

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
MAY 1, 2024
DA-2024-025871; GF-2024-043939
400 WEST LIVE OAK STREET, BUILDINGS A-G

PROPOSAL

Demolish 7 buildings associated with St. John’s Lutheran Church (1950-1966) and the Mary Lee School.

ARCHITECTURE

The 1951 church building is cross-gabled and clad in structural clay tile. Deep eaves frame its largest front-facing gable, and Tudor Revival-style woodwork ornaments the smaller gablet above the entryway. Windows have been replaced and some openings altered, though the original windows that remain appear to be multi-light steel casements.

Later buildings B, D, and E are constructed of red brick, with gabled rooflines and vertical wood accents. Fenestration has been heavily altered. Buildings C and F are clad in horizontal vinyl siding and have replacement windows. Building G is a non-historic-age portable structure.

RESEARCH

The main church building on the property was constructed in 1951 for the St. John’s Lutheran Church congregation. It served as the Church’s South Austin campus until 1966, when a new sanctuary was commissioned at 301 West Ben White Boulevard.

In 1966, the campus was purchased by Charlene Crump, owner and director of the Mary Lee School. Crump founded the school in 1963 as a “halfway house” and vocational training facility for girls and women with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The program quickly outgrew the one-story house in which it began,¹ and 31 students moved into the former church campus in 1966.² Though other branches of the Mary Lee School were established elsewhere throughout the 1960s and 1970s, 400 West Live Oak remained its headquarters; the original branch focused on rehabilitating women with IDD so that they could live independently, a groundbreaking model for the time.³ By 1973, the school had 81 students, who each lived there an average of 18 months.⁴

Later that year, the Mary Lee School’s rural ranch outside Manchaca came under fire for allegations of abuse, health hazards, segregation, and other violations of its pupils’ safety by Representative Lane Denton, chairman of a Texas House subcommittee investigating Texas childcare facilities. However, the 400 West Live Oak campus was declared “in good order” by Denton, and no formal investigation of the ranch facility was ever conducted.⁵ The organization weathered further hiring and abuse lawsuits in 1975⁶; details on their resolutions are limited in the archival record. By 1985, the Mary Lee Foundation had grown to encompass seven residential facilities for children and adults.⁷ In 2013, the Mary Lee Foundation and Charlene Crump were honored by the Texas State House of Representatives for the organization’s 50th anniversary.⁸

PROPERTY EVALUATION

The property is within the boundaries of the 2016 Bouldin Creek Neighborhood survey, but no recommendation was made.

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The buildings are more than 50 years old.
- 2) The buildings appear to retain moderate integrity.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Staff has evaluated the property and

¹ Harvick, Mary Ellen. The Austin American (1914-1973); 03 Mar 1963: C7.

² The Mary Lee Foundation, <https://www.maryleefoundation.org/about>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fries, Jane. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 22 June 1972: B21.

⁵ Shipp, Dixie. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 18 July 1973: 1.

⁶ The Austin American-Statesman (1973-1980), Evening ed.; 07 Feb 1975: 17; Choyke, Bill. The Austin American - Statesman (1973-1980), Evening ed.; 24 Aug 1975: A15.

⁷ "Mary Lee foundation built on a lifetime of love" Newspapers.com. Austin American-Statesman, November 10, 1985. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/austin-american-statesman-mary-lee-found/32080758/>.

⁸ <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/HR00433I.PDF>

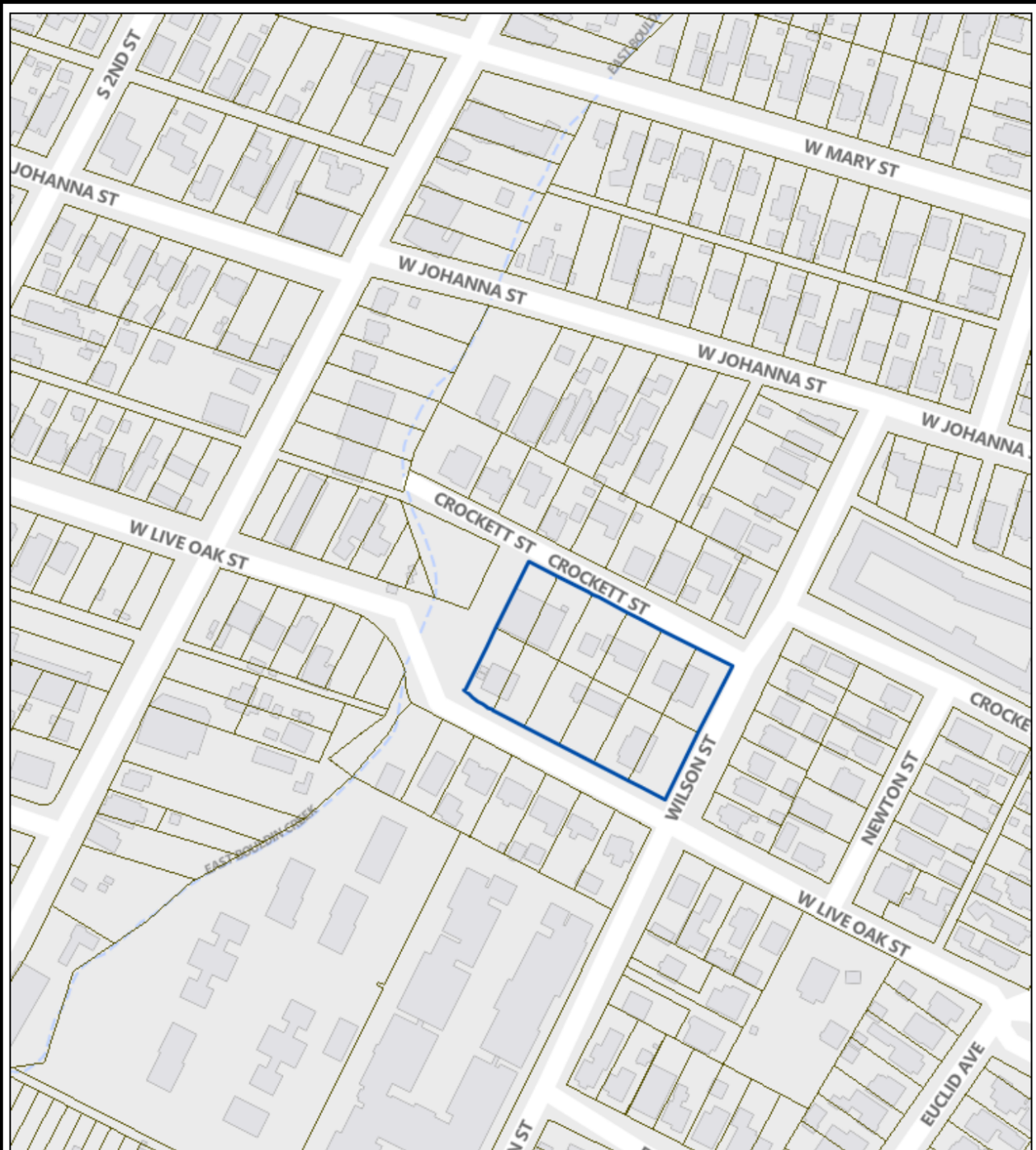
determined that it does not meet two criteria for landmark designation:

- a.* Architecture. Building A is a mid-century ecclesiastical building with simplified Tudor Revival detailing; however, it does not appear to be architecturally distinct and has been altered.
- b.* Historical association. The property is associated with St. John's Lutheran Church and the Mary Lee School, an early example of a rehabilitative vocational facility for children with IDD established by Charlene Crump.
- c.* Archaeology. The property was not evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region.
- d.* Community value. The property was not evaluated for its ability to possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group.
- e.* Landscape feature. The property was not evaluated for its ability to convey a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse for Building A, but release the demolition permit upon completion of a City of Austin Documentation Package for that building.

LOCATION MAP



1: 2400

Lot Lines

Lot Line

**GF 24-043939****400 W LIVE OAK STREET**

4/12/2024

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey. This product has been produced by the City of Austin for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

PROPERTY INFORMATION*Photos*

Photo map, site plan exemption application, 2024







Building A, site plan exemption application, 2024



Building B, site plan exemption application, 2024



Building C, site plan exemption application, 2024



Building D, site plan exemption application, 2024



Building E, site plan exemption application, 2024



Building F, site plan exemption application, 2024



Building G, site plan exemption application, 2024

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, March 2024

1959	St. John Lutheran Church
1955	St. John Lutheran Church
1952	St. John Lutheran Church
1949	Address not listed

Historical Information

St. John's Lutheran Plans Receive Okeh

The city has okehed plans for a \$21,000 church building at 400 West Live Oak Street.

The building inspector's office has issued a construction permit to the St. John's Lutheran Church for a building containing an auditorium and four rooms.

Church School Opening Slated

St. John's Lutheran Church, 400 West Live Oak Street, will begin Vacation Church School on Monday, June 8. The school will begin at 8:30 a.m. and close at 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, June 8 to 19.

The material to be studied is entitled "Trust and Obey," a study on the Ten Commandments. All children between the ages of three and 12 are cordially invited to attend.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 02 Jan 1951: 10
The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 06 June 1964: 9.

House of Hope for the Retarded

By MARY ELLEN HARVICK

Outwardly, Mary Charlene Crump is like most young mothers.

She graduated from Rockdale High School and went to work selling cosmetics at Sears. She married at 18 and kept on working for a while. Now, at 23, she has a daughter, Elayne, 3, and a son, Roby, 20 months. She is slim, attractive, dark-haired. Her husband, Robert Lee Crump, is a bookkeeper who earns a modest salary.

There the similarity to Mrs. Average Young Married ends.

George Clark, assistant director of field operation of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Texas Education Agency, describes her with eloquent understatement: "She has a great deal more tenacity than most."

She'll need it, because Mary Charlene Crump has brought a dream to reality — and most of the work lies ahead. Probably a lifetime of work.

Her dream is the Mary Lee School of Special Education, which opened its doors Friday. It's a non-profit school, dedicated to vocational rehabilitation of retarded girls 16 and over.

"For me, this isn't a job," Mrs. Crump says. "I can't even expect to draw a salary. We'll be working hard to make it break even. This is a career — something we'll live with."

It's a serious project, tackled with faith and determination after a great deal of thought. Mrs. Crump's parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Holden, both teach at a similar school for boys, and for some time she had felt the need of a school in this area for girls.

Her husband agreed, and for a year and a half now Mrs. Crump has been planning and working.

The pace picked up in January—finding a pretty, feminine house at 2117 S. Lamar, getting chartered with the Secretary of State's Office, convincing state officials that she could and would provide a good school, lining up a staff.

"She's expecting help from every source," Mr. Clark says, "she needs all the community support she can get — and she should get it." (In some towns the United Fund underwrites such schools).

Mrs. Crump has a good idea of the difficulties that lie ahead, and a great deal of confidence in the rewards.

"I know it isn't going to be easy," she says. "I haven't had a rosy picture painted. But if we can help just one of these girls, it will be worth it."

Actually, her chances are probably a good deal better than that. Each student is screened by a voluntary, state-approved advisory board of six experts, and only girls who are believed educable will go there.

They'll get personal and continuous attention from a housemother, and a special education teacher will come to the school to teach domestic arts and crafts — home decoration, ceramics, leathercraft, horticulture, sewing, cooking. Professional counselors will add their services.

Mr. Clark describes the school as a "halfway house." It will not be an institution, like the State School, nor will it be as informal as family life.

David Carson, vocational rehabilitation counselor for the Austin district, explains the problem of the educable mentally retarded:

"If they've lived at home, their parents have probably done everything for them. If they've been institutionalized, they've lived in a world apart. They may not know how to ride the bus, how to sew on a button, how to cross the street on a green light."

The hope is here: "They can be taught simple, repetitive jobs — like wrapping candy sticks, putting gas in cars, folding sheets, understanding simple signs like 'Danger' or 'Poison,' sanding

furniture. Sometimes they make better employees at these kind of jobs than more intelligent people, who become bored. Oftentimes, they have dexterity and persistence and can be taught to handle even semi-skilled jobs. They can handle concrete things very well."

"This kind of thing can be taught very nicely in small groups."

The maximum number of students at the Mary Lee School of Special Education is eight, and the things they learn there will take them a big step toward independence — mending, rolling their hair, washing dishes, etc.

Mrs. Crump herself will not be teaching. Administrative chores will be a fulltime job. She has poured her savings into the project, even to hiring a fulltime baby sitter. Like many working mothers, she feels a carer will make her a more interesting, happier person for her children to be around.

Qualifications for the job? "The main things," Mr. Clark says, "are determination and philosophy. If she keeps these, she'll make a go of it."



American-Statesman/UPI

A SMALL WHITE HOUSE OF HOPE WITH GREEN SHUTTERS

Mrs. R. L. Crump at front door of school for retardates.

HARVICK, MARY ELLEN. *The Austin American* (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 03 Mar 1963: C7.



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH PLANS NEW BUILDING
Ground breaking at 301 W. Ben White Blvd. set for Sunday afternoon.

Lutherans Plan New Sanctuary

St. John's Lutheran Church at 400 West Live Oak Street will celebrate its 20th anniversary Sunday and hold ground-breaking services for a soon to be built sanctuary and educational facility.

Rev. C. L. Bohls of Helotes, first pastor of the church, will conduct special anniversary services at 8 and 10:45 a.m.

Sunday afternoon at 3:30, St. John's pastor, Rev. Walter W. Koenig, assisted by Rev. Bohls, will conduct ground-breaking services at the site of the new building, 301 W. Ben White Blvd.

The church was founded Jan. 27, 1946, and held its first worship services in the Austin Theater on South Congress Avenue. There were 36 charter members and St. John's now has 676 baptized members and 469 confirmed members.

Architects for the new building are Barnes, Landes, Goodman and Youngblood of Austin. Bids have been received and contracts will be awarded soon.

The Austin American (1914-1973); Austin, Tex.. 30 Jan 1966: A4.

Mary Lee School

Gets Grant

American-Statesman Service
WASHINGTON — A federal grant of \$95,872 was made Wednesday to the Mary Lee School of Special Education in Austin for the construction of a new building, US Rep. Jake Pickle said.

The total cost of the project will be \$171,725 for the new treatment facilities and educational and custodial care for 54 retardates.

The grant was from the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

School Gets HEW Grant

American-Statesman Service
WASHINGTON — The Health, Education and Welfare Department has approved a \$15,801 grant to Mary Lee School of Social Education at Austin, Sen. Ralph Yarborough's office announced Wednesday.

Supplemented with \$5,268 from the school, the money will be used to buy equipment, employ additional help and alter the existing rehabilitation facility.

School Gets Federal Grant

WASHINGTON — The Mary Lee School, 400 W. Live Oak, Austin, has received a \$40,120 federal staffing grant, according to U.S. Representative J. J. Pickle.

The grant for the special education school is from the Division of Mental Retardation and Rehabilitation Services Administration and will be used to pay professional and technical personnel.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 05 Dec 1968: A33.

Service, American-Statesman. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 26 June 1969: B10.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 13 July 1969: A2

Austin Being Surveyed

Epilepsy Group Seeks State Chapter

Charlene Crump, director of Mary Lee School of Special Education, was elected Friday as chairman pro tem for a group surveying the need for a state chapter of the Epilepsy Foundation of America.

Homer C. Bredehoeft, regional manager at Houston for the foundation, said Austin is the ideal location for a state headquarters of the national voluntary agency. It coordinates resources to meet needs of epileptics.

with drugs, but some authorities suggest these figures are too optimistic.

Mrs. Crump said she would attempt to help interested professionals and concerned citizens organize for community

action supporting medical, social, and employment management of epileptics.

Mrs. Crump can be phoned at 444-6777 or 263-2415.

Agencies represented at the Friday preliminary meeting

with Bredehoeft include Mary Lee School, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Austin-Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation community center, and Texas Employment Commission.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 10 Jan 1970: 46.

School Tour Is Offered

The Austin Association for Retarded Children has invited any interested persons to tour the Mary Lee School of Special Education, 400 W. Live Oak St., Friday from 9:30 until 11 a.m., announced a spokesman for the AARC.

The Mary Lee School is a non-profit residential housing for retarded women aged 16 or over, founded by the present director, Charlene Crump. It provides the women with an opportunity to become completely independent in community living.

For more information, call AARC at 454-3541.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 18 Nov 1971: B21.

School Helps Girls Maximize Potential in Outside World

By JANE FRIES
Staff Writer

An angry and insecure girl hides behind a thick wall built up after many years of failure, frustration and loneliness.

Behind this wall — hoping to avoid the outside world — she tries to pretend her world is happy.

Like many who enter Austin's Mary Lee School of Special Education, this girl has been labeled "slow, highly emotional or withdrawn". She enters the school to find a place within the society she has blocked out.

"Most of our girls are angry people when they come here," Don Lilljedahl, director of the school, said. "They have failed in school because they were expected to compete with others of higher intellect and they honestly can't."

"Some girls are withdrawn, others try to take out their anger on society. They usually have very low self-images.

"We try to help them maximize their potentials, learn to feel they can compete and win, develop a sense of self-worth and to adjust so they can fit back into society as a self-supporting, capable member," Lilljedahl said.

The Mary Lee School, 400 W. Live Oak, is a private non-profit agency which serves girls with borderline intelligence who are 12 years old or older.

"We don't take custodial cases," Lilljedahl explained. "We want girls who can be rehabilitated. We also like poverty kids from rural areas or the ghetto. We try to offer an alternative to the more expensive private school."

The school provides a full array of services including services by social workers, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, special education teachers, vocational trainer and job placement counselors.

"We help the girls learn skills needed to live a normal life," Lilljedahl said. "We help the younger ones become mature, young women."

Girls are referred to the school by private doctors, lawyers, school counselors and other agencies. Their tuition is

often financed by such agencies as the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

The school was started on March 4, 1963 by Mrs. Charlene Crump, now executive director. "My parents worked with retarded boys and I got interested in a program to help girls with special learning problems," she said.

"I went to every kind of agency that could advise me since I had no training to lean on. I wanted to borrow from their experience.

"The National Association of Retarded Children recommended that I do volunteer work and forget the idea. People seemed to think that the girls would not respond to rehabilitation and should be hidden in the home," Mrs. Crump said.

"I couldn't even get professionals to serve on the board of directors," she said. "But once the school did become accepted they have become very supportive."

Undaunted by the rejection of many professionals in the field, Mrs. Crump did continue and expand the facility. The school now has 81 girls and includes special units for pre-delinquent and delinquent girls and a half-way house for mentally restored women.

"We try to teach the girls that they can compete and stand a good chance of winning. I've heard them say 'Boy, I really won that race ... or I nearly won and I'll win next time,'" Mrs. Crump said proudly.

"Many of our girls had never known popularity of their peer group. They learn to have confidence and pride," she said.

"Our girls work in many worthwhile jobs throughout the community such as food service. They learn money management, budgeting, handling check books,

comparative shopping and use of community resources," Mrs. Crump said.

The girls also do volunteer work.

A special activity of the school which seems most popular with the girls is the "Friday night dance". "The dance has grown into an institution around here," Mrs. Crump said.

"If we had begun the school with unlimited funds, we would not have learned to use many good teaching tools," she said.

"The grocery store is one of our classrooms. We also use the laundry mat, public transportation systems, and other community resources.

"We try to make life here as much like the outside world as possible. The girls learn by doing. They have responsibilities and privileges like all girls," she explained.

The girls at Mary Lee participate in a "ranking" system. All are classified freshmen when they arrive here. They move up in rank by learning their responsibilities, doing their assigned duties, obeying rules, and participating in school programs.

"As they gain new privileges they also get added responsibilities," Mrs. Crump said.

"We are constantly working ourselves out of business," Lilljedahl said. "We work for the day our girls can go out on their own."

The average length of stay at Mary Lee is 18 months.

"I feel like a grandmother," said Mrs. Leona Winston who has worked at the school since its beginning. She teaches pre-vocational classes such as crafts, cooking and sewing.

County Home 'Locks Up' Kids

one time used to detain students.

A small brick block building was used as the "lock up" for students who misbehaved, "until Artesia Hall broke" he said.

Now, students who are punished are put into a small closet without ventilation, Denton said. To keep it cool, a pan of ice is sometimes put in the closet with them, he said he was told. Denton said some girls reported having been retained in the closet for as long as six or seven hours at a time.

The Mary Lee School also has a campus on Live Oak for 70 mentally retarded and mentally ill children, which, Denton said, appeared to be in good order. The school has been operating for about 10 years and is licensed by the State Welfare Department.

Some of the student's tuition (which ranges from "zero to \$150" according to the director Don Lilljedahl) is paid by the state under a special pilot project.

Many of the students are from out of state.

As Denton talked to reporters, Ms. Crump, who had been watching on the sidelines, interrupted, (See SCHOOL, Page 6)

By DIXIE SHIPP
Capitol Staff

Rep. Lane Denton of Waco said Wednesday he had discovered a child care facility in West Travis County that has been locking up its students in a tiny closet for six and seven hours at a time in a dirty farmhouse. He said there is also a cage and stone "lock up" on the campus, not now in use.

Denton, who is chairman of the House subcommittee investigating Artesia Hall and other licensed child care facilities, said he discovered the conditions when he made a surprise visit to the Mary Lee Ranch School near Manchaca Sunday and Monday evenings.

While describing conditions at a Capitol press conference, Denton was interrupted by the founder of the school Ms. Charlene Crump, who said Denton's story "grossly misrepresented" the conditions.

Denton told reporters that during the two visits he and Rep. Ben Reyes of Houston, another member of the subcommittee, had talked with approximately a dozen teenage students there who said the "cage" had not been used recently, but had been at

(Continued From Page One)

defending the school.

She said the "cage" had never been used to retain students, but was left over from the previous owner who used it as a dog run.

Ms. Crump described the small building as a "quiet room" where the girls could be separated from their peers when they got rowdy.

She said the closet inside also was a "quiet room" used for the same purpose and that no student had been kept there for hours.

Denton said the house was "full of flies" and he witnessed numerous other health and sanitation problems. Ms. Crump said the facilities were not as nice as she would like, but did not think there were any health hazards since they had received a license to operate from the State Health Department.

Denton also described the training facilities of the school which he said consisted of dirty areas in a tin-roofed building where the girls made clothespins.

Ms. Crump had a different tale.

She said during school semesters the girls received academic and vocational training and had the care of psychiatrists, staff members with masters degrees and special education teachers.

School Founder Feels Betrayed

pictures of the girls," she said. "That put us in a bad position."

According to Don Lilljedahl, a staff member of the Mary Lee School rural campus near Manchaca, told him that

Denton had appeared with several women and a child late Sunday evening and had told them that the women were representatives of the Department of Public Welfare.

Answering allegations made by Denton that he found no "educational program" at the school, Mrs. Crump said that he "as a former school teacher" should have known that Mary Lee School was operating as the Austin Independent School District and had classes of

English, math social studies, physical education, cooking, sewing, home economics and workshops for pre-vocational and vocational training only nine months of the year.

During the summer months, the students participate in recreational activities and arts and crafts, she said.

Mrs. Crump criticized Denton for the statements that on Sunday evening, he had found the girls eating Spam, crackers and water for supper.

She said the girls had been to a picnic in Bastrop State Park that afternoon where they had dined on barbecue and watermelon. The lunchmeat and crackers were a bed-time snack, she said.

Mrs. Charlene Crump feels she has been betrayed, not only by a "former school teacher who should have known better" but also by the news media.

Mrs. Crump, founder of the Mary Lee School for mentally retarded girls now under investigation by Rep. Lane Denton of Waco the former teacher and a sub-committee of legislators, says Denton's "grossly misrepresenting" statements about the school have caused "irreparable damage but at least some people are beginning to see through his motivations."

Mrs. Crump disparaged Denton's ability to judge her facility correctly for "multi-handicapped girls" because he had no trained personnel with him when he initially visited the school Sunday evening.

She said that unannounced visits to the Mary Lee School were frequent and encouraged but that Denton had never contacted her staff about any specific charges against the school.

Mrs. Crump said she felt "betrayed" by the news media, because even though news personnel had been invited to tour the Mary Lee School she had stipulated a condition that "they would not take pictures of the students, only the facility."

Mrs. Crump added that Denton kept leading the photographers over to the groups of girls so that they could have to take pictures of them as he talked.

We don't have authorization from the parents to release

Mrs. Crump and Lilljedahl said many of the girls were given anti-convulsive medication because of seizures from epilepsy and brain damage and that "the people of Denton's committee apparently did not know the difference in these medications."

Mrs. Crump said both campuses had what she called a "quiet room," used for isolating girls who became violent.

She said staff members were required to check on the girls every 15 minutes and no girls ever stayed in the quiet room longer than several hours.

She and Lilljedahl repeatedly stressed that Mary Lee School was a "rehabilitative facility" instead of a custodial home and that already 75 to 100 ex-students of the Mary Lee School were supporting themselves in competitive jobs in the community.

Mary Lee Probe Incomplete

By WAYNE JACKSON
Staff Writer

State Rep. Lane Denton of Waco said Wednesday investigation into the Mary Lee school for girls near Austin is "incomplete" and that "serious questions remain to be answered."

The chairman of the House Subcommittee on Human Resources made the comments during a Capitol press conference at which he reviewed reports on the school from the Department of Public Welfare, Department of Health, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

The four separate reports released Tuesday found the school south of Austin to be in "substantial compliance" with current Texas Department of Welfare standards.

Denton said Wednesday that the reports are more "significant for what they did not comment on" than the points the reports did cover.

Omissions in the reports according to Denton included:

- Failure to address the question of drug use at the school, especially the giving of birth control shots to some girls.

- Failure to comment on the safety of working conditions at the school.

- Failure to say whether cooks at the school had health certificates.

- Failure of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to say if it considered the use of a "quiet room" to be an abuse of the children.

The report recommended that Mary Lee officials review use of the "quiet room" a four and a half foot square enclosure where girls were allegedly confined on occasion.

Last week, Denton said some students told him of being locked in the room for up to seven hours. School officials denied this.

Denton said he plans to write all the agencies to ask for further reports.

WAYNE JACKSON Staff Writer. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex., 25 July 1973: 1.

Denton Asks Welfare Panel If School Segregates Girls

Associated Press

Rep. Lane Denton specifically asked the State Welfare Department Friday if emotionally disturbed and runaway girls at a private school near here are segregated by race.

The Waco Democrat also asked, in effect, that James Harvey, co-author of the welfare department's first report on the school, not be allowed to write the second report on Mary Lee School.

"Our hope is to receive an objective report," Denton said in a letter to welfare commissioner Raymond Vowell. "Under the present circumstances, I do not feel that Mr. James Harvey can provide an objective analysis."

"It is my understanding that Mr. Harvey has served, or is now serving, as an advisory board member for Mary Lee School and is serving as a paid consultant for another child-caring institution. In addition, he was quoted in the press as saying Mary Lee School was a good school before he had conducted a study."

Denton made public Friday his requests for four state agencies to doublecheck on the Mary Lee School, and he listed specific questions for which he wants answers.

asks Welfare Panel Segregates Girls

At a news conference Monday, Denton, chairman of the House subcommittee on public welfare, said he was dissatisfied with the agency reports, which said the school met licensing standards and

generally were not critical of the school.

Denton led reporters on a tour of the rural campus July 18 after criticizing the facility at a news conference.

His letters asking for more information were mailed to the state departments of welfare, health, rehabilitation and mental health and mental retardation.

He asked Vowell if placing girls in a 4-1/2 by 4-1/2-foot closet—the "quiet room" at Mary Lee—constitutes child abuse. He also asked Vowell to check on whether girls had been locked in a wire pen or a concrete blockhouse.

Denton claimed most of the girls at one of the two rural units are white while most at the other are black. "Is racial

discrimination practiced at the rural campus of Mary Lee in regards to students?" Denton asked.

The legislator requested a study of the possible side effects of birth control shots which some of the girls and a nurse said they were receiving, and he added that he wanted to know if it was appropriate to give drugs such as tofranil, se-renalil and thiorazine to emotionally disturbed girls.

Denton said he wanted a complete report on \$100,000 that the rehabilitation commission purportedly paid to Mary Lee School in one year.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 28 July 1973: A10.

"I think they were looking for something specific," said Mrs. Judy Henslee, treatment supervisor. "They selectively took all the bank statements from one particular bank." She said the bank whose statements were tampered with is the one with which the school does all its state business.

"As far as we can tell, none of the records were taken, but the rubber bands were taken off all of them and they were gone through," Mrs. Henslee said.

Mrs. Audrey Tallier, the school's accountant, agreed that the cancelled checks had been tampered with. "The checks are not in sequence, as if some were missing," she said.

There was no evidence at the scene to prove or disprove that the records had been photographed.

Mrs. Henslee said that as well as the records being inspected, two cash boxes were taken from the offices. They contained about \$75, she said.

Mrs. Henslee said that as well as the records being inspected, two cash boxes were taken from the offices. They contained about \$75, she said.

Other than the school's bank statements, medical histories on some of the school's patients were disturbed by the burglar. School officials said the burglar evidently cut himself on some glass when he broke through a window to gain entrance to the accounting office. Blood was found on some of the file folders.

Neither Mrs. Henslee nor Mrs. Tallier would speculate on the purpose of the break-in, or who might be responsible for it. Both, however, said that since only particular records were disturbed by the burglar, they felt the reason for the break-in was not money.

By LARRY WRIGHT
Staff Writer

The main campus of Mary Lee School, 400 W. Live Oak in South Austin, was burglarized by persons evidently more interested in the school's records than cash early Monday, according to school officials.

The school's rural campus has figured in an investigation by state agencies for more than two weeks.

Thieves Rifle
Mary Lee's
Main Office

LARRY WRIGHT Staff Writer. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 30 July 1973: 1.

Solon Ordered To Answer Mary Lee School Monday

Associated Press

State District Judge Tom Blackwell has ordered Rep. Lane Denton, Monday to answer a suit filed by the Mary Lee School.

Charlene Crump, the school's director, filed the suit Wednesday, seeking an injunction to stop what she called "harassment" by Denton.

Denton, chairman of the House Public Welfare Subcommittee, has criticized the school's rural campus near here at news conference and in press releases. He once led reporters on a surprise visit to the school. But his subcommittee has made no formal investigation of the institution for troubled girls.

Mrs. Crump's suit alleges that Denton has "engaged in a course of harassment . . . and has issued irresponsible, distorted, untruthful and malicious statements to the press."

She also said Denton had conducted "an illegal investigation" of the Mary Lee School which was not authorized under the laws of the State of Texas or the rules of the House of Representatives.

The suit seeks a permanent injunction against further investigation, entering the school premises or "further false, inflammatory, slanderous or libelous statements."

In addition, Mrs. Crump wants a court order requiring the subcommittee report to ex-

clude anything not germane to its assigned task, a probe into the licensing of the Artesia Hall school in Liberty County.

Denton issued a statement saying he was "totally confident" that the suit would be dismissed as unfounded.

"I want to reiterate that I have never, on any occasion, made any statement about any child care institution which I did not believe to be true and which I was not prepared to prove was the truth," he said.

"I have acted as any responsible member of the Texas Legislature would when presented with information about such a facility. I have been entirely open in all matters relating to investigations of child care in-

stitutions, because I feel solutions will not come while secrecy prevails with regard to the operation of these schools. The purpose of such visits to child care institutions was always to obtain firsthand, uncensored information about the facilities," Denton said.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 27 Sep 1973: A13.

Mary Lee Court Suit Postponed

Associated Press

A court hearing aimed at stopping Rep. Lane Denton from making any investigation of the Mary Lee School has been postponed until Oct. 9.

The postponement was requested by attorneys for the child care school. The original date was Monday.

Denton, Waco Democrat, chairman of the House Public Welfare Subcommittee, has criticized the school near Austin at news conferences but has held no formal committee probe. On one occasion he led newsmen on a surprise visit to the school.

Charlene Crump, the school's executive director, filed the suit, alleging that Denton had "engaged in a course of harassment . . . and issued irresponsible, distorted, untruthful and malicious statements to the press."

Denton issued a statement saying he was "totally confident" the suit would be dismissed as unfounded.

The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex.. 02 Oct 1973: 7.

Controversial School Starts To Climb Back

His criticism of Mary Lee focused on the school's rural campus, a 42-acre site near Manchaca, where he claimed children were locked up in tiny closets for punishment.

But a subsequent investigation by three state agencies found no cases of child abuse and concluded the school was in "substantial compliance" with current child care standards. Denton called the investigators' report "very incomplete" and suggested unnamed "high state officials" were interfering with the licensing of child care centers in Texas.

"Financially, we're just getting back on an even keel," Lilljedahl said in a telephone interview Friday.

He said Mary Lee closed its rural campus two half-way houses and withdrew its support from other programs soon after last summer's storm of criticism began.

"We decided to simply pull out of everything that was losing money so we could save the agency," he explained, adding the action wasn't taken because any of Denton's criticisms were justified.

Currently the agency houses 65 girls — nearly all the kids it can handle — on the main campus at 400 W. Live Oak. Last summer, Lilljedahl said, Mary Lee School programs had a 137-bed capacity.

Mary Lee School, the Austin facility thrust into controversy during last year's summer of child care scandals, is at last emerging from a "long, dark winter," its director believes.

The Moody Foundation has awarded a \$27,000 grant to the private institution, and director Don Lilljedahl says it's the first grant Mary Lee has received since its problems of a year ago.

"It's encouraging to know we're not being blackballed by everybody," he said, adding the school is further rebuilding its credibility by seeking national accreditation as a psychiatric treatment facility for children.

Mary Lee's problems began in July 1973 when the facility for emotionally disturbed children came in for blistering criticism from several legislators, especially Rep. Lane Denton of Waco.

house and a waiting list.

The director said the criticism damaged the school but no parents pulled their children out because of it. When the agency closed its facilities, the children were sent back to institutions, correctional units, their homes, or wherever else they came from, he said.

The Moody grant will provide matching money the school needs to obtain a \$70,000 grant from the federal government to finance outreach services.

The Austin American - Statesman (1973-1980), Evening ed.; Austin, Tex.: 03 Aug 1974: 11.

Unwed Mother Is Suing School Over Dismissal

An Austin woman who claims that she was fired from her job at the Mary Lee School of Special Education because she was pregnant and unmarried has filed suit in U.S. District Court here.

Evelyn Young, according to the suit, was a mental health worker at the school, responsible for nightly room checks, awakening students in the morning, supervising breakfast and administering required medications.

On June 10, three days after learning that she was in her third month of pregnancy, the suit maintains, she informed her supervisor of her condition.

On June 12, the pregnant woman was informed that the school could not employ pregnant unmarried women, the suit

alleges.

Miss Young, who during her employment used the name Evelyn Franklin, alleges that she was told that her work had been satisfactory but she must be discharged because of her condition.

She maintains that she asked to work two months longer since none of the students knew she was pregnant, but was told "no."

A policy of not hiring pregnant, unmarried working women, the suit alleges, violates the prohibition against discrimination based on sex of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1964.

Don Lilljedahl, director of the Mary Lee School, 400 West Live Oak, said he hadn't seen the suit and had no comment.

The Austin American - Statesman (1973-1980), Evening ed.; Austin, Tex.. 07 Feb 1975: 17.

State child care facilities in for round of scrutiny

By BILL CHOYKE
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Three years ago, Elizabeth M. of Abita Springs, La., was arrested for possession of marijuana. Although the charges were later dropped, the teenager was institutionalized at a Louisiana facility.

Several months later, she was transferred to the Mary Lee School in Austin, operated by the Mary Lee Foundation. There, she alleges, she was drugged, tranquilized and compelled to take birth control pills against her religious beliefs.

Elizabeth's story is not new. There have been reports of other cases of out-of-state children being mistreated in Texas juvenile facilities since the Illinois attorney general in 1973 issued a report documenting the distressing treatment some Illinois children received in the state.

Although many children have since been removed and returned to their home states and Texas has strengthened its interstate child placement procedures, generally the private child care facilities have continued to operate without enough state supervision.

One state welfare official in Austin acknowledged that only "minimum standards" exist to regulate the institutions. It has only been in the last few months that the state legislature has enacted a tougher facility licensing law, and that the welfare department has promulgated specific regulations requiring treatment programs at a number of these institutions.

Even so, some facilities may soon be facing a new round of scrutiny. Elizabeth and two other youngsters have filed suit on behalf of all Louisiana children against 41 Texas child care facilities.

On other fronts, two U.S. Senate panels are gearing up for fall investigations of Texas child care institutions.

The Senate Children and Youth Subcommittee will be exploring the interstate trafficking of children. Committee staffers are now in the preliminary stages of the probe, which includes a visit to Texas this month.

The Senate Judiciary subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency has already heard testimony regarding the practice of giving behavior

modification drugs to children in facilities in Texas and other states. A subcommittee aide said hearings will resume in the fall.

"We scratched the surface with the Louisiana thing and the institutions in East Texas," said the aide. "It's not just in Texas. About 15 or 16 states are involved."

The class action suit also names state officials in Louisiana as defendants. Although originally filed last fall, the suit was amended last month to add 16 more child care facilities in Texas.

The trial, to be heard in federal court in New Orleans, is scheduled for next March.

Many of the Texas institutions named in the suit are in the metropolitan and rural areas of Central and East Texas. Five of the facilities are in the Austin area, while others are in Bangs in Brown County northeast of San Angelo.

Besides the Mary Lee School, Austin facilities named in the suit are the Brown Schools, Inc.; Marbridge Foundation for Retarded Children, Inc.; Arm of the Holy Infancy, Inc., and the Balcones Children's Psychiatric Center.

Since the suit primarily seeks the return of Louisiana children from Texas facilities, its potential effects on the institutions will vary to the extent they are dependent on out-of-state enrollments.

At least one facility in Austin does not appear to be too concerned about the suit.

"It will not affect our program, either way," said Don Lilljedahl, director of the Mary Lee School.

He added that although Mary Lee had about 10 out-of-state children several years ago, that number has been reduced to two.

The shelter care facility has 53 beds, which are not all filled now.

Lilljedahl said the allegations that Elizabeth, while at Mary Lee, received drugs and birth control pills against her will were "not true."

"I don't want to get into that, for it's a new ballgame," he said from his Austin office. "I'd rather not talk about it, but there is no truth to it at all."

Generally, children sent to the Texas schools are delinquent or dependent-neglected, explained the Washington attorney representing Louisiana children in the suit.

"All are sent against their will

to particular schools in Texas," said Steve Buerzon, an attorney for the children's defense fund here. "There are 500 plus in Louisiana alone."

"What we found," he added, "is that the schools in Texas with a couple of exceptions rate from bad custodial care received from parental officers to worse — barbaric care. They go for treatment and they are not getting it."

Besides asking that the children be returned, the suit also requests that the defendants be restricted from removing any child from his or her family or community except in certain cases.

Further, the three children named in the suit are asking for \$150,000 in damages.

Louisiana officials are reserving comment on the case. One refused to say if any changes in the out-of-state placement policy had been made in the wake of the suit.

"I prefer not to answer any questions," said Charles Yost, the Louisiana Department of Family Services official who determines which Texas homes will house his state's children.

"There is no reason to attempt to try this things through the newspapers. It will come up in court eventually and we will be heard," he added.

By Grace Lim

Special to the American-Statesman

She is many women in one. She is everyone's best friend. She is a business executive working with multi-million-dollar budgets. She is "only" a high school graduate, but her hands-on experience with people and life could not be gained from a college degree. She is Charlene Crump, founder and executive director of the Mary Lee Foundation, a private non-profit agency for people with multiple handicaps.

In 1963, Crump opened the door to community life for retarded people, especially retarded women. She started the first Mary Lee School of Special Education, a residential school on South Lamar Boulevard, for four girls.

It was a time when retarded women were locked away and forgotten, but that did not deter Crump, then 23. She spent the next 22 years fighting for equal opportunity for the "special population."

From the modest start of a rented two-bedroom house on South Lamar, the school grew into six residential treatment campuses in Central Texas for boys and girls and an adult residential center in South Austin. Now the foundation houses more than 200 residents and provides services to more than 1,000 people annually.

The name Mary Lee is a combination of Crump's name and that of her husband. Her name is Mary Charlene and her husband's name is Robert Lee.

It was not easy for Crump. She remembers the obstacles she faced when she announced her desire to open a school for retarded, emotionally disturbed, and handicapped women.

"I've talked to the people at the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Most of them didn't really encourage me," she said. "When they found out that I was going to be working with mentally retarded girls and women, basically, the response was, 'Well, you can't do that. You can't take the child out of the home. They get pregnant.' "

Crump looks away, then continues, "Now this came from the professional community." She sits back in her chair with a slightly disgusted look on her face.

She shakes her head and smiles. She remembers the people who did encourage her.

One was Dr. John Peck, then an associate professor



Charlene Crump visits with resident Clifton Miller, above, at the Mary Lee Foundation's facility in Kyle. Crump has worked with the handicapped for more than 20 years, since she began with a two-bedroom rented house.



of special education at the University of Texas, who gave her a reading list to make up for her lack of formal education. The other was Charles Eskridge with the Texas Education Agency.

With the backing of Peck, Eskridge, her husband, and her parents, who had been houseparents for an Austin residential treatment center for retarded males, Crump opened that first school March 1, 1963.

Crump and Leona Winston, who also had no formal training in special education, made up the entire staff.

See Crump, E20

"Mary Lee foundation built on a lifetime of love" Newspapers.com. Austin American-Statesman, November 10, 1985. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/austin-american-statesman-mary-lee-found/32080758/>.

By: Naishtat

H.R. No. 433

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Current and former residents, staff, and supporters
2 of the Mary Lee Foundation in Austin are celebrating its 50th
3 anniversary on March 1, 2013; and

4 WHEREAS, The Mary Lee Foundation serves children and adults
5 with special needs, helping them develop the skills necessary to
6 socially integrate with and contribute to their communities;
7 Charlene Crump, an ordained Methodist minister with a master's
8 degree in social work, formed the foundation in a modest
9 two-bedroom home in South Austin in 1963; four young women from the
10 Texas State School moved in and, with Ms. Crump's assistance,
11 learned how to take care of themselves, study a trade, find
12 employment, and live fulfilling lives; and

13 WHEREAS, Ms. Crump was an early innovator of community-based
14 independent living programs that operate as real homes for adults
15 with disabilities; in 1969, Don Lilljedahl joined Ms. Crump as
16 director of the foundation, and these two caring professionals have
17 been honored by numerous organizations for their work; in 2002, Mr.
18 Lilljedahl was awarded the Martha Arbuckle Meritorious Service
19 Award from the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with
20 Disabilities and in 2001, Ms. Crump received the Texas Governor's
21 Award for Outstanding Service to People with Disabilities; and

22 WHEREAS, Since 1974, the foundation has run a licensed
23 intermediate care facility within an apartment setting for adults
24 with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Lamar

H.R. No. 433

1 Square neighborhood; in 1993, the foundation added a licensed brain
2 injury rehabilitation center and an extended care program; in
3 addition, the foundation offers daily therapeutic activities for
4 adults with developmental and mental health disabilities at their
5 Daybreak Activity Center, individualized services and support for
6 Central Texans who live with their own families or in other
7 community settings, and housing for children with disabilities at
8 the Kathryn Stanley Sinclair Children's Center in Woodville; and

9 WHEREAS, For 50 years, the Mary Lee Foundation has provided
10 essential services to support Texans who need assistance, and the
11 organization's commitment to the physical, emotional, and social
12 well-being of their clients is indeed deserving of recognition;
13 now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
15 Legislature hereby honor the Mary Lee Foundation on the 50th
16 anniversary of its founding and extend to all those affiliated with
17 the organization sincere best wishes for continued success with
18 their important work; and, be it further

19 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
20 prepared for the Mary Lee Foundation as an expression of high regard
21 by the Texas House of Representatives.

<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/HR00433I.PDF>

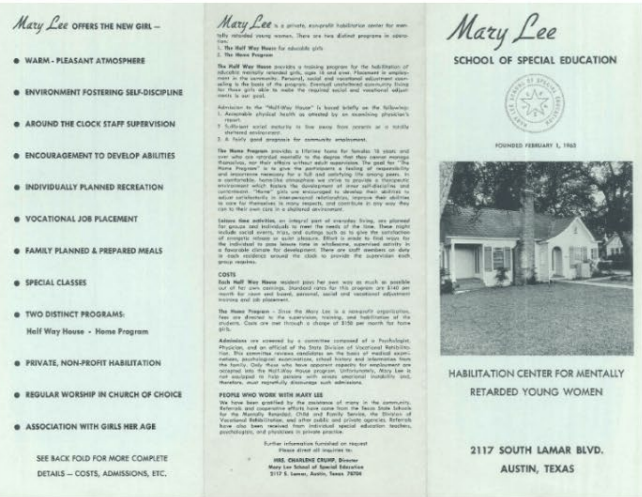
1960s

1970s

1980's

1990's

2000 – Present



1963

Charlene Crump opened Mary Lee School in February 1963.

A pioneering force of the larger national conversation, Charlene Crump set out to establish the first residential facility in Texas for girls with IDD. The Mary Lee Foundation began in 1963 as Mary Lee School of Special Education (Mary is Crump's first name, and Lee is her, now ex-, husband's middle name), a low-budget residential program in a rented two-bedroom home in south Austin. Founder Crump and assistant Leona Winston provided around-the-clock care and education to four girls, equipping them with the skills to care for themselves and earn a living. Though employers were initially hesitant to take them on board, all four girls eventually found jobs and gained a level of independence that would have been nearly unattainable before their training at Mary Lee School. Within three months, Crump opened a second unit next door to the original schoolhouse, boosting enrollment to thirteen students.

[Expand less ^](#)

1966

By 1966, Mary Lee School had an enrollment of 31 students in three buildings.

1969

In 1969, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission approved Mary Lee for a study to determine if women could be de-institutionalized and become socially and vocationally independent.

From the start her philosophy had been that the way to be accepted and acceptable is to hold a job. After three years, the commission found 90% of the clients in the study met most, if not all of the criteria for social and vocational independence. Also in 1969, Mary Lee received funding through a federal research grant to determine if individuals with IDD and mental illness could benefit from rehabilitation programs. To implement these and other new programs, Charlene hired Don Lilljedahl, MSW and ordained minister as the program director. Lilljedahl continued in his position until December 2016, when he retired after forty-seven years of dedicated service.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Mary Lee Auxiliary VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR was announced last month at a reception for Auxiliary members given by the Capital Campaign Committee. Scott Ellis, Volunteer Coordinator for the Foundation, made the presentation to Boots Plunier, right. Other Auxiliary members at the party received certificates for volunteer service at the Youthline, and were given a tour of the new Southpointe Community building, which they helped to fund.



OUR VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION! The Junior League of Austin has, for the second consecutive year, funded a volunteer development project at the Mary Lee Foundation. This year, League Project Director Kathy Luckert (center) is overseeing a program of enhancing volunteer participation in the Mary Lee Capital Campaign Committee and the Mary Lee Foundation Auxiliary.

Helping out with publicity and special projects for the Capital Campaign Committee are Janet Scott (right) and Melanie Stahl (not shown). The League's Court Brennan (left) is acting as a Day Chairman at the Mary Lee Variety Store, where she is recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers.

The 50 volunteers comprising the Mary Lee Foundation Auxiliary are celebrating the purchase of the Southpointe Community Building, made possible largely through the diligent efforts of these fine folks, who have operated the Variety Store for the past three years.

Among the leaders of this group are the Auxiliary Day Chairmen, Mary Jo Campbell, Lynn Travis, Susan Reed, Sheri Brennan, Dorothy Todd, and Mary Jane Johnson. Immediately upon completion of the Southpointe Community Building purchase project, the Auxiliary set their sights on refurbishing some of the children's programs. First on the list of priorities is repairing and painting the dormitories and classrooms at Mary Lee School, Live Oak Campus.

The Variety Store, located at 1180 South Lamar, is in need of such donations and volunteer workers. For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Scott Ellis, at 447-7944.



1973

Mary Lee School celebrates its ten year anniversary in February 1973.

1974

In 1974, Mary Lee School purchased apartment buildings on Lamar Square Drive in order to provide sheltered living facilities for adults with disabilities.

The Southpointe facilities, licensed Intermediate Care Facilities and transitional living programs, found their homes in those apartments and other acquired properties on the square. As other licensed programs for adults and children with disabilities became available in Texas, no other adult program facilitated the level of independent living that Crump knew was possible. At Mary Lee's SouthPointe program, each client lives on their own or with a roommate and are taught to take care of their apartment, cook their own meals, and—in most cases—keep a job.

The Mary Lee Foundation, <https://www.maryleefoundation.org/about>

Permits

St. Johns Lutheran Church		400 West Live Oak St.	
123	1 through 12	3	-
Doughty Sub.			
Masonry church building.			
47080 12-29-50		\$24,000.00	
Lewis Hamilton			
OWNER	Mrs. Charline Crump	ADDRESS	400 West Live Oak
PLAT	123	LOT	1-12
SUBDIVISION		Simon Gibbs DW.	
OCCUPANCY		School	
BLD PERMIT #	98269	DATE	1-6-66
OWNERS		ESTIMATE 3,000.00	
CONTRACTOR	Day Labor	NO. OF FIXTURES	
WATER TAP REC #		SEWER TAP REC #	
Interior Remodeling of Existing Church Bldg.			

OWNER Charles Crump ADDRESS 400 W. Liveoak St.
 PLAT 123 LOT 1-12 BLK ----
 SUBDIVISION Simon Gillis
 OCCUPANCY Dorm, activity room, school
 BLD PERMIT # 108954 DATE 7/22/68 OWNERS ESTIMATE 21,000.00
 CONTRACTOR G. A. Wallace NO. OF FIXTURES See plans
 WATER TAP REC # ----- SEWER TAP REC # -----

frm addn to a dorm. 2060 Sq. ft.

OWNER Mary Lee Schools ADDRESS *West* 400 Live Oak Street
 PLAT 123 LOT 1 thru 12 BLK ---
 SUBDIVISION Simong Gillis
 OCCUPANCY dormitory, dinning room, & ad. bldg.
 BLD PERMIT # 117554 DATE 6-12-70 OWNERS ESTIMATE \$165,000
 CONTRACTOR Joe Badgett Const. Co. NO. OF FIXTURES see plans
 WATER TAP REC # --- SEWER TAP REC # ----

three, one story masonry commercial buildings

9,099 square feet total

OWNER Mary Lee Foundation ADDRESS 400 W. Live Oak
 PLAT 123 LOT 1-12 BLK
 SUBDIVISION Simon Gillis
 OCCUPANCY dorm.
 BLD PERMIT # 145087 DATE 9-13-74 OWNERS ESTIMATE \$5,200
 CONTRACTOR Ed Grimes NO. OF FIXTURES
 WATER TAP REC # SEWER TAP REC #

remodel exist dormitory

OWNER Mary Lee School ADDRESS 400 W. Live Oak
 PLAT 123 LOT 1-12 BLK
 SUBDIVISION Simon Gillis
 OCCUPANCY day care center
 BLDG. PERMIT # 165005 DATE 7-5-77 OWNERS ESTIMATE 300.00
 CONTRACTOR same NO. OF FIXTURES see plan
 WATER TAP REC# SEWER TAP REC#

remodel interior existing comm. bldg. add bath