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FOUR FLATS HAWTHORN

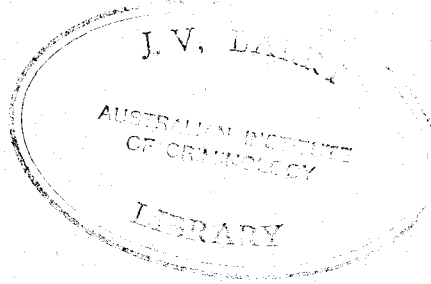
-- AN EVALUATION

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MELBOURNE, 1983

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APPENDIX A:

Results of staff discussion on modification to
treatment program (November, 1977)

APPENDIX B:

Outline of Educational Aspects of Project

1. INTRODUCTION

Four Flats Hawthorn is a non-governmental organization concerned with the well-being of young men newly released from Youth Training Centres or Prisons in Victoria. During 1977 and 1978 it operated a hostel-based program, and was during this period subject to systematic evaluation.

The organization was primarily funded by the Victorian Department of Social Welfare (now Community Welfare Services) together with some special purpose funds from other sources. The Jesuit order (and individual Jesuits in particular) provided both the initiative for its establishment and considerable support in its continuing operation. The evaluation was funded by a grant from the Australian Criminology Research Council.

Progress reports of the project were prepared by J. & E. Hamilton-Smith (1977) and Hayward & Hamilton-Smith (1978). The present report reviews the total evaluation of the program, and incorporates much of the material contained in the progress reports. It also includes a quantitative analysis of the experiences of residents, and of a matched control group.

2. HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

2.1 LOYOLA HOUSE

Peter Norden is a young Jesuit who has trained in social work. His practical experience in the social work field included work in group counselling and work with young offenders. As a result of this experience he developed a concern for the particular needs of young men aged between 17-21 and newly released from Youth Training Centres or from Prison.

The first written document which outlined the ideas of the Four Flats project was written by him at Easter 1975 and is entitled Loyola House - Youth Service Centre. This document is very similar in both basic concept and detail to the second planning document prepared twelve months later which is described below. However, there are some important differences. The original proposal suggested that the residential care centre should be supplemented by the operation of a drop-in service centre for young offenders and this aspect was not pursued in later planning. The second major difference is that the Loyola House plan assumed only 1-1/2 staff members and later planning developed the number of staff to a more realistic number.

2.2 THE JESUIT BOARDING HOUSE

At the commencement of 1976, Peter Norden commenced work at the Manresa Peoples Centre in Hawthorn. In March of that year he completed a further planning document entitled Jesuit Boarding House, Hawthorn; A Residential Community Program for Young Ex-Offenders from Victorian Correctional Institutions. This document became the basis upon which funding from the Victorian Social Welfare Department and The Australian Criminology Research Council was provided.

This report defined the general objective of the program as being:

To provide assistance for young offenders recently released from a correctional institution in their readjustment to living in an open community setting.

and more specifically:

- i. To provide short-term accommodation for a section of those released from the young offender group at Malmsbury Youth Training Centre, Langi Kal Kal youth Training Centre, and Pentridge Prison.
- ii. Through the establishment of a "self-help community", to assist the residents of the house in supporting one another and in discovering and developing personal and community resources to meet individual needs.

It was demonstrated that the target population are a particularly vulnerable group and that few community services are available to them. The general concept of the boarding house was that it would house up to eight young men at any given time and that these would generally stay for a period of approximately three months. It was suggested that this period might be extended for a limit of up to six months. (As the project developed it was decided that the three months period should be the upper limit of any individual stay within the program.)

The general thinking about selection of residents was spelled-out in the following statement:

Close liaison with staff of the correctional institutions is essential if suitable selection of residents for the house is to be possible.

General characteristics required of persons to be admitted to the house should include the following:

- i. a feeling of uneasiness, unhappiness, or discontent with oneself or one's life, and some concern about doing something to change it.
- ii. a recognition and acceptance that one does or can control what happens to one, even though the past may have indicated that one was unable to do much about it.

- iii. a willingness to examine things about oneself with others, even though it may make one angry, unhappy or embarrassed.
- iv. a belief that other residents, and the programme itself, will benefit from one's participation.

The ex-offenders selected as suitable would be those who are not markedly disturbed in a psychiatric sense, but who face fairly severe hardship on release, in that they are cut off from their families, and have no stable peer or occupational group.

Strong emphasis was placed upon the concept that the boarding house would provide an inter-active residential community with residents sharing in decision-making for themselves rather than merely accepting the decisions of adults. It was envisaged that the treatment program would focus heavily upon this opportunity for the residents to accept responsibility for themselves and others. It was planned that regular group meetings would be held under the leadership of a staff member in order to help the residents discuss and resolve their own inter-relationships and their own use of the boarding house program.

The premises available for the project comprised a two-storey house owned by the Catholic Church, and operating as four flats.

It was seen as an appropriate venue for the program in that it was readily accessible to public transport, and had good access to employment opportunities, and was in a suburb with a large number of boarding houses and flats providing avenues for future accommodation after leaving the project.

It was envisaged that a small planning committee would be established to assist in detailing the planning of the project, and that once established a community support group or advisory committee would be established from among local residents.

The planned staff were seen as comprising Peter Norden as director, a second member of the Jesuit Order as house manager, a group worker, a part-time research worker and a part-time cook.

A major theme is that the boarding house would be seen as an action research project or demonstration project and that continuing evaluation would be carried out. One of the obvious evaluative problems in any program of this kind is the extent to which there is a strong community expectation that any project working with offenders should result in a lower rate of recidivism. The document made a first attempt to place this possible program objective in context by making the following statement of possible operational objectives:

i. Reduction in Probability of Recidivism:

It would seem that the major objective of the penal system, at least as explicitly stated, is to minimise the probability that the offender will recidivate.

An offender enters the penal system with a particular probability of recidivism. If what happens to him while within the proposed program results in a reduction of this probability, then the treatment process has had some success. Similarly, we can say that the treatment which has succeeded best is the one that makes the largest reduction in the probability of recidivism.

This is clearly one criterion of the project's success that can be used as a basis for evaluation, but it is not adequate of itself.

ii. Ability to Live Independently within Society:

Within the desirable outcomes that relate to reducing the probability of recidivism, there are further considerations than the above. Perhaps the ex-offender may avoid further crimes of theft and instead learn to live on unemployment assistance benefits or on other welfare services.

This is not to say that there may not be times when it is necessary to turn to such forms of assistance, sometimes due to factors wholly outside of one's control. But the establishment of a life pattern based on this form of assistance, whilst avoiding re-offending against the law, could not be considered a satisfactory product of the proposed program.

There are many ways in which an ex-offender may fail to become an independent member of society, and it may be that some small degree of recidivism, if linked with an otherwise stable life pattern, might be preferable to a dependent existence just within the confines of the law.

iii. Reduction of Human Indignity and Suffering:

One of the objectives which would perhaps be more difficult to assess than the two above would be the capacity of the project to reduce human indignity and suffering. Many young men and women leave Victorian correctional institutions daily having little money, no job, family, friends, or a roof over their heads for their first night of freedom.

Such objectives, in contrast to correctional goals, may not be as easily evaluated, but are of at least equal importance in the effective functioning of the project, given the personal values and beliefs underlying the establishment of the project.

If we regard the project as achieving some success if it alleviates human misery, then the distressed ex-inmates who turn to it in moments of crisis are the testimony of its role and effectiveness within the community. There is also the possibility that, while not completely eliminating recidivism, such a project may postpone its appearance, and its residents may at least temporarily benefit from a refuge, and use it as a base for attempts at readjustment and growth.

No matter how far one might emphasise operational objectives other than reduction of recidivism, the fact remains that there is a widespread community acceptance of this as a paramount objective. Inevitably this acceptance is in turn internalised by government decision-makers and by staff operating within the welfare system.

We will deal later with the effects of this dilemma upon the project but we note at this point that the general experience of programs for ex-offenders throughout the world is that the reduction of recidivism is an extremely difficult task which cannot generally be achieved through treatment programs. A recent comment expresses this succinctly:

...Crime, with all its many causes, cannot be ended by penal policies, of whatever complexion. The National Health Service hasn't ended disease, it is simply the fairest and most decent system to deal with it. The advocates of imprisonment should perhaps look at what such sentences do to a prisoner's personality, identity and personal relationships, rather than at the crime rate. The latter is a perpetual snare and disappointment (Anon, 1977).

2.3 THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The planning committee envisaged in the Jesuit Boarding House document first met during April, 1976, and held a total of four meetings during that year. It was chaired by Peter Norden and involved representatives from the Hostels Division, Youth Training Centres, the Probation and Parole Division of the Victorian Social Welfare Department, an experienced prison chaplain and was attended by the project evaluators and staff as these were progressively appointed.

The Committee primarily served to help operationalise the basic plan and to provide an opportunity for sorting out administrative relationships with the Social Welfare Department. Probably its major contribution to the overall concept of the project was the extent to which concepts of treatment became de-emphasised and a relatively strong emphasis was placed upon what might be called normalisation. The name Four Flats Hawthorn arose out of this direction in thinking as being less institutional in character. Administrative procedures regarding admission of

residents were clarified; some aspects of evaluation procedure were detailed; and at one meeting the inter-relationship of the program with the Commonwealth Employment Service was explored.

Meanwhile practical arrangements were proceeding. Paul Callil of the Jesuit Order was appointed as house manager to the project; Alex Firmager was appointed as group worker; Jean and Elery Hamilton-Smith undertook to carry out the planned evaluation; and arrangements were made to assume tenancy of the Four Flats building at the end of 1976.

In approving the financing of the project, a further staff position was approved, namely that of a field worker who would take particular responsibility in follow-up work outside of the hostel situation. However, the position of part-time cook was not approved and it was decided that this responsibility would be carried by volunteers together with help from other staff and residents. An appointment was made of a field worker at the end of 1976, but the appointee later decided not to accept the post and it was accordingly left vacant until April, 1977.

2.4 STAFFING

As already outlined, staff were progressively appointed, and although written job descriptions were established, the emphasis has been on developing genuine teamwork, with its inevitable overlapping of task areas and blurring of boundaries. However, a more detailed description of staffing arrangements is now needed to give an overall view of the project.

Peter Norden was the original architect of the project and, as such, carried overall responsibility. There is no question that he was perceived by other staff (and everyone else) as the director and leader of the project. At the same time, it is difficult to single out any task which he did not share or carry out jointly with other staff. Perhaps the only significant area which remained as distinctively Peter's was the actual writing of formal documents or correspondence, yet these were very much based upon the collective thinking of the staff.

Paul Callil, a Jesuit brother with a long experience in the secondary schools aspect of the order's work, was the second member of the team. He joined as house manager, and as such, had the most specific role within the staff. He managed the physical and administrative arrangements of the house, working with both volunteer helpers and the residents themselves.

As the oldest member of the staff team, he played a very important role for some of the boys, who developed a close relationship with him. At the same time, he felt unsure of himself in relating to boys who are so different to those with whom he had worked previously and found a greater degree of frustration in the work than other team members.

Alex Firmager came to Four Flats after long experience as a Youth Officer in Social Welfare Department institutions. His role as group worker entailed a central responsibility for the treatment program, yet, like Peter, it is hard to define any area which Alex did not share with the rest of the team. Because of his long experience and wide general knowledge of the youth treatment field, he contributed a great deal to the practical leadership of the program -- sometimes he felt uneasy that he might usurp Peter's role.

Sue Ellis was the next member of the team to be appointed, and came to the role of field worker. She did not have any specifically relevant experience or qualifications, but was selected on the basis of her personal qualities and capacity to relate easily to other team members and the residents.

It is of particular interest that Sue and some other applicants for the post were each invited separately to dinner with the residents as a key element in the selection process. This meant that the decision on appointment was at least guided by the quality of interaction with the residents and the attitudes of the residents to each applicant. Although not a conventional staff selection procedure in the welfare field, this appears to have considerable merit.

Her role nominally carried specific responsibility for assisting the boys in community relationships, in gaining employment and in after-care follow-up. Again, these responsibilities tended to be shared, and her actual work involved a great deal of in-house contact and relationship.

A general principle which has emerged in the team process is that the staff each tended to work as the relationship needs of the residents dictated. Although some residents related readily to all staff, many found they related more readily to one specific person, and so that team member tended to carry a broad range of functions in relation to the boy concerned. The very flexibility and sharing among the staff team then helped the boy to gradually develop and widen his own relationship to other team members. However, the practical outcome is that each resident had considerable opportunity to make his own decision about which worker he would relate to or use to meet his own needs.

Several changes took place in staffing arrangements during 1978. Paul Callil left the project to undertake other duties within the Jesuit Order. His place in the team was filled by Father Pat (Paddy) Mullins. An additional staff member was appointed to take particular responsibility for the educational aspects of the program. Brook Ibbotson occupied this post. A part-time domestic was added to the staff and although the two young ladies who in turn filled this post played little part in the formal program, they did contribute to the efficient operation of the house and did have some impact on the extent to which the residents shared in chores.

These staff changes raised a series of interesting issues. On one hand, Paddy fitted quietly into the role vacated by Paul, instantly established easy relationships with other members of the staff team and was readily accepted by the residents. However, although Brooke had extremely high motivation and enthusiasm and a range of practical skills relevant to the post, his relationships with other staff members remained uneasy through his six months employment on the project. In turn, he had some difficulties in relating to the residents but this was probably accentuated by his difficulties in fitting within the staff team.

The final decision that Brooke should leave the project was a joint one arising out of a staff meeting and it was at least in part motivated by the concern that too much energy was being spent on endeavouring to establish and maintain an effective working relationship with him.

On the one hand, other members of the staff felt that Brooke had a valuable contribution because of the fact that he was somewhat different in style to other staff members. On the other, the constant pressure of events within the house and the extent to which staff were continually manipulated by residents led them to accept the concept of close team work as of paramount importance.

It is not our intention to suggest that there was a complete absence of conflict within the other members of the staff team. The extent to which roles were shared means that there was inevitable overlap in functions and some conflict on both practical and ideological issues. However, all other members of the team were able to discuss such conflicts frankly, reach an agreement and act upon it. Their deep commitment to the project enabled differences to be resolved amicably and the general objectives of the project to be upheld.

3. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

3.1 OVERVIEW

The planning documents prepared by Peter Norden both placed a strong emphasis upon evaluation. He saw it as important that the experience of the project should be adequately recorded so that the learning which might arise out of the project is not lost. At the same time the planning documents reflected a concern with accountability and with establishment of the effectiveness or otherwise of the proposed plan.

The following extract from the planning papers summarizes the concept of the evaluation task at the early stage of planning. It also clearly sets out the key questions to which attention must be paid.

The primary intention of the proposed project remains as the provision of a service to meet the needs of some of the young offender population. The task of the evaluator will be to measure the effectiveness of the means taken to provide that service, and he will do this in the light of the operational objectives, which have been clearly stated.

The task then will be to determine how well this particular intervention strategy worked. Did it bring about the intended changes and to what extent? This perhaps may only be accurately answered by defining separate experimental and control groups.

To assist the evaluator answer these questions it has been intended to incorporate the following ingredients into the design of the project:

- i. the specification of the objectives in terms of what changes are intended.
- ii. a detailed outline of the characteristics of the target population, so that the effect of the intervention strategy can be clearly seen.

- iii. a description of the nature of the proposed intervention.
- iv. specification of the criteria by which change will be measured.

To the extent that these have not been clearly outlined, it will be the task of the evaluator to clarify them with the project staff during the early stages of programme determination.

In fact, the work of the evaluator depends on, and is intimately concerned with, each of the following aspects:

- i. identification of problems.
- ii. specification of objectives.
- iii. analysis of the causes of problems and the shortcomings of existing programmes.
- iv. examination of possible action alternatives.

It is intended to involve the evaluator right from the period when the programme is being formulated and the evaluation is being planned. This intention is based on the understanding of the evaluator's task as helping the programme planners to appropriately define objectives and to formulate criteria for the assessment of these objectives.

The evaluator's task could be more clearly described by outlining what I see as the seven major elements in the process of evaluation:

- a. Objectives: conceptualisation and measurement of the programme's objectives. What is the activity being evaluated expected to accomplish?
- b. Process Phase: the documenting and measuring of what goes on during the programme in its various phases.

- c. Components of Evaluation: the determination of items such as the measuring instruments chosen or designed, the target population, samples of groups and individuals selected, and the forms of intervention.
- d. The End Product: outcome evaluation which provides judgements about the degree to which programme objectives have been accomplished.
- e. Environment of Study: the total environment in which the evaluation is conceived and carried out, especially the attitudes of the administrative staff to the research and their personal interests in the project outcome.
- f. Unanticipated Consequences: to cope with unanticipated consequences in such a way that the study design is not destroyed, and to be prepared to act constructively to modify the programme if this should prove necessary.
- g. Determination of Costs: the function of establishing the costs of an activity or programme as related to its accomplishments.

Jean and Elery Hamilton-Smith undertook in early 1976 to implement the evaluation plan. This enabled participation in meetings of the planning committee and in discussions with Peter Norden and his staff. The general proposition put forward in a document on 5th May, 1976, was that involvement as evaluators would be inter-related with the on-going planning and decision-making of the project.

It was emphasized that the simple traditional model of evaluation in which one merely measures the extent to which previously defined performance objectives have been achieved would just not be applicable to an experimental project of this kind.

This approach to evaluation has been briefly but graphically described by the Stanford Evaluation Consortium in the following terms:

We would emphasize the general features of such a model:

(1) Evaluation can constructively enter the picture earlier and can be seen as a continuing part of management rather than as a short-term consulting contract.

(2) The evaluator, instead of running alongside the train making notes through the windows, can board the train and influence the engineer, the conductor, and the passengers.

(3) The evaluator need not limit his concerns to objectives stated in advance; instead, he can also function as a naturalistic observer whose inquiries grow out of his observations.

(4) The evaluator should not concentrate on outcomes; ultimately, it may prove more profitable to study just what was delivered and how people interacted during the treatment process.

(5) The evaluator should recognize (and act upon the recognition) that systems are rarely influenced by reports received in the mail.

Evaluation thus becomes a component of the evolving program itself, rather than disinterested monitoring undertaken to provide ammunition to the warring factions in a political struggle. Formal reports to outsiders are reduced in significance, and research findings become not conclusions but updatings of the system's picture of itself. (Stanford Evaluation Consortium, 1976: p.212)

It was proposed that three elements might constitute the evaluation:

- (a) Recording the administrative and organizational processes of Four Flats.
- (b) Recording some measurable data about the individual residents and comparing their experience and performance with that of similar young men not passing through the Four Flats project.

(c) Recording the life experience of residents.

The complexity of the task and day-to-day pressures of the Four Flats operation meant that little attention was paid to the third of these elements, but every effort has been made to pursue the first two relatively thoroughly.

3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Elery Hamilton-Smith acted as director/co-ordinator of the evaluation program. His responsibilities included collation of all records, liaison with staff, supervision of all aspects of the evaluation, and analysis of the information collected. Jean Hamilton-Smith (1977) and Christina Hayward (1978) spent at least one evening each week visiting Four Flats, talking with residents and collecting systematic data from them, studying the interactive process between residents and staff, and sharing in the liaison meetings with staff.

Harry Frey (1978) and Martin Ryan (1979) undertook interviews with former residents and with numbers of the control group. Ross Park-Howell assisted in coding and data-processing of the quantitative material.

At the same time, the teamwork which characterised the project itself also developed within the evaluation where many aspects were shared by Jean, Elery and Christina, while both Peter Norden and Alex Firmager played big roles in data collection.

3.3 RECORDING ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES

In carrying out this aspect of the evaluation, the ~~process was~~ guided by the principles set down by the Stanford Evaluation Consortium (above). Evaluators not only observed and recorded; they continually reported their observations to staff and shared in discussion of their meaning. Thus, the evaluation of processes was integrated with the process itself. Obviously, this poses problems in reporting -- the report can only summarise the overall result, which is an outcome of the interaction between program processes and evaluation.

This decision was made at an early stage of the program, and reported in the first progress report. Basically it was seen as the only approach which was genuinely in keeping with the nature of the program, but moreover, as the most effective way of utilizing the very limited resources available for evaluation.

The evaluators thus became part of the staff team, in attending many staff meetings, sharing in seminars, and attending meetings of the advisory committee (see below). They played a consultant role in providing staff with a further and different perception of what was happening within the program, and in helping to formulate responses to issues as these arose.

3.4 RECORDING INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS

The basic concept involved in this aspect of the evaluation was that information would be collected on at least four different occasions in respect to each resident. Two of these sets of information were also collected in respect to the control group of other ex-youth training centre residents who had not entered Four Flats. Each of these four stages of data collection are described below:

- (a) Pre entry. It was decided as much readily available descriptive data as possible concerning each boy released from youth training centres during the period of the study would be collected. This enabled characterization of those entering Four Flats and comparison of their performance with that of either the total population released or a selected matched control population.

Discussion revealed that there was no readily available record already kept within the Social Welfare Department which would bring together the necessary information about each boy. An appropriate form was therefore designed and the youth training centres agreed to complete this form in respect to each boy released (Schedule A).

In practice, two difficulties emerged in utilization of this schedule. The first was that the relatively heavy work load of youth training centre staff made it difficult for them to complete these records as promptly as they wished. It was felt that the process of evaluation should not obtrude unduly into the important day-to-day work of the staff either in the training centres or at Four Flats, and every effort was made to keep the forms to a minimum of data which would enable adequate matching for control group purposes. In spite of this there were still practical difficulties.

The second problem which came to notice only by accident, was that in various instances the form was completed twice in respect to the same boy. Whenever this occurred, the match between each specific pair of forms was relatively poor. This accordingly casts considerable doubt upon the accuracy of all other forms supplied. We stress that we are not in this criticising the youth training centres. Their primary task does not lie in maintaining records for research purposes. Rather this raises an issue for departmental policy as to how far appropriate data for research purposes should be collected and the way in which this should be done.

The residents coming to the project from prisons presented an even greater problem in that adequate background information was far less available and the opportunity for developing a truly matched control group was extremely limited. Again this raises a question of departmental policy on research.

- (b) Entry to Four Flats. Two schedules were prepared to record information at the point of entry to the project. One (Schedule B) was completed by the boy concerned and the other (Schedule B1) by the Four Flats staff.
- (c) The Four Flats Experience. Again two schedules were developed to enable recording of each boy's experience while resident at Four Flats. The first of these (Schedule C) was completed by each boy towards the end of his stay at Four Flats (or sometimes immediately after leaving) generally in an interview situation with Jean or Christina.

The second (Schedule C1) was progressively completed by the staff and handed in to the evaluators at the time when the boy concerned left Four Flats. This record included a simple attitude scale based upon the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

This was selected because of its simplicity and relative unobtrusiveness. Its utility in relation to "delinquent" population has been demonstrated by Kaplan and Pokorny (1969) and Kaplan (1976a, b). Wells and Marwell (1976), while highlighting the conceptual problems associated with the idea of self-esteem, point out the extent to which the Rosenberg scale does perform more satisfactorily than many other scales of similar intent but greater complexity.

- (d) Follow-up. Again two schedules were prepared, one to be completed by the boy himself (Schedule D) and the other by a parole officer or other professional worker in contact with the boy (Schedule D1). These two instruments were applied to both ex-residents of Four Flats and to the control group, generally by an interview with either Harry (1978), Martin (1979), or another professional in touch with the respondent.

Two further problems emerged as the total group of forms were used. The first was that it proved difficult to locate an adequate sized control group, and in the process of identifying the control group, it became clear that qualitative judgements were made by the Four Flats staff which could not be quantified and entered into the data collection. The second is that it proved impossible to gain all data on all individuals. Consequently, many variables were not able to be used in the statistical analysis as they were not available for an adequate number of persons.

Although these constraints upon the quantitative aspects of evaluation might have been ameliorated if greater resources were available, there are more fundamental problems. The validity of much of the data is questionable, and attempts to gain a more comprehensive data set would have been likely to further reduce validity. In addition, the relatively low number of people involved and the complexity of the variables which might be subjected to analysis posed statistical difficulties.

4. THE FOUR FLATS PROCESS

4.1 PATTERN OF DAILY LIVING

Meals: Since the first residents moved in, the established pattern was that evening meals were provided on the five week nights. The boys were asked to help share the work of setting the table, washing up etc., at this time. This led to some heated and sometimes hilarious arguments. The residents were responsible for providing their own breakfast and lunch during the week and meals at weekends. After a few months difficulties arose over the question of residents providing their own meals. In some cases they did not have the money to buy extra food and this led to raids being made on the downstairs larder. It was then decided that these difficulties could be overcome if some basic foodstuffs, e.g. butter and bread, were provided in the upstairs kitchen.

Actual cooking of the evening meal was initially undertaken by staff, but was gradually handed over to volunteers and to the domestic assistant. Generally, three volunteers each cooked on one night per week and the part-time domestic provided the meal on two nights. The two girls who successively filled the role of domestic were able to persuade the residents to help in setting tables, washing up etc. They were more effective in achieving this than the male staff and in so doing probably made an important contribution to the experience of being a resident.

There was some continuing tension about the extent to which boys were able or willing to take responsibility for their other meals. Although they were expected to purchase their own food for other meals, they often spent their money otherwise, e.g. on beer, and then had to seek loans from the staff to buy their food.

Cleaning: The residents were responsible for cleaning their own bedrooms and sharing the responsibility of maintaining their kitchen and bathroom. This was fairly successful although the cleaning tended to be spasmodic. From time to time the fact that one or other resident was not seen to be doing his share of the work, was a subject of debate at the group meetings.

Washing: Each resident was responsible for doing his own personal washing and as there was an automatic washing machine and tumble dryer in the laundry, this did not seem to pose any problems.

Alcohol: There was no prohibition about having alcohol on the premises and this policy did not create undue difficulties. There were some rather noisy evenings and once or twice fights flared up, but these sorts of incidents may well have occurred regardless of whether alcohol was consumed on or off the premises. On occasions guests at the evening meal were offered wine and the residents shared in this (many later stating they would much prefer a beer!).

Television: After considerable debate at group meetings with the boys, it was decided that a colour television should be hired. This was financed by increasing the weekly rent paid by residents from \$20.00 to \$21.00. A large part of the debate concerning the hiring of this set was spent in thrashing out the principle upon which payment should be made, but all agreed eventually that the only fair way was for all residents to contribute equally.

Residence: There were no formal limits or curfews made about how often residents might spend nights away from Four Flats or times at which they should return at night. However, when a resident spent several nights and days away without discussing this arrangement he was followed up by a staff member, usually on the basis of questioning his commitment to the Four Flats program. In many instances this intervention by staff provided a basis for helping the person concerned to make a decision one way or the other about staying on at Four Flats.

A concern that came up very early in the life of Four Flats was the question of girlfriends staying overnight. In mid-March there was a long discussion about that at a group meeting and the consensus finally reached was that this was not a good policy. There was some individual disagreement with this policy at this time and on later occasions.

Financial Arrangements: Residents were required to pay \$20 (\$21 including television hire) a week board. However, they were not required to pay this rent until they were in receipt of wages or social service benefits. Most of the residents, at some stage or another, had financial loans from Four Flats. These were administered by the House

Manager who kept a record when they were made and repaid. The loans ranged from quite small amounts to buy cigarettes etc. to larger amounts to pay residents' outstanding fines.

Ex Residents: Former residents often revisited Four Flats for a variety of reasons. They generally appeared to seek emotional support from the staff, to talk over a variety of practical problems, to borrow money, to see current residents, to have a meal or to attend group meetings. The staff endeavoured to maintain a balance between continuing to be welcoming and supportive and fostering a sense of greater independence.

It is perhaps some indication of the success of the staff in establishing a caring relationship with residents that so many did return to Four Flats and exhibited a clear attachment to and respect for the staff team. It also highlighted the difficulty of assisting residents to achieve independence within the very short time that was available during their stay at Four Flats.

4.2 GROUP INVOLVEMENT

One of the major thrusts of the treatment program offered by Four Flats was described as guided group interaction. Initially, and this was reflected in the job description of the group worker, the group program was seen as an integral part of the treatment program. The regular attendance of all residents at the Tuesday night meetings was seen as essential if this group process was to be established. In the first four months all the staff shared in the Tuesday night meetings. Then later, Alex took the meeting every second week, with all staff attending on the alternate weeks. Topics discussed during this period included the idea of self help, flat living arrangements, discussion about having girlfriends stay overnight and some inter-personal difficulties which were brought out and discussed in the group setting. Although there were many individual sessions between residents and members of staff over particular issues, the weekly group meeting was seen to play an important role in these early months. This was reflected not only in the attendance by the residents, which generally was consistently high, but in the range of topics covered -- the residents clearly had some investment in the discussions.

From the beginning of May 1977 onwards a gradual decline in the importance of the group meetings as far as the residents were concerned, became evident. This was reflected in the lower attendance of the group sessions and in what was discussed. During the month of May through to September the staff input as far as topics discussed was much greater. There was a concern on the part of staff about the lack of group cohesion and lack of involvement. It was at this time that it was becoming clear that having a mix of the more socially immature and socially retarded young offenders and the more assertive socially capable offenders was creating difficulties.

At the end of September 1977 it was decided that a fifth flat would be established at a different address to enable some separation of these two groups. The residents in the main house tended to be the less socially competent, and the program moved towards one-to-one contact with staff rather than group interaction. The boys resident in the fifth flat attended house meetings on each alternate week, but held their own separate meeting on intervening weeks. This was merely one aspect of an overall review and re-definition of the program which took place at that time. A formal statement of this review is attached as Appendix A.

In 1978 regular group meetings continued to be held. They were used then as a general forum for discussing any problems or grievances which arose. Although all of the staff shared in discussion in these meetings, it was often the residents who initiated topics for discussion. Attitudes and behaviour on a wide range of areas were openly discussed and, where necessary, common agreement reached to facilitate day-to-day living.

As during 1977, some problems arose during autumn when there was a mix of assertive and socially mature young men together with some less mature residents who were not so willing or able to express their ideas in a group. These latter residents often failed to attend the group meetings and so opted out of the group relationship. This led to a period within which the individual residents showed very little sharing of responsibility or concern for each other. However, with the turnover of residents occurring week by week the situation corrected itself and good working relationships were readily re-established.

The Fifth Flat was closed during 1978 as it proved to demand an excessive amount of staff time. The residents in the Fifth Flat remained heavily dependent upon the staff rather than moving towards greater independence. However, it proved significant that once the flat was closed, the boys concerned appeared to be more able to move into independent living. It may well have served a valuable role even though not useful on a continuing basis.

Discussion with residents suggested that probably the most important feature of the Four Flats program was the willingness of staff members to talk about problems with the boys rather than make unilateral and authoritarian decisions. The residents said that one of the best things about living at Four Flats was the extent to which the staff had time for them and were willing and able to discuss any problems at all.

4.3 EMPLOYMENT

In the early months of the program there was an emphasis placed on the importance of residents finding employment. However, this was not seen as being mandatory. In fact, all the residents during the first three months did find employment, although often they did not hold the job for more than a few days. Two of this early group were later granted invalid pensions as their social disabilities were such that they were not able to maintain employment.

During the next three months until the end of June, there was a stable core of residents who were working regularly. Again there was no fixed policy about employment, but there was a general expectation shared by staff and residents that residents would be working during their stay at Four Flats. An entry in the day book in early June commented "All eight boys are working". This was followed by a comment about a week later -- "In less than a week five have lost jobs in rapid succession". This heralded a period of change and a lot of movement in and out of the Four Flats.

With the influx of some new residents and the departure of some of the long staying boys the whole social climate within Four Flats changed. There was no expectation about working whilst in residence which had come from the group of residents in the early months. In fact there was

evidence of an attitude "Why should I work?" It was during these three months that a number of former residents re-offended and this affected morale of the staff and of present residents.

During October and November several more residents re-offended. These months were seen as being difficult and frustrating months for the staff and a lot of re-thinking about the treatment program took place. One of the results of this re-thinking was the decision to formalize a policy about the importance of employment for residents of Four Flats. Thus it was decided at a staff meeting in November that "Because the overall goal of the residential stay is of increasing independence and avoiding re-offending behaviour, the finding and maintaining of employment is to be seen as an integral and essential aspect of the program being offered at Four Flats". This policy was then part of a formal individual contract which each boy had to consider and sign before taking part in the program (see Appendix A).

In 1978 the staff maintained a strong emphasis upon the importance of employment, but there was no time when there was a stable core of residents regularly undertaking continuous work. Every effort was made by Sue to assist boys in finding and obtaining work and the resident staff did their best to ensure the boys left in time for work each day. However, few boys were able to hold jobs and to do well at them and even those who did were not encouraged or supported in this by their peers.

The worsening economic conditions made this situation still more difficult. Work was not difficult to obtain at the level for which most of the residents were equipped. They were so lacking in work skills that only the worst jobs were generally open to them. These jobs offered little in the way of pay, working conditions, security and job satisfaction. Both staff and boys were therefore in a cleft stick. Having a job is seen as important by the general community, and hence an important part of developing one's own self-esteem. Being out of work develops, even in those not very motivated towards work, feelings of low self value or even of guilt. Moreover, those with limited social competence find it difficult to occupy their time in other meaningful ways. At the same time there were difficulties in continuing to press these young men into work when it was clear that the only work accessible and available to them was of such poor quality that it would not further either their self esteem or their chances of economic survival.

This same problem is described by Liffman (1978: 93) in his account of the Family Center Project of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence. Again, in that project it proved impossible to satisfactorily resolve this particular problem.

4.4 RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE OF FOUR FLATS

So far in this section we have commented on the general patten of internal relationships. As many of the residents made significant relationships with groups and individuals outside Four Flats it is worth noting these.

In terms of relationships with formal institutions the major bodies residents had contact with were the Commonwealth Employment Service (C.E.S.) and the Parole Service. Overall the contact of residents with the C.E.S. was positive, this in large part being due to the personal qualities of the officer-in-charge of the special needs section. The contact with the Parole Service was largely with the one Parole Officer assigned to work with the residents. Again this was a positive contact as the officer concerned was able to visit the Four Flats fairly frequently and establish informal relationships with the residents. The officer concerned was aware of the advantages and disadvantages in being the only Parole Officer in contact with Four Flats. On the one hand he was able to stand off and not get involved in any "playing off" between residents (which may have occurred more frequently had there been a number of Parole Officers involved), and he found that a number of residents were happy to visit him spontaneously as there was no pressure to regularly see him. Yet on the other hand, because of the group nature of the program, he was not able to establish very deep individual relationships which sometimes was a concern in the follow-up once a resident left Four Flats.

With regard to more informal contacts, a number of residents, particularly in the early part of the year, had a significant contact with "Youth Organization for the Unemployed" (YOU). In two instances this contact opened a whole new world of social relationships which proved to be very positive to the residents concerned.

Some other isolated individual contacts were made with particular groups where the residents felt comfortable and at ease. One had a lot of contact with a group of workers at a nearby railway station. Another was heavily involved with the anti-freeway movement in Collingwood. Some individual residents had contact with a local Hawthorn family.

Less positive social environments explored by some residents were contact with a "camp scene" in the middle of 1976, and then later in the year with a young woman with a flat and great enthusiasm for entertaining young men.

These social contacts described tend to demonstrate how much young ex-offenders are marginal to the mainstream of society and how few are the social milieux in which marginal individuals can feel at home. The milieux which Four Flats residents have chosen certainly all have in common either marginality in themselves (e.g. camp scene) or a high tolerance and acceptance of marginal people (e.g. YOU and anti-freeway movement). This emphasizes the problems of readjustment facing these young men and the limited opportunities provided by our society in which they can feel comfortable and at home.

4.5 RECREATION AND EDUCATION

The major passive activities within Four Flats were watching television or playing pool. As the staff had many and varied interests, a number of outside activities took place, usually at their invitation. For example, Peter Norden enjoyed a run in the park or kicking a football around and often one or more of the boys accompanied him. Alex was a keen golfer and took many of the boys to play a round with him. Paul took boys with him to watch the trotting and to some of the outdoor concerts. As many of the residents had never been out to a restaurant or to see a film, Sue played a very useful role in accompanying them on these sort of excursions. She was also a keen ice-skater so a number of boys did this. Other activities that residents shared with various staff members were to go to football matches, to the races, to the boxing, going bowling, to a local gymnasium and canoeing on the Yarra.

There was no fixed rule as to which staff member did a particular activity. It tended to be a spontaneous thing with the staff members who had particular interests and abilities going off to do whatever interested them and inviting residents who were around at the time to join them.

During 1977 there were six camps held in various parts of Victoria. Again the organization was generally that the staff said they were going and those residents that wanted to come were very welcome. Probably one of the most successful of these camps was held at Easter time when four of the boys accompanied by three girls and two staff members went to Kevington. There was opportunity for the residents to meet a policeman on a very informal basis, and this proved to be a rewarding experience in terms of the discussion it raised amongst the boys. During the Easter weekend there was also a car accident which, although most unfortunate for those concerned, did provide an opportunity for the boys to prove themselves to the Kevington townsfolk as being responsible and caring people.

It is worth noting here that very few of the boys claimed any hobbies or interests. In general they indicated that spending time at the pub or at discos was their major way of filling in their spare time.

In 1978 additional funds were made available to the project by the Schools Commission to enable more attention to be given to the educational components of the project. These educational elements were seen as comprising three closely related strands:

- Social Competence;
- Community Involvement; and
- Recreation and Leisure.

An outline of the plan for these three educational strands is provided in Appendix B.

It is perhaps first necessary to emphasize that formalized teaching was felt to have no role in work with the residents of Four Flats. Virtually all have had very negative experiences of schooling and the majority were functionally illiterate. The extent of their negative experience was such that any attempt at formal teaching would be likely

to result in non-communication. The staff endeavoured to meet educational goals through the day-to-day interaction with the residents and through fostering special opportunities for their interaction with others.

For instance, development of social competency skills was largely carried out by supporting and accompanying residents in contact with government agencies, e.g. Commonwealth Employment Service and Department of Social Security; in job-seeking; shopping; and the seeking of personal accommodation when the time approached for leaving Four Flats. Most residents showed some improvement in capacity in these various skills although the extent of this improvement would be extremely difficult to measure objectively. A valuable contribution to the program was provided by the local Medical Officer of Health (who was also a member of the Advisory Committee to the project) by calling at the house on occasional evenings, having a meal with the residents and talking with them informally about health issues. Because of his easy and informal relationship with the boys, many discussed issues and problems which concerned them with him. In virtually all cases this was their first contact with a doctor which was other than a formal consultation with little communication.

The recreation and leisure program continued much as during 1977, but with some additional resources being devoted to it. Only one of the residents became involved in regular competitive sport by playing football with a locally-based team. However, many took part in non-competitive sporting activities; jogging, kicking a football informally, an occasional game of golf, ten-pin bowling, attending a gymnasium, canoeing and camping. They also expanded their range of experience in less active recreational pastimes by watching sport, attending concerts, dining out, attending films and other entertainments, attending local youth clubs and social events and participating in community activities.

The community involvement program was forced to remain limited and at a low key level by an unfortunate incident towards the end of 1977 in which one of the residents was responsible for manslaughter. This incident is further discussed immediately below.

In summary the education program was a continuing aspect of life at Four Flats and certainly contributed to the experience and development of the residents. The staff had to make judgements as to how far they might pressure the boys to more formal learning as opposed to merely making use of day-to-day opportunities for educational input. Although it is relatively easy to see ways in which more might have been done, it is also easy to recognise that this would have resulted in increased pressure upon the residents and may well have had negative effects.

4.6 COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

One of the marked features of the Four Flats project has been the acceptance of the program within the Hawthorn community. Many welfare organizations, including State Departments, have faced loud protests from residents whenever hostel type projects have been proposed. However, Four Flats Hawthorn was established without any such protests and continued to receive strong and positive sanction from neighbours, other residents and a wide range of community decision-makers.

This is no doubt due in part to the fact that the Jesuit Order were already deeply involved in the Hawthorn Community through the local Parish and the Manresa People's Centre. There is probably little doubt that this contributed greatly to acceptance of the project. The establishment of Four Flats was widely discussed with residents before the actual commencement and a number of local residents were involved as members of the project's Advisory Committee.

Membership of the committee included a number of local residents, among them a councillor, a medical practitioner, lawyer, sergeant of police, near neighbours of the house and the Superior of the Hawthorn Jesuit Community. In addition, there were representatives of the Social Welfare Department, Victorian Council for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, and a Chaplain to the Social Welfare Department. The committee played an important role in both establishing an understanding of the project within its local community and in assisting and supporting the staff team in their work.

In September, 1977, it was decided to develop a handyman service to local residents, partly to provide an opportunity for casual employment of residents and to heighten their own practical skills, and partly to further relationships between the project and the local community. Regrettably a tragic incident at the very beginning of this scheme meant that it was abandoned. The incident concerned (which was widely publicised in the media) was when a 69 year old lady, who had engaged one of the Four Flats residents as a handyman, was alleged to have been sexually assaulted and was killed. The young man concerned, who was evidently affected by Mandrax tablets at the time, admitted to the killing although he was unable to remember much of what he had done. He was later convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

This incident led to continuing public criticism of the project and of the Social Welfare Department by the family of the deceased. However, support for the project by other members of the community remained high and the project continued without interruption.

5. THE QUANTITATIVE PERSPECTIVE

5.1 OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the available quantitative data on residents, controls and others is reviewed. Data were collected on a total of 508 young men released from youth Training Centres or Prisons during the period concerned. Of these, 53 were residents of Four Flats for varying periods of time, while a further 37 were selected as having characteristics similar to the residents, and each agreed to be interviewed as a number of a control group. Although this chapter reports on only a limited number of aspects of the data collected, a very wide range of potential relationships between (both bi-variate and multi-variate) were explored. Only those where a significant relationship could be demonstrated are reported here.

5.2 THE RESIDENTS

Those who had entered Four Flats ranged between 17 and 23 years of age. They came to the program from the various institutions shown in Table 1.

Langi Kal Kal Y.T.C.	19
Malmsbury Y.T.C.	13
Turana Y.T.C.	5
Pentridge Prison	11
Other Prisons	5

Table 1: Institutional background of
Four Flats Residents

A relatively high number (22) came from intact families, with 30 coming from separated, divorced, widowed or deceased parents and no information being available in one case. However, of those recorded as "intact", at

least some (details not validly available) had a family with at least one step-parent, and some of these were in a de facto relationship. It appeared that very few, if any, could claim to come from a "traditional" nuclear family.

A particularly important characteristic is that in virtually all cases, the relationship with the family was poor or non-existent.

Quality of relationship with family	Residents	Controls	Others
excellent	1	1	30
good	8	14	122
fair	3	8	92
poor or nil	35	14	87
Totals	47	37	331

Table 2: Quality of family relationship

Table 2 indicates that Four Flats residents are not only significantly disadvantaged in this by comparison with others, but that even the control group could not be matched adequately on this criterion. This indicates that the Four Flats program did cater for a population in special need.

Details of parental occupations were only available for 24 of the residents. Not surprisingly, these were at the lower end of the socio-economic status ladder as shop assistants, process workers or unskilled labourers. However, the exceptions (4 fathers, 3 mothers) were at the opposite end in professional and managerial positions.

The educational level of residents was generally very low, and lower than the broader population upon whom we had data available (significant at the 1% level). However, in this respect there was no statistically significant difference between the residents and controls.

Highest education completed	Residents	Controls	Others
Primary	11	3	60
Forms 1 - 2	25	20	153
3 - 4	16	11	212
5 or higher	1	0	21
Totals	53	36	426

Table 3: Highest level of education completed

The extent to which residents were disadvantaged is further demonstrated by examining work experience. Seventeen (32%) had not worked prior to entering Four Flats. Table 4 indicates the extent of this difference and shows that again, the control group was not matched as well as might have been desired. In so far as details are available of jobs held, it seems the difference between Four Flats residents and others are not statistically significant -- 6 had worked as tradesmen, while others (26) had been process or unskilled workers.

Number of Jobs	Residents	Controls	Others
0	17	5	58
1 - 5	31	24	286
6 or more	5	6	82
Totals	53	35	426

Table 4: Number of jobs held prior to last institutional residence

None of the residents were recorded as not drinking alcohol, and 15 were rated as heavy drinkers. Twenty-two had used other drugs (generally marijuana).

The pattern of previous offences is of interest. Although the distribution of number of recorded offences or the age of first offending did not differ between the various groups, the level of most serious recorded offences (Table 5) did show a significant difference ($\text{Chi}^2 = 20.185$ $p < .001$). Four Flats residents were much less likely to have committed violent offences, and their "highest" level of crime was usually breaking in of premises. Again, the control group did not match closely.

This probably can be related directly to the Interpersonal Maturity Level classification developed by the California Youth Authority and used by the Victorian Social Welfare Department. Thirty-seven of the Four Flats residents were classified as I_2 and I_3 -- a relatively low level of maturity, and one which leads to either compulsive compliant or conformist behaviour. In a delinquent sub-culture, the compliant or conformist individual is easily pressured into crime, and often used as a "fall-guy". Breaking or motor vehicle offences tend to be typical of offenders in this category.

Level of most serious offence	Residents	Controls	Others
Assault, armed robbery, sexual offences	11	17	150
Breaking	36	15	165
Larceny, other offences including motor vehicles	5	5	106
Totals	52	37	421

Table 5: Most serious recorded offence prior to last institutional residence

Data was also collected on the Jesness index of A-social behaviour and the prediction of Youth Training Centre staff of future success. Neither of these indicated any difference between residents and others.

In summary, Four Flats residents are generally distinguished from others leaving youth Training Centres by having very poor family relationships, a low level of education, a poor work history (often no employment experience), immaturity, and as having usually committed breaking and/or less serious offences. The statistical analysis supports the view that the program was focussed upon young men who were especially vulnerable. Moreover, it was found in endeavouring to select a control group that it was not possible to adequately match the combinations of characteristics displayed by residents. Although every effort was made to do so, the above analysis shows that this was not wholly successful. The control group are arguably less vulnerable than the residents (although this does not imply that they are less likely to re-offend). Essentially, virtually all those sharing the characteristics of the residents were in

fact residents. Four Flats was thus able to cater for almost all of the population which had been selected as particularly suitable for inclusion in the program.

This introduces a difficulty from the research perspective. We did not anticipate the extent to which residents would constitute a clearly delineated category, nor that nearly all persons falling into that category would be entrants to the Four Flats program. Coupled with problems about the quality of data and the small numbers of individuals involved, this makes it impossible to develop firm conclusions concerning the relationship between program outcomes and the effects of the program itself. Nevertheless, some suggestive patterns emerge.

5.3 IMPACT OF THE FOUR FLATS PROGRAM

On following up both residents and controls (at approximately 12 months after release), we certainly found further indications of the special character of residents. Thus, Table 6 highlights the isolation of residents from their own family. Again in Table 7, not only is this emphasised, but the dependence of residents upon "institutional" peers is brought clearly to attention.

	Residents	Controls
Family situation	1	19
Boarding House	2	0
Flat/apartment	31	7
Other	6	10
Totals	40	36

Table 6: Living arrangements at time of follow-up interview

	Residents	Controls
Family	1	21
YTC/Four Flats peers	34	1
Other peers	0	6
Wife/girl-friend	1	5
Other	6	4
<hr/>		
Totals	42	37

Table 7: Persons with whom living at time of follow-up interview

In spite of these differences, both residents and controls showed a similar degree of residential mobility, with less than half having only lived at one address. Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in the extent of contact with the parole service, rate of return to custody, level of jobs held, or number of jobs held.

However, there was a slight difference in the number of further offences recorded, although even this was not a very marked effect, being significant only at the 10% level (Table 8).

Number of further offences	Residents	Controls
0	18	8
1 - 5	28	18
6 or more	7	11
Totals	53	37

Table 8: Number of further offences recorded since discharge (Cramers V = 0.21595)

On this basis, it appears that residents may have re-offended less than controls, but one cannot make such an assumption. The support structure of the Four Flats program may lead to some residents being cautioned rather than charged; residents may tend to a pattern of offences with a lower apprehension rate, or a variety of other explanations may well be operating. The only variable which showed a reasonably significant relationship (at the 2% level) with the number of further offences was the number of changes in residence since release from custody. This is more likely to be a result of re-offending than a cause!

5.4 THE QUESTION OF SELF-ESTEEM

In addition to the problems already outlined, it was found impossible to provide adequate consistency in the administration of the self-esteem scale. Many of the young men were not sufficiently literate for this to be used as a self-administered scale; a range of different interviewers were used in a wide variety of situations ranging from a comfortable home to a prison visit.

We found that six of the items correlated with each other to a reasonable degree (Kendall's tau = 0.33, $p < 0.008$). These were simply added to give a single score, as the number of cases was inadequate to derive any weighting of raw scores.

The score obtained from residents while living at Four Flats was then compared with the available descriptive variables related to each resident's prior history. There was no significant relationship between self-esteem, as measured by us, and the quality of family relationship, level of most serious previous offence, number of previous offences or Jesness index.

Both level of education and the I-level classification correlated positively, as indicated in Tables 9 and 10. The latter correlation is effectively tautologous, as self-esteem has an almost self-evident impact upon the presentation of self -- which in turn has an equivalent effect upon the kind of assessment involved in the I-level classification.

Self-esteem score	Primary only	Forms 1 & 2	Forms 3 & 4
up to 10	3	5	1
11 - 13	2	7	1
14 or higher	2	1	5

Table 9: Self-esteem score of residents compared with highest level of education attained.

($\chi^2 = 9.4022$ $p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .42$)

Self-esteem score	I ₂ - I ₃	I ₄
up to 10	8	0
11 - 13	9	1
14 or higher	4	4

Table 10: Self-esteem score of residents compared with I-level classification.
(Chi² = 7.3295 p < .05; Cramer's V = .53)

A further score was obtained from the D schedule, administered to residents at approximately six months after leaving Four Flats, and to the control group at the same time, which was generally at least 12 months after release from custody.

This second score, removed at least a further twelve months from the background events which provided the original descriptive data, did not demonstrate any significant correlation with any of these -- namely, quality of relationship with family, highest level of education attained, level of most serious previous offence, number of previous offences, I-level, or Jesness Index. It seems likely that as time proceeds, the impact of schooling is likely to lessen, while the I-level classification will be negated by differential rates of maturation.

It was also compared with more recent events and, again, demonstrated no significant relationship with living arrangements or employment. However, it showed a negative correlation with the number of further offences committed and an even stronger correlation with return to custody (Tables 11, 12). This replicates the general pattern of results obtained from a large sample in the United States by Kaplan (1976).

Self-esteem score	No. of further offences		
	0	1 - 5	many
up to 10	1	15	8
11 - 13	3	15	6
14 or higher	10	16	4

Table 11: Self-esteem scores of residents and controls compared with number of further offences.
($\chi^2 = 9.5226$, $p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .25$)

Self-esteem score	No return to custody	Returned to custody
up to 10	2	20
11 - 13	5	18
14 or higher	16	12

Table 12: Self-esteem scores of residents and controls compared with return to custody.
($\chi^2 = 14.6666$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .45$)

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 SUCCESS OR FAILURE

An obvious first question is whether the Four Flats program can be considered a success. Three key operational objectives were outlined above (pp.5-6) and these provide a basis from which the question might be approached.

Firstly, there has been some reduction in recidivism (p.39 above), but the exact nature of this reduction is unclear. It is possible, of course, that the apparent difference between Four Flats residents and the control population may vanish with the passage of further time. In other words, the program may have delayed rather than reduced recidivism. However, even this is of value to both the victim and to wider society. Irrespective of any doubts and uncertainties, recidivism has been reduced. This is even a little surprising in view of world experience which suggests that success in reduction of recidivism is rare, and where it does occur may well be of a short-term nature (Lipton et al, 1975).

Secondly, there is reasonable evidence, based upon the qualitative judgements which were made both by the two evaluation interviewers (Frey and Ryan) and by program staff, that the ability of the young men to live independently was enhanced. Many had little or no experience of independent living prior to the Four Flats experience, but were able to move into independence relatively smoothly. Perhaps the most regrettable aspect of this independence is that for most of the residents, no alternative (other than institutional custody) was available (pp.37-38).

Thirdly, the reduction of human indignity and suffering was, in retrospect, a process objective rather than truly describing possible outcomes. The experience described in section 4 of this report speaks for itself. The young men at Four Flats were treated with dignity and compassion, and did experience a relatively enjoyable lifestyle.

Our judgement therefore is that the program was a success, even to a greater extent than might be expected. Equally importantly, it was able to identify and provide for a specific and particularly vulnerable population (pp.36-37).

6.2 THE PROBLEM OF REPLICATION

Basically, any experimental project is seen as providing a possible model for service development. However, there are some problems with this relatively simplistic view. There is an extent to which any one social program is unique.

The character of the Four Flats program was obviously influenced by the staff team. In turn, the staff team were certainly influenced by the nature of the planning process which proceeded for over twelve months prior to the establishment of the project. An attempt to replicate the Four Flats program would not be a true replication unless this planning process and the staff development process which followed it were themselves to be replicated. It is clear from observations of the program that the commitment and team work of the staff played a most important part and this could not be duplicated merely by setting up the same administrative structures with a quite different process of planning and staff development.

The difficulty experienced in endeavouring to integrate a new member into the team (p.10) emphasizes the problem. It may be that the failure to integrate a new member of the team demonstrated some deficiency in the staff development and team building process which had occurred.

A more compelling suggestion is that in any project of this nature, the staff must develop some kind of team work, but that staff changes which occur will result in a breakdown of the team and potentially unsatisfactory relationships developing within the project. Anyone who has seen a variety of small institutions will recognize this situation.

A further issue is the possible impact upon the program of the fact that the program was initiated and partly staffed by members of the Jesuit order. Peter, Paul and Paddy inevitably brought to the project a particular viewpoint and commitment which arose out of their identity as Jesuits. One can only question whether this could be replicated by lay personnel, no matter how competent, committed or compassionate.

This brings us to discussion of the real nature of the Four Flats project. It might simply be considered as a social welfare institution. The staff developed a conviction that they offered more than being merely a social welfare institution.

In the first place, Four Flats was home for Peter and at different periods for Paul and Paddy. They shared that home with a variety of young men and they were visited in it by a variety of friends and colleagues. This, in itself, was a significant additional dimension and it was a deliberate decision that Four Flats would be a home rather than an institution or a therapeutic community.

Secondly, welfare services tend to focus upon intervention, change, social control, and questions of outcomes. The basic plan for the Four Flats project emphasized a low level of concentration upon direct intervention and specified as one of the three major objectives a concern to reduce human indignity and suffering by providing a caring environment for the young men concerned. It was seen as an attempt to positively effect the future life style of these individuals.

Probably either or both of these qualities might be claimed by other social welfare establishments, and there is certainly no clear boundary line which delineates welfare establishments or programs from many other kinds of human service activity. The fact remains that the attitude of the staff and hence their behaviour in relationships with the residents was conditioned by the extent to which they themselves believed they did provide more than a welfare service.

6.3 THE REDUCTION OF HUMAN INDIGNITY AND SUFFERING

We have referred above to the extent to which one of the original objectives specified an intention to reduce the indignity and suffering of the young men concerned. The planning document pointed out that:

Many young men and women leave Victorian correctional institutions daily having little money, no job, family, friends, or a roof over their heads for their first night of freedom.

Four Flats certainly saw to it that 53 young men left a correctional institution to live in a comfortable environment with people known to them as friends. These included both their peers and staff members who had visited the correctional institutions and had established relationships with them before their entry to Four Flats.

Talking with the residents and ex-residents made it clear to us that they themselves recognised and appreciated the extent to which Four Flats met this goal. The extent to which some saw this as giving them both opportunity and incentive to modify their own life style suggested that perhaps the care and concern expressed through the Four Flats project had in itself some interventive or therapeutic side effects: a not very surprising conclusion in the light of other experiences of youth projects.

The planning document also suggested:

If we regard the project as achieving some success, if it alleviates human misery, then the distressed ex-inmates who turn to it in moments of crisis are the testimony of its role and effectiveness within the community.

We have already discussed the extent to which ex-residents maintained a continuing contact with Four Flats. There is no question that they were particularly likely to do so when facing a crisis of one kind or another. This pattern supports the evidence gained from our interviews

with ex-residents. Both from verbal statements and their actual behaviour it was demonstrated that they recognised Four Flats as a place where they would find concern and emotional support even though they may not receive or even desire practical support.

6.4 FINALLY.....

Although there are problems in replication in a strict sense, we believe there are some valuable qualities in the Four Flats program which should be incorporated in other programs for young offenders. These include:

- * the emphasis upon reduction of indignity and suffering;
- * the emphasis upon development of staff team work and of a common understanding of the program;
- * the extent of compassion able to be demonstrated by staff;
- * the extent to which Four Flats was a home rather than an institution;
- * the deliberate efforts made to foster independence within residents.

Inevitably, the system for dealing with offenders in our society has three conflicting goals -- retribution and punishment (even though this is often denied); protection of society and reform or rehabilitation. Even Four Flats found itself caught between the latter two on many occasions. No program can remove or ignore any of these goals, but success is likely to be enhanced if they are explicitly recognised by all concerned, and if the program tries, as did Four Flats, to separate the impacts of each, maintaining compassion and human dignity as a central principle.

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APPENDIX A

Results of Staff Discussion on Modification to Treatment Programme
(November, 1977).

1. Intake Procedures:

- a. Prior contact with potential resident to be as extensive as possible.
- b. Background information and relevant material to be gathered soon after initial contact.
- c. Treatment program to be spelt out as clearly as possible to potential resident whilst he is under sentence.
- d. Elicit applicant's personal goals in seeking assistance after release, and in taking on a stay of three months at Four Flats.
- e. Where possible, obtain week-end leave or temporary leave approximately one month before release.
- f. Establish contact with family or significant others whilst the prisoner is still under sentence.
- g. Allow the prisoner sufficient time to make his own commitment to apply for a position at Four Flats.
- h. Ensure that a formal discussion on the part of the staff takes place as to whether the prisoner should in fact be received into the program, allowing each member of staff to clearly express his opinions.
- i. Develop a preliminary contract for the individual prisoner which would be the basis for his later contract once he arrives in the program.

2. Contractual Basis of Entry:

The value underlying the formulation of an individual contract with each resident participating in the Four Flats program is that in order to establish the three month stay as a treatment period -- rather than the mere provision of emergency accommodation -- each resident must have specific goals with which he seeks the assistance of the program staff.

The contract does not have any form of legal binds, but is in the form of guidelines which are mutually decided upon, and which are to be seen as guidelines for the achievement of the individual's goal.

Each contract will also have written into it some time dimension, with an upper limit of a three month stay within the program.

3. Employment: A Vital Element:

Because of the overall goal of the residential stay of increasing independence and avoiding re-offending behaviour, the finding and maintaining of employment is to be seen as an integral and essential aspect of the program being offered at Four Flats.

Assistance in seeking employment after the first week in residence, and liaison with employers during employment, will be the normal arrangements for each individual resident.

Lack of consistent efforts to obtain or maintain employment will signify to others that there is lack of interest in maintaining a position within the program.

APPENDIX A (cont'd)

4. After-Care Program:

A regular period of three months following on departure from the residential program would seem to be the normal length of after-care contact which the program staff could reasonably take on.

This would normally involve weekly contact (at least) following on departure from the program.

Formal after-care for an individual would not be seen as a responsibility of the project staff after this three month follow-up period. Naturally initiatives or particular requests after this period of time on the part of an ex-resident would not be overlooked, but we would not assume a responsibility for this type of work after that period.

5. Philosophy Underlying Bendigo Street Flat:

The existence of a fifth flat separate from the central location of the major Four Flats residence in Power Street Hawthorn, enables a greater degree of differential treatment within the overall project.

Although the fifth flat is vitally linked with the Power Street complex, and although the tenancy of the flat in Bendigo Street is in the name of Four Apartments Hawthorn, not the individuals resident there, a greater degree of responsibility and independence is required for those living there.

They are fully responsible for the regular payment of rent and power bills, and responsible for the purchase of food and preparation of all meals.

Movement from the Power Street residence into the Bendigo Street flat would still entail an upper limit stay of three months.

APPENDIX A (cont'd)

Those residents in the Power Street Flats who are capable of operating at a higher maturity level are more likely to be moved into the Richmond residence. Furthermore, the fifth flat can be used in certain circumstances to avoid personality conflicts, or in other situations to enhance group cohesion.

6. Group Program:

House meetings will take place every second Tuesday evening, with all members of staff and all individuals involved in the residential program in attendance.

On the alternate week, the residents within the Power Street flats will meet with Alex and those resident within the Bendigo Street flat with Peter.

7. Liaison with Work-Outs Programs:

Trainees from Malmsbury and Langi Kal Kal Y.T.C.'s on work-out programs need not be excluded from the Four Flats project, but entry into the program assessed and accepted into the program as outlined above in the section entitled Intake Procedures.

Peter Norden, S.J.

APPENDIX B

Outline of Educational Aspects of Project

1. Social Competency Program

A. Immediate Objectives of Program

- i. to enhance the individual's general knowledge and social achievements with readjustment to work and resettlement within the community as the focus.
- ii. to learn the basic skills of reading and writing as they apply to the practical things the residents need to use in daily life.
- iii. to provide practical, enjoyable and motivating learning experiences.
- iv. to encourage pro-social behaviour and ideas by positive reinforcement of achievements and continual encouragement to seek further knowledge and skills with confidence.

B. Long-Term Objectives of Program:

- i. the development of self-esteem within the individual resident through positive learning experience.
- ii. the integration of constructive and acceptable personal and social values aiding fuller participation as an equal citizen in the community.
- iii. the enhancement of power of the residents over decision-making, resources, information and personal relationships.

C. Relevance of Social Competency to the Resettlement Program:

Family breakdown, negative school experiences, and offending behaviour are characteristic of the youths in our care. Some of them have spent all of their life within various institutions. The school has been a significant factor in increasing their social isolation because of their difficulty in achieving goals in a social situation.

It is widely agreed that many of the causes of delinquency or offending behaviour can be a result of social deprivation, lack of community competence, lack of education or adequate access to socialising experiences, or the lack of a sensitive application of education programs to individual needs.

This program defines many of the basic skills which are lacking. However, the techniques to be used in compensating the educational needs need to be carefully chosen. Offenders usually have a high rate of truancy, and this illustrates that conventional educational methods are not acceptable or effective.

Furthermore, because the residential program is built around a basic period of the initial three month stay, an unstructured approach to social competency training seems more appropriate.

D. Range of Proposed Program:

- i. Community skills and knowledge (public transport, street directories, telephones, application forms, etc., newspapers, voting, community resources).
- ii. Occupational skills (seeking a position, interviews, applications, C.E.S., training opportunities, rights and obligations, attitudes and habits).

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

- iii. Finance (budgetting, shopping, banking, insurance, accommodation).
- iv. Health (personal hygiene, food, medical services, drugs, sex education.)
- v. Social skills (assertive training, communication skills, decisions).

2. Community Involvement Program

A. Immediate Objectives of the Program:

- i. to compensate for the lack of previous social experiences in the lives of highly institutionalized adolescents by facilitating a variety of situations not otherwise accessible to them.
- ii. to facilitate the normalisation of social experiences for the residents of the program by providing appropriate support in their use of numerous community resources from which they have previously been isolated.
- iii. to provide practical, enjoyable, and motivating learning experiences.
- iv. to enable the residents of the program to assist others in the community in a practical way, and thus to experience themselves as helping agents.
- v. to encourage pro-social behaviour and ideas by positive reinforcement of achievements and continual encouragement to participate more fully within social situations which may be unfamiliar.

B. Long-Term Objectives of the Program:

- i. the development of self-esteem within the individual resident through positive learning experiences and satisfactory participation in socially demanding situations.
- ii. the integration of constructive and acceptable personal and social values aiding fuller participation as an equal citizen within the community.
- iii. the enhancement of power the residents have over the use of community resources, information, personal relationships and decision making.

C. Relevance of Community Involvement to the Resettlement Program:

Many of our residents have suffered early disruption in family life, and the conflicts and frustrations which developed around normal learning situations often have the effect of isolating the individual from the variety of social networks and systems on which our society is based.

Lacking emotional and social competence at a very early age has the effect of increasing the alienation experienced when the individual approaches situations unknown to him. The social disadvantages which this child suffers are very often accompanied by economic instability of the family unit also. This results in a lessening of the alternatives available to him in the way of leisure, recreation and entertainment.

If this early family disruption is also accompanied by placement within an institution at an early age, which is the case with most of the residents of the Four Flats project, the child is then placed in a setting where individual enrichment and maturity are severely retarded.

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

D. Range of Proposed Program:

- exposure to a wide range of people performing different roles in society.
- participation in locally-based youth programs and activities.
- the experience of dining out at a variety of different venues.
- involvement in festivals, exhibitions, displays of various sorts in Melbourne.
- the provision of a handyman service within the municipality of Hawthorn.
- exposure to a variety of social experiences within the community, according to individual needs and assessed abilities.
- participation in local community issues assisted in this by the availability of video equipment and printing materials.

3. Recreational and Leisure Program

A. Immediate Objectives of Program:

- i. to enable the residents of the project to have a variety of alternatives available for the constructive use of their leisure time.
- ii. to enable the residents of the project to experience viable alternatives to their previous leisure patterns which brought them into social conflict and institutional care.

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

- iii. to offer a wide variety of activities to the residents of the project with a balance between passive and active leisure pursuits.
- iv. to provide residents with some responsibility in organising leisure activities both within the residence and within the community.
- v. to broaden the very limited experience and knowledge of skills which the residents have in the constructive use of leisure time.
- vi. to gain interests and skills and develop relationships that can lead to later participation in social activities in the community.
- vii. to act as a liaison between the residents and community activity groups and to involve volunteers within the activities program.

B. Long-Term Objectives of Recreational and Leisure Program:

- i. the development of self-esteem within the residents through constructive use of leisure time and participation in socially demanding situations.
- ii. to facilitate the normalisations of social experiences for the residents.

C. Relevance of Recreational and Leisure Programme to Resettlement Program:

It is clear that the residents of Four Flats, because of time spent in institutions, have lived in a very restricting environment. It is basic for the development of their pre-learning skills that they be provided with enriching

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

experiences, in order to compensate for both material and emotional impoverishment, and to ensure equality of opportunity for the future.

In order to bring about a normalisation of social experiences for these young offenders upon release from youth training centres, the availability of a wide range of recreational and leisure alternatives and opportunities is called for.

D. Range of Proposed Program:

During the period of residence at the Flats, it is intended to make available to the residents a variety of recreational and leisure activities. These include both short-term involvements and commitments, as well as the opportunity of developing relationships, interests, and skills for continuing involvement.

- involvement in competitive sporting activities and clubs.
- participation in non-competitive activities at sports centres.
- attendance of films and theatre for broadening of experience and interests.
- provision of a variety of forms of musical entertainment and appreciation.
- involvement in adventure sports and camping excursions.
- participation in vacation travel trip within the state of Victoria.

