

MOTLEY #1

"Worthy of mention"...and off we go....

"Here is something that might interest you. Elinor Poland, a former N3F member and a very dear friend...of mine, is now teaching in a school for deaf mutes. She writes that many of these waifs receive no mail at all at mail call and literally break into tears of frustration ...and of rejection. Why they get no mail I don't know.... Elinor asked me if I could locate some people who'd be willing to write little notes or letters once a week to one of these kids. Nothing elaborate ...just a note and perhaps a stick of chewing gum would make these kids so almighty happy, its a shame to deny them.

"Hope you'll find this worthy of mention."

Fanatically yours,
/s/ Seth Johnson

A letter to Elinor brought this response:

"Our kids are from four years of age up to about eleven. Classes are by years, not grades. No, they aren't retarded, just slow or behind from speech & hearing limitations.

"The kids aren't very articulate, so probably will NOT answer letters, even tho they are happy as larks to get them. There ARE a few who do write fairly good letters and who will enjoy answering.

"All the kids stay in school all the time except for holidays or a weekend at home once a month if no holiday falls at that period. Some never get home except at Christmas. Not a single Negro child went home for Thanksgiving! Don't know if it was due to poverty or rejection, but I felt so sad about it. But everyone must go home for Christmas, so there will be no one left this next holiday. However, I don't know if they'll all have a good Christmas, even at home. Some are very poor.

"Some kids get regular mail from home and are loved. Others get NO mail and are hated by their parents, poor darlings! These are the ones who cry and suffer so.

"I'll send you the names of the most neglected ones. Already they are happier with the little mail that is starting to trickle in! Cute cards would be okay instead of letters, just so long as it's MAIL! They DO love to get boxes of cookies, and a little bag of candy is like a million bucks to them. I try to get one or two boxes a week myself [one reason why teachers at this type of school are never rich...Bjo]. In fact, anything at all you'd like to send to them would be a miracle to them. Even those penny-machine rings or prizes are treasures to them. They like picture postcards, too.

"They just live for boxes. Everytime someone receives a box, the other children gather to see what will be inside the exciting box! If there's enuf (like lollypops), we pass them out to the whole floor and everyone is so happy. They write it in their news: "Johnny got a box today...Cynthia got a letter...Mary gave us some candy...." It is such an important event. And they save the boxes for their crayons or other possessions. Everything is precious to them.

"The state has spent a lot for the buildings and equipment. But it can't give the more personal things a child needs...love, primarily, and little pleasures."

Love,

/s/ Elinor Poland

