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1 February, 1980

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1. What my opinion is concerning Mentally Retarded Institutions

I have been asked to give my opinion on what I think of Institutions. I had the opportunity to grow up in the City of Red Deer Institution, which was called the Provincial Training School at that time. I lived there from the age of seven years, from 1934 to 1947. As I spent most of my younger years there it gave me an insight into just what living at the Provincial Training School was like.

These hospitals do have their purpose, I feel of the residents who lived at the Training School in my time a few did require professional help, while for others it was not the place for them. They were perfectly normal people but because of family problems or no one cared they were put into the school as a last resort. The institutions are looked upon by a lot of people as a shame, while others look at them as a place where their children can get the help they need.

2. Living in Institutions

Once the residents are put in the hospitals they are given very little schooling, as I had. I was told I could never reach beyond a level 3 and that I could never make it on my own. I always had everything done for me even after moving out into the community the people I worked for would not let me try on my own. It took me ten to fifteen years to prove to myself that I could make it on my own and I have. There are others who had been at Mitchener Centre who were given up too, they are now out living in the community and have homes of their own and doing very well.

So it is not always the answer to leave residents in institutions if there is a possibility that the child can make it on his or her own living in the community rather than an institution. My experience living in the community has given me the chance to learn what I have. I accomplished this on my own working with different organizations, in peoples homes, meeting new friends, and having my own home. Educating myself through seeing what

others can do in the community. It has been wonderful. So it has been for others who have made it on their own.

My opinion on these hospitals is that these hospitals do have their purpose for residents who will always need professional help and never will be able to look after themselves on their own in the community.

So this is my opinion on what I think of institutions.

We need more Group Homes, staff and money to keep these children out of institutions and get them into the community to become independent people.

Thank you

Doreen Befus.