

CONNECTIONS

THE PUBLICATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

OCTOBER 1983

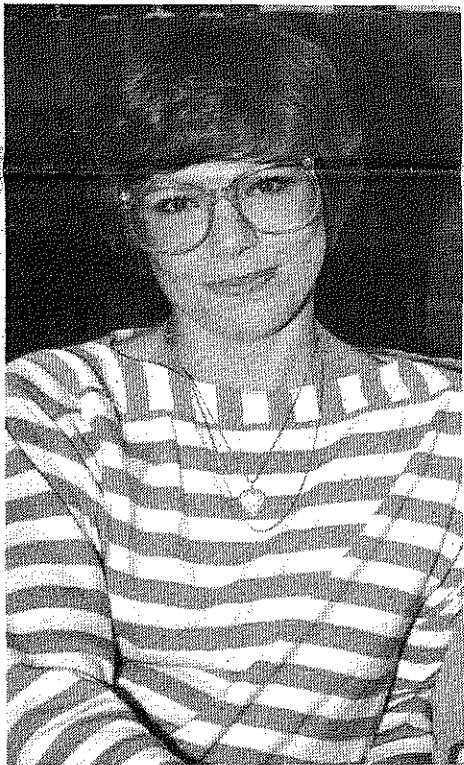
*Governor, Republican senators defeat bill
to restore mental health budget cuts*

FUNDS RESTORATION FAILS BY TWO VOTES IN SENATE

INTERVIEW:

TINA REYNOLDS

Public Policy Coordinator



"The success of any kind of public policy endeavor is going to be contingent upon volunteers being involved," said Tina Reynolds, M.S.W.

Reynolds is combing her background in community organization, her interest in volunteers and her knowledge of the political and budget process as new

"We need to focus on building a general constituency for mental health . . ."

coordinator of public policy for the Mental Health Association in Los Angeles County (MHA).

Her role with MHA includes working with volunteers and the Mental Health Coalition and tracking legislation and the budget.

"The last three years have

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Another opportunity to restore the mental health budget cuts lost by two votes in the state Senate as AB 1557 (Bates/Watson) went down in defeat. The urgency bill had in it money to restore the mental health budget cuts across the state, including the \$9.6 million for Los Angeles County. (See budget cut description pages 4 and 5.)

The bill required a two-thirds vote for passage.

"If the Governor had been in support of the bill there is reason to believe that the Republican senators would have voted for it," said Assemblyman Tom Bates (D-Alameda).

Senator Diane Watson (D-Los Angeles) said of the bill, "My concern is that the reduction of mental health funds will result in an actual increase in utilization of state hospital beds in place of community care delivered at a lower cost."

There was opportunity to override the Governor's blue pencil of the original budget but the Legislature made no attempt.

Negotiations between the Administration and the Legislature failed September 14, in the attempt to restore mental health funds.

Senator Watson's office said the bill will come up for vote again in January.

"We need to double our efforts to reach legislators and the Administration with the facts about what these mental health cutbacks are doing to the mentally ill of this state," said Richard Van Horn, executive director of the Mental Health Association in Los Angeles County.

AB 1557 Vote Record

Voting against were Senators Beverly (R), Campbell (R), Davis (R), Doolittle (R), Ellis (R), Maddy (R), Nielson (R), Royce (R), Russell (R), Seymour (R) and Speraw (R).

Voting for were Senators Alquist (D), Ayala (D), Boatwright (D), Carpenter (D), Deddeh (D), Dills (D), Foran (D), Garamendi (D), B. Greene (D), L. Greene (D), Hart (D), Keene (D), Lockyear (D), Marks (R), McCorquodale (D), Mello (D), Petris (D), Presley (D), Robbins (D), Roberti (D), Rosenthal (D), Stiern (D), Torres (D), Vuich (D) and Watson (D).

REHNQUIST HALTS SSI PAYMENTS

U.S. Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist has blocked an order requiring the Social Security Administration (SSA) to reinstate tens of thousands of disabled people cut from its rolls.

Rehnquist indefinitely stayed Los Angeles Federal District Court Judge William P. Grey's order to restore Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits to about 72,800 persons whose benefits had been wrongly terminated.

"The bottom line now," said James Preis, executive director of Mental Health Advocacy Services (MHAS), "is that people can continue to go through the process (of applying for benefits) but they will get no money."

The stay, which covers the part of the ruling covering reinstatement and issuance of checks, did not challenge the standards for determining eligibility, that persons may reapply for reinstatement if they believe their medical condition has not improved following the granting of disability benefits.

According to Barbara Bennett, senior attorney with MHAS, there was a freeze on terminations but the SSA may begin them again. Those seeking reinstatement may have to wait up to two years to receive benefits, but Bennett says it is important to turn in names and information.

"The stay puts the whole thing in limbo," said Preis.

The stay will be in effect until the suit is decided by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers nine western states including California, and is expected to take at least six months.

The SSA had requested the stay, in part because it estimated reinstating some of the people dropped over the past three years could cost more than \$19 million.

Rehnquist made his decision based on the damage he sees being done to the

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IN CRISIS
PG. 3**

**STATE MAKES
COLD CUTS
PG. 4-5**

**JUSTICE
FOR ALL
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Gloria Nabrit

NABRIT BECOMES MEMBER OF CAC

Gloria Nabrit, M.P.A., executive director of Kedren Community Mental Health Center, has been appointed to the California Department of Mental Health Citizens Advisory Council (CAC).

The 15-member council is a citizens group whose existence and organization is mandated by law to assist and advise the governor, the legislature and the state Department of Mental Health on mental health issues.

"I am privileged to have this opportunity to influence the conditions under which we present mental health services," said Nabrit. "As a provider, this is a good place to be."

Nabrit replaces Ruth Ann Terry who resigned from the group. Nabrit will represent mental health administrators on the council.

State Assembly Speaker Willie Brown named Nabrit to the CAC. The council is made up of nine members appointed by the governor, three by the chairperson of the Senate Rules Committee and three by the Speaker of the Assembly.

In January, Nabrit completed a five-year tenure on the State Health Facilities Board. She was appointed to the body by former Gov. Jerry Brown. She is a member of the Association of Mental Health Administrators and the United Way Corporate Committee on Health.

Nabrit is a former chairperson of the 30th Senatorial District Committee on Health and former vice chairperson of the board of directors of the Public Inebriate Program Inc. Other past involvements include posts on the boards of directors of the Frederick Douglass Child Development Center and the Big Sister League Inc.

Chaired by Lila Berman, the CAC works with the state legislature and the director of mental health (Gov. George Deukmejian has yet to fill this post) to insure mental health provisions throughout the state.

Among the council's many responsibilities are to advise the director of mental health on the development of a state mental health plan and the system of priorities in the plan, to periodically review all mental health services in California and to encourage the coordination of community mental health resources.

Other new members on the council are John J. Ryan, Victoria Camilli, Dr. Allan Seid and Dr. Stephen Morrin. There are two vacancies among appointees from the governor's office. Ruth Melrose is the CAC executive officer.

Nabrit attended her first meeting in July at the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City. At that meeting the council focused on such consumer issues as patients' rights, the right of involuntarily committed persons to refuse medication and affirmative action in hiring the mentally disabled.

SOCIAL WORKERS' FAIR EXPLORES HOW TO GET MORE OUT OF LIFE

"Most people cope well until some major stress or life change comes along and they find themselves in the emotional soup," said Abby Franklin, chairperson, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Counseling and Psychotherapy Referral Service of Los Angeles County.

"Clinical social workers are interested in educating people in advance of these situations which confront all of us, so that individuals have tools for handling and overcoming these difficult life transitions," she said.

Such education will be offered by the NASW Los Angeles County Referral Service at "The Getting More Out of Life Fair," on Oct. 15, a day of workshops on contemporary mental health and relationship issues.

Co-presented with Loyola Marymount University, the symposium will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Robert's Auditorium on the university's Westchester campus, Loyola Boulevard at West 80th Street, Los Angeles.

The \$15 fee includes three workshops, lunch and continuing education units for nurses, psychologists and social workers.

The 30 workshops in three sessions will be led by licensed social workers.

Session I contains "Mothers and Daughters," "Spiritual Hypnosis," "Freeing Creativity," "Attacking Heart Attacks — ABCs of Stress Management for Type As," "Living in Step-families," "Enhance Your Life With Effective Communications," "Being Up on Being Down — Depression," "Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (S.T.E.P.)," "My Parent — My Child — Caring for Aging Relatives" and "Gifted Kids — Pride and Pitfalls."

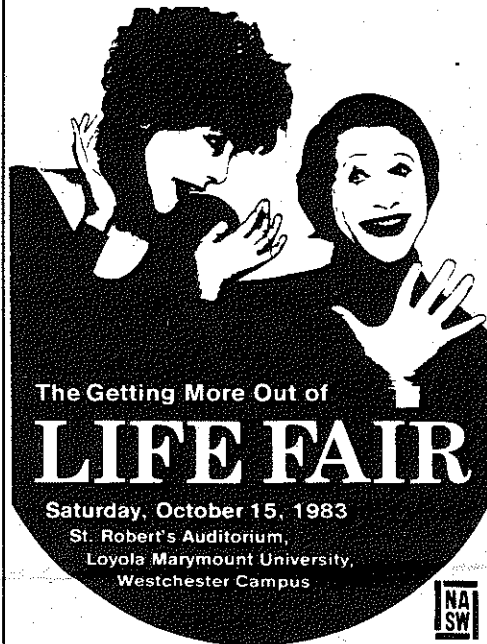
Session II has "De-Parenting — Emptying the Full Nest," "Fathering — A New Role," "How to Put Job Stress to Work for You," "The Self-Healing

Powers of Imagery," "Court Rooms Are Not Healthy for Families and Other Living Things — Divorce Mediation," "Discipline in an Age of Permissiveness — Coping with Your Teen-ager," "Escape From Loneliness," "Surviving Personal Disaster," "Staying Sexy — Human Sexuality Throughout Our Lives" and "Death — Living With Loss."

Session III has "And Baby Makes Three — From Couple to Family," "You Are My Other Myself — Relationships in a Holistic Age," "Hypnosis for Self-Improvement," "Assertiveness as a Management Tool," "Stress Management for Today," "Prescription for Survival — How to Keep Your Life Together Without Another," "Rape — Myth and Reality," "Sleep and Its Problems," "Developing Self-Confidence" and "Retirement — Problems and Rewards."

A keynote address, "Dealing with Divorce," will be delivered by Joan Dastor, L.C.S.W., Ph.D.

For pre-registration or information, call 642-2757.



PROJECT RETURN TO HONOR MEMBERS

Project Return, a program of the Mental Health Association in Los Angeles County, will hold its annual luncheon, Thursday, Nov. 10 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Miramar Sheraton Hotel, at the corner of Ocean and Wilshire Blvds., in Santa Monica.

The event honors members, staff and friends of Project Return, a federation of nearly 40 clubs and 500 members throughout Los Angeles County.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Deane Dana will be keynote speaker at the luncheon, addressing public and private partnership in the mental health system.

The Project Return Players, an improvisational theater group comprised of federation club members, will per-

form at the event.

Project Return Federation President Larry Brownstein will emcee the luncheon which features the presentation of nearly 50 awards including the Westwide and Coastal Friends Award to a professional, the business leader award, outstanding achievement awards, and the Rose and Aaron Sachs Awards, sponsored by Rhoda Zusman, co-founder of Project Return.

One member of each Project Return Club will receive a special recognition award and attend the luncheon free.

Tickets to the luncheon are \$25 for the public and \$5 for members.

Checks for reservations should be sent to the Mental Health Association, 930 Georgia St., Los Angeles, CA 90015.

SSI PAYMENTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

public treasury in weighing equities, said Preis. "He felt it was his duty to protect the trust fund; the lower courts wanted to protect the disabled."

In his ruling against the Social Security Administration, Grey ordered the SSA to notify wrongfully terminated persons whose health or mental condition had not improved within 60 days of their right to benefits.

Rehnquist's decision has overturned Justice Administration had acted illegally by ignoring evidence that many of the people whose benefits were cut off were still severely disabled.

"In his decision Rehnquist clearly stated that a stay is rarely granted," said Preis. "He said this was an exceptional case."

According to Bennett, Rehnquist believes Grey went too far in making such a sweeping order. Rehnquist has made clear in other cases, his belief that the Social Security system is already overloaded, said Bennett.

Following their denial of the SSA's request to stay Judge Grey's order, Ninth Cir-

cuit Court of Appeals Judges Stephen Reinhardt and Harry Pregerson wrote a decision upholding all of Grey's rulings. Wrote Pregerson in his concurrence to the ruling, "The government expects citizens to abide by the law; no less is expected of those (referring to the SSA) charged to faithfully administer the law."

Mental Health Advocacy Services was one of 14 public interest groups who filed a class-action suit earlier this year to force reinstatement.

Preis and other plaintiffs, including the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation and the Western Center on Law and Poverty, plan to ask the full Supreme Court to overturn Rehnquist's decision, or failing that, to ask the circuit court to hear the case as soon as possible.

"We believe a federal judge brought discretion to the case and Rehnquist interfered," said Bennett. "He has invalidated Judge Grey's remedy and denied benefits to injured people."

"Though he believes it is not a question of standards, he is worried about the scope of the remedy."

FILM TV BOOKS

Surviving Schizophrenia: A Family Manual

"The magnitude of schizophrenia as a national calamity is exceeded only by the magnitude of our ignorance in dealing with it. We have become experts in hiding it. It lurks behind the curtain in many families. It is a stigma that our ignorance continues to perpetuate."

E. Fuller Torrey, M.D. a clinical and research psychiatrist who specializes in schizophrenia, makes this statement in his new book, "Surviving Schizophrenia: A Family Manual."

This comprehensive, informative book shows a great deal of sympathy for the individual suffering from schizophrenia. There is also empathy for family members involved in this disease process that is so mysterious, foreign and frightening.

Torrey's use of direct quotes from clinical cases detail the sensations, thoughts, feelings and resultant behavior changes accompanying this illness that strikes one out of every 100 Americans.

Schizophrenia afflicts 100,000 new individuals each year, utilizes more hospital beds than any other illness and costs the United States billions of dollars annually in medical costs. Torrey explains succinctly and understandably the complete history of the disease; theories, both current and past; treatments; and the shortcomings he sees in the methods being used to treat those suffering from this illness.

His definitions about what schizophrenia is and what it is not, good and poor recovery rates, and the course that this illness takes are clearly explained and documented.

He presents statistics on the distribution rates from country to country which show Sweden having the highest occurrence with five times more cases than the United States and African nations having the lowest rates.

Torrey's book is by no means without hope. He sees a light at the end of the tunnel with current progress in research, new treatments and especially the organization of families and friends as advocates.

Torrey is critical of American psychiatrists for their lack of interest in schizophrenia. He feels the National Institute of Mental Health, the Mental Health Associations in the United States and other consumer groups are contributors to a history of shocking neglect to those individuals suffering from this illness. Torrey rightfully asks what happened to the years of promises for improved care and community services.

This book is an important purchase for anyone working with an individual or family suffering from schizophrenia, but it is an absolute necessity to those families going through the pain and puzzling aspects of this illness.

Susan Ronec

("Surviving Schizophrenia: A Family Manual" by E. Fuller Torrey, can be ordered for \$16.50 from the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, 1234 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Dr. Torrey is contributing his proceeds from the sale of his book to NAMI.)

Susan Ronec is the parent of a mentally ill son and vice president of the Mental Health Association in Los Angeles County board of directors.



Robert Sundance and Timothy Flynn (l-r) at the June opening of the Weingart Center on Los Angeles' Skid Row. Sundance and Flynn were plaintiff and chief attorney in the landmark 'Sundance' case of which the detoxification-service center is a direct result. Flynn is now president and executive director of the Public Justice Foundation, working to take inebriates, mentally ill and others out of jail and put them in treatment programs.

'AND JUSTICE FOR ALL' INCLUDES INEBRIATES, MENTALLY DISABLED

Lawyer Timothy Flynn is working to unclog the backlogged criminal justice system. And his plan includes taking the mentally ill out of jails and putting them in hospitals.

After seven-and-a-half years with the Center for Law in the Public Interest, Flynn recently founded the Public Justice Foundation to address "systematic change in current criminal justice, specifically with respect to the overuse and overcrowding of municipal jail facilities nationwide."

Flynn has worked in and around the criminal justice system since his graduation from Stanford Law School in 1967. He worked for the Los Angeles District Attorney's office as a special investigator prosecuting public corruption and police misconduct cases. He also worked for law firms in San Diego and Los Angeles.

His years of work have proven to him that the criminal court and mental health systems are misused and therefore not meeting their intended purposes.

"It is short-sighted and in my view an invisible tragedy that the mental health policy has been to make jails mental institutions," said Flynn. "We have gone from institutionalization to criminalization."

"The court system is hopelessly overloaded. There is a glut of cases and this has demoralized personnel, from police officers to judges, who can't get their work done," said Flynn.

"With so many cases, efficiency becomes the overriding consideration. They are taking on too much and people are swept into the legal system, which is not the system they belong in."

Flynn, best known as the chief attorney on the landmark Sundance case, wrote in his proposal to start the foundation, "Only by selectively diverting the types of 'offender' now swept into the penal system, and by reducing case processing delays and inefficiencies, may police, court and correctional agencies solve the dilemma of overcrowding and focus crime control resources on programs for public safety."

With the Public Justice Foundation, Flynn sought to establish a separate independent agency, for public information, research and advocacy, instead of working on the broad spectrum of issues he encountered at the Center for Law in the Public Interest.

Flynn's foundation has as its goal the elimination of an overcrowding epidemic in police lock-ups, criminal courts and county jails. To achieve these ends, the foundation's staff will develop and direct litigation addressing important national issues.

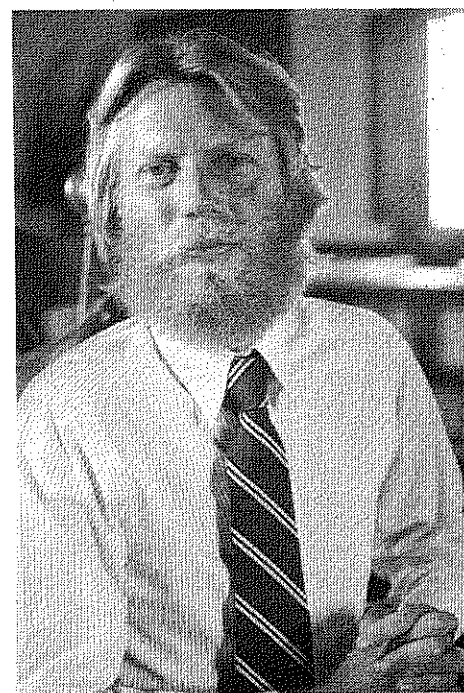
The Sundance case became the prototype for a series of cases that define the work and areas of reform the foundation

addresses:

Sundance vs. the Municipal Court of Los Angeles challenged the practice of arresting public drunks. "There is widespread agreement that non-criminal alternatives (public shelter and detoxification-rehabilitation services) are more cost-effective and successful in working with the non-disorderly public helplessness of homeless alcoholics; we know this also works with the mentally ill," Flynn wrote in his foundation proposal.

The Beltram vs. Pitchess case questions the procedure of "mercy bookings," of the mentally disordered and gravely disabled persons.

"These people are arrested and prosecuted on petty charges and warehoused in counter-therapeutic 'ding tanks,'" wrote Flynn. "Even if sufficiently ill to be



Timothy Flynn

recognized as such, and despite court-ordered transfers, many remain 'backlogged' in jail or are never transferred to a mental health milieu or facility."

Flynn plans to use methods other than litigation, such as public education, to improve the justice system. He envisions a practice that is not restricted to regional concerns, but that takes on cases that have national policy effects as in the treatment of public drunks, jailing the mentally ill and putting children in adult jails.

"We have one agenda, overcrowding in jails, as our sole focus," said Flynn, "and it is an important and timely issue." He adds, "We are in no way lacking in support."

At a conference, "Jail — The New Mental Institution," 35 national organizations

took positions on the areas Flynn is seeking to change, making as their top priority the removal of the four populations from the criminal court system — inebriates, children in adult jails, pre-trial detainees not in custody and the mentally ill.

The mentally ill go to jail for non-criminal behavior, unavoidable symptoms of their disease. They are usually arrested for some kind of malicious mischief, trespassing or defrauding an innkeeper, said Flynn.

"As alcoholics are made helpless by their illness so are the chronically mentally ill who are arrested for behavior over which they have no control," he said. "The profile is bizarre, they are often delusional, talking gibberish or hearing voices. They are displeasing and that leads to a complaint and to arrest."

"The mentally ill are arrested," said Flynn, "because they are unaesthetic. Just like being drunk in public, they are acting out or being psychotic in public. Mental illness cases are just like those involving drunks."

According to many in the mental health system, the mentally ill often break windows or disrobe in public as a plea for help. They often seek arrest to win a bed in a crowded mental hospital.

Law enforcement officers, empowered to take the mentally ill directly to hospitals, have learned their only hope in finding an available bed often is through the criminal justice system — arrest, court and a judge's order for transfer to the hospital.

"We use a dehumanizing system that takes a person through court proceedings, booking, fingerprinting and pictures," said Flynn. "It is a medieval approach; why do we use a system that deals with crime and guilt? It's much more humane and cheaper to use the public health system," said Flynn.

After his nearly eight years on the Sundance vs. Municipal Court of Los Angeles case, Flynn has become an expert on alcoholism and its treatment. "We've had to learn the facts and we know that one in three arrests is for non-disorderly, 'just plain drunk.' We have worked on the public health consequences, the human consequences of criminalizing the sick."

Flynn fell into the Sundance case after just six weeks at the Center for Law in the Public Interest. "A handwritten petition for a writ of habeas corpus came in, written on faded yellow paper (by the defendant, Robert Sundance). It was an eloquent plea challenging the constitutionality of institutionalizing the sick and criminalizing illness."

After interviewing Sundance in the Los Angeles Central Jail and becoming "hooked" on the case, Flynn sought and was given permission to pursue the case.

One of Flynn's major arguments at the Superior Court trial was that the cost of providing health care to public inebriates would be less than the cost of arresting them and sending them through the court system.

The argument was not a legal breakthrough but it garnered much attention. As a result, in 1977-78 the findings in the Sundance case included "profligate taxpayer waste (\$7.6 million a year) and systematic constitutional violations." The court ordered upgrading of all police and jail procedures and facilities.

A direct result of the ruling that the county is responsible for care of inebriates was the creation of the Weingart Center, a multi-million dollar conversion of the old El Rey Hotel as a detoxification and social service center.

Hitting the economic side of the issue is Flynn's "ace in the hole" in bringing about his desired changes. "People believe that the mental health system is more expensive, but early and proper intervention is cheaper. The key is dollars; fiscal chaos has ruined the mental health system and we must look at the long-term effects."

"Being drunk or mentally ill is not a crime," said Flynn. "It has been acknowledged by experts that incarceration is not the answer. We must demand alternatives."

To bring about these alternatives, Flynn has designed a third part of the foundation's program, "a creative communication program to persuade the general public and various special interest groups that the changes sought are necessary and in the public interest," as he wrote in his proposal.

"One of the barriers we face is financing; we are working on gargantuan changes in a complex system and to have an aggressive voice we need money."

Flynn envisions a public education campaign that points out the taxpayer waste and results in public scrutiny of the figures. "It is not enough to have people doing briefs; we must have public education on the four populations and have people of stature articulating the arguments against

incarceration of these people."

With two attorneys, one paralegal and a secretary-receptionist, the Public Justice Foundation is working to get its agenda publicly espoused as policy by national organizations, to reach people who affect public policy and eventually "to restore vitality to the public justice system."

As Flynn wrote in his proposal for the foundation, "In the priorities of the PJE, the key ingredient for effecting change is proof that these practices are wasteful of public funds. Unassailable cost-benefit arguments, whether developed through taxpayer waste actions or independent studies of alternative government practice, have enormous untapped potential for political initiatives with public acceptance and support."

Flynn believes his goals of economic justice for taxpayers and social justice for those caught up in the system can be reached. "I think we have had an effect and the winds of change are being felt in the area of public drunkenness. We have set in motion elements of what could bring about expansion of services modeled by the Weingart Center."

"We are fortunate to have a policy-minded court, willing to expand and finance development of community-based services, which we believe is an answer. We want to remove the barrier of jail and bring about direct intervention by the mental health system."

For further information write or call the Public Justice Foundation, 185 Pier Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90405, (213) 399-9201.

LA AGENCIES WIN FEDERAL FUNDING

Two Los Angeles County agencies, Kedren Community Mental Health Center and Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center, have received Mental Health Block Grants for the 1983-84 program year.

Of the \$1.5 million federal money available for distribution, Kedren received \$406,908 and Didi Hirsch received \$606,006.

The Family Guidance Clinic in Orange received a grant of \$89,877.

The federal money is distributed to the state for allocation among the 600 eligible community mental health centers.

"For Didi Hirsch, the block grant is an essential component of our funding," said Gerald F. Jacobson, M.D., Didi Hirsch executive director. "The restoration of the monies enables us to provide vitally needed services to those who couldn't receive the services any other way. There is no question that lives will be saved and others enhanced."

Of the 600 most eligible agencies, many have "graduated" — reaching the expectation that they will sustain themselves with other third party reimbursements or fees for service.

"For many of us this is impossible," said Gloria Nabrit, Kedren executive director. "There is often no supplemental money and there are constant expenses."

This is the seventh year Kedren has received a block grant. "The money makes up 25 percent of our budget. We are really excited to get the money," said Nabrit. The grant money covers the end of the last program year retroactively and forward for 1983-84.

NEW COOKBOOK BENEFITS 'MANOS'

A collection of North, Central and South American recipes is available from Manos de Esperanza, a program of San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center Inc.

Compiled by volunteers, staff and clients, the Manos de Esperanza cookbook has an emphasis on Mexican and South American dishes and also includes regional recipes. The more than 100 recipes range from soup to entrees to desserts.

The book is available for a \$5 donation. Interested persons may contact Octavio A. Figueroa at 988-8050, ext. 249.

Manos de Esperanza provides bilingual/bicultural mental health care services to Latino communities in the central San Fernando Valley.

