

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**