

*Jewish National Home
for
Asthmatic Children at Denver*



Chicago Division

1953-1954



A Panoramic View of the Home



The Importance of the Jewish National Home

"MICHAEL REESE HOSPITAL 29th St. and Ellis Ave., Chicago, Ill.

I am a pediatric resident at Michael Reese Hospital and am writing on behalf of all the personnel—residents, attending pediatricians, allergists, social workers, psychiatrists, and auxiliary personnel—who have at one time or another taken care of Shirley James during the past three years.

I first met Shirley when I began my residency some 15 months ago. She entered the Examining Room in the midst of a severe asthmatic attack; the nurse said "Shirley's here again," and asked me to inject the I V Aminophyllin. This episode was repeated about every three to four days (or nights). Her visits became so frequent that they ceased to be listed in her clinic record; they must number well into the hundreds. She has had the use of every facility that modern medicine could muster. She was seen regularly over the years at the allergy clinic; she has had intensive treatment by the Psychiatric Department; she has received prophylactic medication with no consideration as to cost—including intensive trials on cortisone up to 60 mg daily at home over periods of several weeks. All these efforts have failed to prevent or even to alleviate her continuing attacks.

The only relief Shirley ever found has been inside the protective environment of the hospital. She has had about six admissions because of intractable status asthmaticus and after emerging from the acute phase (usually in 48 hours) she has spent many asymptomatic days and weeks, only to return wheezing a few days after discharge.

Shirley is now a patient in my ward, having been admitted three weeks ago in status. From my observations of Shirley as an outpatient and in the ward situation, and from my knowledge of her previous history, I believe she may still be rehabilitated if first she can be removed from her traumatic home situation and second, placed in a residential setting which is designed to give total patient care to this kind of patient. I feel that this is our last chance to save her from a shortened life span of continuous asthma attacks and all the serious attendant complications of this disease.

After careful consultation with several agencies, we find that your institution is the only one which meets our specifications. I am therefore requesting that you consider this girl as a candidate for admission to the Home."

Footnote—Shirley James is now at our home.

(All of us know the important role our National Home occupies in the nation's total health picture. Every Chapter member and each person of the staff shares the pride of this knowledge. However, it is always encouraging to note when a famed medical institution pays professional tribute to our child treatment program which YOU make possible.

We believe the contents of the above letter speak more eloquently in appreciation of the existence of the National Home than anything we could write.)

What they say

"It appears to us that the child cannot go on very much longer under the present conditions. *The Home would be a real advantage to the boy.*"

Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

"I would urge that you get this boy into the National Home just as soon as you can. I feel *this is the only solution* for Jimmie. He is in urgent need of this type of care."

Lahey Clinic, Boston

"Joel has had a thorough trial with practically all the treatment available to us. From a psychological, as well as a somatic standpoint, *your Home should contribute greatly to his welfare.*"

Children's Hospital of Los Angeles

Shirley may still be rehabilitated if first she can be removed from her traumatic home situation and second, placed in a residential setting which is designed to give total patient care to this kind of patient. *This is our last chance to save her from a shortened life span* of continuous asthma attacks and all the serious attendant complications of this disease. After careful consultation with several agencies, *we find that the National Home is the only one which meets our specifications.*"

Michael Reese Hospital, Chicago

"Your Home would do this youngster a great deal of good."

Duke University, North Carolina

... about *The*

Jewish **National Home** *for*

Asthmatic Children

at Denver

The Jewish National Home for Asthmatic Children (formerly National Home for Jewish Children), the only charitable institution of its kind in America, fulfills a vital role in our country's health picture.

The children sent to us come from every part of the nation, regardless of race or religion. They are referred to us by major hospitals, clinics and child welfare agencies.

On these pages are a few of the admission requests sent to the National Home by various agencies on behalf of some needy child suffering from chronic intractable asthma.

We believe these excerpts speak for themselves on the importance of the National Home's free, nationwide treatment dedicated to the child asthmatic sufferer.

Your support will make possible the care, treatment, rehabilitation and research services of the National Home which have answered the urgent appeals expressed herein. Your generous contributions will insure that the National Home will be enabled to maintain and expand its life saving services, available without any cost to the parents of the nation's needy asthmatic child sufferers.

"This child has had an extremely difficult time with her asthma. From the allergic viewpoint she has been investigated and re-investigated and still continues to have persistent symptoms requiring large amounts of medication for a child of this age. *I feel that she deserves a chance and should be given a trial at the National Home. It would be desirable to have her admitted to the Home directly from the Hospital.*"

Brooklyn Jewish Hospital

"This child had some form of congenital heart disease followed by frequent respiratory infection which eventually ended in bronchial asthma. In addition he had a severe attack of polio. He does not walk, but must ride and be pushed about on a bicycle. Because of the whole complicated picture, *we can see no way out for this little boy of five but his acceptance and admission to your home where the total personality of the child, as well as his physical condition, can be evaluated and treated.*"

"It is recognized this is a difficult problem but this only serves as a challenge to your institution."

Child Welfare Services, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"If this child can be saved from inroads already made, *a great service will have been rendered to this little girl by the National Home. This eight-year-old has a heart of a thirty-year-old.*"

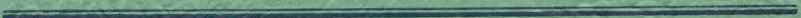
Children's Agency, Milwaukee

"*Mary stands an excellent chance for help in your institution; while if allowed to go on, she may end up as a hopeless pulmonary cripple. Without your help we can only visualize a rapid deterioration of her health.*"

Fort Dodge Hospital, Iowa



The Daniel L. Simon Building



September 15, 1953

Dear Mr. Gershtenson:

I am a pediatric resident at Michael Reese Hospital and am writing you on behalf of all the personnel — residents, attending pediatricians, allergists, social workers, psychiatrists, and auxiliary personnel — who have at one time or another taken care of Shirley James during the past three years.

I first met Shirley when I began my residency some 15 months ago. She entered the Examining Room in the midst of a severe asthmatic attack; the nurse said "Shirley's here again", and asked me to inject the IV Aminophyllin. This episode was repeated about every three to four days (or nights). Her visits became so frequent that they ceased to be listed in her clinic record; they must number well into the hundreds. She has had the use of every facility that modern medicine could muster. She was seen regularly over the years at the allergy clinic; she has had intensive treatment by the Psychiatric Department; she has received prophylactic medication with no consideration as to cost — including extensive trials on cortisone up to 60 mg daily at home over periods of several weeks. All these efforts have failed to prevent or even to alleviate her continuing attacks.

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After careful consultation with several agencies, we find that your institution is the only one which meets our specifications. I am therefore requesting that you consider this girl as a candidate for admission to the Home.

-2-

She is a negro; however, she seems to relate well to both white and colored in the ward situation and I see no reason for excessive fears on that score. She is a charity patient and will probably be unable to pay for any significant portion of her care.

I am enclosing statements by her psychiatrist and psychiatric social worker in order that you may be fully acquainted with all the facts we can provide.

If you need any further information, please feel free to write to me.

Very truly yours,

Robert S. Mendelsohn, M.D.

RSM:rrm
Enclosures

National Home for Jewish Children

at Denver

3447 West 19th Avenue, Denver 4, Colorado

September 21, 1953

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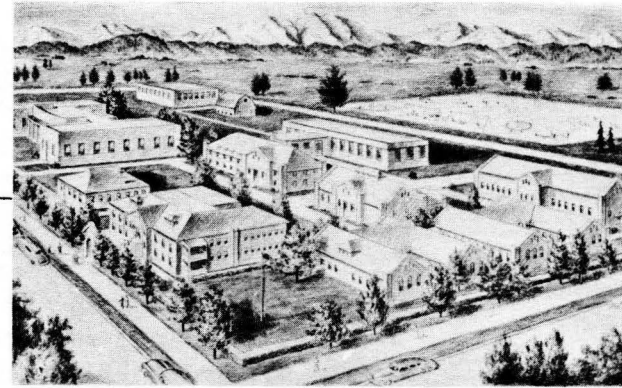
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AIR MAIL

Robert S. Mendelsohn, M. D.
Michael Reese Hospital
29th Street and Ellis Avenue
Chicago 16, Illinois



We Prepare and Prevent Rather than Repair and Repent

Jack Gershtenson
Administrator

Allan Hurst, M.D.
Medical Director

Harold Nitzberg
Case Work Director

Irving Kaplan
Group Work Director

Re: Shirley James

Dear Dr. Mendelsohn:

Mr. Gershtenson has referred to me your letter along with additional material from the psychiatrist and the social worker regarding Shirley James. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your very comprehensive and useful material relating to the presenting problem and also the therapy that has already been done with this child and her mother. I am sure that at the point where the application is processed by our staff and the Admissions Committee we shall find that we have been very much helped by you and your colleagues who understand the needs of this girl.

I would like to share with you a little bit about our admission procedures so that the family can be helped to make the application and also to understand the nature of our institution in relation to sectarianism. As you may know our Home has always been designated as a center for the treatment of Jewish Children. When the applications of children of this origin come to us the final responsibility lies with the Admissions Committee. However, when we are processing applications of children of other religions we then take the matter to the Board as there is a matter of policy involved. At the present time we do have ten non-Jewish children. We want you to know, however, that we have been impressed by Shirley's needs and do wish to have the family and you complete the application process so that we can present the material to the Admissions Committee and the Board. It seems that your staff has a good deal of understanding of the child's needs and has given much constructive thought to the need for placement with us.

Part of the application procedure is to have the doctors fill out the enclosed medical forms. In addition we require the family to fill out in duplicate, the enclosed application blanks. We also require that the family be involved with the social service worker around the whole matter of planning for this separation. We would need some report of the family's attitude toward placement and also their readiness to continue working through with the social worker the many aspects relating to the child's illness such as inter-relationships, anxieties around placement, etc.

We hope we can get the required material as soon as possible. If the child is accepted we would like to have her enrolled in the public school without any loss of time. We shall be looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Nitzberg
cm

Harold Nitzberg
Director of Casework

HN:cm

Dictated but not read

Enc: