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Howell

THE NATIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH
FOUNDATION

★ P. O. BOX 7574. PHILADELPHIA 1, PA.

BARING 1548

June 10, 1946

Miss Melvina Thompson
342 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

Dear Miss Thompson:

I am enclosing an answer to Mrs. Jane S. Howell. You wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt regarding articles on the subject of mental deficiency. I do not have Mrs. Howell's address and trust that you may be able to forward this to her.

I thank you very much for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Leonard Edelstein
Leonard Edelstein
Executive Secretary

Enclosure
LE/b

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THE NATIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH
FOUNDATION

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:
I note per THE PITTSBURGH PRESS
that you are a member of the
National Mental Health
Foundation and that one of
the purposes of the
Foundation is to
bring attention to
the mental health
of the people.
I am glad to
hear that you
are a member
of the
National
Mental Health
Foundation
and that one
of the
purposes
of the
Foundation
is to
bring
attention
to the
mental
health
of the
people.

Many times^I have wanted to write to you, but have always felt it might seem presumptuous. I have much admiration for you and your great husband and consider myself fortunate in having grown up in a generation of which he was a leader. His wonderful influence will never be forgotten by the world.

I beg of you to use your influence to have the committee seriously consider my suggestion to keep articles on mental deficiency out of general publication for I speak from the agony of experience.

Sincerely,

Jane S. Howell

R. D. 3
PERKASIE, PENNSYLVANIA

June 4, 1946.

Dear Mrs. Howell:

Your letter to Mrs. Roosevelt has been forwarded to me. I hope you will not mind if I answer it in her place. She is one of the fortunate ones, all of whose children were born healthy in body and mind. My own child by birth is mentally defective. I know so well what you mean when you speak of the agony of experience. I wrote to you - and indeed it is not easy to do so - because I want you to know that I know what it means to have a mentally handicapped child. And yet I feel we must have articles written dealing with mental defectives for three reasons:

First, there are very undesirable conditions in institutions sheltering these children, and these conditions have to be made known before they can be corrected. I have been active for many years on behalf of mentally defective children and I know how much needs to be done for them, particularly in state institutions, but alas, also in private ones. These children are so pitifully helpless. Often they cannot even speak to tell the visiting parents that they are ill treated.

Second, I think the common public attitude toward these helpless children and their equally helpless parents should be changed. It is no one's fault when a human being does not reach his full development. He is still a human being and he has the right to his life. I feel that we must do all that we can to help people to understand that mental deficiency is as natural an affliction as heart disease or club feet, and there is no cause for shame in it.

Third, I feel that these articles should help the parents of defective children. The only way that I have been able to bear the sorrow has been for me to make my child's life have meaning

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Mrs. Howell

6/4/46

for as many people as possible. She has taught me so much. I used to be an impatient person - I had to learn infinite patience with her slow mind, and through her have learned to have patience with all persons, those who are stupid, narrow, unthinking, prejudiced, and limited in so many ways. These, too, in their own ways are mentally and spiritually deficient. My child taught me that. She taught me, too, to value the good things about everyone. Since she has so little, I had to learn at least to value her cheerfulness and her childlike heart, to be grateful for her small good qualities, such as they were - to be thankful for what she had instead of despairing for what she had not. That lesson has helped me so often with many people I might naturally have disliked.

Having this child of mine has opened to me a whole new world, the world of others like her. I have in her name been able to contribute to research which has increased our scientific knowledge of the causes of mental deficiency. I can truthfully say that in all these ways my child has greatly enriched and enlarged my life. Of course I would have given everything to have had her develop as she might have done, but that could not be. With what had to be, I have gained much. And she has been happy - she has never known what she lacked. I am so grateful for that. But the effect of her life on me is that I should like to see much written and much done to better the lives of mental defectives. We need much more research and we need to give them much better care. Especially do we all need to teach people to accept them as persons, not to hide or to be ashamed of ~~them~~ ^{them} ~~but as~~ human individuals ~~who~~ have as much right to walk in God's sunshine as any of us, and only deserving of special tenderness and care because the strong ought to bear the burdens of the weak.

They are

A. D. 3
PERKASIE, PENNSYLVANIA

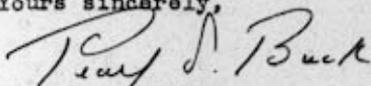
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Mrs. Howell

6/4/46

Forgive me for writing at such length and so
frankly. But I do so with all my heart.

Yours sincerely,


Pearl S. Buck

Mrs. Jane S. Howell

Hayt

I am very glad
to know that you
will have an
exhibition of your
paintings.

The little picture
of the little Spanish
donkey hangs in
one of my rooms at
my HP Cottage
& is a great joy

I am sure your
paintings of Guatemala
will add greatly
to the understanding
between our two
countries

ALLERTON HOUSE

130 EAST 57TH STREET
NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

December 20th 1946

My dear Mr Roosevelt,

I know you will remember me because of my picture of the "little Spanish donkey"!

I am sending you the reproductions of my paintings of two shrines in Guatemala where I was for nearly two years, painting. I was there at the time of your visit and was sorry not to be able to see you, as I was in the hills.

I am to have an exhibit of
my paintings of Mexico and
especially Guatemala.
at the Arthur Newton Gallery
11 East 57th Street (Jan 27th to Feb 8th)

Would you - if this is
not asking too much - write
me just a line or two of
introduction for my catalogue?
You have been to Guatemala
and know my work: a word
from you would carry great
weight.

The Guatemalan Government
and also our Embassy considered
that my work was helping the

150 EAST 57TH STREET
NEW YORK 22, N.Y.

Good Neighbors
I will show you not only
handicrafts, but Indian
and costumes, but Indian
strange rituals and
to Guatemala
My

ALLERTON HOUSE

130 EAST 57TH STREET
NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

bit of
Mexico and
La.
"Good Neighborhood Policy".

I will show not only
landscapes, but Indian types
and costumes and their
strange rituals and dances,
some of them little known even
to Guatemalans.

My catalogue goes to
press the first week in January.

If you will graciously
do this for me I will be
most grateful, and with

best wishes, please believe me,
dear Mrs Roosevelt,

Very sincerely yours,
~~Edith Hoyt~~

[Faint, illegible handwritten notes or scribbles]