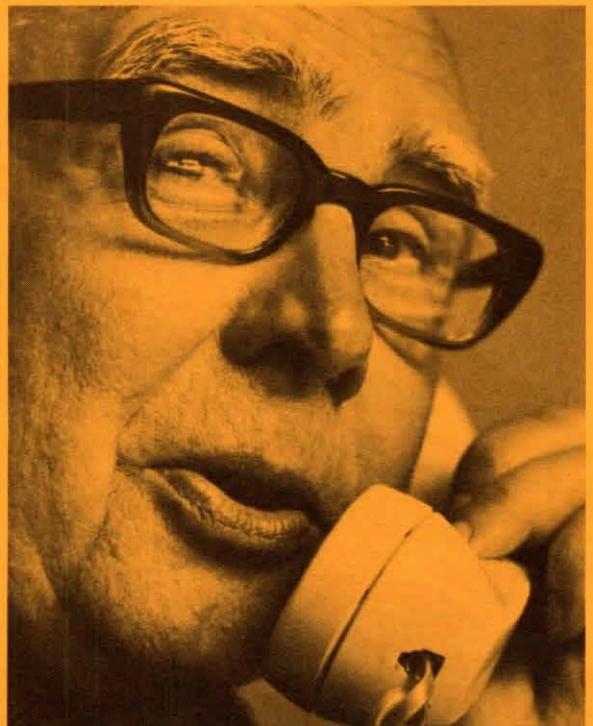
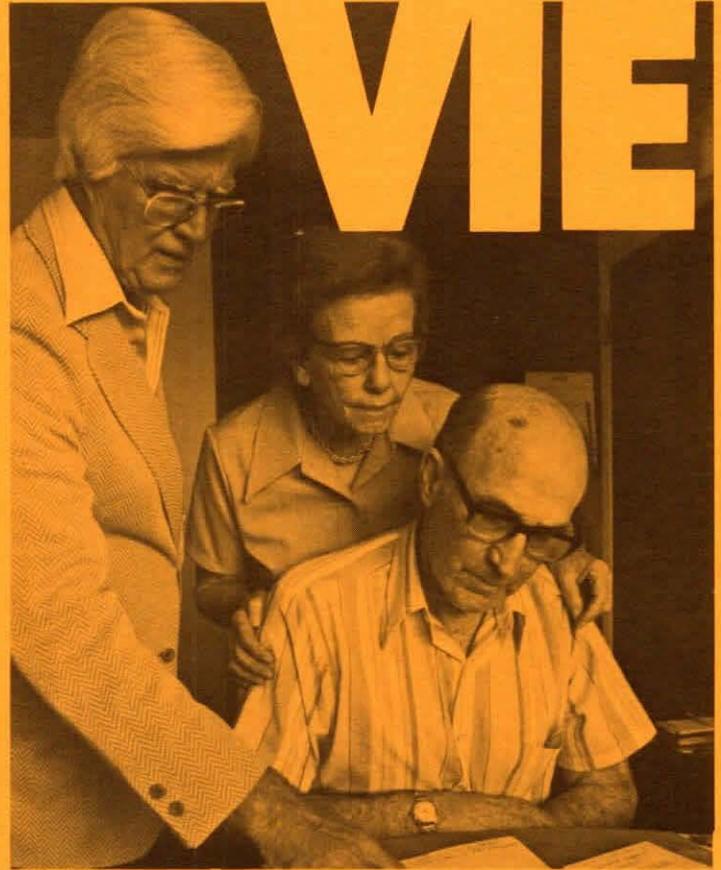


# A New Voice To Answer Community Need:



*A unique national demonstration program that utilizes the skills of older citizens to solve community problems was initiated by The Association of Junior Leagues, Inc. (A.J.L.), in 1977. The program proved so successful in the demonstration phase that the Association now seeks to share its design with local governments, community institutions and agencies, citizens' groups, corporations, colleges and universities and any other body concerned with improving the quality of life in our society.*

*Known as "Volunteers Intervening for Equity (V.I.E.)," the program taps a vast, underutilized volunteer resource: retired citizens. Under V.I.E.'s auspices, more than 600 men and women—ranging from 55 to 89 years of age—have been working vigorously to meet urgent community needs and to ensure the responsiveness of social service systems to the people they are designed to serve. Within their local communities, these trained volunteers have taken on the role of active agents for constructive social change.*

*In the nine V.I.E. demonstration projects established by sponsoring Junior Leagues in cities across the United States, creative solutions to a wide variety of social problems have been developed and put into action. The V.I.E. program has earned local, state and national acclaim for its accomplishments—including the commendation of the White House in 1978.*

*Project V.I.E. has matured from the "test stage" into a number of programs of great import. This booklet tells about some of those programs and their important ramifications—including the rewards derived by the sponsoring Junior Leagues and by other groups that have incorporated the V.I.E. model into their community service programs.*

*The Association of Junior Leagues hopes that V.I.E. will serve as a national model for all groups—both inside and outside the Association—who want to address the critical problems of their communities and for whom this significant volunteer resource may be the key to obtaining meaningful change.*

*Cover photos depict V.I.E. workers acting as intermediaries and agents of constructive change: lecturing seniors on entitlements (upper left); working with them to obtain benefits (upper right); tutoring children (lower left), and using the phone to campaign, lobby and intervene for equity.*



---

"Through V.I.E., older people function at peak productivity in the service of their communities," says Judge Rom Powell of Florida's Ninth Judicial Circuit. "In Florida, V.I.E.'s observations and recommendations for improvement of the juvenile court process were of great benefit to the court and to our children."

"My father was able to spend the last weeks of his life the way he wanted to—at home—because of the home health coverage V.I.E. initiated," says a Michigan man, Don Scott.

"V.I.E. speaks with one voice for thousands," states Nebraska State Insurance Commissioner Walter Weaver. "V.I.E. was extremely helpful to the Nebraska State Insurance Commission and the Nebraska Legislature, in the passage of L.B. 877."

"V.I.E.," beams Elmer Fryckman of Minneapolis, Manager of the Honeywell Retirement Volunteer Program, "was an inspiration to us all!"

What is the exact nature of this V.I.E., which elicits so much praise, which spans so many states, which touches so many disparate people?

V.I.E.—Volunteers Intervening for Equity—began in 1977 as a national advocacy demonstration project of The Association of Junior Leagues, Inc. (A.J.L.), with a major grant from The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. The project proposal sets forth V.I.E.'s objectives:

- To recruit and train skilled and educated retired people as advocates, thereby countering the pronounced disuse by society of the skills and talents of older persons.
- To advocate on behalf of millions of fellow-citizens who cannot cope individually with the increased complexity and impersonality of many major institutions.

V.I.E. was envisioned as a vehicle for enlisting knowledgeable seniors as volunteer intermediaries between bewildered and frustrated clients and complex institutions such as hospitals, school systems, government agencies and courts—hence its name: "Volunteers Intervening for Equity." Through V.I.E., older men and women advocate on behalf of persons needing help to obtain a right or benefit and work to change systems that have an adverse effect on people.

In our society, problems that cry out for intervention are plentiful, but the money and manpower to solve them are *not*. Funding to fill social needs is scarce, and would-be volunteers have less available time to give. But, paradoxically, social resources and productive volunteers are needed now as seldom before.

"An entire hemisphere is now seeking ways to continue to provide essential services—and to effect vital, constructive change—in a time of economic constraints and redefined national priorities," states Margaret M. Graham, President of The Association of Junior Leagues, Inc., 1980-82. "Voluntarism will be tested to capacity."

## V.I.E. Trains in Depth

For these reasons, A.J.L.'s V.I.E. program mobilized 600 of the 6,000,000 healthy retired Americans: corporate and nonprofit executives, bookkeepers, engineers, teachers, assembly-line workers, psychologists, bankers, office workers, accountants and lawyers. After a needs survey was conducted at each demonstration site to determine the area in which the need for citizen-advocacy was most urgent, the recruits were given about 40 hours of specialized initial training, followed by periodic follow-up sessions. The caliber of the training is illustrated by the list of V.I.E. instructors in one demonstration site, Omaha, Nebraska: the Dean of the School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha; the Omaha Bar Association Treasurer; the Legal Services Developer, Nebraska State Commission on Aging; various Federal Food and Drug Administration officers and numerous bank officers, attorneys and insurance experts.

After training the volunteers, V.I.E. projects put retired Americans back to work as molders of policy, analysts of community needs, implementers of change. The volunteers took on a wide variety of issues. Working with very low budgets and with donated office equipment and space, V.I.E. members won passage of model state legislation, designed and marketed a new employee insurance prototype, initiated important programs at major corporations, effected changes in Medicare practices, established a model county-wide coordinating agency, and settled claims totaling thousands of dollars for individual clients.

## V.I.E. Fosters Networks

It is likely that none of these achievements would have been realized if the organizations that worked together to bring these changes about had tried to tackle such big issues alone, looking to their own overtaxed budgets for all the financial and human resources necessary to wage such sophisticated advocacy efforts. V.I.E. makes such achievements possible because it encourages collaborative efforts among voluntary organizations, public agencies, the business community and an organized citizenry. It helps groups to pool their existing resources and also enables them to call upon a rich reserve of volunteer talent and expertise to augment their work.

"We don't do make-work, but work that is using the talents that we acquire in our respective careers," one V.I.E. volunteer says. "V.I.E. uses the talent of the senior citizen at his highest level of competence."

V.I.E. is thousands of older people whose talents and high levels of competence can produce a new voice to answer community needs. This is the story of 600 men and women who pioneered V.I.E., and the story of thousands of Americans helped by V.I.E.

## A New Voice for Systems Change and Legislative Reform



*Testimony sparking the passage of national model legislation was given by Omaha V.I.E. officers.*

A sickly newborn infant and an insurance-poor elderly couple are among thousands of people in Michigan and Nebraska whose lives were touched by V.I.E. achievements in those two states.

The infant was able to receive very specialized medical care in his own home instead of languishing in a hospital's neo-natal unit. He had a happier infancy because Grand Rapids V.I.E. innovated an employee health insurance plan prototype that provides for low-cost home health care, convinced private employers to adopt it, and launched an agency to coordinate home health services.

The aged couple, typical of millions of insurance-poor older persons who fear incapacity and dependency, were depleting their modest resources by paying premiums on nine health insurance policies that covered gaps in Medicaid and Medicare. They and their peers throughout the state of Nebraska are protected now from the financial drain of over-insurance because Omaha V.I.E. battled for model legislation that regulates the sale of supplementary health insurance policies.

### **Achieving Legislative Reform**

In Omaha, where V.I.E. established a legal counseling program for persons aged 55 and up, V.I.E. received 280 complaints about misleading or high-pressure

supplementary health insurance sales tactics in a four-month period. "Many people had been taken advantage of through scare tactics, such as, 'You don't want to be a burden to your family,'" explains 69-year-old Delmar Serafy, Omaha V.I.E.'s Consumerism Committee Chairman.

**Omaha V.I.E. decided to make the elimination of such abuses a priority. In their pursuit of that goal, Omaha V.I.E. members personified voluntarism—and the older volunteer—at its best. For, V.I.E. members in that city of 368,000 took on the entire state legislature. They described and documented a state-wide problem, informed and aroused the electorate, galvanized the legislators, and joined in the work of an existing nonprofit organization and of a state regulatory agency.**

First, V.I.E. ran an educational campaign to warn elderly consumers about over-insurance. Then, the volunteers moved into the legislative arena, where they waged a long battle. The end result was a smashing victory for the volunteers: passage of a law that became a national model, L.B. 877, which sets guidelines and standards for supplemental health insurance policies.

"Its passage was a tribute to V.I.E.," says attorney Vicki Horton Fowler, Legal Services Developer for the Eastern Nebraska Commission on Aging. "V.I.E. really has an understanding of the legislative process and how to impact on it. V.I.E. members testified at two hearings on the need for reform in the sale of medi-gap insurance. They were very active in contacting legislators, lobbying, and educating them on the issue. They focused public attention on the problem. They were involved in negotiating the language of the bill. They worked with Legal Aid attorneys to bring it to the forefront as an issue. V.I.E. helped every step of the way."

Nebraska State Insurance Commissioner Walter Weaver agrees. "V.I.E. was extremely helpful to the Nebraska State Insurance Commission and the Nebraska State Legislature in the passage of L.B. 877. V.I.E. speaks with one voice for thousands, he adds. "They're a clearing-house. I don't have the means to call thousands of people if I have a question on their opinions, so I make one phone call—to V.I.E."

Omaha's V.I.E. is comprised of 20 Junior League members, several Omaha Bar Association advisers and about 70 retired men and women. The annual V.I.E. budget averages \$28,000, an amazingly small sum for such a sophisticated and successful advocacy project.

### Changing a Senseless System

"Children and old people have a great fear of going into a hospital," according to Manley Brown, Home Help Coordinator for the West Michigan Area Agency on Aging. "And they are the ones who need home health care."

Those were among the findings of Grand Rapids V.I.E. workers who spent many months surveying health care professionals, planners, insurance experts and patients in that Michigan city. V.I.E. members learned that alternatives to hospitalization were urgently needed but were sparse and fragmented, and affordable insurance plans did not cover the available home-care services.

**V.I.E. volunteers concluded that the existing, entrenched health care system was inefficient, wasteful, inhumane and senseless. So, Grand Rapids V.I.E. put its collective abilities to work to change this system. With a minimum of expenditure, these Michigan volunteers succeeded in altering this established system drastically, winning a decided victory for the public interest. These older Americans proved that V.I.E. can grapple with a system that affects the interests of unions, doctors, insurance companies, nurses, technicians and businessmen—and that V.I.E. can motivate the voluntary and private sectors to work together to achieve changes in such a system.**



*V.I.E. achieves stunning victories through community coalitions.*

V.I.E. volunteers drew up a proposal for an agency to coordinate home health care in Kent County, where Grand Rapids is located. The County Health Systems Agency (H.S.A.) approved the plan for the agency, called Home Health Services, Inc.

Meanwhile, a V.I.E. task force, working with insurance professionals, developed a pilot insurance plan that provided for low-cost, low-deductible coverage for comprehensive home health services. Five task force members convinced 10 local businessmen employing 12,000 persons to adopt the plan and to contribute a total of \$65,000 to initiate Home Health Services, Inc. The insurance plan is believed to be the first of its kind in the United States.

"Our people think it's great!" says Don Packard of Associated Truck Lines, one of the companies that adopted the plan. "One reason a lot of them stayed in the hospital is that the doctors kept them there, and historically, insurance wouldn't cover home care."

In announcing the opening of Home Health Services to his membership, Kent County Medical Society President Dr. Timothy Talbott stated: "Physicians will be happy about this home care concept...the earlier discharge of patients will help reduce some of the congestion and competition that occurs regarding the availability of hospital beds for admission."

Praise even louder comes from the sick and the dying and their families. "My father had emphysema and was unable to take care of himself. He was really quite weak, but he didn't want to go to a nursing home," one man confides. "Then we got a brochure in the mail on the new home health services adopted by his company. We got someone to come in and clean, help him with personal needs and cook meals. This enabled my father to spend the last weeks of his life the way he wanted to."

That gift was priceless. Yet, in actual dollars and cents, Grand Rapids V.I.E. spends only \$10,000 a year.

## A New Voice for Children

"My wife and I saw a very small nine-month-old baby last week. Both his legs were broken, some ribs were broken, and he had cigarette burns on him. He had hardly any clothes, either. You just have to see one case like that to get involved."

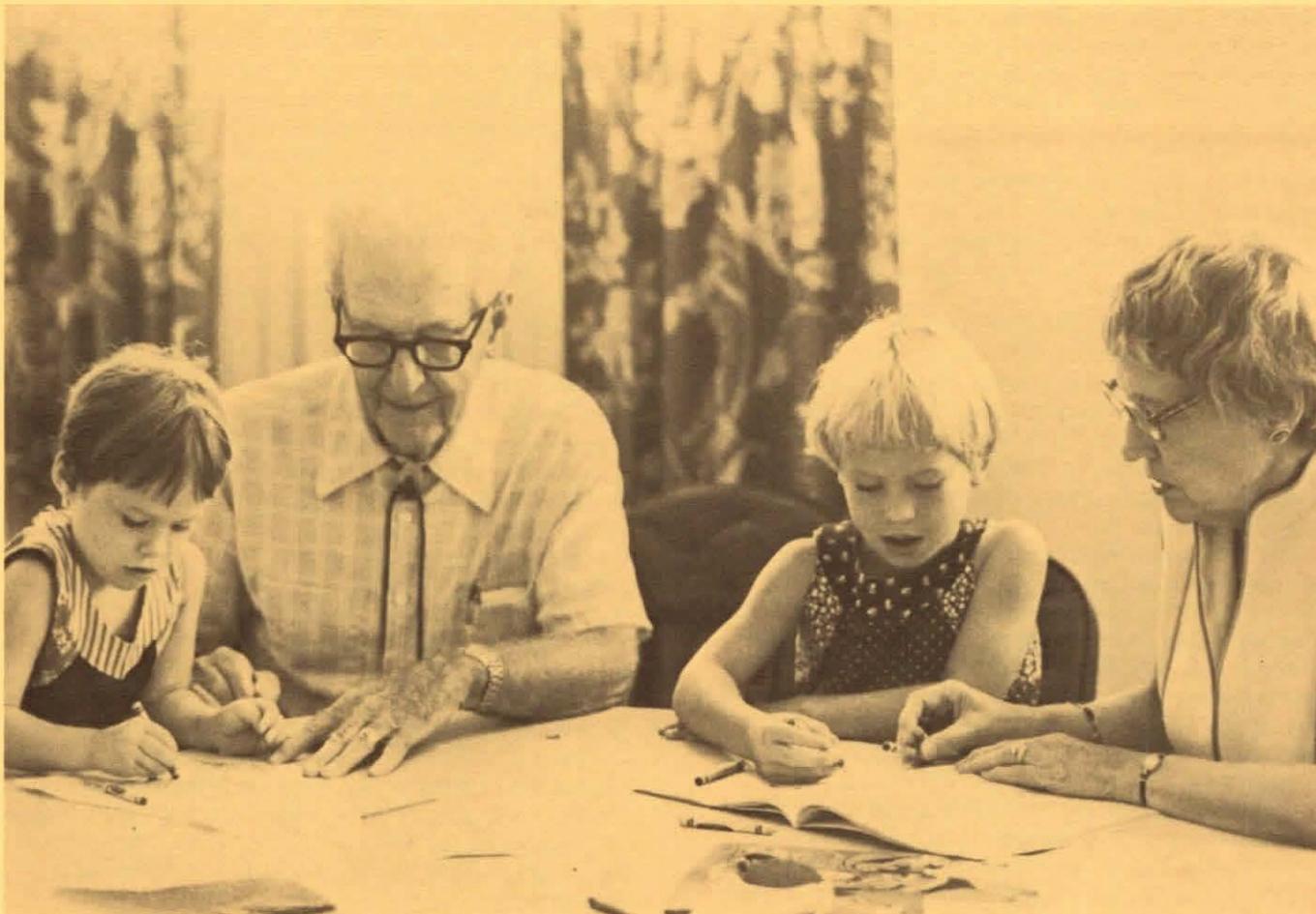
That's what Kansas City V.I.E. Chairman Al Huttig answers, when asked to explain the meshing of generations at the V.I.E. projects in Orlando and Winter Park, Florida, and in the two Kansas Cities, where the V.I.E. volunteers have focused on the needs of children. "Most older people have children and grandchildren. The older people have suffered along with them; they see the world the way it is, and they hope they can ease children's paths," the retired banker continues. "Love of children is a powerful motivation for all people. When I hold my grandchildren on my knee, I cannot imagine anyone abusing children."

**How this Kansas City father of three and his V.I.E. colleagues feel—and, as a result, what they**

**did to help children—demonstrates graphically that: (1) older volunteers can make a major contribution to younger generations; (2) V.I.E. can grapple with very "sticky" issues and can effect constructive change in even the most sensitive, underfinanced and overbureaucratized spheres, and (3) V.I.E. can provide effective and much-needed manpower to agencies with limited staff, huge workloads and insufficient budgets.**

The two Kansas Cities have separate Junior Leagues that decided to sponsor a joint V.I.E. project. Research at both sites highlighted many problems in the foster care systems. "In most states, the Department of Family Services (D.F.S.), which has jurisdiction over foster care, is understaffed and underfinanced," 67-year-old Mr. Huttig explains. "The social worker has a lot of problems—a tremendous caseload. It's endless, and it's enervating."

*V.I.E. brings generations together to help each other.*





*Mo. Gov. Joseph P. Teasdale proclaims a Foster Home Parents Month, to launch a V.I.E. foster-home recruitment drive, in front of V.I.E. workers and state D.F.S. staff.*

To help the overburdened staffs at D.F.S. in Missouri and Kansas, V.I.E. volunteers:

- played an instrumental role in the passage of MO. H.B. 972, which reformed Missouri law governing the termination of natural parents' rights, so that foster children can be put up for adoption sooner;
- ran a six-month-long drive for good foster homes that elicited requests for foster children from 300 families in Kansas and Missouri, and
- published the first known newsletter for foster parents, to provide moral support and disseminate information on social and medical services, child development and care, money-saving buying and cooking methods, scholarships, and so on.

Kansas City V.I.E. does all this without outside funding; services-in-kind are donated by local businesses and other community resources. In

addition, the project's 20 workers assist other child welfare agencies in a variety of projects. One, funded by a grant from the U.S. Children's Bureau to the Missouri Association for Social Welfare, is intended to effect further foster care systems change throughout Missouri. The project trains community volunteers to extract certain data from foster children's case records — data that had never been collected before because of manpower and funding insufficiencies.

Volunteers of all ages, including foster parents themselves, are participating in this project. "I do appreciate any help I can get," says Project Director Amy Petrillo. "But I was quite impressed that people from the community who may not have any direct concern with child welfare—people whose children are grown—were interested in donating considerable time."

---

## A New Voice in the Corporate World



*Those who serve—and those who are served—are fulfilled by the trend-setting Honeywell program V.I.E. helped shape.*

### **Employee Post-Retirement Programs**

When 1,600 Laotian children left refugee camps in Southeast Asia to settle in Minneapolis with their families, creating a crisis in that city's schools, a huge pool of volunteer English-tutors leaped to the rescue.

When a Minnesota hospital's budget escalated drastically because of rising fuel costs, a volunteer engineer readjusted the institution's ventilation system to effect huge savings on fuel.

When paralytics at a Twin City rehabilitation center had difficulty with typing, a volunteer tool and dye

maker built an extra key onto a typewriter that made typing easier for these disabled people.

**These Minnesota volunteers—and hundreds of others— are part of a trend-setting employee post-retirement program at the Minneapolis headquarters of the giant Honeywell Corporation. Minneapolis V.I.E. had a strong hand in the development of that program. For, V.I.E. post-retirement advocates had made such an impression on Honeywell executives that V.I.E. members were asked to serve in key posts on the**

**committee that designed and implemented the \$35,000-a-year Honeywell Retiree Volunteer Project (H.R.V.P.). What happened when Honeywell and V.I.E. worked together to shape H.R.V.P. shows that citizen-advocacy can have a significant impact on corporations, yielding innovative programs that benefit millions of employees and millions of women, men and children who live in their host communities.**

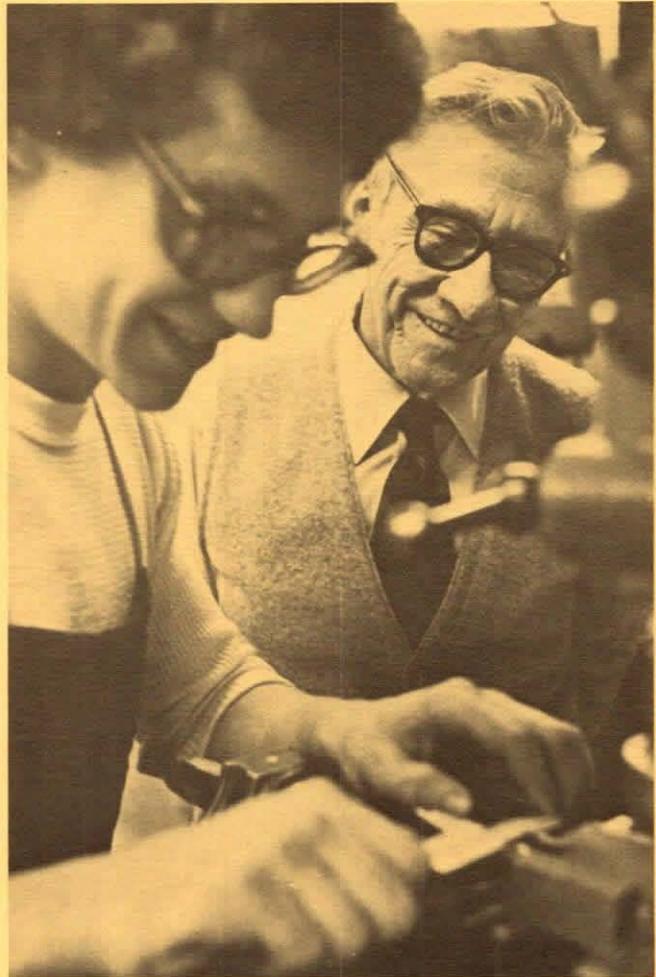
Under the well-organized retiree volunteer program, H.R.V.P. volunteers contribute 84,400 work-hours a year in the service of their neighbors in the Greater Minneapolis area. "Honeywell's retiree program is helping to provide our community's social service agencies and civic and hobby organizations with a pool of trained and qualified volunteers," Honeywell Community Relations Director Ron Speed states. "While the project benefits the volunteer directly in many ways, the generosity and good will of the retirees also enhance our reputation as a company concerned about its community."

H.R.V.P. is managed by V.I.E. member Elmer Fryckman, 67, who came back to Honeywell's Home Office after his retirement to run the new program. A Honeywell employee for 32 years, he managed a department that trained customers—including astronauts—in the use of new avionic equipment. "After I left my job, I was looking for mental stimulation," he explains. "When people reach for something with their mind, their body will reach to where the mind wants to go. It's the reverse of letting your mind slip—and your body along with it."

"When people retire with the idea of looking after number one, that is very limiting for them—very materialistic. When you are trying to look after your brother, your life has a spiritual dimension. That dimension provides the enhancement that people are looking for."

The same need was cited by Minneapolis V.I.E.'s Co-Chairman, 66-year-old Elva Walker. "We're giving people the feeling that they're needed again," the retired corporation president says. "We met so many Honeywell people who didn't have any sense of direction—people who had been very important in the company. When their company asked them to volunteer, they were people with a purpose again—there was something to be done!"

The new concept of corporate post-retirement programs that V.I.E. pioneered at Honeywell is proliferating in the Greater Minneapolis area, according to Mrs. Walker. For Minneapolis V.I.E., which operates on a \$10,000-a-year budget, is dedicated to the promotion of such programs.



Skills of a lifetime are passed on by an ex-Honeywell toolmaker.

### **Release-Time Programs**

V.I.E. leaders believe that corporations have a responsibility to encourage voluntarism in their employees long before they retire. In that way, another large group of people become more available to participate in advocacy projects. For these reasons, V.I.E. volunteers have also acted as catalysts for another type of trend-setting corporate program called "release-time." Under the release-time system, companies give employees nearing retirement several hours a week off to do volunteer work.

In Kansas City, Missouri, where V.I.E. persuaded the First National Bank to institute a release-time program, bank President Mike Mayer says the program strengthens the bank's ongoing stress on community involvement.

## A New Voice for Older Citizens



Older people resolve benefit disputes with V.I.E.'s help.

To a poor 80-year-old widow from Seattle, an \$800 reimbursement meant more food on her meager table. The widow got that payment because 68-year-old V.I.E. volunteer Maxine Johnson worked on the elderly woman's claim for a whole year.

"She had been paying on that policy for years," Mrs. Johnson recalls. "But we were really the only people who could help her get reimbursement. The doctors' offices are too impatient; the hospitals are too busy and impersonal."

The widow is one of more than 4,000 low- and moderate-income clients over the age of 60 for whom Seattle V.I.E.\* does one-on-one advocacy every year in legal hassles, landlord-tenant disputes, and tangles relating to payments from Social Security, Medicare and supplementary health insurance. The clients are Washingtonians who fall into service "cracks" in their city.

**The help that Seattle V.I.E. gives these elderly clients is an example of the direct services that V.I.E. can provide. V.I.E. can interpret the complex regulations of huge national agencies, which often bewilder people dependent on benefits from those agencies, and can advocate on a one-to-one basis to obtain those benefits.**

Seattle V.I.E. volunteers donate about 3,000 hours of time a year to serve their clients. The V.I.E. workers staff their office 20 hours a week and make monthly visits to seven outreach centers frequented by older persons. But that's not all they do.

Working in conjunction with other community groups, V.I.E. volunteers persuaded the Seattle Bar Association to create a modest-means panel, comprised of more than 25 attorneys who charge very low fees for moderate-income older persons. Seattle V.I.E. also runs a speakers' bureau that informs older people of their legal rights; in one year, for example, V.I.E. speakers gave 41 lectures to a total of 1,400 people. And, in the legislative arena, the project has also advocated in many areas.

The 85 men and women who contributed to these accomplishments had very different life-experiences. One was a career Army officer, one a postman, one a hospital administrator, one a realtor, and so on. But all of them share the values personified by Maxine Johnson.

When she retired in her early 60s, Mrs. Johnson attended a Seattle junior college and earned a degree. Then she learned of the V.I.E. program, volunteered and was trained as a health insurance counselor. "I like exercising my mind," she says. "I thought I'd never get another job as interesting as the one I had—in a law office—but health insurance is a very large, exciting, complicated field."



In one-on-one advocacy, the phone is an essential tool.

"I have lots of activities, but this is the most interesting," Mrs. Johnson concludes. "The volunteers get really worthwhile jobs to do—not stuffing envelopes or carrying trays or emptying bedpans."

Concurring with Mrs. Johnson about the caliber of Seattle V.I.E.'s work, the U.S. Health Care Financing Administration presented the project with one of its two annual Beneficiary Service Awards in 1980 for "outstanding cooperation and effort in advancing understanding between Medicare and senior citizens in the Seattle/King County area during 1977-80."

\*Seattle V.I.E. has incorporated under the name, Senior Rights Assistance.

## A New Voice for Voluntarism

*The Association of Junior Leagues (A.J.L.), founded in 1921, is an international voluntary organization comprised of 246 member Leagues that span the United States, Canada and Mexico.*

*A.J.L. made a major commitment to Volunteers Intervening for Equity because the project design supports these fundamental Junior League goals: to promote voluntarism so that human needs can be more fully met; to demonstrate and increase the effectiveness of trained volunteers in meeting those needs, and to advocate on behalf of those who have unmet needs.*

*A.J.L. also subscribes to the other principles that underlie V.I.E.:*

- Citizen-advocacy drives must increase manifold, to counteract the growing complexity of our institutions and the resulting feelings of bewilderment and detachment that pervade our society.*
- Untapped human resources must be identified and utilized, and groups must find ways to pool resources for effective advocacy and service-provision in this period of financial retrenchment.*
- Millions of retired persons—in collaboration with people from other generations—can meet the desperate need for increased advocacy, giving of the talents and wisdom acquired throughout a lifetime and continuing to work productively within the mainstream of their communities.*

*In the demonstration sites where this project was launched, V.I.E. proved the validity of these principles. We urge organizations to utilize the V.I.E. model to open new volunteer vistas in their communities and to enjoy a greater leadership role in encouraging interagency cooperation and serving as advocates for needed change.*

*V.I.E.'s structure can be modified to meet a variety of organizational needs. V.I.E. can function as: a separate, incorporated entity (as in Seattle); as a partner of local government (as in Omaha); as a corporate collaborator (as in Minneapolis); as a division of an existing organization that employs older members to full capacity, or as an organizational vehicle for the recruitment of new members who can devote a major portion of their time to projects.*

*If ever there was a project that enhances our ability to deal effectively with critical community problems, it is Project V.I.E. By increasing our pool of vital resources—volunteer power, financial support and access to the power structure—V.I.E. enables concerned community groups to assume an active rather than reactive role in instituting change. The potential significance of such a project—for individual organizations, for voluntarism in general, for a whole generation of able citizens, and for the entire nation—is tremendous.*

*Board of Directors  
The Association of Junior Leagues, Inc.*



## IN PRAISE OF V.I.E.:

"V.I.E. has stripped away outmoded ideas of what older people are capable of doing. V.I.E. shows the impact older people can make on society as a whole as they serve as advocates and change agents in their communities." — Sheila Raviv, Assistant Director, National Council on the Aging, and Director, National Voluntary Organization for Independent Living for the Aging (NVOILA)

"We wish to commend your organization for this exciting concept using older volunteers in a constructive manner. This only makes the prospect of growing older a positive and productive experience." — Richard R. Rector, Project Director/Executive Producer, Over Easy, KQED, Inc.

"I'm impressed:

- by the mix of advocacy and direct service achieved by Project V.I.E.;
- by the demonstration that older people can and will become actively involved in non-elderly as well as elderly issues and concerns;
- by the impact older volunteers can and will have on truly significant issues when they are provided resources and support." — Wayne Moulder, Coordinator, National Services Project, NRTA/AARP (National Retired Teachers Association/American Association of Retired Persons)

*A replication handbook, V.I.E. — A Guide for a New Kind of Community Action, offering specific guidelines for developing a V.I.E. project, is available. For this handbook or for any other information about the V.I.E. projects, write to:*

**Coordinator, Project V.I.E.  
The Association of Junior Leagues, Inc.  
825 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022**

THE ASSOCIATION OF JUNIOR LEAGUES, INC.  
825 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022 • (212) 355-4380