

Editorial—

Foster Home Need for Wayward Youngsters

Northern Regional Citizen's Advisory Committee for the Northern Regional Correctional Institution in Fairbanks met last Friday at the state jail and the main subject of discussion was foster homes for young people who have had brush with the law.

The advisory committee continues to hear difficulties of such young people getting foster homes in Fairbanks because a goodly number of city's people are somewhat apprehensive of taking in foster children who have had trouble with the law.

The committee has found that when the youngsters are released from correctional institutions, they are sent back to either their homes or to the areas where they originally ran afoul with the law. The youngsters are not always welcomed back home and the process of getting into trouble recurs and they are back in custody once

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'I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it.' - Voltaire

Foster Home Need . . .

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again. This process is seemingly endless because the youngsters have no other direction to turn. They are unwanted and feel unwanted and then they get into more trouble. Rejection and lack of kindness and counseling eat into their young souls.

The advisory committee is attempting to find ways of getting the people of Fairbanks or adjacent communities to become aware of the difficulty of getting foster homes for the troubled youngsters. Some people say, "Delinquency breeds delinquency." That may be true but we don't think it's true all the way. Surely, some of the troubled youngsters will respond to kindness, concern, consideration—the security of a solid, wholesome home life. This, we are willing to bet, they never had in their homes in the first place. This sad fate of the youngsters is something the public should consider and then try a little harder to try to help to resolve it. Good progress can be made if the public can become more aware of the problem.

This public includes the native homes in the area because many of the youngsters who run afoul of the law are native youngsters. The need for foster homes for these youngsters is also the natives' concern and they should become more aware of it.

We are also of the opinion that the authorities who are concerned for the need of foster homes for the troubled youngsters should make their requirements more liberal and easier to qualify. The committee has found out that households who volunteered to become foster homes are subjected to scrutiny by the authorities that enters into the area of invading the privacy of their lives. They are subjected to intensive physical examinations, testing of water quality among other things, even though the home has a history of wholesomeness, growing happy children some of whom attend colleges. Surely, the authorities are not trying to enter a youngster into the home who is superior to the family members of the home in question.

This type of approach, we believe, is going a bit too far and it may be one of the big reasons why good homes are reluctant to volunteer. The privacy of a home is a precious thing and it can be sacred to the family, especially if the home is a wholesome one. If the authorities are following the statutes of the state or federal requirements, then some efforts should be made to liberalize them. We do not mean that any home should be picked without some information but the reputation of the home by neighbors and colleagues, whose evaluation is usually sound, should come close to qualifying the home.

We think that a happier medium can be arrived at in efforts of getting foster homes for our troubled youngsters. Perhaps some delinquency will rub off on the home but we also think that kindness with generous consideration for the youngster will have more of a chance to be absorbed by the troubled youngster and help to aim his course to better things. Good, solid, wholesome, home is a stone wall in itself that can defy influences of evil.