can qualify for the Milk Fund.

Since 1969, some 51,599 families have been served by 533,487, or about 67,747, quarts of milk through the Milk Fund. These include men, women, and children of all ages, regardless of color or creed.

The Advertiser Milk Fund is unique in that every cent it collects goes into the fund, and the program is 100 percent voluntary. There are no overhead expenses.

Last month, 223 persons were served 1,787 quarts of milk at a cost of $1,396. The poor, the needy, those in financial straits, or persons facing other problems are all considered as candidates for the Milk Fund.

The recent case of a Milk Fund recipient was a family of seven children plus the parents. The father, a carpenter, works on the job weather-permitting. The oldest girl, 12, developed cancer, and a son was trapped in a fire in which he received third degree burns over his entire body. The mother spends her time with the children, and the bills were adding up. After a screening by SOCIAL, milk was temporarily provided until the family could find another source of income.

Another case is of a family, as in the case above, in which the wife lost her house in a fire. The family had to go to work to look for another house, and the mother was unemployed. These people were screened and selected as recipients.

Another facet of the fund, as important as providing nutritious milk to families in need, is the fact that volunteers who visit families to be screened often come upon seriously ill children and adults who were taken immediately to the hospital for medical attention they could not afford.

Sometimes calls are made to the milk fund delivering milk and other foods that could provide financial and personal benefits to them.

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SLERC Takes Role of Busy Vital Link in Community

In 13 years of operation over 192,877 cases have been processed through SLERC averaging 1,200 to 1,500 calls per month. No other single agency covers the wide range of community problems, ranging the gamut of mental illness, mental retardation, alcoholism, drug abuse, unwed mothers, suicide problems, all the disturbing and unusual problems of a fast growing community.

An average of 70 percent of all inquiries are by telephone. Approximately 40 percent are for help with specific problems such as finding a wheelchair or the name of a marriage counselor. The rest are for general information related to available facilities; requirements for services; how and where to apply to SLERC accept applications and advice people in all matters. Calls are received from the general public, as well as from professionals active in the health field.

A position is made and approximately 80 percent of all calls with only a small percentage of calls not being handled. However, in some cases, the Referral Center can call upon private resources to give the assistance needed, thus filling in the gap.

Day in the day out, dating from the founding of the Southwest Louisiana Education and Referral Center, dozens of calls have been handled through normal referral programs. Concurrently, the Center has involved itself in assisting a myriad of other agencies and organizations in their efforts to inform citizens about existing services, newly available ones, and about SLERC itself.

Not content to accept the "status quo" where facilities and services have been lacking, the Referral Center has assumed the initiative of bringing together those community leaders and resources that give promise of developing new programs.

Programs developed through such action by the SLERC Board of Directors and staff since 1969 include: M.L.K. Legal Aid, Social Services; and the Community Service and Housing Program.

The Case Management Advocacy Service was introduced to Acadiana on January 1, 1979. This program is designed to provide outreach, information, referral, follow along, direct counseling services and advocacy for persons with community needs and resources that contribute to the development of new programs.

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SLERC adds to the over-all capability of all city and parish agencies. Countless hours of valuable time are saved for the Sheriff, Chief of Police and elected officials, as well as professionals in the field of health. Many times, SLERC can solve a problem before a severe and traumatic crisis occurs involving a chain of agency, offices and individuals.
PAST INTO A NEW FUTURE

Glasses for needy

SLERC in cooperation with the School Board Nursing Department, originated and coordinated all interested community groups including the Lion’s Club, Beaver’s Club, L’Heure D’Amitié, and others in their sight conservation programs. A survey was conducted among area eye specialists to see if more participation in an eye-care program for needy indigent children could be stimulated in order that more children could be helped on the limited funds that were available. All of the ophthalmologists agreed to participate (on a rotation basis) to examine, at no charge, a couple of children per month, who had been screened by the Vision Clinic and School Board Nurse or SLERC. This program went into effect in November, 1970, and has proven very successful. SLERC screens and refers cases directly.

Because of Federally subsidized programs i.e. EPSDT the following persons are eligible for the purchase of eyeglasses as well as physical exams:

1. Aid to Families with Dependent Children recipients under age 21
2. Supplemental Security Income recipients under age 21
3. Foster Care Children under age 21
4. Cuban and Vietnamese Refugee recipients under age 21

For this reason, the demands on ophthalmologists for children are now rare. Requests are primarily from senior citizens who must pay for the initial eye examination and, then, that person is referred to a physician for glasses by SLERC. There is a tremendous gap in this area.

Contact

SLERC wrote for details of this program which began operation in Sydney, Australia, as early as 1968. CONTACT is an extension of the ministry. The ministers and priests of all churches work on a rotation basis to serve not only as a fine resource for crisis intervention, but to minister to anyone having a problem who merely needs a listener. CONTACT serves a wide range of human needs. Although the feasibility of establishing a chapter of CONTACT in Lafayette was not rejected, ministers preferred to operate on a rotation basis through HELP. The program is ongoing and has been a success.

Parents Without Partners

Numerous requests indicating interest in such an organization were received by SLERC as early as 1968. Contact was made with the National Organization and a local group (St. Jules Parish) was organized under their sponsorship. The Chapter was activated in 1970. At present there are 50 members.

Pauper’s Burial

Several calls regarding burial of the indigent over the years have come through SLERC. This resulted in the Board of Directors having to turn to private resources and to personally provide financial assistance. This has amounted to thousands of dollars. As a result, SLERC investigated to see if there was not an existing law to provide for Pauper’s Burial. State Statute 331:561:1 states that if anyone dies in the City and has no relatives or funds, the responsibility of burying that person rests with the City. SLERC officers, St. Vincent de Paul members and morticians met with the Mayor and, in the future, such problems will be cared for by the City.
Traveler's Aid

A SUPERB FEAT OF COORDINATION

SLERC was originally asked by the Traveler's Aid Association of America to represent them in Lafayette, but because of lack of staff and failure to agree on cost, we declined. Actually, the Salvation Army is the only resource available and efforts to obtain aid are frequently made through St. Vincent dePaul Societies and local church groups. Due to the lack of cooperation and increase in requests for aid from all agencies, SLERC has had to discontinue aiding the transient except in extreme cases such as emergency medical aid and transportation. There is no Traveler's Aid Association as such in Lafayette and little prospect of having one. SLERC continues to serve this function.

Emergency Needs

The only current services available for emergencies are the Salvation Army, St. Vincent dePaul Societies, United Christian Outreach and a few private sources SLERC has (which are often used). The Salvation Army will house transients for one day (two at the most) every ninety days and offers food, clothing and furnishings to the needy.

St. Vincent dePaul Societies in various church parishes offer similar aid for their parish residents. A few offer assistance to persons regardless of location.

Christmas Baskets

For several years SLERC has been the clearinghouse for all agencies, church groups and schools who distribute baskets to the needy. This is a highly popular and successful program if implemented through one agency. SLERC will continue to be this agency if the participating groups wish. 305 families received baskets in 1980.

Transport of Medically Indigent

Charity Hospital does provide Ambulance Service for in-patients to other state hospitals, who provide special care which is not available at Charity Hospital.

In the past, for cases referred to SLERC, arrangements were made through various community organizations to provide funds for transportation. The last March of Dimes provided assistance for children with any type of birth defect (also polio cases). St. Vincent dePaul Societies and other church and civic groups assist other types of cases. For severe medical cases, where transportation by public means is not feasible and no private resources are available, arrangements can be made through the Coroner’s Office for transportation by the Sheriff’s Department.

The Handicap Program started in September 1972, to accommodate those patients in wheelchairs and limited ambulation, and was started again in cooperation with Easter Seal and the City of Lafayette on February 1, 1974. Now, Handicap is equipped with two vans which serve primarily health and medical services and transports mentally retarded persons to and from the Allee Center. Handicap is now in a position to serve all of Lafayette Parish.

SMILE now has 30 buses, vans and trucks to provide transportation over a three parish area, for mentally retarded citizens. Rehabilitation cases, pre-school and school age children for evaluations. All people under Title 20, Early American Act, and the Migrant Seashore Act of Agriculture are also eligible for SMILE’s transportation services.

The Health Services Transportation Co. will transport persons for medical, non-emergency reasons to and from a medical provider if they are covered under Medicaid.

Meal Program

Congregate Meals are provided for under Title 7, nutrition program. This program provides meals and serves them to 26 individual meal sites over an 8 parish area. There are no provisions under Title 7 for transportation to and from these meal sites. The Council on Aging handles the Congregate Meal Program and has a van to pick up persons.

Meals on Wheels is provided for under Title 20. SMILE handles this program, which delivers the meals to the person’s home. They cover Iberia, St. Martin and parts of Lafayette. This program is limited to: 1) Eligible persons 60 and over; 2) over 100 eligible persons in Lafayette; 3) Priorities considered are blindness, physical handicaps, living alone and unable to prepare meals in home.

Genetic Counseling

SLERC has received several requests for genetic counseling (especially by prospective parents with a history of diabetes, epilepsy and schizophrenia). The cases were handled by physicians on SLERC Board. The Sickle Cell Anemia Research Program approached SLERC about the possibility of help from our agency. Two physicians, Dr. J.T. Briere and Ernest Kinchon, have volunteered their services to provide genetic counseling in this area.

Loan Closet

Due to contributions to SLERC and money from the Medical Auxiliary, medical equipment was accumulated for specific emergencies. Small equipment is still out on a loan basis, but we no longer have the area to maintain sizeable equipment. Therefore, we no longer render this service on a large scale.

Family Planning Program

The original contact was made with Dr. Joseph D. Reesley of Tulane University and Mr. George E. Planagan, who was then Executive Director of the Louisiana Family Planning Program, Inc. of New Orleans, concerning the possibility for a program in this area. A second clinic was then in the planning stage for Rapids Parish. A visit was made to the New Orleans Clinic by the SLERC Director to see the operation first-hand. SLERC then helped gather statistical data regarding need of a clinic in the Lafayette area. A survey showed some 3,548 potential clients who could use the program. Approximately 800-1,000 patients are seen each week from Lafayette Parish. The service is now officially called the Louisiana Family Planning Program and is under the direction of the Department of Health.

Recovery

SLERC began an investigation of established chapters in the U.S. in 1968. The first chapter in the area was in Rayne. The first Lafayette Chapter was organized on September 9, 1968.

There are now two chapters in the area and both are very effective.

Poison Control

Other than a few calls which are handled by SLERC, the need for such a service has not been established. However, SLERC does have resources. Doctors on the SLERC Board handle these calls and cases are sent to the Emergency Room at the three hospitals. All callers are advised to keep universal antidote on hand. Louisiana has five poison control centers located in Baton Rouge (Washington-St. Tammany Charity Hospital), Monroe (St. Francis Hospital); New Orleans (U.S. Public Health Service Hospital); Shreveport (E.K. Schumpert Memorial Hospital); Baton Rouge (Earl K. Long Hospital).

Volunteer Home Health Aide

The need for either a volunteer or paid "visiting homemaker" who could work with low income families on a personal basis to instruct and teach better nutrition, health and sanitation, was presented to several agencies in the interest of organizing such a program locally. Plans were made based on SLERC's recommendations, and such projects were begun.

The "Neighborhood Service Centers", upon appointment, provide a trained Home Health Aide to assist families with housing and home management counseling. This program is sponsored by the City of Lafayette. Also, the LSU Cooperative Extension Service, which consists of seven paid para-professional aides provide these services. SLERC was also instrumental in getting Home makers Upjohn, Inc., to the area.
It's hard work

Child Abuse

In 1975, SLENC held a public forum and put on an educational campaign regarding Act 556 (Child Abuse) which resulted in numerous reports and investigations. The Immunity Clause was especially stressed and we attribute the increase of reports to this fact (Prior to this no reports were made in the Lafayette Area).

In 1975, through the efforts of Dr. Larry Hebert, Mr. Garland Bonin and SLENC, a Child Protection Center has been located in Lafayette and it is the only independent child abuse center in Louisiana. All other parishes are handled through the Office of Human Development. SLENC was to be the screening and referral agency but, because of legal technicalities, the Board decided to play no official role in the agency. There is, however, close cooperation.

Drug Abuse

The prime aid in SLENC cases is rendered by physicians and psychiatrists in our area (on a rotation basis), the Lafayette Substance Abuse Clinic and by the Acadia Mental Health Center. The latter offers a comprehensive drug program along with a 19 bed in-patient unit.

The Lafayette Substance Abuse Clinic offers outpatient treatment and services to individuals and families with alcohol or drug abuse problems; provide referrals to detoxification and emergency treatment facilities and inpatient and residential care programs.

AIDE House, opened in 1974, with a 20 bed in-patient unit and offers residents with a drug abuse problem supportive services.

Facilities for Children with Learning Disabilities

SLENC has worked with the Superintendent of Special Education, USL, the State Board of Education and the Acadia Health Planning Council to find an acceptable solution to the education of these children. Dr. Harley Smith, once Asat, Superintendent of Special Education, was instrumental in launching the Learning Disabilities program as well as the programs for the blind in Lafayette Parish.

There are 37 schools in Lafayette Parish who have services for the Learning Disabled; 31 of these have a resource room. 3 itinerant teachers in the Parish provide services to those 6 schools which have no resource rooms.

Facilities for Special Education

Recent Federal and State laws have provided, legally, facilities for all children who need special education. This previous gap has now been filled.

Facilities for Acutely ILL Alcoholics

SLENC spearheaded a movement and organized meetings to open a facility for the acutely ill alcoholic. A Detoxification Unit was finally activated at Charity Hospital and is now part of the Tri-Med program, under the auspices of Dr. Michael Prejean.
Does it really work?

I am very proud to be a member of this board, because I am in the business of people helping. So many large organizations raise large sums of money to assist people with various maladies (i.e., muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, etc.) but, dilute their direct service dollars with high administrative costs and there is no more efficient use of taxpayer's dollars anywhere, than at SIERC.

Joseph T. Brierre, Jr., M.D.

"The agency is a model of its kind, to provide our patients with continued high quality comprehensive health care".

Charles F. Hamilton, M.D.

"I have always considered this voluntary effort a contribution to the community, but without an agency such as SIERC toscreen, refer, and act as a clearinghouse, our participation would be impossible".

John N. Straub, M.D.

"The Southwest Louisiana Education & Referral Center, Inc., since its inception has been giving a unique service to this area of Louisiana. Anyone with a serious problem, regardless of the nature, may contact this center by calling 432-HELP and they will be directed to the appropriate agency. The center has served as a central clearinghouse for every type of problem which faces the members of this community. It has also assimilated and compiled materials requested of it by different agencies".

Rodney L. Savoy
Certified Public Accountant

"SIERC is a competently staffed center which processes literally thousands of calls from people with personal problems. Help is furnished immediately, and confidentially, through a network of professionals and laymen, all volunteers. Often a comparatively minor problem (temporary aid for milk, for instance) will reveal more serious ailments, both physical and mental, which SIERC will work to alleviate by calling in the proper agency or authority.

SIERC has opened the doors of hope, immediate assistance and, just as important, SIERC follows up to ensure that each person and problem has been treated with maximum beneficial results. SIERC responds to all legitimate calls of anyone needing help, in any area, and it does so with true concern and without breaking the confidence of anyone involved".

Richard E. D'Aquin
Publisher/THE DAILY ADVERTISER

"The Referral Center aids persons in need by directing them to the source of help. Through our efforts in obtaining free services from our local doctors, dentists, and psychiatrists, we are providing free services for persons who most likely would be cared for by the State, thus benefiting both the State and the individual".

John F. O'Malley
Certified Public Accountant
Lives have been saved, suffering humanity has been relieved, needs of every kind have been met as community leaders from many walks of life have joined hands and skills to meet many varying needs to the providing source of support.

Robert S. King, Jr.,
Pastor/FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

"If no known resource is available, such as federal, state, parish, municipal or civic agencies, the SLERC organization is the first to know how to initiate handling the situation. As Chief of Police of the City of Lafayette, I can assure you that their services are one of the most vital to the welfare of this community. I can truly estimate that the existence of SLERC probably saves my department approximately 150 man hours a month or the equivalent of one police officer. This means that one police officer is free to perform more vital effective law enforcement functions. I know of no time, whether it be day or night, that this department cannot call on SLERC for assistance. This agency is not one that passes the buck but rather operates under the motto "The Buck Stops Here."

John G. Hyde, IV
Chief of Police
City of Lafayette

"SLERC has an immaculate reputation for the thoroughness of concept and integrity of purpose. The programs are of extreme value to this community and money is spent wisely and well for the maximum benefit of the individuals in need for whom the agency serves."

Otis "Roy" Menard
President
Lafayette Parish Police Jury

"It is the only agency dedicated to giving relief and assistance to needy people who have no solutions."

Kirby J. Guidry, D.D.S., M.S.P.

"SLERC provides vital services to the people of Acadia and is of invaluable assistance to the City of Lafayette."

David Lastreto
Mayor/City of Lafayette

"SLERC includes direct and indirect services to public and private schools, to law enforcement agencies, and to the large number of individuals who though not eligible for public aid are in urgent need. SLERC gives temporary help, tells where to go for help, or aids in organizing to overcome local problems that concern hundreds of persons."

Harley A. Smith, Ph.D.

"I am most familiar with SLERC problems dealing with epilepsy and other neurological impairments. Often, times, diagnosis is only the beginning, and assistance is required to master the maze of federal and state services. SLERC provides that assistance."

Daniel C. Durning, M.D.

Government at all levels -- local, state and federal -- has shown great compassion for the needs of the sick, the handicapped, the elderly and the mentally incompetent. Many fine programs have been established to help with these problems.

There is one major problem, however, that has not been solved. How do these people find help when they desperately need it? An old person with failing vision, a mentally retarded child with illiterate parents, an emotionally disturbed individual, a high school student with V.D. who is afraid his parents will find out -- how qualified are these persons to find the right agency and utilize services that could be just what they need if they could only reach them? Who will follow-up the case and see that help was properly rendered?

This is what the Southwest Louisiana Education & Referral Center, Inc. has been doing for fifteen years -- for 270,000 persons who called 232-HELP."

Robert D. Lowe
Chairman of the Board
CENTRAL INDUSTRIES, INC.

"SLERC is a unique organization that has been in existence since 1966. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the State. 232-HELP handles calls dealing with every facet of community life from Mental Illness, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Unwed Mothers, Suicide, to Legal Aid, etc."

Elsie D. Abell
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

"I have found that the use of one number -- 232-HELP -- has helped literally thousands of persons get the information and for urgent help they needed. Thereby, saving the State of Louisiana and area organizations time, expertise and frustration of trying to get the requesting person and the right organization together."

Dr. Hosea Phillips
HEBBARD HONOR PROFESSOR/USB

"The Southwest Louisiana Education & Referral Center is a unique clearinghouse of all information concerning health and community services. Anyone with problems is referred to the proper agency or individual to provide assistance. If no resource is available, SLERC is the first to know and initiates filling the gap. This agency truly fulfills its purpose."

William E. McCray, M.D.

"The organization gets the job done! Each case is properly evaluated and appropriately handled. There is no substitution for efficiency coupled with compassion and SLERC provides both."

Shirley S. Cowington, M.D.

"The 232-HELP organization has gained nationwide attention and has been the model to start similar programs around the country."

Richard G. Saloom, M.D.
In Lafayette, the sea of life has a most powerful beacon. It is called the Southwest Louisiana Education & Referral Center. It has guided and assisted many wandering souls and hearts to their destination and needed assistance.”

Robert D. Martinez, M.D.

“The very object of the Referral Center’s existence has been to cut through bureaucratic red tape and provide a rapid, efficient public service with conscientious follow-up thereafter. Through a referral system of doctors, lawyers and other professionals, the Referral Center has assembled a vast resource pool of individuals and entities that through the years have given hundreds of thousands of dollars of in-kind services in professional help to needy individuals, and these services have been rendered as a direct result of the Referral Center’s activities.”

James Parkinson Ray
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

“SLERC performs a definite useful and needed service in this area. Regardless of the numbers of already existing state and private agencies there are always gaps in service. An agency such as SLERC helps fill these gaps.”

Curtis H. Roy, D.D.S.

“The numerous and varied services provided by SLERC have been of outstanding benefit to the people of this area.”

David J. Rees, M.D.

“SLERC provides many valuable services to the Acadia Community”

Ray Authement
President/USL

“I think the most important aspect of SLERC is its ability to put people with problems in touch with people who have the solutions. If SLERC were not here doing what it does so well, the people of Southwest Louisiana would undoubtedly suffer.”

Carol Ross
KPEL RADIO

“This agency is uniformly recognized by the citizens of Lafayette and the surrounding areas as the only agency dedicated to assist people in need regardless of their needs.”

J. Barry Houton
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

It is difficult for one to visualize Lafayette without the tremendous human need services rendered by SLERC. There would be a devastating void if the many thousands helped by SLERC would say “THANK YOU”, simultaneously.

It really works!

SLERC prepares these periodic reports to the community as part of its effort to be accountable to our thousands of friends, volunteers, and financial contributors. It also means we utilize to pay our respects and express our gratitude to those extremely busy and highly-trained professionals who serve as volunteers, including physicians, attorneys, nurses, law enforcement officers, social workers, elected officials, government workers and business leaders as well as many, many more. SLERC is PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE. It is citizen action at the grassroots, community level supplementing government programs and sustaining our American Way of Life.


SPECIAL NOTE: The editors wish to apologize to the dozens of people who are active in important volunteer leaders with SLERC, but of whom we have no photographs to use in this report. We hope to do better with our future publications, for we are as grateful and appreciative to all, shown or not shown.
Straight Talk
In spite of the impressive array of areas of activity coordinated and sustained by SLERC as well as the numerous other organizations and agencies in the community, there are always many gaps existing in our collective work on behalf of people in need. Following are only a very few which exemplify the growing number of problems and needs still to be addressed and met through expansion of our program services and by others.

Half-Way House for the Alcoholic
As of now there is no half-way house for alcoholics in Lafayette Parish. However, members of Turning Point (a place where someone can go for a very short period of time) hope to eventually get funds for a facility in Lafayette.

Evaluation & Training Center
As of June, 1972, a program was set up under the title of Vocational Evaluation Unit for ex-mental patients who are not ready to work but need structured activity and help in setting up realistic goals, etc. No other programs have been added.

Workshops for the Blind
At the request of several interested community groups, a study was made by SLERC of the needs of the blind in the area. Statistics were compiled and results indicated a sheltered workshop was a primary need. There is none between Shreveport and New Orleans.

DEBT & FINANCIAL COUNSELING
SLERC directed an inquiry to the Family Debt Counselors of Greater Baton Rouge, Inc., in March 1969. Information concerning their program was supplied. SLERC Board members arranged a meeting with the Referee in Bankruptcy, area businessmen and attorneys on June 4, 1969. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the possibility of establishing a family debt counseling service in Lafayette. This service is badly needed.

THANK YOU
The SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA EDUCATION & REFERRAL CENTER wishes to gratefully acknowledge the staff of the American Lung Association of La. for the processing of this SLERC report, and to that organization’s Board of Directors for its publication as a part of the ALA’s ongoing community services program.

We wish to especially acknowledge the significant financial underwriting of all printing and production costs of this report being provided by humorist Felician Cocodril, The Ambassador of Acadiana(r), from income derived from his live performances for international, national and Louisiana conventions and groups as well as from income derived from his new album, "Laughing Our Way To Cajun Power!"(p).

5,000 copies of this important institutional report have been financed and published as a result of the help of the ALA and Ambassador Cocodril.

SLERC wishes to also acknowledge and thank the LAFAYETTE DAILY ADVERTISER for many of the articles and photographs in this report as well as John Stephen of PELICAN STUDIO. Special thanks also go to Mrs. Dorothy Flowers, Mr. Jay Wharton and Mr. W. Findley Raymond for assisting the SLERC staff in the editing of the document. We wish, too, to recognize Mrs. Katie Hatchland and Sharon Green as well as Mr. Kevin Lockett, CETA, for the printing and mechanical production of this report in our constituency.
OUTSTANDING IN SERVING COMMUNITY

SLERC Should Have Guaranteed Annual Funding

Many times a community of plenty fails to recognize when it has something that on a day-in, day-out basis does more good than all of the other organizations in the city put together. Lafayette is a community of plenty. We have things good here and the future seems to hold many great things if we continue to put it all together.

That is what makes it easy to take things for granted. This community certainly does that with the Southwest Louisiana Education and Referral Center. ONE OF OUR PET PEEVES

The lack of recognition of this organization and what it does for our community has long been one of this writer's pet peeves. Perhaps because it does so many things in so many different areas the community does not recognize the value of its work.

But each and every year this organization has to go to several different organizations for funding and be requested to document why it should be given funds. This is almost ridiculous.

FUNDING SHOULD BE AUTOMATIC

Funding for the work of this organization should be as automatic in a community like Lafayette as the monies for police and fire protection. This community simply could not function properly without the work of SLERC. Acting in the role of a clearing house for information, a center for referral, education and evaluation; and as a resource for disposal of problems requiring discreet handling but positive action, SLERC deals with crises, chaos and conflict. Daily logs reflect the number of individuals striving, through their own efforts, to cope with doubt, to overcome ignorance, or to face unexpressed fears in a realistic manner.

Tel-Med is a physician-compiled-and-approved series of tapes on medical problems presented in levian's language. Tel-Law is a comparable collection oriented to common legal dilemmas. Counselling tapes are concerned with new and disturbing mental problems. Nutrition Line is a source of normal nutrition information. And soon Policeline will be available from SLERC.

MORE THAN 300,000 CASES

In 15 years of operation, more than 300,000 cases have presented themselves to the agency and have reflected the disturbance of mind and body known to exist but often left to fester in a fast-growing community. An average of 70 percent of all inquiries are processed through 222-HELP; some are isolated by professionals seeking help for certain patients or clients, but the majority of calls come, often in desperation, from the affected individuals or members of their families.

Through case studies and full documentation, SLERC can chart its effectiveness on a daily basis, but it is not content to simply maintain the status quo. In the interest of developing new programs, the staff, with the full support of the board of directors, assumes the initiative of bringing together community leaders and representatives of organizations/corporations with known resource potential.

In short, SLERC can get things done.

VITAL TO OUR COMMUNITY

Since its inception, SLERC has served as an arm of the city and parish agencies by participating in many situations requiring more (or less) than arrest or temporary confinement. The complement of professionals contributing in-kind services would not be feasible as a community resource without the screening and management structure of SLERC.

One program that is near and dear to The Advertiser is its Milk Fund which we believe is an outstanding service to the community. Without the work of SLERC, there would be no Milk Fund.

And we simply cannot speak of the work of SLERC without giving credit to the dynamic executive director, Jewell Lowe. Without her drive and guidance there would be no SLERC.

We would like to see the city, parish and state come forward and recognize the work of this organization. Not by giving plaques or lip service, but by making sure that it is adequately funded so that it can continue its outstanding service to this community.

CAMPAIGN OF CONCERN epitomizes the spirit of your Southwest Louisiana Education & Referral Center, as does Dr. John Hendry, center foreground, personifying the giving of tender loving care as one of SLERC's many professional volunteers. The early screening and diagnosis of problems in children through SLERC's Developmental Disabilities cooperative activities helps prevent conditions worsening in some, helps prevent chronic illnesses in some, and leads toward the development of handicapped children toward becoming self-sufficient adults. Parents are helped. Lives are saved. Suffering is alleviated. And, the community's general good including the productivity of its citizens is directly affected. The SLERC leadership is profoundly appreciative of the continuing sense of "community" and the dedication of its volunteers as well as those in the Acadiana region and at the state level who give it the financial support it must have to continue its dynamic, essential work in this region of Louisiana.
Thanks for your continued confidence!

MRS. JEWELL P. LOWE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Member United Fund