



A family standing at the entrance of the Catholic Social Services offices of the Marquette Diocese symbolizes the work of the agency—with the family.

Placement Of Children In Foster Homes Done By Catholic Social Services

BY JOSEPH R. SULLIVAN

(Ed Note: This is the sixth in a series of stories on the recipient agencies of the Community Chest, which began its 1958 drive for funds here last week).

I am 13. My first name is Edward, but my friends call me Eddie. My last name isn't important, but my story is. Won't you let me tell it to you?

It was just about a year ago that my father called me aside and told me that I would have to take his place at home for awhile. I knew dad hadn't been feeling very well, but I never thought that it was anything serious.

Dad had only been in the veteran's hospital two months when my mother discovered she had TB. Her first thought was what was going to happen to me.

Laid Off From Work

Mother phoned Uncle Fred. When she learned that he had been laid off from work she did not tell him about her having to go to a sanatorium, nor did she ask if I might stay with them.

Aunt Mary and Uncle Bob would have welcomed me into their home but Uncle Bob had just returned home from the hospital and a serious operation. Mother didn't call them.

When the doctor phoned Mother that afternoon she told him about her problem. He suggested that she contact Catholic Social Services. Mother was nervous as she dialed CAnal 6-9831.

I gathered from my Mother's smile that her conversation with a Father Gibbs was satisfactory. An appointment was made for 10 the next morning.

No Signs Of Disease

While Mother packed that afternoon I was visiting the doctor. Tests showed that I had no signs of TB. I was choked up about mother having TB and my having to live with strangers. I

broke into tears before I could leave the office.

Doc: "Go ahead, Eddie. Get it out of your system."

Doc planted his arm around my shoulders, like dad did whenever we had a serious talk.

Doc: "Sure, things are tough, Eddie. But you can be thankful that your mother learned about her TB as early as she did. Your father is doing very well at the hospital."

Eddie: "I've never been away from my parents before. Not like this. Sure, I went to summer camp for two weeks, but this isn't the same."

Doc: "Of course it isn't, Eddie. But you'll be able to visit your parents and Catholic Social Services will do all they can to help you."

Eddie: "What kind of place is it, Doc?"

Doc: "It's a place where people go with many problems, perhaps a couple who would like to adopt a child, or maybe a young girl who has a serious problem. In your case, Eddie, Catholic Social Services will place you in a foster home."

Eddie: "I have an idea what a foster home is. Maybe you could explain it to me a little better."

Doc: "I'd like to, Eddie, but I have other patients waiting to see me. Tell you what. You think of all the questions you want to ask and I'll see if I can't answer them tomorrow."

Carefully Selected

The next day I waited outside in the car for Doc. Mother had said goodbye to me and he was helping her get settled in the sanatorium.

On the way to Catholic Social Services Doc tried to explain a foster home. He said that I would be living with a couple that had been carefully selected by the agency. He said that the couple would not try to take the place of my father and mother, but that they would try to do everything for me that my parents might do if we were together.

As we walked up the steps leading to the offices of Catholic Social Services I told Doc that I felt a little funny about being here.

Doc: "What do you mean?"

Eddie: "Well, asking these people to find a home for me is like borrowing something from somebody. Unless you know them real well you feel uneasy about it."

Doc: "Do you know about the Community Chest?"

Eddie: "Sure, my parents give

donation each year."

Doc: "When they gave, Eddie they were helping to support many organizations and Catholic Social Services is one of them."

Find Couple

Soon we were talking with the Rev. Wilbur M. Gibbs, director of Catholic Social Services and Victor G. Holliday Jr., supervisor. After Doc visited with them he waited outside for me.

I entered the office. Father Gibbs and Mr. Holliday made me feel very comfortable. Father Gibbs told me they had found a couple who were anxious to have me stay with them. He said this particular couple have three children of their own, but they were either at school or married.

Mr. Holliday said that another couple, who had no children of their own, were also interested in me.

Father Gibbs: "Eddie, you and I know that the best place for you is in your own home. Since your mother and father are both hospitalized and your relatives can't take care of you you'll be under our care for a while."

Eddie: "Father, are there many kids like me. I mean with both parents sick?"

Father Gibbs: "I think Mr. Holliday might want to answer that question."

Mr. Holliday: "You aren't alone, Eddie. Right now we have 83 children placed in 65 foster homes."

Eddie: "Boy, that's a lot of parents in hospitals."

Father Gibbs: "No Eddie, not all the parents of these children are in the hospitals. Some parents don't get along like yours do. There's a conflict in the home. Maybe, the parents are arguing all the time."

Mr. Holliday: "Some boys and girls come to us because the courts have ordered them to turn their children over to us to take care of."

Eddie: "Gee, I'm lucky that I have such a good father and mother."

Father Gibbs: "Yes, you are. Many boys and girls are not as fortunate as you."

Eddie: "When I move to this foster home, will I see you two again?"

Mr. Holliday: "We'll be keeping in touch with you and your foster parents. In case you or they have a problem we'll be right there to help you with it."

Following my visit with Father

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A social worker for Catholic Social Services brings two children to a foster home in the area. By having the "home" atmosphere, the children enjoy themselves more than they would in an orphan's home.