

Congressman John E. Fogarty
National Convention of National
Society for Crippled Children
and Adults
Chicago, Illinois
November 21, 1965

PARTNERSHIP FOR HUMAN PROGRESS

To attend your National Convention is both a pleasant and stimulating experience. To receive this special award from the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults and to be invited to join in your meeting in a personal way is a singular compliment, indeed, and I would like to open my remarks this evening by telling you that I am deeply conscious of the honor you have accorded me.

As a Federal legislator, I welcome this opportunity to reaffirm the partnership that exists between your Government and the voluntary agencies of this country. America can be proud of what such groups as yours have accomplished through support of research, public and professional education, and community service.

We are entering upon a new era in American history. In the belief that those Americans who have tasted the fulfillment of this great Nation's promise have an obligation to help bring their less fortunate fellowmen out of their despair and deprivation and into the mainstream of American life, the first session of the 89th Congress amassed an impressive box score on national social legislation.

Some of these measures extend and expand existing programs; others break new ground. In the democratic process, when human aspirations cannot be satisfied by individual effort or within existing private resources, your Government has an obligation to provide other means for their realization.

Thus, the Medicare Program, the Community Mental Health Program, the Appalachian Regional Program, the Community Action Program, the regional programs to combat heart disease, cancer and stroke, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments -- all are significant and important steps to that goal. All of them allow for innovations in organizing and delivering health services through purposeful, vigorous community action. All of them are tailor-made for participation by voluntary agencies.

I cannot stress too often that we in Washington can authorize programs to help our citizens -- but in the last analysis it is these citizens who must help themselves. If any of the programs authorized by this Congress fail -- it will be because of lack of initiative at the local and regional levels.

I welcome this opportunity to share in this general session and to address representatives of a Society that is combatting such lack of initiative through State and local societies in the 50 States, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Those of you in voluntary associations such as this will do much to assure the newly-enacted, long-range National programs to renew American democracy do not fail.

I welcome this opportunity to salute the National Society as one of this nation's topflight voluntary associations, now in its 45th year of service to our country's handicapped people.

Your Society is to be commended for having chosen^{as} its theme for this convention, "Impact for Tomorrow," aimed at emphasizing the effect of voluntary effort on the American scene.

That effect has been a resounding and significant one, you may be sure.

I have a wealth of personal knowledge about your Society and its many accomplishments. In my own city of Providence, the State Society's Meeting Street School, Children's Rehabilitation Center is marking its 20th year of service to Rhode Island and the adjacent region. During those two decades, it has compiled an outstanding record in filling previously unmet needs of all types of handicapped children. In addition, it has engaged in public and professional education, research, provided a clearing-house of information on services to the handicapped and served as an approved training center for student therapists, child development, social work, and psychology students.

And I have also had occasion to observe the work of your organization in the national capital area. There, four Easter Seal Centers provide pre-school education, psychological and medical evaluation, clinics, and rehabilitation services to children and adult victims of crippling diseases and accidents.

But these are only two examples and there is not a representative from any of your local societies here tonight who could not provide us with a similar list of accomplishments.

In one of his works titled Health and Education: The Science of Health, the English clergyman, Charles Kingsley, advised us that "to be discontented with the divine discontent, and to be ashamed with the noble shame, is the very germ and first upgrowth of all virtue."

It occurs to me that the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults came into existence because of the discontent of one man, Mr. Edgar F. Allen, and his shame for the state of our nation's crippled in the 1920's. Personally involved by the tragic death of his own son, Mr. Allen was shocked and distressed by the inadequacy of our prevailing knowledge of and facilities for the care of crippled children. His personal dedication brought into being a general hospital and a special hospital to serve his own town of Elyria, Ohio. That dedication then expanded to seek and obtain similar care for other handicapped children throughout Ohio and, like a torrent let loose, spilled over state borders and led to the establishment of the National Society.

A rugged pioneer in the field, your Society was the only national voluntary agency speaking for and acting on behalf of the crippled. It assumed the lead in attacking the formidable problem of providing both voluntary and tax-supported rehabilitation services for the handicapped.

It would not be entirely just to say that -- until the National Society was founded in 1921 -- nobody cared about the future of our handicapped and disabled people. But it is not an exaggeration to state that only after the establishment of your Society were major efforts initiated to study and understand the serious problems posed by the situation, and to analyze and interpret these problems for the American public. It was your Society that first spelled out the difficulties over which even the best efforts could stumble, and then helped to formulate plans for the kind of national cooperation and concerted attack that could avoid these pitfalls and move toward its goal.

Your Society initially sought public recognition of the needs and potentialities of the crippled and worked vigorously to bring about legislation to provide basic medical and educational services. More recently it has focused on the development and operation of rehabilitation facilities and services. And because your Society specializes in providing direct help to the disabled, it serves as a resource in depth for other voluntary agencies, which refer cases for rehabilitative assistance in communities where your Easter Seal facilities are recognized as superior.

Just as your Society works side by side with dozens of other voluntary organizations, the combined voluntaries work side by side with government at local, State, and Federal level. This combination of diverse forces -- working together for a common purpose -- again characterizes the practical type of partnership that I consider a key to better health.

Strangely enough, although there has been some latterday abatement, loud and determined voices have for many years sounded a death knell for voluntary agencies in America, pointing to the increasing activity of the Federal government in health matters. Yet, I recall that in the spring of 1963, when the National Health Council held its Forum in Washington, D.C. its delegates refused to take counsel of these fears and visualized these voluntary groups as a most essential component of a partnership of public and private effort.

And one of their major conclusions was that "despite the phenomenal expansion of government activity in the health field, voluntary agencies still have a leading role to play in developing the nation's resources."

Their judgment makes sense to me. The truth of the matter is that through the combined efforts of voluntary agencies and government, we have mounted an attack on killing and crippling diseases that is without precedent in history. Any dispassionate examination of the nature of the roles each side plays in the

continuing fight only substantiates my firm belief that their respective efforts, as in the case of any true partnership, are complementary.

Carping and captious critics delight in asserting that the Federal government's research activities are elbowing the voluntary organizations out of the research field. But is this the case? I do not believe so, and I point to your own research efforts to prove my point. For some 12 years the National Society has operated a modest but purposeful research program through its Easter Seal Foundation. Your main support, as one would expect, has been given to investigations of the cause of crippling, the prevention of physical disabilities, methods for improving the function of impaired limbs, and measures for increasing the overall effectiveness of various rehabilitation processes.

But your broad interests have also included projects designed to improve the educational, emotional, psychological, social and vocational adjustment of crippled persons. Problems in these areas may influence the treatment of physical disabilities, and any assistance afforded the physically disabled to overcome these associated problems cannot but facilitate their eventual entry into productive living.

Our critics note the extent to which the Government supports research in the same areas. This is true. It is also true that -- no matter how much research is sponsored by government in these areas -- the National Society is in no danger in being crowded from the research scene. There will never be too much research done to combat killing and crippling diseases, and there is plenty of room in the field for both public and private research. And the results of research sponsored by Government and that sponsored by your Society are of mutual benefit to these "partners" in research and -- much more to the point -- are of benefit to the American people.

Now, while I have been specific in speaking to your representatives and have related my remarks to the National Society, I hope you will indulge me if I address some remarks to all voluntary agencies and to all their members who selflessly invest their time, talent, and service in volunteer work. I would be unforgivably remiss if I did not single out these individuals who form the hard core of voluntaryism.

I believe we have reached the point in our Nation's history where gross speculation as to the continued life of voluntarism will soon fade away. The voluntary agency is here to stay. It does a necessary job and does it extremely well. If not badgered by needless intrusion on the part of would-be overlords and the inevitable "we-can-do-it-better-than-you" brigades, the voluntary agency can devote its considerable energy to the strengthening of its essential components -- voluntary work and voluntary giving -- while providing the public with the type of creative leadership and vital services that have distinguished voluntarism from its very beginnings.

Of the vast amount of work that remains ahead for public and private instrumentalities, several essential tasks are tailor-made for voluntary agencies. First, they have the unique capability of creating the demand and presenting the case for meaningful research to their legislators in Washington. They have done yeoman work in this area in the past, but it is a continuing requirement.

They can help to promote the development of the hospital as a health service center in the community and assist in providing the necessary leadership for judicious area planning for optimum use of area medical resources.

In this regard, the recently-enacted Heart Disease, Cancer, and Stroke Amendments of 1965 (PL 89-239), in establishing regional medical programs, offer further opportunities for agency participation. The voluntaries can now join or sponsor members of the local advisory groups that will help advise prospective applicants in formulating and carrying out plans for establishing regional medical programs.

I believe it is imperative that our voluntary agencies continue to support selective research. Their makeup is flexible; they can follow new leads with dispatch; they can award grants at the psychological moment to assist or to encourage potential breakthroughs; and they have the capability of adjusting their direction or emphasis rapidly. These are advantages voluntary agencies enjoy in research that their government partners do not.

And, finally, they must continue their outstanding work in organizing and financing health services in local communities.

I hasten to note that I am not implying that voluntary agencies are not already deeply involved in all the task-areas I have outlined. But there will never be enough committed partisans in these areas, and only continuing and continual commitment can get the job done. These organizations have demonstrated over the years those two inseparable prerequisites

of achievement: imagination and courage. It takes a limitless imagination to conceive, to define, and to investigate unmet needs; and it takes great courage to strike out in new directions, abandoning customary activities and laboring in the now dim, now uncertain, and always controversial no-man's land that stands between what we are doing and what needs to be done.

Your Government needs and welcomes the assistance of all voluntary groups and their acknowledged expertise in the national effort to protect and improve our people's health. These programs will move ahead in any event, but they will move with greater purpose if backed by the kind of community and national investment of knowledgeable people's time and effort and humanitarianism that voluntary associations can provide so well.

Voluntary agencies have immeasurably enriched the partnership for progress in health that this country has made in recent years. They have raised to the highest degree our American tradition of concern and respect for the individual, and have dramatized and sharpened the edge of our moral sensitivity. In a display of interpersonal relationship at its very best, such groups as yours have given warm hearts and zealous hands to the cause of human betterment and rekindled hope and faith in the minds and hearts of countless persons.

In his book, The Future as History, Robert Heilbroner wrote: "...every event in history has a Januslike quality -- one face which regards the past, and one which looks ahead; one aspect which is the culmination of what has gone before and another which is the point of departure of what is to follow."

The National Society for Crippled Children and Adults is deeply embedded in the past that shaped the initially vague outlines of voluntaryism into a major force in our society. While others were as swift to move in meeting a social need, none charted a course more purposefully to benefit succeeding generations.

The National Society is equally committed to the future. It is meeting here to look into that future, a future it will share with other voluntary agencies and with Government at various levels.

In our common excursion into that future, and in meeting the host of challenges that awaits us there, I am confident that the partnership of the Government and the voluntaries will continue to flourish and provide this Nation with the key to greater health and happiness for all of our citizens.

In his book, The Future as History, Robert Heilbroner wrote: "...every event in history has a Januslike quality -- one face which regards the past, and one which looks ahead; one aspect which is the culmination of what has gone before and another which is the point of departure of what is to follow."

The National Society for Crippled Children and Adults is deeply embedded in the past that shaped the initially vague outlines of voluntaryism into a major force in our society. While others were as swift to move in meeting a social need, none charted a course more purposefully to benefit succeeding generations.

The National Society is equally committed to the future. It is meeting here to look into that future, a future it will share with other voluntary agencies and with Government at various levels.

In our common excursion into that future, and in meeting the host of challenges that awaits us there, I am confident that the partnership of the Government and the voluntaries will continue to flourish and provide this Nation with the key to better health.