

Katherine Wilson, director of the Allenville Senior Center (ASC), was very much oriented toward planning. In fact, one of the first things she had done after her appointment as director was to set a planning

Gray Panthers had worked to develop a new strategic plan for the agency.

One of the first things the hardworking committee had done was to survey the center's members to assess their needs and interests. At the same time, an analysis of other human service programs in the community was also completed. A series of community meetings provided a transition from needs assessment to goal setting, and, as a result of all of these procedures, a new set of agency goals had been developed.

The ASC's mission was to bring Allenville's older citizens into the mainstream of community life. Toward this end, the center would provide services such as the following:

1. A foster grandparents program involving the center's members in helping care for young children in the community
2. A consultation project, through which retired members would provide consultation to young businesspeople
3. A placement program assisting retired people to share part-time, paying jobs
4. An educational program, in cooperation with the local college, providing credit courses that would allow members to work toward degrees

Many of the functions the planning committee identified could be carried out under current funding. Some, however, would work more effectively as specially funded projects. The central focus of the program was clear, and Wilson was ready to carry out her promise to the committee and her very supportive board of directors. She would try to obtain the funding needed to carry out community-based programs. In the meantime, some of the activities could begin through allocation of part of the time of currently employed staff members.

Wilson was occupied in completing a tentative budget plan based on the planned activities when she received a call from the chair of ASC's board of directors. With excitement in his voice, Jonas Pratt exclaimed that he had just been contacted by the Rodin Foundation. They were interested in funding a project to build a country retreat for senior citizens. Funding would be very generous, and they would welcome a proposal from ASC.

project in motion. A committee made up of employees of the center, community leaders, consumers of the agency's services, and representatives of the American Association of Retired Persons and the

"Be sure to get on this right away, Katherine," Pratt bubbled. "He said he'd be interested in receiving our proposal, but you know we're not the only ones he called. The write-up had better be good. And be sure you come on strong with the needs assessment."

"But Mr. Pratt, what about the planning document we just did? That was approved by the board, and this project you're talking about doesn't sound as though it has any relationship to it. It sounds as if we'd be going in the opposite direction."

"Well, I know, but this idea is so new we just didn't think of it ourselves. The kind of funding they're talking about could keep us out of trouble for a long time."

"Mr. Pratt, it would also keep us from carrying out the plans for community involvement that we all agreed made sense," Wilson replied. "Our center members don't want to go to the woods on a retreat. They want to be involved in their own community. How can we show a needs assessment supporting a project like this when the needs assessment we really did pointed the other way? Do you think there might be any chance at all that the Rodin Foundation might be interested in funding one of our own projects?"

"Katherine, I just don't think so. They didn't sound as if they were just out shopping for proposals. They had something darned specific in mind. Listen, there's no point in our talking about whether we want this Rodin money when we don't even have the grant. We can always decide whether we want to accept it with the strings attached or not after we've gotten it. In the meantime, let's just put all our efforts into doing the proposal. If we don't get the funding, no problem. If we do, then we can decide."