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Agnews Developmental Center:

From Past to Present

*An Essay
Presented to The California Pioneers
of Santa Clara County*

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INTRODUCTION

Agnews Developmental Center was established in 1885 and was long known to most people as an insane asylum. More recently, however, it has assumed the role of a mentally retarded complex and is a highly regarded state hospital. The Developmental Center offers six programs that help the patients learn, and hopefully prepare for, the outside world. Agnews has survived many set backs, including the 1906 earthquake, set backs concerning staff members, and citations from the State Legislature. Although Agnews has had its share of problems, it is known to be one of the best state hospitals in the western United States.

HISTORY

Agnews Developmental Center was built on land bought from a man named Abram Agnew. The chosen site of land had been granted by Pio Pico, Governor of California, on May 9, 1845.

Abram Agnew was born on January 1, 1820, in Knox County, Ohio. His parents were Jonathen and Mary (Prather) Agnew. As a child, Abram worked on the family farm and later took up the blacksmith trade. When he became older he engaged in mining, blacksmithing, and cattle raising. In 1873 he moved to Santa Clara where he met his future wife, Sarah Jane Barber. Together, they had two sons named Hugh C. and Jesse B. Agnew. In 1876 Abram sold 323.5 acres of his land to the State of California and the village of Agnews was established.

Construction of the Agnews "neuropsychiatric institution" (as it was first called) started in 1886. The new buildings had forward structures of red brick, three stories high and the main building and four stories high in the administrative building. The complex was constructed in the shape of a cross and was completed in 1888. The first patients to be admitted were

sixty-five people from Stockton Insane Asylum on November 26, 1888. The first superintendent appointed to office was Dr. W.W. McFarlane.

On April 18, 1906, at 5:12 a.m., an earthquake measuring about 8.2, according to the Richter scale back then, devastated the Agnews hospital. The most severe damage was done to the great hall, which measured several blocks in length and three to four stories high. The only thing left standing was the water tower.

The 1906 quake killed 112 people at Agnews and while news was being sent to Santa Clara County's Sheriffs Department for help, patients were housed in temporary tents on the front lawn. The most severally ill patients were chained to trees.

Dr. Leonard Stocking was superintendent of Agnews at the time of the earthquake. After the state approved the \$800,000 bill for reconstruction, Stocking began drawing up plans for the new facility. These plans consisted of cottages for certain groups of patients instead of long wards. Long driveways with trees and shrubs along the side were designed to give the new hospital a "homey" look to it.

Stocking described his vision of the newly reconstruced institution,

"... the hospital is going to be built with the idea of securing the patients and employees with an abundance of sunshine, comfort and cheer, and

I have endeavored to create and maintain throughout the institution a cheerful, helpful contented atmosphere..."¹

The reconstruction of the campus also included a social center, consisting of a 550 seat auditorium, club rooms, a banquet hall, a theater, and church. The new hospital could now accommodate 1,180 residents.

In 1926, the State acquired 323.5 acres which they would use to build what is now called "The East Campus" (the original land is called the West Campus). The East Campus is located one and a half miles away from the West Campus. This area was originally used as farm land to provide food for the facility; however, in 1933, three large units were constructed to meet the needs of an increasing patient load. These units could hold up to 1500 people. Over the years, The East and West Campuses have grown to comprise more than 150 buildings on 747 acres of land. In 1951, three more buildings were constructed on the West Campus, and by 1955 Agnews population had swelled to nearly 4,600 patients.

Early in 1966, Agnews developed the "Regionalization Plan" on a center wide basis with an intensified effort to improve pre-admission screening and counseling, clinical treatment and follow up programs. In January 1966, the first program for individuals with developmental disabilities was established at Agnews with the transfer of 534

individuals from Fairview, Porterville, and Sonoma Developmental Centers.

In 1971, the number of programs for individuals with developmental disabilities increased while Agnews' treatment for individuals with mental problems decreased. By June of 1972 those with mental illnesses were being returned to the community or transferred to other facilities.

Today, about 1,100 people with developmental disabilities are receiving service from six different programs which are staffed by people in the fields of medicine, psychology, social services, education, rehabilitation therapy, nursing, and living management.

AGNEWS IN THE 1980'S

During the 1980's, Agnews Developmental Center went through some troubled times. There were many problems dealing with uncontrollable patients who lashed out², charges that staff members abused the patients, and many citations from the State.

In 1980, Boyd and Evelyn Shipley's teen-aged daughter, a patient at Agnews, was molested, and Winifred Hafley's son drowned in May of 1982. Both of these incidents were supposedly due to improper care or supervision by Agnews staff.³

During the annual inspection of August of 1981, Agnews was charged with sixty-five failures to comply with State and Federal regulations, ranging from minor record-keeping errors to mislabeling drugs.⁴ Between January of 1978 to the middle of 1981, thirty workers have been fired for a variety of offenses. Seven were terminated for physical or psychological abuse of patients. The rest of the workers were fired for reasons that included drinking, using drugs, stealing, and falsifying records.⁵

In 1988; however, Carla Framiglio, the chief of the State Health Agency's district office in San Jose, stated that, "... overall, for the number of clients they serve and the particular problems those people have, they have a good compliance record."⁶

AGNEWS IN THE 1990'S

Agnews Developmental Center is directed by Keri L . Procnier, employs 1,600 staff members, serves 1,100 people twenty-four hours a day (365 days a year), serves 3,300 meals a day, and does over 100,000 pounds of laundry a week.⁷ Agnews also has it's own police department, fire department, plumbers, electricians , and carpenters. If the power went out they have their own electric generator and if the drought gets too bad, they have their own water well. In other words, Agnews is pretty much a city of its own.

The orientation of Agnews Developmental Center has changed a great deal since it first opened. The facility is presently used for helping people and preparing them for the outside world, instead of locking them in padded rooms. Agnews' philosophy is that through hard work, the developmentally disabled can lead a life of dignity and love.⁸

Agnews provides many services; in fact, they have six programs to help people. Each program is staffed and each staff provides appropriate services and activities to meet the needs of the individuals served. These

programs include education, recreation, activities of daily living, occupational therapy, various levels of vocational skill training, and other services; such as, physical therapy and County Transit Bus training. The staff members who "live" in the units provide training in daily living skills such as personal hygiene, dental care, care of personal belongings, community awareness, citizenship, advocacy, civil rights, independent decision-making, and other classes to promote growth and independence. Religious services are also provided for all denominations by a priest, a minister, and a rabbi, all whom are employed by the center.

The goal of the staff at Agnews is to treat the patients with dignity as if they are like all other people. All activities are voluntary, except school (which is mandatory for patients under the age of twenty-one) and the staff cannot violate the patients civil rights. For instance, some patients have seatbelts in their wheelchairs so they will not fall out. The need for the seatbelt has to be written down and documented as a necessary support device. Otherwise, it would be considered a restraint.

Another example is that of a client who scratched his face severely. The staff tried cutting his fingernails, but that still did not stop the problem. Eventually they had to put mittens on his hands. The State told Agnews that it was illegal to do so for it was a violation of his sense of

touch. Then, the recreational therapists took the mittens and made finger puppets. They wrote it in the medical records as a therapeutic recreational activity.⁹

The only time restraint is used is when the patient is an immediate threat to others or is harming himself. According to one staff member, "... The patients are usually well-behaved, but when someone has a fuss we hold them down until their muscles relax; then we let them go , if they fuss up again, we do the same procedure."¹⁰

PROBLEMS IN THE 1990'S

Recently Agnews has experienced some negative publicity. In the past two years, Agnews has received twenty-four citations from the State Department of Health Services. What is troubling to state investigators is the frequency and seriousness of the offences at a facility that for years has enjoyed "a good record" for patients' care.¹¹

In one case, a very ill twelve-year old patient was ordered to Kaisers emergency room. An ambulance was called to take her to the hospital which was seven miles away. The trip should have taken no longer than twenty minutes. Forty minutes later the ambulance still had not left Agnews despite the doctors' orders. The driver got lost and one hour and forty-five minutes later the ambulance arrived at Kaiser, but the doctors could do nothing to save her. Jerry Burtelson, the volunteer coordinator responding by saying, "the ambulance driver was new to the area and did not know **where** Kaiser Hospital was. In the future, drivers will have maps of all the neighboring cities."¹²

Another case of misfortune involved a twenty-eight year old man named Benjamin C. Hartzell. He died on Novemeber 20, 1990, after drinking detergent found in the same cup used for serving milk. When Benjamin saw

the cup in the janitorial closet, he assumed that it was milk.

It may seem that Agnews does not take care of its patients, but it is quite the contrary. As Jerry Burtelson explained:

"... people look upon Agnews harshly because of something unfortunate they read in the newspaper. People hardly notice the good things that Agnews has done for our patients. It is the bad publicity that has people looking down at us."¹³

THE EAST AND WEST CAMPUSES

Agnews Developmental Center presently cares for four types of patients including those who suffer from cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and mental retardation. These types of patients are divided amongst the campuses. The East Campus is for those who need special medical attention. The West Campus is for those who are the highest functioning. For instance, they can walk, talk, tell time, know where they are going, and when to come home for dinner. They have what is called "ground privileges".

Both campuses have what is called the "Normalizing Activity". This is where patients do not just learn about the outside world; they experience it. For example, patients work on the outside and get paid, ride County Transit to school or work, and they have credit cards at major department stores. When the patient buys something, the bill is deducted from their own trust fund. They obtain this trust fund from places such as Medi-Care, Medi-Cal, Dependent Childrens Association or their families.

Use of the West Campus is not just limited to the patients. Several

other small businesses now lease the land. Back in 1951, the population of Agnews was 4,900, and they had to have buildings to accomodate them accordingly. Now, the population is only 1,100 patients. Agnews still has the buildings, so they are leasing out to organizations such as the Alviso Preschool, an agency for the homeless, the California Conservation Corp, and the Police Athletic League(PAL).¹⁴

CONCLUSION

For more than a hundred years, Agnews has successfully met the needs of a special group of people in our community. One example of this success is shown through the fact that over thirty percent of Agnews' patients are released into homes that require less supervision. In spite of the difficulties that any institution of its size might encounter, Agnews has done a commendable job in serving its' patients. They have continually upgraded their programs to meet the changing needs of the patients, and, unlike many other businesses, they have managed to live within their budget. When problems have arisen, the staff at Agnews has dealt with them accordingly and fairly. The good spirit that Agnews has shown through over a hundred years will surely continue and grow.

NOTES

1. Sidney Hill, "Sale of Agnews Land Considered," San Jose Mercury News, July 18, 1974.

2. "Agnews Puts Its Troubled Past It," San Jose Mercury News, February 14, 1982, pp.1A, 11A.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Mardi Bennet, "A Good Reason for Celebration," San Jose Mercury News, February 24, 1988, p.2.

7. Michael Di Marco, "Agnews Emerges as Best Care for the Disabled While Shaking Its Image As Bay Area's Asylum," The American, May 22, 1987, pp.8, 9.

8. Ibid.

9. Jerry Burtelson, Personal Interview by Michelle Johnson, at Agnews Developmental Center, San Jose, CA, 10:15 a.m., April 15, 1991.

10. Ibid.

11. Ed Pope, "Twenty-four Citations Mar Agnews' 'Good Record'," San Jose Mercury News, March 8, 1991, pp. 1A, 11A.

12. Burtelson, Op. Cit.

13. Ibid.

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Appendices

STATE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

AGNEWS DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER
3500 ZANKER ROAD
SAN JOSE, CA 95134-2299
(408) 432-8500
TTY (408) 432-0942

Keri L. Procnier, Ph.D., Executive Director
Charlene Stewart, Clinical Director
Corey Hudson, Administrative Services Director

INFORMATION STATEMENT

Agnews Developmental Center is a residential facility, maintained and operated by the State of California, for the care, treatment, development, and training of individuals with developmental disabilities. The average population of the center is 1100, primarily from the Bay Area; however, a population of 1,505 could be accommodated. Care, treatment, development, and training activities are organized into six programs. Each program is headed by a program director and is staffed with appropriate professional personnel in the fields of medicine, psychology, social service, education, rehabilitation therapy, nursing, and living unit management.

Program 1 - Continuing Medical and Acute Services:

Serves individuals who have multiple physical handicaps or who need acute or continuing frequent medical attention requiring the service of skilled nursing staff. Almost all the individuals in this program do not ambulate or ambulate only with assistance. The programming services provided include physical and occupational therapies, education, and training in self-help, recreation, and socialization skills.

Program 2 - Physical Development:

Serves individuals who require skilled nursing care. The majority of individuals are in the severe and profound range of developmental disabilities, and most have severe multiple handicaps, with varying degrees of physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Services are provided in self-care, communication, sensory motor, education, recreation, socialization, and various levels of vocational/skill development.

Program 3 - Adult Physical and Social Development:

Provides intermediate care for older adults who function within the moderate to profound range of developmental disabilities. Training is provided in self-care, socialization, and independent living skills.

Program 4 - Social Development:

Provides intermediate care for adults with severe and profound developmental disabilities. Emphasis is placed on training in self-care, socialization, sensory motor, leisure time use, various levels of vocational/skill development, academic and independent living.

Program 5 - Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult:

Serves individuals who require intermediate care. Most of Program Five's population are children and adolescents. Emphasis is placed on training in areas of self-care, communication, education, socialization, and various levels of vocational skills/development.

Program 6 - Behavior and Social Adjustment:

Provides intermediate care for adults who have mild to severe developmental disabilities with mild to moderate behavior problems. Training focuses on preparation for community living, survival skills, and emphasizes various levels of vocational training, education, the utilization of leisure time, the consolidation of skills in self-care, and socialization, resulting in the reduction of unacceptable behaviors.

Assessing Individuals' Needs:

Agnews Developmental Center has competent and licensed staff that provide assessments that identify the individual's current functional level, health status, developmental strengths and needs, conditions that impede development and causes, if known, of the disability. The following assessments are provided: physical examination and health assessment, dental exam, nutritional evaluation, visual and auditory evaluations, social evaluation, speech and language evaluations, psychological evaluation, assessment of adaptive behavior or independent-living skill, developmental, educational, vocational evaluations, medication and immunization history, recreation and leisure, occupational therapy, physical therapy, neurological examination, and psychiatric evaluation. If an assessment is unavailable at Agnews Developmental Center, the individual will be referred to an appropriate facility for the needed assessment.

Information Packet
Revised 3/90
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STATE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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3500 ZANKER ROAD
SAN JOSE, CA 95134-2299
(408) 432-8500
TTY (408) 432-0942**

CENTRAL PROGRAM SERVICES

SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY SERVICES (Extension 2288)

Speech Pathology and Audiology Services are provided to assist individuals in maximizing their communication potential. These services include screening, assessment, evaluation and consultation.

CAMP COYOTE (Carol Bowman, extension 3381)

At Camp Coyote, individuals participate in a variety of day and overnight camping experiences. The camp, located on the East Campus of Agnews, affords opportunities for individuals to explore nature and the out-of-doors. Parents, relatives, and the local community also use Camp Coyote.

GYMNASIUM (Lori Beling, extension 3381)

Individuals play basketball, kick ball, floor hockey, paddle ball, and ping-pong in the gymnasium. All staff provide structured activities which emphasize gait, motor, and balance activities, as well as movement exploration exercises.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS (Lori Beling, extension 3381)

Agnews participates in the nationally recognized Special Olympics Program. The Agnews District, an independent area of the California Special Olympics Program, represents the approximately 1,100 Agnews' individuals in local, county, and state meets. Special Olympics' events include gymnastics, track and field, basketball, floor hockey, swimming, bowling, roller skating, and snow skiing. Developing a positive self-image, gaining confidence, and developing a sense of pride and accomplishment through on-going training and participation are emphasized by the Special Olympics Program.

LIBRARY SERVICES (Pam Healy, extension 3382)

Books, talking books, records, film strips, and video tapes available in Agnews' Community Library are used to enrich structured, unstructured, and leisure time activities. Adaptive library services are provided to the individuals who live on the East Campus. This program provides music, recreation, and leisure activities for the individuals' enjoyment.

The Staff Library, located in the Training Center, is a valuable resource. A collection of current literature and resources on developmental disabilities is available for use by staff and students.

REHABILITATION SUPPLY CENTER (Joanne Eastland, extension 3380)

Craft, party, recreation, and activity supplies needed to conduct recreational, educational, and leisure time programs are available from Rehabilitation Supply.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES (Jerry Bertelsen, extension 2004)

Volunteer Services at Agnews coordinates the successful involvement between the community and the individuals who live at Agnews. Volunteers offer special activities, such as holiday events, carnivals, musical entertainment, as well as personal and direct relationships with the individuals.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES (Father Byrne, extension 2142; Rev. Charles Carney, extension 2141); Rabbi Bernie Robinson, extension 2143)

Many pastoral, educational, and worship services are available. Staff and volunteer chaplains, representing all faith groups, provide counseling services to parents seeking advice and assurance regarding initial residency and continued care. On-going relationships with community parishes and synagogues provide opportunities for individuals to experience worship with the community. Lay volunteers contribute significantly to program goals, enhancing the human dimensions of residential living.

FOSTER GRANDPARENT AND SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM (Toni Tollack, ext. 2083)

The Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Project, a federally-funded project under ACTION, is designed to provide low-income seniors with an opportunity to augment their income through involvement with individuals. The Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion is assigned two individuals and spends two hours daily, Monday through Friday, with each individual. Taking walks and bus rides, listening to the radio, reading stories, and going to training classes are activities enjoyed by both the individual and the Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion. The Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program makes this one-to-one relationship possible.

EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES (Liz Stoddard, extension 2296)

Program-based education services are augmented by the services of the Assistant Chief, Central Services (Education), who provides liaison, coordination, and technical assistance to the center's Chapter I Project (E.S.E.A. Title I); Santa Clara Unified Adult Education Program; West Valley Community College, and other community education projects and resources.

WORK AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

A continuum of vocational services for individuals with developmental disabilities is provided to help each individual move along the continuum of vocational training toward remunerative employment as an independent citizen and worker in the community.

BARBER AND BEAUTY SERVICES (Carl Sims, extension 2619; Juanita Wiesenstein, extension 2617)

Barber and beauty services, such as hair care, hair cutting and styling, permanents, and general grooming help, are provided on a regular basis. Also, residential staff are trained to teach individuals how to use proper grooming and hair care skills and improve their general appearance.

PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION (Usha Belani, M.D., extension 2442)

Under the direction of a physician, plans and implements physical medicine services in the following areas: neuro-developmental, physical rehabilitation, psycho-social, self-care and sensory integration, neuromuscular facilitation, and multi-sensory stimulation.

ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT DEPARTMENT (James Liang, extension 2458)

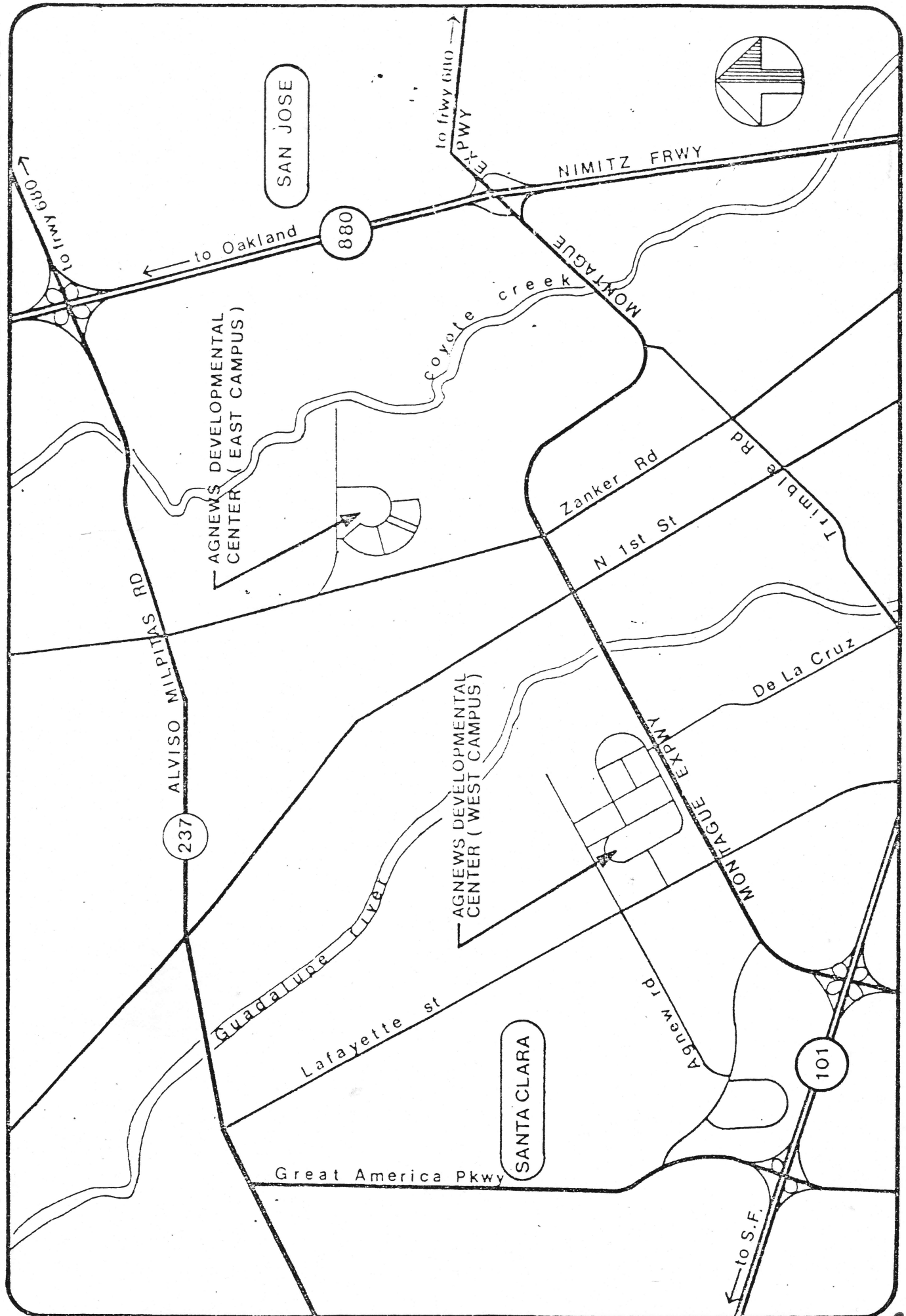
Designs and fabricates custom seating systems and adaptive devices such as lap trays, helmets, scooter boards, abductors, etc. Also, provides repair services for above noted devices.

dg
Information Folder
11/90

AGNEWS DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER East & West Campus

(408) 432 - 8500

LOCATION MAP



Willow Glen Educational Park

Advisor:

Mrs. Kathryn Philp