

"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 recieve 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 kidsaren t very articulate, so probably will NOT answer letters, even the 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 latter...Mary gave us some candy...." It is such an important event. And they save the boxes for their crayons or other posessions. 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 or a

Five Minutes a Week to Make a Child Happy:

There are people everywhere who need to communicate. Young, growing minds need this more than anyone else, for security, and a sense of belonging. Letters are one way of communicating, For deaf children, it is one good way of telling them that they are not going to be left alone in their silent world. Letters can also show them that someone cares!

Residential schools for handicapped children exist everywhere, and in all of them are children who never get one word of affection from anyone but their teachers (who must necessarily avoid paying too much attention to any one child).

If we could reach every school...and try to find a person who would write to at least one child -- "adopt" him -- at least once a week.... However, we'll start with Elinor Poland's school and work from there. This bulletin is going out into fandom, and to several other groups who might be interested in joining the project. Fans may be too busy, but wives or older children might find time; if not, please pass this sheet on to your local minister, scout leader, or anyone else who may be able to bring some light and love to a lonely, deaf child.

Please address questions to me, and I will see to it that they are eventually answered. For those who must have some sort of answer to letters, we hope that they will be satisfied with a small bulletin of news concerning the children, their progress, and any news we obtain from them or the school. This way, we share the information, and the interesting things that happen (and save busy Elinor from having to answer dozens of letters).

These are the children who never get mail; with Elinor's comments:

DEBRA, Negro, age 7... "Never gets mail and cried at mailtime...didn't go home last two months...."

ELMER, about 8, spastic & deaf..."Cries easily...extremes of emotion... I wrote him one letter and he thanks me every day, with stars in his eyes."

TOMMY, age 9... "Write simple sentences to him, as he is very slow...." PATTY, age 7... "Never gets any mail...her parents hate her." JIMMIE, age 11..."Nice boy, comes from broken home."

Do you have five minutes a week for children like these? If you accept the responsibility of writing to a child, write to me at the address below, and I'll send you the full name, age, and address of a child. We'll try to fill any preferences for age or sex.

If, after starting this, you cannot continue, please tell me immediately. Do not betray a child simply by dropping him!; he'll never understand why, and you'll have done more damage than not sending letters in the first place. Instead, tell me, and we'll arrange to quietly shift the child to someone else.

The letters need not be long, and typing is fine. If handwritten, letters for youngsters up to about eight years of age should be in manuscript print: For older kids, use cursive handwriting:

We have three cats at I would like to be your our house. With love, friend I will write again soon.

This bulletin is a Mathom House publication, 9 December 1962, from:

Bjo Trimble -- 5734 Parapet Street -- Long Beach 8, California -- USA

[Phone: HA 1-1186]