

it; in August she attended the White House Conference on narcotics addiction, and in a speech delivered there recommended not only half-way houses for men and women addicts returning from hospitals but also camps in a drug-free environment, outside the city, where boys and girls could learn a trade, get used to keeping regular hours, continue psychiatric treatment and learn to use their leisure time constructively. She hopes that city, state and federal aid will eventually make such a camp possible. Meanwhile she continues a rigorous schedule of trying to get addicts into hospitals, attending N.A. meetings and advising those who want to start new chapters.

As concern about narcotics addiction has grown, N.A.'s open meetings have been visited by priests, ministers, social workers and nurses trying to learn about addiction, and lately an occasional politician looking for votes on the promise of supporting legislation helpful to addicts. Sometimes addicts from New Jersey come to New York meetings; they are usually accompanied by Father Leonard Spanburg who, while helping juvenile delinquents, began to realize that a growing number of adolescents were taking heroin for thrills and were becoming addicted. He hopes that New Jersey's Carmel Guild, a Catholic group noted for its programs for the blind, the deaf and alcoholics, will eventually offer similar assistance to narcotics addicts. He is having a hard time arousing interest, however, as there is apparently even more lethargy and ignorance on the subject in New Jersey than in New York.

In New York, adolescent addicts are sent to Riverside Hospital which, along with medical and psychiatric treatment, provides a school and athletic and recreation programs. Riverside has been criticized because it has "cured" so few young addicts. One of the hospital's most loyal defenders, however, is Father Archangel Sica, O.F.M., its Catholic chaplain. He and Riverside's administrators maintain, reasonably, that no amount of hospital care will have any permanent effect as long as the boys return to their old neighborhoods where heroin is easy to buy and where they are left to their own devices with no community services or supervision to help them stay off drugs. Father Archangel isn't permitted to proselytize on the island but he tries to give any of the boys and (while the hospital was still admitting them) girls who come to him a sense of their own dignity and worth, a sense of purpose and meaning and a feeling of responsibility for their actions. He also offers them the Mass, the sacraments and confession as tangible aids to changing and strengthening their lives. He is regularly helped by a group of lay people (including Father Egan's father) who teach catechism and try to make friends with the boys. Father Archangel finds the good example and sympathy of his lay assistants invaluable in reaching Riverside's young people who invariably have stopped going to church and who have little or no knowledge of or interest in religion.

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Source: Mike R.



*In Bellevue Hospital Father Daniel Egan visits an addict whose neck was broken when a man threw her out a window after a quarrel over money. BELOW: Mrs. Rae Lopez, a former heroin addict, and Brigadier Dorothy Berry of the Salvation Army at an open meeting of Narcotics Anonymous.*

