

ANNOTATION

Maloney, Daniel J. "The Ocean Tides Residential, Educational, and Family Services Program: An Organizational History 1975-1985" EdD dissertation, Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts, 1984. 198pp.

Dr. Maloney's dissertation focused on how the history of juvenile delinquency in the United States, as well as in Rhode Island specifically, contributed to the creation and development of Ocean Tides. The program offers delinquent boys an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system, with emphasis on education and rehabilitation to help its participants in need of diversionary counseling or residential treatment (160).

The first chapter discusses the development of juvenile delinquency in the United States, as well as programs and institutions designed to address it. The colonial period was marked by family-oriented consequences for deviant behavior such as corporal punishment, with more severe offenses falling under the procedures of British Common law (16-17). Under this system, children (particularly older children) were often treated as adults. The primary family structure changed during the industrial age, with more families moving to the cities to work in factories. The employment circumstances for many of these industrial workers lead to high rates of poverty, which in turn influenced an increase in crime rates (24). With this rise in crime came higher rates of children being placed in institutions, often designed for deviants and those living in poverty. In many cases these children were institutionalized after recommendation from their schools, without formal evaluation to assess their need. As juvenile delinquency continued to grow worse through the period following the Civil War, the effectiveness of these institutions was questioned (34). Primary questions centered around whether a focus on punishment was failing to reduce deviant behavior, and how rehabilitation might become an effective replacement for the existing system. A necessity to treat children differently than adults was also emphasized during this time, with the first formal court systems for juveniles emerging in Chicago during the progressive era (36).

In the second Chapter, Maloney examines the state of juvenile delinquency specific to Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations, the area where Ocean Tides was initially developed. With criminal matters largely left up to the states, in colonial Rhode Island punishments often included public spectacles using whips, stocks, small prison cells, or banishment (56). These punishments were generally consistent for both adults and children, with juvenile offenders commonly placed in institutions with adults (58). However, several developments aimed to reduce the number of juveniles in these institutions – reform schools designed to train and educate rather than punish (59), development of a juvenile court system to keep children separate (64), and implementation of a probationary system (67). When these were still not highly effective, exploration of other options and prevention methods began.

The De La Salle Christian Brothers were among the groups that were looking into additional options for juvenile offenders, and Maloney describes the early stages of this process in chapter 3. The Brothers' interest in helping delinquent youth is long-standing, with Saint La Salle himself emphasizing the importance of educating and assisting all people, including those likely to be institutionalized (such as delinquents; 83). When the Brothers began their work in the United States, this priority to provide education took the shape of schools and institutions for orphans, the poor, and juvenile delinquents (84). The focus was not just on education, but also on building community and relationships with students. The Brothers started their work in Rhode Island in 1871, but by the 1970s they were looking to reduce institutionalized programs and exploring alternatives (88). They started designing a temporary residency program, with an emphasis on building transitional and adjustment skills in the youth who attended (97). The program was designed with four phases: building a residential center, creating community connections, developing job training, and establishing a research program to monitor progress.

The end result of this design was Ocean Tides, and the development of this program is described in chapter 4. While the Brothers experienced issues with state regulators and funding, after the initial implementation of Ocean Tides their first major obstacle was developing trust with their residents (110). The first group of juvenile boys in the program were entering an entirely new environment, with no previous participants to give them context regarding what to expect or how to interact with the staff. This was helped early on by a largely informal setting between the staff and the residents, which allowed for the natural development of relationships. The positive results that stemmed (at least in part) from these relationships provided a measure of success for Ocean Tides, which gave the Brothers a strong argument when advocating for the resources from the state to create a high quality program (114). This was something the Brothers repeatedly emphasized, stating they would run a quality program or no program at all. Ultimately, Ocean Tides developed into a program that provides a variety of services, including residential treatment, aftercare, family services, public school re-entry, treatment planning and goal setting, use of community resources, in-service training, expanded facilities, and self-sufficiency (121-123).

In chapter 5, Maloney provides examples of some of the data and feedback that the Ocean Tides program has collected to demonstrate its efficacy. Vast feedback has indicated that Ocean Tides has been a successful program for many of its participants. Informal data include positive feedback from former residents and family members, as well as teachers and staff involved in the program (140-144). Other data-driven feedback also provides evidence of the effectiveness and comprehension Ocean Tides (144-148). However, the importance of keeping the program small means that a lack of alternatives to juvenile detention centers is still a problem in Rhode Island 10 years after the Ocean Tides program began (151). This reflects issues that are seen around the rest of the country as well.

In the final chapter, details are provided that seek to identify the key components of Ocean Tides that have contributed to its effectiveness with delinquent boys. First and foremost among them is the focus on the quality of the program by the Brothers, which has lead them to continue the components that are effective and adjust those that aren't (175). Many of the other keys center on the way the program was designed. These include having a solid goal to work toward, a willingness to include adaptation and openness to change in the program's design, emphasis on

communication between staff and administrators, requirements for continuing staff development, a desire to collect formal data for assessment of progress toward goals, dedication to the small size of the program, and a multi-faceted approach to treatment and services for the residents (175-178).