

City for Addicts and Criminals Planned by Rehabilitation Unit



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Charles Dederich, chairman of Synanon Foundation, Inc., discussing plans to build California rehabilitation city.

Plans to build a city in California for the rehabilitation of criminals, delinquents and narcotic addicts were announced here yesterday.

The city, to be built by the Synanon Foundation, Inc., would have a population of 5,000 of the country's "socially disorganized."

"I can have 3,000 addicts off the New York streets in 18 months," said Charles Dederich, a former alcoholic and chairman and founder of Synanon. He made the announcement at the St. Moritz Hotel at a press conference that he said had been called to publicize Synanon's need for funds and other help.

He said he expected to spend about a week here in an attempt to enlist the support of city agencies and private foundations. He said he hoped to meet with Mayor Wagner before returning to his office in a recently renovated warehouse in San Francisco.

Synanon began its human reclamation program seven years ago with a handful of addicts. It now handles 500 former narcotics users in four West Coast facilities. The foundation also maintains a reception center for East Coast addicts in Westport, Conn.

Synanon City, as the new project is called, is to be built some 45 miles north of San Francisco, near Tomalis Bay. It is to consist of Synanon Industries, dormitories for men and women, private resident complexes, houses for directors and sponsors, seminar buildings, lecture halls, an administration building and a library.

"We will have our own post office, fire department and hospital," Mr. Dederich said. "We won't need a police department, and we will be the only city in the country without a jail."

"We take the position," Mr. Dederich continued, "that addicts are stupid—emotionally—and not sick." He said that of the 445 East Coast addicts who had gone to Synanon for help since 1959, a total of 54 per cent were now living drug-free lives.

The foundation, which he said got its name from a former addict mispronouncing the word "symposium" or "seminar," relies for its funds mainly on donations from individuals. Some help, he said, has come from private foundations.

The former addicts at Synanon, Mr. Dederich said, are maintained at a cost of \$3 a day each. He contrasted this to hospital and jail costs of between \$15 and \$20 a day throughout the country.

With Mr. Dederich at the press conference were seven former narcotics users from the New York metropolitan area who spoke openly of their days as criminals. Each said that Synanon had succeeded in putting an end to his addiction, where psychiatrists, hospitals and Federal rehabilitation centers had failed in earlier years.

Mr. Dederich said that Bronx Borough President Joseph F. Periconi had arranged for Synanon officials to meet with 200 to 300 residents of his borough at 2 P.M. Monday in the County Court Building to stimulate support for the new project.