

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

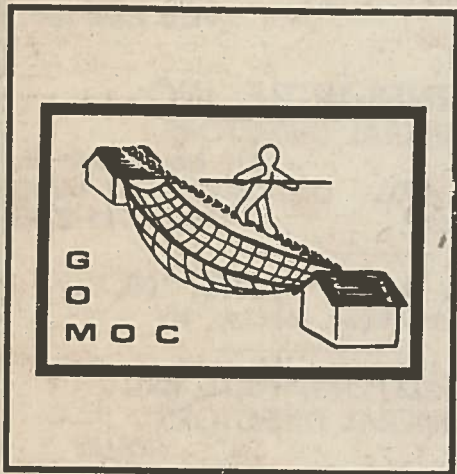
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GENESE-ORLEANS MINISTRY OF CONCERN



The Genesee-Orleans Ministry of Concern with offices at 118 S. Main Street in Albion and 17 Masse Place in Batavia is an agency of "last resort." It helps people who are oppressed, disadvantaged, hungry, homeless, ill, involved in the court system, incarcerated, and victims of family violence. By networking with area agencies, organizations and churches, emergency food, shelter, utilities, and medicines are provided, as well as health-related services for the elderly. The GOMOC has a separate fund restricted by its donors for emergency aid. Jail ministries include visitation of inmates and their families, bail bond funds, and advocacy for alternatives to incarceration. The GOMOC serves racial and ethnic minorities, women, children and youth, handicapped and disabled.

The Ministry of Concern grew out of the Migrant Ministry committees of the churches in Orleans and Genesee Counties in the nineteen-fifties, a time when the seasonal migration of farmworkers to this area was high.

When farm mechanization reduced the need for hand labor, and summer migration gradually declined, many workers and their families resettled in our area, out of the migrant stream. New problems then occurred such as discrimination in jobs and housing, even survival. To meet their year-around needs, the committees formed the Genesee-Orleans Ministry of Concern. To work with them and all economically poor of the

two-country area, the organization was incorporated in June 1968.

For the past quarter century the GOMOC has been developing and administering services and programs and caring for emergency needs. This ministry identifies gaps in existing services, with a view to promoting a more wholesome environment for the community, with emphasis on the economically poor.

During 1992 this agency helped 4650 clients. To date during the current year of 1993, the GOMOC has assisted over 5500 from the two-county area. This increase is partly due to the fact that jobs are hard to get and that GOMOC is better known. The ministry also conducts a follow-up program with one employee working 10 hours each week in both Orleans and Genesee Counties.

Presently, GOMOC is desperately looking for people to staff the Salvation Army collection kettles during four weeks prior to Christmas. Youth groups, civic groups, couples and individuals are being sought for this needy volunteer service which ultimately helps the disadvantaged.

Although our demographics have changed a little since the days of the Ministry of Concern, the needs are just as demanding. Thirty years ago about 30,000 migrants came to New York annually to work in seasonal labor positions (mostly harvest). Of those, 27,000 were Afro-Americans from the southern states, 2,400 were of Puerto Rican background and 600 from various other cultures.

Because migrants move so often they are often deprived of normal community services like education, medical care, recreational opportunities and church life. Housing 30 years ago was often substandard. Naturally, because of the nature of harvesting crops, employment is irregular or there is no work at all. The Migrant Ministry which GOMOC grew out of, was a basic beginning and help put forth to serve men, women and children who followed crops. The program centered in faith, was designed to help the migrant to develop a sense of personal worth, belonging and responsibility. And it sought to awaken the community to the obligation of sharing equally, all the protective benefits and warmth of community life.