

In 1991, Illinois became the first state to launch a formal investigation into reviving orphanages. But a state-established task force concluded that orphanages are "not consistent" with the goal of rapidly returning abused children to their families. The task force seemed not to notice that in the 18 months it spent preparing its report, Illinois' foster-care rolls had swelled by another 11,000 children.

The opponents of orphanages make several critical errors. They raise fears that orphanages will be used inappropriately in place of foster homes, but they don't recognize that foster care is being destroyed by a system that forces troubled kids into it who don't belong there, don't benefit from it, and whose behavior hounds foster parents into quitting.

The opponents cling to the hope that better foster care and "family preservation" programs can handle the child-welfare crisis. It's true that prevention programs are critical and show real promise, but they are still in their infancy. And they're being swamped by the child-abuse epidemic.

Just as flu and typhoid created scores of orphans in the 1890s, so have crack-cocaine and AIDS in the 1990s. "We're always going to have dysfunctional families. But I'm convinced that sexual abuse and physical abuse is the result of being high on crack-cocaine and alcohol," says Smyth. "They're nuts, they're crazy. When they walk in a room, a 7-year-old girl looks like a 21-year-old girl. Human nature has not changed that much in 10, 12, 15 years."

In the 1990s, child abuse often starts in the womb. At the child intake center run by Maryville, roughly 5 to 10 infants arrive each day suffering from fetal alcohol syndrome or the symptoms of crack-cocaine use by their mothers.

The nation can't handle its drug epidemic, which begat the child welfare epidemic. It can't prevent drugs from being manufactured here or shipped in from somewhere else. It doesn't have enough jail cells to lock up the users. And it does not want to spend the money for treatment.

On top of that, the nation is just beginning to deal with the disaster of a federal welfare policy that prevents outright destitution but contributes to a permanent underclass, which is most prone to child neglect.

"Everything it has done has destroyed families," says Smith, who works closely with welfare recipients. "These are the conditions of welfare. You cannot own anything. You cannot save anything, you cannot work and you can't get married. I think that's slavery. If you took away welfare, they'd work. And they'd live and they'd succeed. But you have to raise people up so they can compete. You start by making sure the family stays together and the kids stay in school."

Until the nation figures out how to raise up the underclass and end drug abuse—utopian notions, perhaps—it has to figure out what to do with all the kids who can't live safely at home, particularly those whose emotional scars run deepest.

It cannot afford to turn its back on any reasonable solutions. And that includes the 1990s version of the orphanage.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

HON. ANDREW JACOBS, JR.

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 1995

Mr. JACOBS. Mr. Speaker, despite her splendid accomplishments as Social Security

Commissioner which are set out in the following USA Today article, Shirley Chater's nomination to become the first head of the non-partisan independent Social Security Administration has been held up in the Senate Finance Committee, thus proving that there is more than one way to abuse a woman.

[From the USA Today, Aug. 30, 1995]

AGENCY PUTS FOCUS ON ITS CUSTOMERS

(By Martha T. Moore)

WASHINGTON.—For knowledgeable, helpful, polite telephone service, a shopper can call that famous mail-order retailer in Maine.

Or, a taxpayer can call Social Security.

After two years of corporate-style reengineering, the Social Security Administration is emerging as the federal agency that's providing the best service to its customers—that is, to taxpayers. It's a favorite of Vice President Gore, the champion of reinventing government, and Michael Hammer, co-author of *Reengineering the Corporation*—the book that spurred the reengineering movement.

And in key measures of customers satisfaction, Social Security has outscored companies famed for service, such as Nordstrom and L.L. Bean. That's an "incredible" achievement, Gore says. "They're really transforming and reengineering their agency."

Reengineering, a term borrowed from the corporate world, means a start-from-scratch overhaul of the way an organization does its work, with goals determined by customers' desires and performance measured by comparisons against the best in the industry. Since 1993, when the Clinton administration kicked off its National Performance Review for government agencies, Social Security has pressed hard to improve customer service, through the agency's toll-free number (800-772-1213) for questions and information, and in its field offices. The changes that have been made are both obvious and subtle. For one thing, taxpayers are now referred to as customers.

As well they should be, says Stephanie Martin, a telephone representative at the agency's Jamaica (N.Y.) Tele-service Center. "Social Security is a business of insurance," says Martin, who handles 50 to 70 callers a day. "They are paying to be insured."

The results so far: In a survey of telephone customer service in May, Social Security outperformed private companies famous for their customer service, including catalog retailer L.L. Bean and Baldrige Quality Award winners Federal Express and AT&T Universal Card.

"There are some government departments which are effectively resisting this whole (performance review) thing tooth and nail, which are bureaucratic nightmares beyond anything one could imagine," Hammer says. "A few agencies are doing a good job. The Social Security Administration is one of the leaders."

Social Security Commissioner Shirley Chater is hoping for a fringe benefit from reengineering: If people believe Social Security is run efficiently, they may worry less about whether it will go broke before they retire. "Good service equals confidence in the program," she says.

To come up with a revamped process, the agency began the way corporations do: It created a reengineering team. Together with consultants, the team members visited private companies such as AT&T's Universal Card operation to see how they operate. And they did what all market researchers do: they talked to the people who use their services. "The cornerstone is to find out what your customers want," says Toni Lenane, chief policy officer and head of the customer

service program. The agency surveyed 10,000 people, conducted focus groups, and mailed 22,000 comment cards to people who had visited Social Security offices.

What the team learned: Customers don't expect the world, but they want to be treated well and quickly. Based on the results, the agency pledged to treat customers politely and promptly. It instituted more courtesy training for employees. It is reassigning as many as 700 staff members from headquarters and support jobs to field offices to deal with customers face-to-face.

The biggest effort focuses on the 800 number, most taxpayers' first contact with the agency. Social Security's goal is for customers to reach a representative within five minutes.

It's a tough task. Because all Social Security checks normally arrive on the third day of the month (unless that falls on a Sunday), everyone who has a problem calls on the same day to complain. That's why the agency hasn't met its five-minute target yet. In the May telephone service survey, Social Security scored first in every aspect of telephone service except time spent on hold: Its callers held for about eight minutes on average. Agency figures for week of August 7-11 show that 69% of callers got through within five minutes. Lenane admits that on the worst days, callers may never get through. So the reengineering isn't over. By January, the agency predicts the success rate will reach 95%. To hit that goal, it is adding staff to answer phones at peak times. In January, when calls typically increase because of December retirees and frequent questions about cost-of-living adjustments and taxes, the agency will boost the number of people answering phones from 4,600 last year, then a record, to 7,900. Most help comes from other agency workers trained to pitch in temporarily.

Upgrading phone systems and adding automated information to answer the most common questions. Already, a menu allows callers to choose English or Spanish language help. That's a boon for Betsy Reyes, a bilingual representative at the Queens (N.Y.) phone center. Before, she was summoned each time an agency worker received a call from a Spanish speaker. Now those calls queue up automatically.

Staggering delivery times of checks for people who retire in coming years. The agency had hoped to stagger checks for people already receiving Social Security as well. But current recipients, whose finances revolve around a check arriving the third of each month, were opposed.

While the reinvention of customer service continues, the agency also is preparing to tackle and even tougher challenge: fixing the process for awarding disability benefits. Now, it's a nightmare that can drag on for nearly two years—even though the actual labor involved in a disability claim, by the agency's own count, totals 45 hours. Even a simple claim for benefits that doesn't get appealed takes 155 days—five months—to be decided. The problem: a cumbersome administrative process. Handling the disability program, though it involves only 20% of Social Security recipients, takes up more than half of the agency's \$4.9 billion administrative budget.

The goal for reengineering that process calls for a disability application to be handled by one person, down from 13 currently. A four-level process will be cut to two levels. "You can always continue to throw money at something, but we really needed to fundamentally rethink the program," says Charles Jones, director of the disability process redesign.

The reengineering, which will take five years to complete, hinges on a new computer

system—which in turn hinges on a \$1 billion appropriation from Congress. But the biggest obstacle is “people’s natural resistance to major change. It is scary to a lot of people,” Jones says.

Reengineering scared Martin, the Queens telephone representative, mostly because it sounded like “more work to do.” But the customer service program, which gives phone representatives more information so they can answer questions quickly, “makes the job creative and interesting,” she says. Even courtesy training is welcome. Social Security phone reps get their share of angry, even suicidal callers. “It’s stressful,” Reyes says. And because of the range of information they provide, “we’re like the doctor, lawyer, social worker, accountant,” says Martin.

“Psychiatrist,” Reyes adds.

In fact, as much as Social Security has modeled itself on the corporate world, it remains different.

“We should look for new ideas” from private industry, says Richard Heyniger, of the Jamaica center. But he recalls his first job with Social Security, 21 years ago, visiting shelters in Manhattan. “Guys would sneeze on me and drool on me,” as he tracked down homeless men to give them their benefits, he says. “I don’t think there are lot of private sector organizations that do that. They’re concerned with customers—but they’re also concerned with profits.”

“WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME”

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 1995

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention a meaningful message, “What America Means to Me,” written by Julio Martinez who is a member of VFW Post 2545 in Redlands, CA. As a nation of immigrants, we must continue to recognize that the strength of our country lies largely in its diversity. I commend this passage to my colleagues in the House:

WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME

America means to me, the place of my birth. Born to a family who taught me, early in life,

No matter the hardships,
To love this land of my birth.

America offered schools for you and me,
To become whatever we wished to become.
Through life adjustment and preparation.
So we could build a stronger nation.

America means to me, freedom of speech,
As long as I do not infringe on the rights, of
any of our citizens.

America is the only place on this earth,
Where people of all nationalities live, and co-
exist as fellow citizens.

America means to me, freedom of religion,
To worship any religion I choose.
And the freedom not to worship if I so
choose.

America means to me, the freedom,
Of working where I choose to work.
And wherever I choose to work.
And am guaranteed fair wages for my work.

America means to me, freedom,
To move from one job to another, without
reprisal.

From one state to another, without fear
upon my arrival.

America means to me, the freedom, to
choose where,

I wish to live and am guaranteed, by our,
Constitution, the freedom.

To pursue life, liberty and the pursuit of
happiness.

With total freedom.

America means to me, freedom to elect,
Public officials to govern us,

With our consent.

and to remove them if not content.

America means to me, the freedom,
On the Fourth of July, her birthday, to cele-
brate.

She gained her independence for you and for
me.

So let us all celebrate.

America means to me, freedom to fly,
Our beautiful flag, atop our flagpoles,
Fluttering majestically, throughout our na-
tion,

Reminding us all that we live in a free na-
tion.

America may not be perfect, but,
It is still the best nation in the world.

So we had best take care of her, by living
harmoniously together.

If we look out for each other,

She will continue to be the best nation in
the world.

We know we are still learning to live to-
gether, as American citizens.

But let an outsider threaten America, and
she,

Will send out a call to her sons, daughters
and citizens.

We will respond to her call, no matter what
we contend.

We will defend her to the very end.

Our nation is free.

We have demonstrated to the world,

We will fight to keep her free.

And yes this is what America, means to me.
That I wish the world to see.

TRIBUTE TO ELEANOR KAHLE

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 1995

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of an extraordinary woman, Mrs. Eleanor Kahle of Toledo, who died at the age of 78 years young on August 13, 1995. Councilwoman and vice mayor emeritus, Eleanor Kahle, was a citizen-stateswoman, a mentor, a team player, and a friend to thousands. Her passing leaves a void in our community no one can adequately fill.

Eleanor (Konieczka) Kahle, Polish-American by heritage, began her life on September 10, 1916, in what was then the small community of Sylvania outside of the city of Toledo. At the time of her death, she had become a citizen of the world. In fact, though over her lifetime she received recognitions too numerous to mention, the one she cherished most was her last, that of being named National Volunteer of the Year of Sister Cities International.

It has been said that Eleanor Kahle had four careers in her life: that of wife and mother of six children, pastoral associate in the Catholic Church, executive director of the West Toledo Senior Center, and elected official in the city of Toledo. In all of these careers, Eleanor Kahle forged new ground. She took no responsibility more seriously than raising her six sons as a young widow, and delighted in their achievements as adults and in their children's.

She was also a devoted woman of the church. There did not exist such a position as

pastoral associate in the diocesan Catholic Church until Eleanor Kahle pursued its creation. In the 1970's as a pastoral associate, she was essentially the highest ranking woman in the Catholic Church, performing nearly all of the duties of the priesthood with the exception of the celebration of the Mass and the Sacraments.

Doggedly pursuing the creation of a senior citizens center for several years in spite of tremendous opposition, she oversaw the birth of the thriving West Toledo Senior Center in 1979, directing its growth until her retirement in 1993. Today that center stands, 5,000 seniors strong, housed in a large, pleasant, refurbished building, as a true legacy to her.

In 1983, I was honored by her service on my congressional staff in Washington as a special assistant on senior citizen issues, guiding and advising me as Congress debated changes in the Social Security system to assure its future solvency. She approached that opportunity with the zest, intelligence, and dedication that characterized her entire life.

In 1987, at the age of 70, when most people would not dream of making such a major change in their life, Eleanor began her stellar political career as an elected official winning a seat on Toledo's city council. Four years later, in 1991, she finished first in the city council races among a field of eight, and was elected the city's vice mayor, one of only two women in Toledo history to rise to the post. Always planning and working toward unmet horizons she kept up the brisk pace of public life right until her unexpected illness, and never wavered from the idea that she might return to her duties. It was during her career as a councilwoman that Eleanor Kahle committed herself to the Sister Cities International ideals. She traveled abroad extensively as a goodwill ambassador for Toledo and our Nation, establishing new relationships with the cities of Szeged, Hungary, and Poznan, Poland. She hosted dozens of visitors in her home and was Toledo's most dedicated ambassador-at-large.

In every endeavor, Eleanor Kahle conducted herself with grace, dignity, and eloquence. In her own mind, she never had to be the leader, “just wanted to make sure the job got done.” Yet in her persevering and joyful way, she led her community forward always, many times as a lone pioneer. Who can forget the twinkle in her eye or her cherubic grin. In the words of her children, while describing her and comparing her to the roses she so enjoyed, Eleanor Kahle was “a true American beauty.”

In special memory of Eleanor's life, in honor of her gifts and talents, and in recognition of her achievements and the special roles she fulfilled so exceptionally in our community, our Nation, and our world, the Eleanor Kahle Memorial Scholarship Fund will be established at Lourdes College, to be awarded to a nontraditional student who wishes to pursue those goals which Eleanor cherished and toward which she strove. This scholarship will stand as a legacy to Eleanor, her life, and her ideals. On behalf of all the citizens of our community whose lives have been improved by her vigilant work, let us publicly thank her as well as her family for their selfless devotion to others. We shall miss her always and be inspired by her life's work. She remains our true friend.