

HipPocrates Here for Open City

Harvey Ovshinsky

1969



Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld speaking at Community Arts Auditorium, May 28, 1969 at a benefit for Open City.

Photo: Alan Gotkin.

Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld, known and loved “Hipocrates,” will be at WSU’s Community Arts Auditorium on Wednesday May 28 at 8 pm in a benefit for Open City, Detroit’s service organization for the free community.

Dr. Schoenfeld’s appearance will officially mark the beginning of Open City’s coming Spring offensive and the \$2 collected at the door will go directly into organizing a Free Medical Clinic.

Open City has previously been concentrating its efforts around the Switchboard. Telephone operators have weekly meetings to discuss calls that have come in and all incoming calls are logged and each operator’s reply is discussed.

Of the fifty or sixty calls that come in daily, half of them are questions about draft or legal problems and the rest are either serious drug questions or serious cranks. The number is 831-2770 and operators can take calls from 10 am to 11 pm.

A steering committee has been meeting regularly and it consists of people who in effect are Open City. Members are either chairmen of committees or are just active people.

They are Fred Barrie (stores), Dave Marsh (Legal Defense), Carmel Marks (Medical), Bill Boucher (Legal Aid), Jane Forrest (Nursery), Paul Healy (Housing), Bob Faust (Free U.), John Martin (Nursery), Nancy Anger (Manager) and Harvey Ovshinsky and Nolon Shaw as coordinators.

In the next two months Open City’s assault on the city will cover about four projects, and most important being the establishment of a free medical clinic.

The medical committee has already established counseling sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays. These “sessions” are from 7 to 11 p.m. and involve medical people rapping either on the phone or at the switchboard office with young people who are bothered by drugs, school, family, etc. Sessions are informal and at no time is any medical advice given out.

These same people have recently banded together to make themselves available to hospitals in the city for emergency "bad trip" advice and counseling.

If this project succeeds, instead of a person who is high and in trouble getting handcuffed to a hospital bed or shot up with thorazine, doctors would call Open City people in to talk the person out of his trip.

In the meantime, the medical people are checking out sites for a free clinic in the Warren-Forest area. There are some legal problems to be worked out, but if anyone with medical experience wants to get involved now, they can call the switchboard.

The housing people, headed by Paul Healy and John Martin, have circulated a letter to landlords in the area inviting them to call the switchboard when they have vacant apartments. As it stands now, when people call in for jobs or housing, the operator tells them to send a self addressed stamped envelope and the caller will get his information through the mail.

The Legal Department at Open City has been either answering problems itself or forwarding calls to the proper attorney. Legal Self Defense (LSD) is taking care of emergency bail situations, but according to David Marsh and Alan Gotkin, funds are running low and a benefit is being planned.

The entertainment committee is busy with the Hippocrates benefit and is in the process of booking the Sixth Street Theatre from New York.

Special thanks must go to Russ Gibb, Tom Wright and even Gabe Glantz for their full cooperation at the recent Open City Grande Benefit. Uncle Russ came through without charging a cent for rent or equipment. Tom Wright managed the whole evening's festivities, and Gabe Glantz sat around and talked about the community.

Over a thousand people jammed into the Grande that night to hear Plum Wine, the Rationals, and the MC5. Eighteen hundred dollars was collected at the door which went in the bank or paid off debts for Open City.

A new Coffee House managed by Open City will be opened in the Warren-Forest just as soon as the people in charge of it find a large enough building. The Open City general store has the same problem with space, but money and volunteer labor is being arranged. The stores committee does need goods and community people who are into clothing, ceramics, etc.

Open City has needed and gotten the support of the community it serves. About the only problem now is getting enough money together to keep the switchboard open longer hours and finance the committees in their projects.

To that end people wishing to donate money to Open City can do so in this way. First, \$25 donation allows the contributor free admission to all Open City Benefits plus a free subscription to the Fifth Estate. With donations of over \$5 the contributor gets a free Fifth Estate unclassified ad.

Queries should be sent to Open City, 4726 Third St., No. 5, Detroit, Mich. 48201.

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