

The Seed, the only program which is spectacularly successful



Those of us who care about our young people are running this open letter to let the people of America know that we support Art Barker's Seed program which has helped 5,000 young people in their life and death struggle against the ravages of drugs. We know because we are the parents, relatives, and friends of these young people. As civic minded, concerned citizens, we want the best for our country. This open letter will convince you that The Seed is THE BEST — the MOST SUCCESSFUL, THE LARGEST, and the MOST ECONOMICAL drug rehabilitation program of its type in the world! We want it for our young people!

THE SEED TEACHES LOVE

The faith of "a grain of mustard seed" to move whole communities . . . the faith and conviction that young people can be motivated to develop the ability and empathy to help themselves, and others . . . led to the beginning of The Seed by Art and Shelly Barker in July, 1970, at Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Art Barker, President and Founder of The Seed, Inc. was previously involved for a four-year period working with alcoholics, young narcotic addicts, and juvenile delinquents on an individual basis.

During World War II, Mr. Barker served with distinction in the United States Air Force. Enlisting as a private in 1942, he flew fifty-one missions as a staff sergeant tail gunner. He was wounded in action and decorated. He ended his tour of duty as a commissioned officer.

Mr. Barker's prime objective for The Seed program is the rehabilitation of the youth of this country, to become respected members of their community, discover that they can love themselves, love others, love family, love God and love their Country. The Seed, Inc., is a private non-profit corporation, operating as a non-residential center. The program is designed to work with large numbers of young people, predominantly between the ages of twelve and twenty-five, and includes all ethnic and religious groups.

THE SEED IS COOPERATIVE

During its first year, The Seed was able to make great strides in important areas: Co-

operation with law enforcement officials was established. School officials arranged for Seed representatives to speak at school assemblies and individual classes as part of drug abuse education; Public awareness was achieved through the efforts of young speakers from The Seed who willingly went before many civic, community and church organizations, in order that the people be informed of the current drug abuse epidemic.

Invaluable volunteer services were extended to The Seed, and continue to date, as a cooperative effort on the part of parents, who participate in many facets of The Seed operation.

THE SEED IS UNIQUE

The Seed is quite unique in that it believes in using the community for assistance and support, and has involved the many fine civic, service, and church organizations, as well as professional, community, and business leaders within the areas served. It is the belief of The Seed that the involvement of the above areas is most important to enable the young people to go back into their environment to create a productive future for themselves.

These groups, national, state and local, in turn have shown their commanding respect by honoring Mr. Barker with the following awards:

1974 — Recipient of a "Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge" award for the drug rehabilitation program, The Seed, which he founded.

1973 — "Service to Mankind" award for significant and meritorious service to mankind.

Given by the Northeast Sertona Club of St. Petersburg.

1972 — "Honorary Doctor of Social Sciences", Bestowed by Ft. Lauderdale University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

1971 — "Man of The Year" award for outstanding contributions in the field of drug abuse. Given by Florida Education Association.

1971 — "Community Service" award for distinguished achievement, given by the Broward Times".

Extensive in-service training is afforded selected Seed graduates to prepare them for specific assignments and program Staff positions. These graduates are carefully screened, using the criteria of empathy, love, honesty, dedication, and leadership qualities. These outstanding young people, in their Staff positions, take on great responsibilities, and are dedicated to helping their peers and to the basic concepts of The Seed program.

THE SEED IS BEST

In late summer of 1971, an outside professional evaluation of The Seed program was made by Psychologist, Richard Urbanik, of the North Carolina Division of Forensic Psychiatry under the Department of Mental Health. (This evaluation among other program evaluations which Mr. Urbanik accomplished, was founded by a federal grant and a copy was forwarded to proper officials in Washington.)

In early 1972 The Seed Program aroused the concern and interest of the Honorable Alfonso C. Sepe, Judge, Criminal Court of Record, Dade County, Miami, Florida. He strongly urged Dade County officials to provide a home and site for "the only genuine help available . . . and the most fantastic program in the United States."

As the work and success of The Seed reached national prominence, founder Art Barker, and several youngsters from the program were invited to testify on the subject of "Drugs In Our Schools" at hearings held by the Select Committee on Crime of the U. S. House of Representatives, chaired by Congressman Claude Pepper, in Miami, Florida. In a subsequent report printed a year later to the Committee of the Whole House of the U. S., the committee stated they had studied a number of rehabilitation programs in the course of their inquiry and: "One of the most imaginative, innovative, and dynamic programs designed to eliminate drug abuse by young people, found by the committee during its investigation, is The Seed program in Fort Lauderdale, Florida."

The interest shown The Seed was further highlighted when WTVJ Channel 4, Television station in Miami, filmed a moving documentary on the program "A Seed of Hope".

Another important milestone soon followed in the growth of The Seed. Recognizing the massive problem of the drug problem facing its area, the Spring Term of the Dade County Grand Jury, Miami, asked to study The Seed program in order to accent and bring to the foreground the epidemic of drug usage among young people. Their study was published in November, 1972, and included their recommendations that The Seed program be expanded to Dade County and throughout the State of Florida, and that Federal, State and local governments fund the program.

THE SEED IS GROWING

On Nov. 30, 1972, 500 young people from Dade County currently on The Seed program were transferred to a Dade County facility where ultimately over 1500 young people were helped.

By the summer of 1973, in its third year of operation, further involvements and accomplishments of The Seed coincided with its plan to become a state-wide drug rehabilitation program. The Pinellas County Seed facility was opened in May at St. Petersburg, Florida, to serve the West Coast, becoming the third such facility in the State of Florida. Two months later, the fourth Seed facility was made available in St. Lucie County — Fort Pierce, — to provide services to the central area of Florida.

Within this same time period, testimony was given by Mr. Barker and young Seed representatives before two additional Congressional committees — The U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization, chaired by Senator Lawton Chiles (Senator Abraham Ribicoff, Chairman), and the U. S. House Select Subcommittee on Education, Chaired by Congressman William Lehman (Congressman John Brademas, Chairman).

Unprecedented action was taken by The Florida Bicentennial Commission in adopting and endorsing The Seed Program, as well as encouraging this same action on a national level.

In 1973 through the efforts of friends of The Seed serving in the Senate and the Florida House of Representatives, very fruitful legislative reform; i.e. education and law enforcement, were passed in the field of drug abuse. These reforms have benefited thousands of young people in the State of Florida.

In line with tentative plans for out-of-state expansion by The Seed, an invitation was accepted by President Art Barker to address the Juvenile Court Judges at their Southern Regional Conference (consisting of ten states), held in the State of North Carolina. An invitation was also accepted by Mr. Barker and Seed representatives to address hundreds of officials and prominent people in Dallas, Texas, at the request of the Dallas Crime Commission. Recent conferences with Governor Winfield Dunn and his associates in Tennessee and representatives from the State of Kentucky, coordinated by the Lieutenant Governor's Office, are steps toward opening new Seeds in these states. In addition groups from six other states are attempting to bring The Seed to their communities.

THE SEED IS A DYNAMIC PROGRAM

In the area of education, Drs. Richard E. Hardy and John G. Cull have devoted an entire chapter with reference to The Seed program — "A Therapeutic Approach to The Rehabilitation of the Youthful Drug Abuser: The Seed" — in their new book, "Drug Dependence and Rehabilitation Approaches". The summary is quoted below:

"In summary, The SEED is an organization of former drug offenders who are dedicated to helping others. Its president, Art Barker, is a truly rare individual who has somehow combined great skill and genuine concern with the ability to teach and treat drug offenders. Its program of guided interaction, honesty, concern, and understanding seems to have meshed into a workable method. The testimony of parents, doctors, friends, teachers, prison officials, members of school boards, and others all point to the fact that The SEED is a viable, dynamic program."

This book is a publication of the Bannerstone Division of American Lectures in Social and Rehabilitation Psychology, published in 1973 by Charles C. Thomas, Publisher.

The Seed program administrative headquarters is presently maintained in Broward County, where such centralizing in the book-keeping, records, and research department (Seed graduates are followed-up for a period of five years) etc., have kept costs to a minimum. Consultants from Coopers-Lybrand, an international accounting firm provide a yearly certified audit of The Seed, Inc.

THE SEED IS SUCCESSFUL

As stated previously, The Seed fulfills the need for a large program which can treat massive numbers successfully and economically. That The Seed fulfills these needs is evidenced by the rapid expansion, growth, and acceptance experienced by the program during the four year period since its inception in 1970. During this time, The Seed has helped over 5,000 young drug users, abusers, and addicts to re-establish new life styles. As out-of-state expansion plans crystallize, The Seed anticipates further realization of founder Art Barker's original purpose . . . "many thousands of young people moving whole communities . . . by helping themselves and others."

After a review of the various sources of income, Art Barker wrote the following letter to the United States Office of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Governor's Council on Criminal Justice:

The Seed, Inc.
 6900 west state road 84
 fort lauderdale (davie), florida 33314
 305/791-4900

Art Barker
 president

February 19, 1974

TO: Dept. of H. E. W., Bethesda, Maryland
 Governor's Council on Criminal Justice, Tallahassee, Florida

Gentlemen:

With the conclusion of this past year, The Seed was motivated to re-evaluate the need for Federal grant continuation based on The Seed's community and parental involvement. The various Federal grants under consideration were: (1) National Institute on Drug Abuse - Broward County - \$224,000; (2) Law Enforcement Assistance Act (LEAA) - Broward County - \$50,000; (3) LEAA - Dade County - \$35,000; and (4) LEAA - Pinellas County - \$60,000, for the sum total of \$369,000 resulting in the matching requirement of funds totalling \$104,335.00.

To further clarify this picture, The Seed must match the total Federal grants with \$104,335 of its own funds. The Seed maintains that its \$104,335 can be used more economically and effectively without government bureaucracy.

This re-assessment, after considerable deliberation, resulted in the unanimous decision on the part of the Board of Directors, Administrative and Program Staff of The Seed to "reject" all government grants.

This important decision is based on three vital principles: (1) The Seed's philosophy is to secure community support to operate an optimum program. During the past three and one-half years of operation, The Seed has built up a cadre of parents, and community support. This philosophy has enabled, and shall continue to enable, The Seed to utilize the sound, successful procedures which have helped approximately 5,000 young people. This outreach has resulted in The Seed's becoming the most successful, the largest, and the most economical program of its kind in the world; (2) The local competition for the Federal grants creates a hostile atmosphere among drug rehabilitation programs. This competition brings disharmony and discredit to rehabilitation efforts. It also fosters a super agency that focuses its efforts on grantsmanship rather than quality care for young people, which should be the basic, the primary, and the only real concern; (3) We disagree with the "ivory tower" approach to the funding of drug rehabilitation programs. Federal, State, and local agencies who have little or no experience with successful drug rehabilitation make "life and death" decisions. Their ability to evaluate is based on textbook knowledge and observations of programs which have failed.

The Seed's rejection of the Federal grants and the subsequent elimination of the excessive demands, harassment and bureaucracy created by these numerous agencies, provide the necessary autonomy for The Seed to continue its innovative and dynamic leadership in fulfilling its only purpose -- saving kids!!

Art Barker
 Art Barker, President

Help us keep our country great by helping us make our kids straight and great! All donations are tax deductible — 170 (c) of The Internal Revenue Code. Checks may be made payable to: The Seed, Inc., 6900 West State Road 84, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314.