

THE RICE INSTITUTE  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

CIVICS AND PHILANTHROPY

April 28, 1924.

Mrs. James L. Autry,  
Courtland Place,  
Houston, Texas.

Dear Mrs. Autry:

NEED OF PROVISION FOR TUBERCULAR CHILDREN

I wish to state, in a few sentences, the reasons which would justify your taking an interest in this matter. Measures for curbing the ravages of tuberculosis have, for the most part, concerned adults who were definitely stricken. We have hardly entered the field of preventive care. A step of obvious importance is to protect and save children. You can realize their very great liability to infection: (a) when children of a family are in close contact with parents often in advanced stages and usually ignorant of protective measures; (b) when there is an inherited pre-disposition which is accentuated by growth-disturbances in the presence of infection sources, universal in the atmosphere of an urban community; (c) a devitalized condition in any child from any cause, particularly inadequate or improper nourishment.

It is interesting that the infection seldom proves fatal during childhood, but if the disease has made any progress during childhood, such a person almost universally dies of the disease before middle life.

What is needed, therefore, is an institution which will take such children at the very first sign of infection and put them under a proper regime. Such institutions in the form of open air schools or as so-called "preventoria", have a record of great success. If children are carried around their bad corner and the disease kept from fixing its hold, they seem completely safe thereafter.

There is one requirement that differentiates such an institution from hospitals. It is that provision must be made to carry forward the school work of the children and to prevent their falling behind in their grades. A school of this character of about thirty children would be of mixed grades and would require the services of two teachers.

The institution which you have had under consideration should be maintained by the city as a part of its hospital system and the teaching facilities should be provided by the school board. The department of school hygiene, the visiting nurses, and the clinic of the Anti-Tuberculosis League would locate the children needing such care and present them for admission.

Yours very sincerely,

J. W. Slaughter