

Address by:

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Dedication of Jaycee Chapel
Camp Easter-in-the-Pines
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OUR HANDICAPPED RESOURCES

First, let me thank you for the honor of sharing this occasion with you. It is good to return to Camp Easter-in-the-Pines, to have an opportunity to witness its fine progress for myself, and I am especially grateful for the opportunity to renew the many friendships born of past Easter Seal campaigns.

As I looked around the camp this afternoon, I found it hard to believe that such an outstanding recreational facility has developed in just seven short years, and everyone who has contributed to its growth certainly should feel proud. You Jaycees are well-known for your ability to "get the job done", and I can think of no more worthwhile undertaking than the beautiful new chapel which we have come to dedicate. Camp Easter is here because of the gifts of many, and you have given more than your share.

I think no camping experience has truly been worthwhile unless it has left the camper with a feeling of closeness to

nature and closeness to God. And when that feeling comes, there is now a special place where each and every one may come to give his thanks.

Many will come here I am sure, for young and old alike have come to know Camp Easter as a special place - a place to come to camp when before there was no place to go, a place to do the many things that before could not be done, and a place to find a kind of joy that once could not be found.

Camp Easter is a place of discovery - a place where the handicapped can discover new ways to fulfill their lives, and where those others of us, each with our own limitations, may learn from them how to live with our problems.

However, I do not want to talk about the problems of the handicapped. For too long we have thought of the handicapped as a social problem in terms of what society must do for them.

I submit to you that it is time for more realistic thinking about the handicapped. While society needs to provide more and better rehabilitative services to an ever increasing number of handicapped citizens, at the same time we need to consider them as "Social Resources" rather than "Social Problems". It is time that we start considering what the handicapped can do for society as well as what society should do for the handicapped.

A hundred years ago it would have sounded very heartless and cruel to make statements like "The handicapped should earn their own living" and "That woman in a wheelchair should learn to cook and do her own housework". Certainly a hundred years ago few, if any, would have thought of the handicapped having any civic or community responsibility.

Today, however, these statements are not cruel, but express the deepest longings of most handicapped people. With few exceptions, our handicapped citizens do not want others to "Take Care of Them", physically or financially. They are only seeking the opportunity to take care of themselves and contribute to society.

Before going any further, we should recognize one important fact too often overlooked in respect to the handicapped. Each person is an individual and must be thought of as such. While two people may have similar physical, mental or emotional disabilities, their ability to cope with their disability will be entirely different as a result of their economic status, family and social backgrounds. We are learning that no one form of treatment or social service can possibly meet the needs of all people with disabilities. One of the greatest challenges that we face is the development and implementation of rehabilitation programs that will benefit all disabled Americans.

As long as there is one person in our State who is physically handicapped, mentally retarded, or emotionally disturbed,

who is not being served, our job will not have been completed. As a lawyer, I do not have the skill to perform surgery and administer any form of therapy that enable the physically handicapped to walk, talk, or gain better use of their arms and hands. Neither am I capable of training the retarded to reach their maximum level of learning, nor am I trained to help the emotionally disturbed person regain his sense of worth and belonging.

Does this mean that Bob Morgan has no responsibility to the handicapped of North Carolina and that I can do nothing for my fellow citizen who has a disability? I think not and hope not!

While each disabled person must have the skills of specially trained people, we must never forget that these specialists are dependent upon an enlightened public to carry on their work, whether they be in a State-supported or privately supported program. Although we may not possess the medical and professional skills to aid the handicapped, friends, you and I have the final say on whether the disabled of our State and Nation will receive a chance to lead a productive and meaningful life.

It is becoming increasingly clear that all levels of government, local, State and Federal, must join with many private organizations in providing greater opportunities to the handicapped.

As I attempt to serve the people of North Carolina in public office, may I make my views clear on the questions and

The "shot in the arm approach"-- one professional being interest in his one service alone -- has to become a part of the past. No man can concentrate on "self-actualization," or attaining a proper work objective if he is starving; if he is in great physical pain, if he does not have any marketable skills, if his family life is falling apart because of illness or some other problem; or if he has experienced so many failures he does not know the meaning of success.

The professional like you, who can see these total needs and identify resources to meet them, will ultimately be more successful. And it is my fondest hope that one day soon North Carolina's disabled will have access to all of these resources through professionals like you.

Surely our State has many demands and limited resources -- but its greatest asset is its people. For too long we have seen most disabled people as problems to be tolerated only through health maintenance and public assistance payments. Compared to social and health programs, we are spending a pittance on rehabilitation in North Carolina. Our newspapers proclaim our vast social problems --

many of which could be greatly alleviated by Vocational Rehabilitation. Yet there is rarely a reference to Vocational Rehabilitation as a major counteracting force. Think of the potential manpower available to North Carolina if we could but see beyond the surface of the disability to the possibility of rehabilitation.

If tomorrow's newspapers would carry screaming headlines of a discovery of gold, oil, or some other natural resource in the State of North Carolina, there would be a great excitement and there is little doubt but what the needed capital to develop and market such resources would be raised very quickly. I submit to you that if we think of our handicapped citizens as resources for rehabilitation, rather than problems to be tolerated, this State can and will find the money, and enact the progressive legislation to make certain you people have the tools to do a good job.

Thank you.