

The Flint Voice-2 years old

The Flint Voice began as an outgrowth of our work at the Hotline Center, a crisis center of sorts that opened in 1973. We felt frustrated listening to various problems people were encountering and realized how much more needed to be done to prevent the individual tragedies we saw occurring. People abusing drugs, young women with unwanted pregnancies, high school students who were bored and depressed, factory workers drunk every night, housewives with their friendly Valiums—problems that we quickly realized didn't "just happen." We saw that there were societal causes behind each of these personal miseries, and we knew that it was the causes which had to be dealt with. We saw, for example, that—

Lack of information led to those unwanted pregnancies.

Dehumanizing factory work led to alcohol abuse.

Boring and irrelevant schools led to student apathy and depression.

Sexist attitudes that place women in second class roles led to the dependence on Valium and other drugs.

We believed that people are basically good and that it was the various environments they found themselves in that made them do self-destructive things.

We were also aware that the typical social service agencies were treating

only the symptoms ("Let's see—how can we get you to stop abusing drugs.") instead of getting to the root of the problems.

At that point, we decided to devote more of our time to speaking out and organizing people to create social changes and make Flint a more peaceful, just, and humanistic place to live in.

We knew that the standard news media, which was owned by many of the same corporations that were causing much of this injustice and disparity, were not going to cover the issues and events that would lead to this more peaceful and just society. Under their false air of "objectivity" the media constantly puts down or ignores any real movement that may affect the status quo. Last year there were over 10 student walk-outs or sit-downs in area schools. How many of those did you read about in the Flint Journal?

In fact, we had decided that we had had enough with the Flint Journal. Here was a newspaper that has been wrong on every important social issue in the last 50 years.

Well, rather than spend any more time wondering why the Journal was against workers, for war and up the creek about nuclear power, we decided to put out our own newspaper that supported average people, spoke out for those who had little representation, and printed the truth.

Thus, the Flint Voice was born.

In two years, we have covered a wide range of stories about county commissioners ripping off \$30,000, police killings of Blacks and young people, women's rights, corporal punishment, the draft, assembly line speed-ups, discrimination at Howard Johnson's, police surveillance of individuals, and Mayor Rutherford's sordid past.

We have close to 2,000 subscribers and over 100 outlets that carry the Voice. Each month we print 15,000 copies that are distributed in high schools, colleges, factories, and on the street.

Our staff is always too small for what we're doing and each issue we hope to attract more people. Our decisions are made jointly with no hierarchy or person "in charge." Everybody has an equal say. Everybody also has the same salary: zip.

We do not pretend to be "objective" as the other media does. Their slant is subtle, ours is more obvious. We admit that we have feelings and won't bullshit you about it. We also won't distort the truth, regardless of what our feelings are.

That's the bottom line—we will always tell the truth and we will report nothing unless it is backed up by at least two credible sources.

The Flint Voice is a newspaper that we hope will encourage people to act. Having people read it is not enough. We want you to become involved by being informed about what's going on.

One way to involve yourself is to join our volunteer staff. We are always in need of people to distribute our newspaper and for people to sell advertising. We can also use a few good writers, gutsy photographers, persistent investigators, and layout and design people. There are many jobs for people who just want to be part of a unique and creative experience in Flint, Michigan.

Money is also something that we are in dire need of. If you've been receiving the paper and haven't sent us any money in a while, please send us a check for whatever you can afford. We will greatly appreciate any help you can give us.

Finally, as we enter our third year, we'd like to say that it feels good to be in Flint and to live with people who are ever aware of the problems this city faces but are who confused about how to better the situation. All of us have a common struggle living here from day to day, whether we're on the assembly line, behind a counter at McDonald's, or confined to a desk at Southwestern High School. Together we can make good things happen.

Thanks for your support—you certainly have ours.

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