



(This is the third in a series of three articles concerning HELP of Cape Cod)

Together with three other Cape programs -- Provincetown Drop-In Center, Bourne Children's Service, and Falmouth HELPLINE -- HELP of Cape Cod is currently involved in a new program, the Emergency Shelter Home.

These four programs have received verbal commitment from the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare for \$140,000 to operate Emergency Shelter Homes for youth-in-crisis between the ages of 12 and 18 years.

It is proposed that the maximum stay at such an emergency shelter will be 30 days. The Cape Cod Mental Health Association has agreed to receive the grant and be the legal and fiscal agent.

The four youth service agencies, plus nine other interested community members, will be represented on the Board of Directors and will assume responsibility for program development and management.

HELP of Cape Cod is a program we can be proud of; the Division of Drug Rehabilitation Regional Administration has nominated HELP as the most outstanding program in Region 7. This nomination has been made to the National Search Committee, Division of Drug Abuse and Prevention, in Washington, D.C.

The federal government will choose one program from each state and five honorable mentions. The information will be published in a national directory.

Betsy, 15, lives with her mother and two younger sisters in a mid-Cape village. She attends high school near her home.

Betsy's mother works at a large motel as a chambermaid while the children attend school. She is divorced from her husband, and receiving support payments from him in the amount of \$45 each week. Mortgage payments on the family home amount to \$130 a month. Mother's take-home pay is \$78 a week.

Because Betsy's mother is determined to remain self-supporting, she has not applied for welfare payments. Because she finds it difficult to meet the many expenses of running a home, feeding herself and three girls with healthy appetites, clothing and transportation costs, she is constantly under tension and inclined to be short-tempered.

Betsy, the oldest, is expected to do much of the cooking and housework, and supervise her sisters when her mother is out of the house. While she realizes her mother needs help, Betsy longs for the freedom from responsibility other girls her age enjoy.

Recently she attended a basketball game at school, met a young man several years older than herself, and a strong dependent relationship between the two has grown. Betsy is flattered by his attention, is dealing with her developing sexuality, is happy only when she is with this man; she is becoming more and more resentful of the demands made upon her at home.

This boy friend is viewed as "too old for her" by Betsy's mother who is fearful for the girl, and Betsy has been forbidden to see him. As a result, she has been skipping classes at school to meet him during the day.

Now she believes she may be pregnant, and is concerned she may have contracted a venereal disease.

Betsy is an alienated adolescent. Her mother, hard-working and burdened with the entire responsibility for raising three daughters, has placed demands on Betsy who, while appreciating her mother's position is resentful of the need.

Additionally, Betsy is strongly attracted to a man who represents to her the maturity she is struggling toward, who may in some ways substitute for her lost father, and who is unquestionably a threat to her safety at this point in her life.

Her mother's fears are justified, of course, but Betsy sees her mother's objections as efforts to "keep her a child", to "force her to be a housemaid", and to deny her privileges she feels she has earned, even though she is not yet mature enough to cope with them successfully.

Betsy will soon call HELP of Cape Cod for an appointment at the pregnancy testing clinic. While there she will express her suspicion that she may have "caught something". She will be treated gently and

considerately. She will learn what her condition is. She will be counseled and appropriately guided.

Most important, Betsy's self-referral to HELP will be treated confidentially. If she has VD, she will receive treatment. If she is pregnant she will be helped to decide what her next step must be.

Betsy is one of 650 or more girls who will come to HELP in 1975 believing they may be pregnant. She is 15 years old. HELP is here, in Hyannis, to give her the assistance she needs.

Future goals of the program center around immediate problems of the youth community. HELP feels a great concern for the school drop-out problem, and believes it can offer valuable assistance in reducing the incidence of the turned-off student.

HELP also sees a need for a job-bank for local youth and would like to set up a program to open communication lines between young people seeking work and business people willing to hire and train them.

HELP would like to do more follow-up with the people they see on a short-term basis, would like to research the effects of the long-term services they have given.

HELP's immediate problem, however, is financial survival.

To continue its service to the towns of Barnstable, Yarmouth and Dennis, it must look to these municipalities for appropriations of tax dollars at town meetings.

HELP of Cape Cod is offering our youth a valuable service, a life-saving service in many instances. Each year it has expanded the types of services available to meet the needs it sees exist.

Adolescents, even alienated adolescents, are a part of our families; they will soon be adults and begin to take their places as voters, workers in the community, and participating mature individuals. We can continue to provide a place for them to turn when they are troubled, hurt, in need -- a place where they will receive understanding and good care and wise counsel.

While it's true that ideally, the place they should look for understanding, good care and wise counsel is HOME, the fact is, for many children, home provides none of these. The child who can depend on his parents for understanding, good care and wise counsel will not need HELP of Cape Cod.

The child who turns to HELP of Cape Cod is the child whose home fails to provide these important services to him. More and more, we see these lacks in Cape Cod homes, and more and more we see the need for HELP of Cape Cod to provide what the homes do not