

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC  
**OPPORTUNITY**

FOR RELEASE  
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OEI REGIONAL OFFICE NOMINATES FIVE FOR SHRIVER SCHOLARSHIPS

Five young people "who have shown remarkable courage and tenacity in battling the odds stacked against their lives" have been nominated from the Northeast for Sargent Shriver Scholarships, Robert J. Mangum said yesterday.

"They have shown the perseverance and will to help not only themselves but others start to break out of the poverty cycle," Mangum said. He is Northeast Regional Director for the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The nominees are Marion Coates of Babylon, N.Y., Corena Perry of Newark, N.J., Lubbis Harper Jr. of New Haven, Conn., Alfredo Ribot of Bridgeport, Conn., and Robert Ware of Hartford, Conn.

One of the five nominees will be chosen by a joint selection board, representing the OEI and the Experiment in International Living, to go to a Latin American, African or Asian country for two months this summer, live with a family there and join in the work of Peace Corps volunteers.

The selection committee will likewise choose one nominee from each of the other six OEI regions. The Experiment in International Living, a private, non-profit organization which promotes mutual respect among peoples of the world through mutual understanding, is fully financing the scholarships.

Mangum said that his office received approximately 75 recommendations for the scholarships from organizations throughout the Northeast representing every aspect of the War on Poverty. A selection committee from the regional office interviewed 15 personally.

The region's five nominees have been variously active in the Neighborhood Youth Corps, the College Work-Study Program and neighborhood anti-poverty campaigns under the Community Action Program. All were recommended by the community action agencies in their respective communities. All have expressed strong inclinations toward teaching or group social work as a career.

The community action agencies are: Action for Bridgeport Community Development, Inc. (256 Golden Hill Street, Bridgeport, Conn., 203-333-5536); Community Renewal Team of Greater Hartford (18 Asylum Street, Hartford, Conn., 203-525-8236); United Community Corporation (124 Branford Place, Newark, New Jersey, 201-623-7313); Community Progress Inc. (270 Orange Street, New Haven, Conn., 203-787-6572); Suffolk County Bureau of Economic Opportunity (1 Indian Head Road, Cosmack, New York, 516-543-6666).

Because "I would like to help people as people have helped me," Marion Coates looks forward to a teaching career. Miss Coates, 20, will apply for entrance to a four-year college or university in New York City, with a major in anthropology in mind, after she graduates this June from the Suffolk County Community College in Selden, N.Y.

Dr. Albert M. Ammerman, president of the community college, says that Miss Coates "with both parents deceased, found the strength to continue her education, to help not only herself but others with low income and in difficult straits. She has proved herself academically and socially."

A beneficiary of the College Work-Study Program, Miss Coates successfully tutored seven low-income nursing students between 20 and 40 years old through their biology courses.

Miss Coates is a graduate of Babylon High School, where she was active on the yearbook, the school paper and the dramatic club. From her early high school days, she has volunteered her time to community causes. For several years she was a "candy-striper," or nurses' aide, at the Southside Hospital in Babylon. Now she spends much of her spare time working in the clinic run by the Planned Parenthood Association of South Suffolk.

Gorena Perry, 18, lives in a small walk-up apartment in one of the most severely run-down neighborhoods of Newark. The "middle child" in a family of eleven, she is the ward of an older sister, who works in a Montclair laundry.

Miss Perry, whose Neighborhood Youth Corps job in neighborhood research and tabulation of records is helping her set her sights on college, ranks first in Central High School's senior class of 351 students and is a National Achievement Scholarship finalist.

Also outstanding extracurricularly, Miss Perry is secretary of the student council, president of the English honor society, president of the Future Teachers of America and president of the National Honor Society.

She hopes to teach in the Newark high school system "because I know something about the problems some of the kids have, and I think I can help."

"I am recommending Lubbie Harper because in many ways he epitomizes what the poverty program is all about. Not only is he going to 'make it' personally in spite of his environmental handicaps but he is one of those rare people who after 'making it' will stay and continue the fight against poverty and injustice in our cities," says Thomas N. Flood, neighborhood coordinator for New Haven's Hill Area.

Flood's prediction is already coming true.

While completing his Master's at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work (where he is helped by a College Work-Study scholarship), Harper, 23, still finds time to counsel one group of adolescent girls and one of boys for the Dixwell Community House.

The Dixwell area, where Harper grew up, is one of New Haven's most deeply scarred neighborhoods.

"The heart of the problem is the negative image these kids have of themselves," says Harper.

"All of society -- teachers and ministers included, the lot -- have combined to tell them in one way or another that they're no good, that they have no future.

"What gives me hope, though, is that now they are beginning to question the image. They are beginning to look forward to something."

Married and the father of two, Harper graduated from Wilbur Cross High School and from New Haven College, where he was president of his class and an outstanding athlete.

He has worked with Community Progress, Inc., since its beginning, interviewing for research studies, conducting recreation programs and coordinating group work at the Prince Street elementary school.

Like many others who have "made it" from the slums, Harper is consistently generous in volunteering his time to neighborhood organizations.

Although he is only 20 years old, Alfredo Ribot was recently elected chairman of the East Side Neighborhood Council and hence is a member of the steering committee of Action for Bridgeport Community Development.

Ribot says he is surprised to have been elected. A recounting of his neighborhood activities and leadership lessens the surprise for others: work at St. Vincent's Hospital, teaching Spanish at St. Mary's Church, recruitment of neighborhood teenagers into the Boy and Girl Scouts, running a playground in the summer for the Hall Neighborhood House. Part of his work has been done under the Neighborhood Youth Corps; most is volunteer.

Ribot is also secretary of the Tenants' association of Father Panik Village, a 23-year-old housing development. When he was four years old his family, now numbering ten, came to New York from Puerto Rico and shortly thereafter to Bridgeport when his father could find no employment in New York. An older brother is currently in the Army in Korea.

A graduate of Warren Harding High School where he was senior class president, Ribot has had part-time jobs since he was 13. Four years ago he began at the Main Line Diner as a dishwasher. He has advanced to become a short-order cook.

Now a sophomore at Sacred Heart University where he is president of the choir, Ribot is planning to major in psychology with a view towards teaching elementary or junior high school, possibly in Bridgeport, possibly in Puerto Rico. "The greatest thing you can be is a teacher," he says, adding that he wants to combine teaching with social work. He is thinking of applying to become a Peace Corps Volunteer first.

Last Christmas as part of his Neighborhood Youth Corps work for the Youth-in-Action Center in Hartford's North End, Robert Ware, 18, organized three Christmas parties for a total of 300 children. He got donations for the refreshments and supervised a team of adults and teenagers in a neighborhood publicity campaign. And at the parties he played Santa Claus.

Ware profited in these tasks from thorough experience in neighborhood organization. In October, 1964, he formed with five other teenagers the Hartford Flames ("What? A Club. Who? A Friend.") to stay out of trouble and do something constructive.

The Flames' membership now numbers more than 60 boys and girls 8 through 20, and President Ware lists their present activities: tutoring, camera club, field trips, movies, camping, arts and crafts, bowling, group singing, discussions and "Junior Flames."

Activities "in the making" include typing and shorthand, sewing and cooking classes, marching corps, sports league, tutoring children in hospitals, pen pals with convalescent homes, and a big brother club.

In addition, the Flames have formed a "rescue service" for young people in trouble, sponsored hootenannies and talent shows at convalescent homes and at the Mansfield State Training School, and campaigned for the Cerebral Palsy Fund and the March Against Leukemia, Tumors and Muscular Disorders.

The State Child Welfare Department has begun to refer problem cases to the Flames.

Ware says he got the idea for the Flames "because I didn't want kids to grow up like me." Deserted as a baby by his parents, he grew up as a state ward ("that's a bad word -- he's on the state") and knows about being "in trouble". ("From about 12 I hung around with the wrong crowd, I went with anybody who would accept me and be my friend.").

Brushes with the law involved running away several times from the home in which he had been placed, being with a group caught stealing, pulling false alarms and the like.

Ware credits a young high school science teacher with reversing his direction by taking a personal interest in him. He dropped out of Weaver High School, but now wants to go back, and on to college if possible, perhaps after a stint in the Air Force.

A board member of the Community Service Council, Ware is interested in a career of neighborhood social work.