
TO THE CITIZEN

IF YOUR NEIGHBOR HAS A CLEFT PALATE

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A crippled child has been defined by the International Society for The Welfare of Cripples. It defines cripples as "Individuals whose activities have become so far restricted by loss, defect or deformity of bones or muscles as to reduce his or her normal capacity for education and self-support." In the terms of this definition, an individual with a cleft palate or cleft lip is just as much a cripple as anyone having any other deformity. Certainly one who cannot speak clearly is at a disadvantage in his family and social life, as well as in his job. Although he may be highly intelligent and capable, his chances for achievement are limited in this highly competitive verbal world of ours. If he has a cleft lip, his appearance is against him. Even though his lip is perfect, his opportunity is lost as soon as he opens his mouth and speaks with the indistinct nasality that is the special disability of this speech cripple. Thus, this individual may often become a drain on the community unless he can be made self-supporting to the extent of his abilities. Such need not be the case, just as a leg or arm cripple may be completely rehabilitated, so may the child with a hole in his mouth. Recent research and practice make it possible not only to give him a lip and mouth that is natural but—and of much more importance—speech that is clear and distinct. There are now clinics in operation which have successfully restored cleft palate individuals to a worthwhile secure place

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in society. The tragedy today is that too few of us recognize that such people are cripples and that they can be completely rehabilitated. The job *can* be done if you, Mr. Citizen, are really interested in helping your neighbor.

As a citizen therefore, your responsibility should be to—

1. Determine available community agencies or resources which could place this individual under proper care and guidance.

2. If no such facilities are available in your community it is then imperative that you as a citizen feel the responsibility for the establishing or financing such aid for your neighbor or neighbor's child. It has been found with alarming frequency that there are communities who believe they do not have enough of such cases to warrant any activity in their behalf. This attitude can be *due* only to lack of interest or research facilities because it is a well-established fact that one child in every 700-750 live births is born with a cleft palate or cleft lip.

3. In bringing proper aid to your crippled neighbor, it is recommended that you as an interested citizen contact the following agencies:

(1) Cleft Palate Division, Department of Health, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

(2) State Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Physical Restoration, State Capitol, Your State.

(3) Your local or state Crippled Children's Society.

(4) Your local service clubs interested in crippled children and adults.

(5) Your State Nurse.

It is just as important from the standpoint of the community that an individual be prepared not only to walk up and ask for a job by correcting a lame leg, but when he can walk for the job that he be rehabilitated to the extent that his speech and personality makes him capable of asking for it when he gets there.