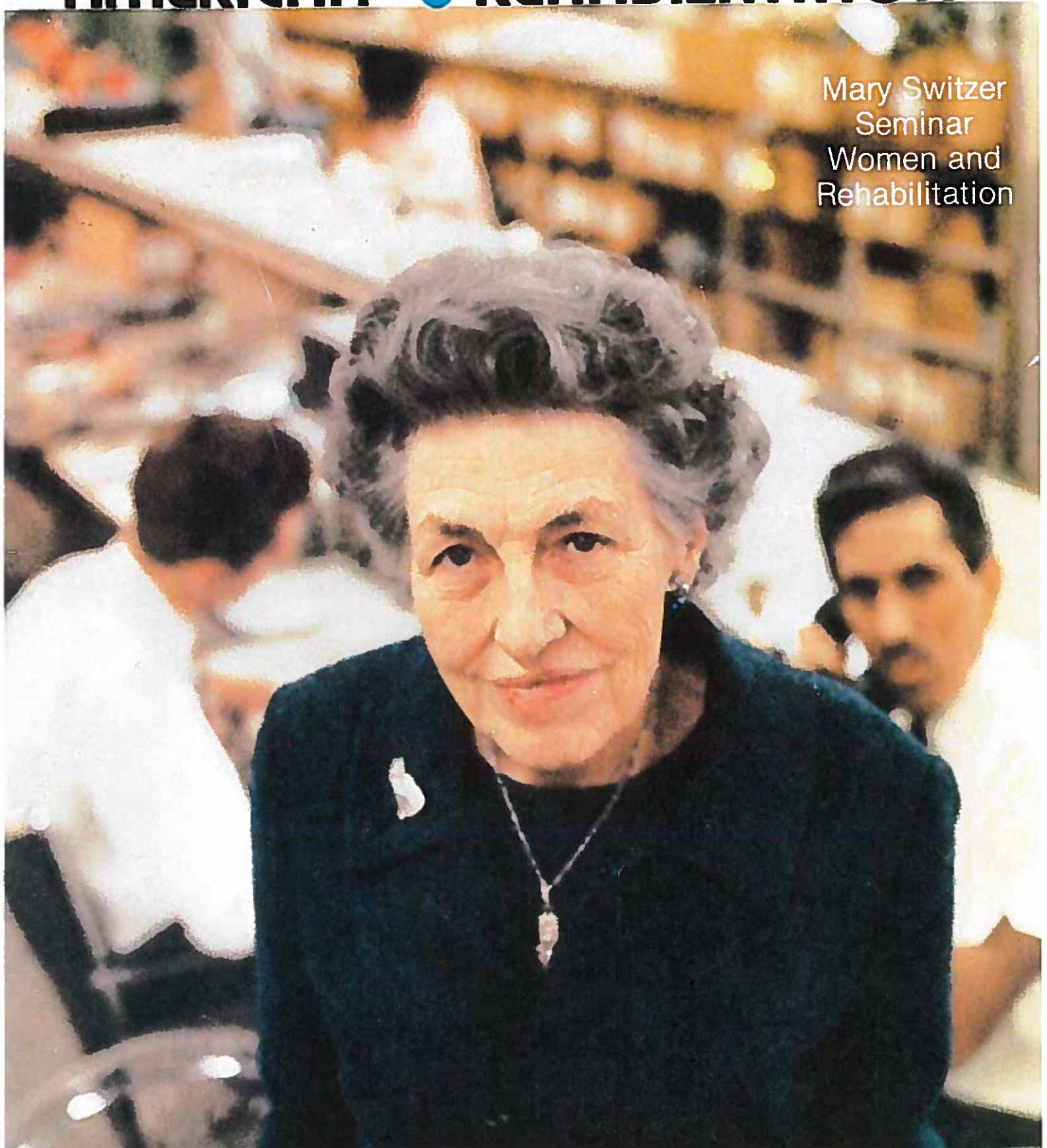




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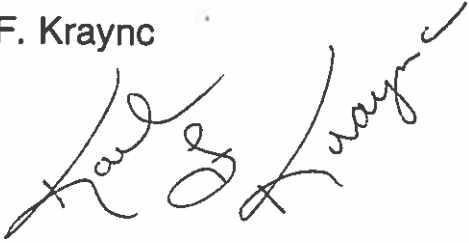
AMERICAN REHABILITATION

Mary Switzer
Seminar
Women and
Rehabilitation



Utah Program Trains Mine Workers

Karl F. Kraync



The special Coal Mine Training Program of the Eastern Utah District of Rehabilitation Services was born of despair, of people who migrated to the area in hopes of obtaining employment in the local mining industry. The Eastern Utah District is located in one of the richest energy areas in the United States. Our area is experiencing a modest boom as the consequence of an expanding international coal market. This boom, in concert with the general decline of economic conditions in the rest of the United States, has caused a tremendous number of skilled and unskilled laborers to migrate to Carbon and Emery Counties. At the inception of the program, there were eight applicants for each mining position offered. In such an environment, hard-core rehabilitation clients were at an extreme disadvantage.

The genesis of the program was a late afternoon interview with a person who was contemplating suicide as a solution to his inability to support his family. Such despairing people were not rare.

The person in question, the graduate of a one-week mine orientation program, had just returned from a series of interviews with mine personnel officers all of whom had told him that they were hiring only experienced personnel. In desperation, equal to that of the client's, the College of Eastern

Utah was contacted to determine if a program could be developed that would provide sufficient training to make a hard-core, unemployed rehabilitation client appealing to the mining industry.

The outcome of the initial discus-

sions with the College of Eastern Utah was the creation of a special 17-week Coal Mine Training Program that was jointly sponsored by the College of Eastern Utah, State Division of Vocational Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services and Industry. The pro-



First graduating class. Back row, l. to r., Roy Sink, instructor; James McCall; Miguel Soto; William Skillingstad; Frank "Kotter" Burge, instructor; Darrell Richards; Richard Woodland, instructor; and Karl Kraync, district supervisor. Front row, Terry Hurtado, Kathy Hilliard, Gilbert Tucson, and Maryanne Young.



Top, left. Gilbert Tucson demonstrates welds to instructor Roy Sink. Left, middle. Instructor Sink demonstrates operation of welding apparatus. Left, bottom. Terry Hurtado assembles major part of Joy Buggy. Above. Darrell Richards practices with drill press—students became familiar with most equipment found in industrial shops.

gram curriculum included intensive training in mine orientation, mine rescue, mine technology, and emergency medical technician training.

Having the program sponsored, the next most important task was selection of a program staff. The Rehabilitation District committed three rehabilitation counselors, all of whom had clients who would be participating in the program. The College of Eastern Utah committed two program instructors and one person who would serve as the student advocate throughout the course of the program and who later affectionately became known to his students as "Kotter." The students, in return, were nicknamed the "Sweat Hogs."

With all program elements in place, counselors in the Price office were requested to select some of their most hard-core, unemployed clients for placement in the program. From a potential field of 120 people, 13 of the most physically capable, economically disadvantaged, emotionally handicapped persons were selected for enrollment. Client backgrounds included people with extensive criminal records, poor or nonexistent work histories, long term dependence upon the welfare system, and emotional disabilities. Program enrollees shared the common characteristics of distrust, hostility, hopelessness, and anger. Of the 13 original participants, one was placed in the mining industry midway through terminated from the program for behavioral problems is currently employed by a mining company. Only two clients who were terminated from the program are considered to be failures. Nine individuals, who have completed the program in its entirety, are currently interviewing with local mining companies, and it is anticipated that all nine will be placed in employment before the program is completed.

Training

For seventeen weeks students in the Special Mine Training Program were engaged in the most demanding training offered at CEU. For six of the seventeen weeks, students attended class seven days a week for 12 hours a day. The training provided could be defined in three categories: coal mine safety, mine maintenance, and social employment skills.

The mine safety component included mine orientation, emergency medical technician training, and basic mine rescue. Mine orientation students were taught basic mine safety, general procedures relating to the production of coal, and the rights of a miner in relation to safety. All students completed EMT Training and four are now certified EMT's. This certification will allow graduates to serve as crew members on mine emergency equipment. During the basic mine rescue, students learned the use and function of the various breathing apparatus used in rescue operations. They were also instructed in various techniques of operating rescue equipment in a gaseous environment.

The mine maintenance component of the program accounted for most of the training effort. Students learned the basics of hydraulics, welding, mine electricity, diesel mechanics, and general mechanics. The theory learned in the classroom was translated into hands on experience in the shop. Students disassembled, serviced, reassembled and made operative major components of mining equipment.

Social skills were taught on a formal and informal basis throughout the program. Every Friday the client advocate met formally with the class to conduct "job-seeking, job-survival skills" seminars, and deal with the problems. Rehabilitation and college staff used classroom problems such as

late incentive pay as mechanism to teach students the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

The metamorphosis achieved by those who have completed the program is truly dramatic. Earrings, bandannas, and side knives have vanished. Personal hygiene and attention to appearance have improved remarkably, but, most important, is the change in attitude by those who have completed the program. The nine program participants have learned to depend on each other, to look after each other, and, most importantly, to care for each other.

Having tasted success, all participants now desire further success. Many anticipate returning to school after a period of employment. The success of the program participants has been a hard fought fight. Instructors, rehabilitation staff, and most significantly the client advocate have worked after hours and on weekends dealing with the training and personal problems of the clients.

Crises have included everything from a weekend drunk to dealing with a panic stricken husband waiting for his wife in the obstetrics waiting room of the local hospital.

A number of factors are considered significant in the success of this program: the technical skills, patience, and devotion of the College of Eastern Utah staff, the client advocate who interceded so often for the client, and the untiring efforts of the rehabilitation counselor who served as friend, advocate, and disciplinarian to the client. Nonetheless, none of these would have mattered without the honest desire of the program participants to succeed.

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