

# Raton Range

RATON, COLFAX COUNTY, NEW MEXICO 87740 15¢

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## Father Ed's Boys Home

# Approval withdrawn, complaint issued

By SCOTT EATON  
Range Staff Writer

The Raton office of the state Social Services Agency has withdrawn its approval of Father Ed's Hacienda de los Muchachos and has filed a five-page complaint with state officials and the archbishop of the Diocese of Santa Fe.

The report, signed by social services (SSA) field office manager Janet Bryan and social worker M.E.L. Olsen, states: "...It is the consensus of the Colfax County SSA staff that alternative placements for the eight boys currently at the Hacienda be found and that no more children be placed there."

Bryan said copies of the March 12, 1976 report sent to then director of the state Department of Social Services, John Edwards; John Kearny, supervising, state Health Agency; and archbishop Robert Sanchez. Hacienda does not come under the Catholic church, Father Ed priest, does.

the founder and director of the home for wayward boys, told the state he had taken all but one boy back to the home, many to Roswell, pending state action. He said he had been told by a social worker from Raton that his

one is accepted.

Officials said the local office does not make referrals to the Hacienda because of its proximity to Raton.

"M.E.L.'s (Olsen) report was a recommendation. We feel the Hacienda should not be used by our agency or any others. We don't think it should be open," Bryan said.

Bryan said the decision to file a report and withdraw approval from the Hacienda was not related to the death of a 12-year-old boy who ran away from the home Jan. 25. The boy was found dead of exposure.

Some of the items listed in the report are: the home stresses severing family relationships, and Christmas presents have been returned to parents in some cases; education is considered a privilege to be earned and a boy must prove himself before being allowed to attend public schools in Springer; there are an "excessive number" of runaways, and Father Ed has not always been anxious to return boys who run away; older boys are placed in the same dorms with younger boys; "the whole system of discipline is arbitrary"; and "the Hacienda provides an austere atmosphere."



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... license to operate the Hacienda had been taken away.

Field office manager Bryan, however, said she did not know of anyone telling Father Ed his license had been suspended, and she said only the licensing division of the State Health Agency has that authority. The Social Services Agency is separate from the state Health Agency, although both are in the Health and Social Services Department.

State licensing supervisor John Kearny confirmed his office received a copy of the report from the local social services office, and also a letter indicating the Hacienda would be closed down. He emphasized only his agency can grant or suspend licenses, and social services is charged with referring children to institutions such as the Hacienda, and funding them while they are there.

He said, however, he would send an inspector to the facility near Galdstone, N.M., around May 17, and another check would probably be conducted between then and Sept. 1.

The Hacienda is classified as a 24-hour child care facility, and Kearny said its license, which it has had since August, 1967, is good until Sept. 1 of this year.

The first check will be a comprehensive routine annual inspection, and Kearny said complaints from the local social services office would be looked into at that time. Each of the approximate 2200 licensed institutions in the state are given one comprehensive examination and two or three spot checks annually, he said. Licenses come up for renewal annually.

"If we were ever going to have any kind of crisis, it couldn't have come at a better time," Father Ed, who doesn't use a surname, said. "Our first five years were the cradle stage, and the second five years have been the crawling stage. We had already set up the timing to create an advisory board and review our program after ten years."

Although the Hacienda is a private institution supported mostly through donations and contributions, the Social Services Agency is the child it places there at \$123-a-month according to the office here. Father Ed said some educational equipment has been added in the past two years through Title I program.

The Hacienda has received boys from most of the state on recommendations from agencies and organizations. Boys are individually interviewed before being accepted, officials said.

Field office manager Bryan and social services supervisor Olsen said of an average of 8-10 boys are accepted from the state Social Services Agency. The effects of the report will

provides an austere atmosphere—more like a monastery than a normal home."

In commenting on the report, Olsen said, "It took a long time to come to the decision—a lot of weighing, a lot of talking. It wasn't a snap thing. We felt the Hacienda was possibly detrimental to the growth and development of the child."

Father Ed, who was a chaplain at the Springer Boys' School before founding the Hacienda, said Olsen had been visiting the Hacienda "announced and unannounced for about a year and a half, and she was always welcome."

"(Social services) told us last month they were pulling our license. They told us they had pulled it. I notified the dean and he notified the archbishop. The archbishop wrote me a letter, and I started to act on that letter," he said, in explaining why boys were transferred out.

Father Ed said he discovered last January, the 1973 Children's Code prohibits retarded, emotionally disturbed, delinquent and pre-delinquent children in the same facility, and he quit taking in boys after learning that.

But he said the complaints by the social services office here seemed to "happen almost overnight. They told me there would be an investigation and it would start from the governor's office. Shortly after that, Ruth Rolstadt, who identified herself as being from the governor's office, called to see if I could take a boy."

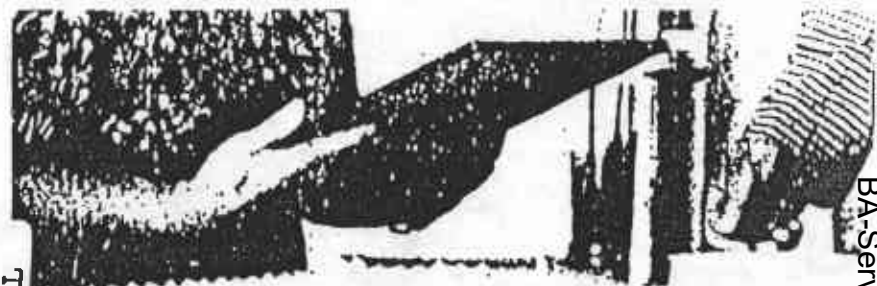
In answering some of the items in the five-page report, Father Ed said, "Those boys who can carry regular academic programs do go to the public schools in Springer, but they don't go in the middle of the school year."

He also said the authorities are called if a boy runs away, and he said he did not know of a time when a boy was found nearby when Hacienda officials did not go get him. He said older boys have always been put in with younger boys, and if Olsen did not feel that was good, "Why didn't she say something earlier?"

Father Ed said his policy is the boys have to learn to depend on themselves to get things done, and they must seek out the supervisors for assistance, instead of the supervisors keeping a constant watch on the boys.

The buildings at the Hacienda are old (1935 or so), but sturdy, he said. He also said he has been talking with an architect about remodeling or even perhaps new buildings.

There is no indication as to what effect the withdrawal of approval of the Hacienda by the local social services office will have, since the local office did not refer boys, and only a few boys were accepted from the state Social Services Agency. The effects of the report will



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RETIRES AFTER 30 YEARS—Eddie Gabriele was honored yesterday for her 30 years of service at Miners' Hospital, and she said she has "enjoyed it." Miss Gabriele started at the hospital May 4, 1945, and as several people said, "She did everything," although the last 20 years were spent working in the kitchen.

She said she has "waited on four times as many bosses" in her life as she planned any more. "I'll wait and see," Miss Gabriele said. (R)



ARTIST TO DISPLAY—Jim Mullings, shown here with his ghost town painting, will be one of over 20 local artists who will be exhibiting

High School art classes. Night Talent.

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