

# **Laconia State School**

## **Significant Events Time Line**

### **I. The Early Years**

#### **1893-1900:**

- NH Board of Charities and Corrections seeks to reform conditions at County Almshouses.
- Advocates for child welfare seek to remove children from wretched conditions found in most almshouses or county farms.

#### **1900:**

- NH Women's Clubs and other citizen groups lobby legislature for construction of special school for feeble minded children

#### **1901:**

- Legislation passed by NH Legislature allocating funds for the construction of a special home and school for feebleminded children between the ages of 3 and 21.

#### **1903:**

- The NH School for the Feebleminded opened. 60 girls and boys are admitted. Dr. Little first Superintendent.

#### **1906:**

- Admission criteria are amended to include women from 21-45 years of age, reflecting the growing influence of the Eugenics movement.

## **II. The Social Indictment and Eugenics Period**

### **1910:**

- Dr. Benjamin Baker selected as Superintendent, remaining in this position until 1945, greatly influencing social policy in New Hampshire for over 35 years.
- Census -172 children and adults.

### **1915-20:**

- Sterilization and marriage laws enacted to reflect eugenics social policy, which was viewed as “the final solution” to poverty, crime, unemployment, and other social problems. 349 residents by 1920.

## **III. Invisibility, Abandonment and Neglect**

### **1925-30:**

- Overcrowding becomes a continual issue.
- 483 residents in 1930.
- Parole for certain residents to relieve overcrowding. Name changed to Laconia State School.
- Social Policy and conditions at the institution resemble those of the concentration camps of Nazi Germany

### **1930-1950:**

- Depression and two World Wars focused attention and funding elsewhere. 614 residents by 1940 living in subhuman conditions

## **IV. Parents' Advocacy and Reform**

### **1950-1958:**

- Great Bay Association for Retarded Children formed.
- Richard Hungerford appointed Superintendent bring with him new ideas of parents' advocacy, training, education and improved living conditions.
- LSS NARC Section formed.
- 1950- 724 residents.
- 1956 parents make movie of institutional conditions, causes public uproar and the Portsmouth Herald publishes front page article condemning the state.
- Hungerford terminated as Superintendent.

### **1958-75:**

- Under Kennedy Administration the Federal government begins sweeping reforms to improve conditions of institutions and provide financial support community programs.
- 1968 publication of Christmas in Purgatory
- Arthur Toll Superintendent
- 990 residents in 1962
- 1100 in 1970
- Local ARC's established as parents' answer to institutionalization of their children.
- Medicaid Funding becomes available for institutionalized residents of state schools.
- Normalization Principles introduced. Later called SRV.

## **V. Litigation Deinstitutionalization and Community Integrations**

### **1975-1979**

- Jack Melton appointed Superintendent
- RSA 171-A Law established state's responsibility to provide community services in the least restrictive setting. Never fully funded.
- Medicaid program established at LSS (ICF/MR)

- 717 residents in 1976

### **1979-1986**

- Garrity v. Gallen class action law suit filed by parents and advocates, court decision in 1981 creates momentum for sweeping changes: establishes the community area agency service system, mandated improved services and living conditions at the institution and community placements.
- Action for Independence written, state plan for improvements in service system.
- 300 residents in 1984
- NH State Plan for the Community Care Waiver (CCW) written and implemented, providing state and federal matching funds for community services.
- Name changed to Laconia Developmental Services.

## **VI, The Beginning of a New Era**

### **1987-1991**

- Richard Crocker appointed Superintendent.
- Adaptive Equipment Center established
- Community placements continue with growing support for community services.
- 1987, Family Support Legislation signed into law
- 1991, Laconia Developmental Services closes and New Hampshire becomes first state to have a totally community based system of services.
- Inclusion, social equality, empowerment and family support become

## **VII. Forging a New Vision Based on:**

### **A New Way of Thinking**

**A Fundamental Dynamic – Power, Control, Empowerment**

**A Focused Vision with Empowering Supports**

**The Big Leap – One Agenda**

**The New Baseline and Funding for Value**

**Expanding the Opportunities for People with Disabilities to Exercise Power and Control**

**Challenging the Broader Community to Do Its Job**

**A Home of My Own**

**Lifelong Education**

**Real Work**

**Individual and Family Support**

**Getting to the Community – Access, Technology and Universal Design**

**EmPOWERment through Leadership Training  
Leaps in Technology and Access to Information**