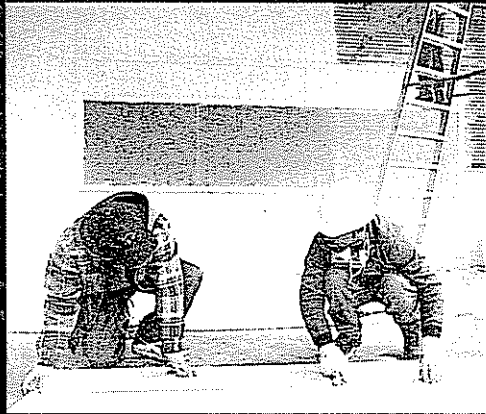
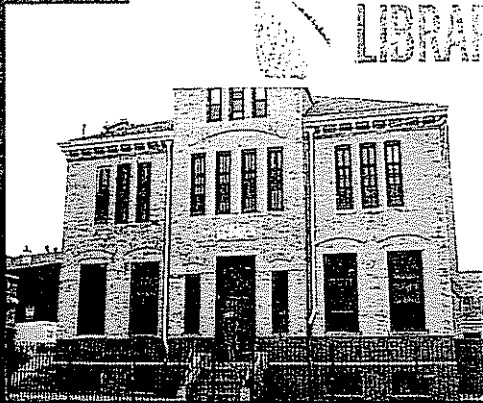
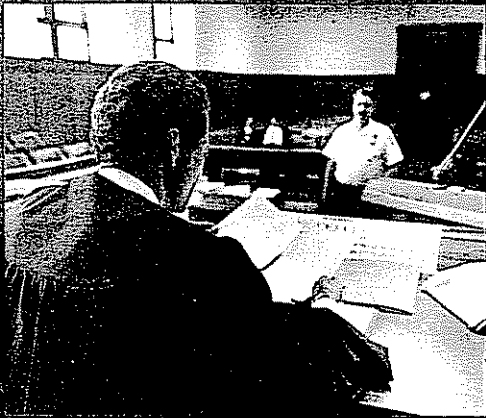


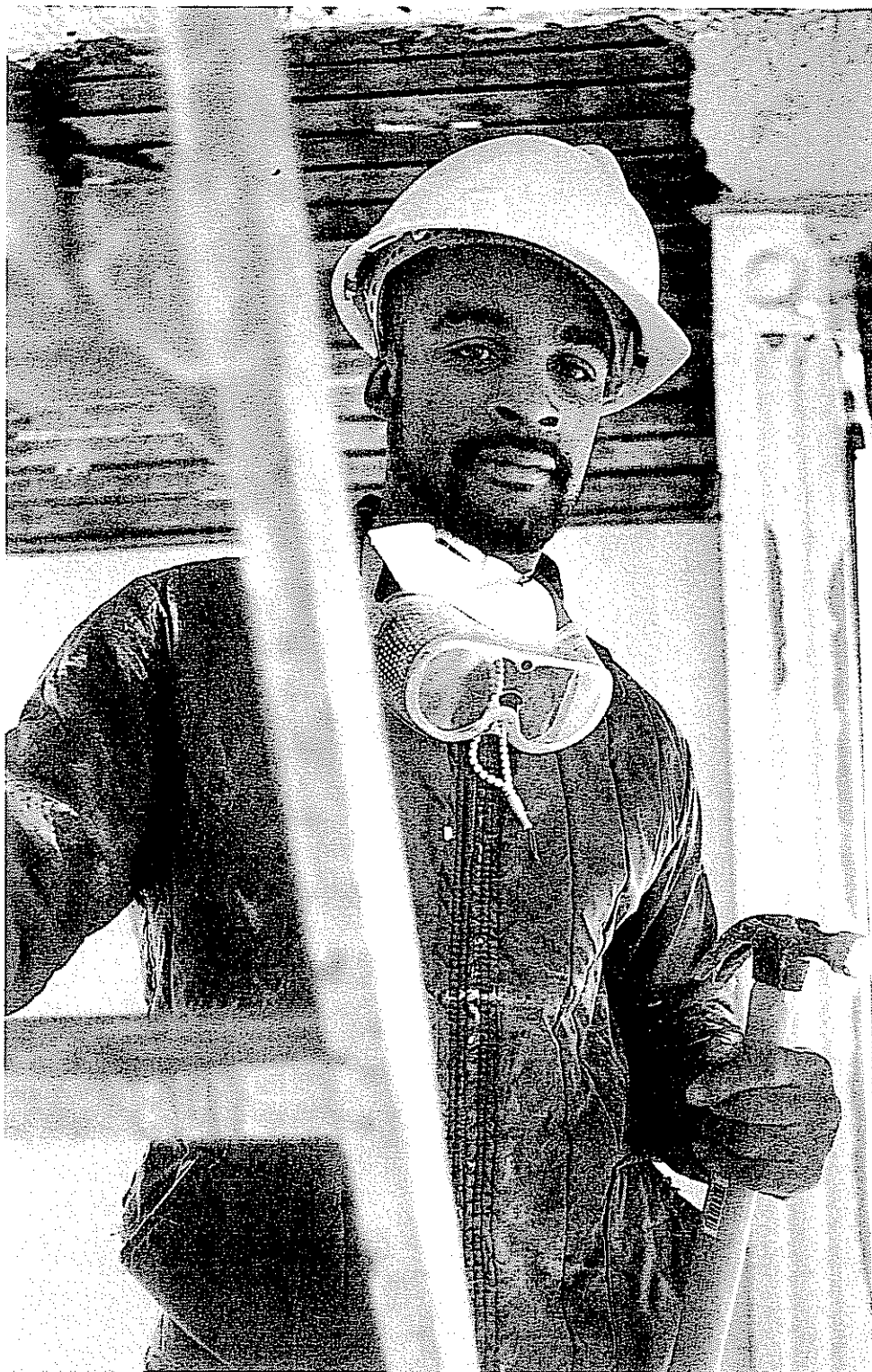
VERA M. ...
LIBRARY 1587



The Community Service Sentencing Project

CSSP

A PROGRAM OF
THE CENTER FOR
ALTERNATIVE
SENTENCING
AND EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES
(CASES)



Brian, now a CSSP graduate, lends his skills to a community project in Brooklyn.

The Community Service Sentencing Project

offers judges in the Criminal Court in New York City an intermediate sanction for repeat misdemeanor offenders. Program participants must perform 70 hours of unpaid work at community organizations throughout the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. The program provides support services to help participants complete its requirements and offers referrals to outside assistance, but CSSP's priority is to hold this group of persistent offenders accountable for their crimes. At this, we are largely successful: nearly 70 percent of the more than 1,600 offenders sentenced to CSSP each year meet their obligations to the court. Overall, 93 percent either complete the program or are resentenced and punished for failure within a year.

CSSP WORKS IN THE COURTS to provide judges and prosecutors with a sentencing option that helps them deliver swift, certain, and proportionate punishment. CSSP WORKS WITH OFFENDERS in small, carefully supervised work teams to hold them accountable and to create opportunities for meaningful restitution. CSSP WORKS FOR THE COMMUNITY by providing valuable services to organizations that improve the quality of life in neighborhoods throughout the City, and by reducing the financial burden of crime on taxpayers.



CSSP provides an invaluable sentencing option for Criminal Court judges. The program is exceptionally well-run. The selection criteria, in particular, clarify the program's purpose and the court advocates provide useful information and strong assurance that the credibility of the program is maintained in each individual case. CSSP is a model for all others.

JUDGE SHERYL PARKER

Working in the Courts

THE COMMUNITY SERVICE
SENTENCING PROJECT
BEGINS IN THE CRIMINAL
COURT, where every year more

than 300,000 cases come before less than a hundred judges in New York City. Each judge typically has just a few minutes and even fewer sentencing tools with which to craft a fair and enforceable punishment. CSSP tries to make the courts' difficult task easier.

SELECTION

Our selection criteria have always targeted offenders who can be managed effectively in the community. More recently, CSSP has changed the criteria to focus on defendants whom we predict would otherwise be sentenced to jail terms. The changes reflect the findings of researchers who have analyzed New York's offender population, and take into account the interests of the City government.

More than two-thirds of the offenders who come through CSSP every year have been convicted on property charges, such as shoplifting, holding stolen goods, and auto stripping. Almost one-third of the charges involve drug possession and sales, typically of small amounts of marijuana. CSSP court representatives use the selection criteria to review over 30,000 cases each year. They consider the circumstances of the crime, and the offender's criminal history and community ties. Our court staff then interview potential candidates to assess their willingness and ability to work in the community.

ADVOCACY

Court representatives advocate for each candidate in front of the judge, explaining how CSSP would serve the interests of the justice system and the offender in that case. If the judge agrees with our recommendation, the offender pleads guilty to a misdemeanor and is sentenced to a conditional discharge requiring that he or she complete 70 hours of community service. Participants are then escorted to CSSP's courthouse office, briefed on the program requirements, and given a subway token and directions to the base site in that borough.

RESPONSE

In December 1995, CSSP sent a survey to all Criminal Court judges in Bronx, Kings, New York, and Queens counties. Over 50% of the judges returned the survey. The responses, highlighted here, suggest that CSSP plays a useful role in the sentencing process.

CSSP SURVEY OF CRIMINAL COURT JUDGES

Given your knowledge of the sentencing options available to Criminal Court judges in New York City, how would you characterize the value of the Community Service Sentencing Project to you and your colleagues?

Very valuable	74%
Valuable	21%
Modestly valuable	5%
Not valuable	—

How would you characterize your level of satisfaction with the quality of supervision and services provided by CSSP?

Very satisfied	64%
Satisfied	33%
Somewhat dissatisfied	—
Very dissatisfied	3%

How would you rate your satisfaction with the accuracy and timeliness of CSSP's reports to the court concerning the success or failure of individual offenders?

Very satisfied	76%
Satisfied	19%
Somewhat dissatisfied	5%
Very dissatisfied	—



CSSP offers the Court an important alternative, one that is accountable to the judge and that provides excellent services to the defendant. The program's court liaisons are knowledgeable and professional. I know I'll hear from CSSP right away if a defendant is failing the program, so I feel confident about sending them even a difficult case.

JUDGE PAULINE MULLINGS

OUR SUPERVISION,
SUPPORT, AND
ENFORCEMENT

Working with Offenders

efforts define CSSP's relationship with the offenders entrusted to the program by the courts. Together, these program elements help us maintain the integrity of the sanction and demonstrate that there is viable punishment outside the jails.

SUPERVISION

The offenders in the Community Service Sentencing Project are not an easy group to manage. The work we require of them is difficult and, unlike incarceration, offenders must actively participate in fulfilling the conditions of their sentence. For every group of 15 or so participants, three CSSP staff are responsible for supervising them between 8:30 and 4:30, and making sure the participants actually do the assigned work. These small, intensively supervised work teams have been a distinctive feature of CSSP since it began in 1979.

If site supervisors are the face of CSSP for the participants, compliance monitors are the voice. "I start calling participants early in the morning, from 6:15 on. I wake them up most days, so they get to know me quickly," says Andrew McNaulty, a compliance monitor in Manhattan. "There's no set dialogue, I have something different I tell each person to get them to the sites on time. I understand they all have their own problems, but I let them know

I have found CSSP to be most valuable in the disposition of cases. CSSP's close and no-nonsense supervision of sentenced defendants impresses upon them the seriousness of the program's purpose, and in my opinion, serves as a strong deterrent to future involvement.

JUDGE ROGER ROSENGARTEN

that the next step might be jail.” Site supervisors and compliance monitors work closely with one another to ably oversee large numbers of participants in the course of a year.

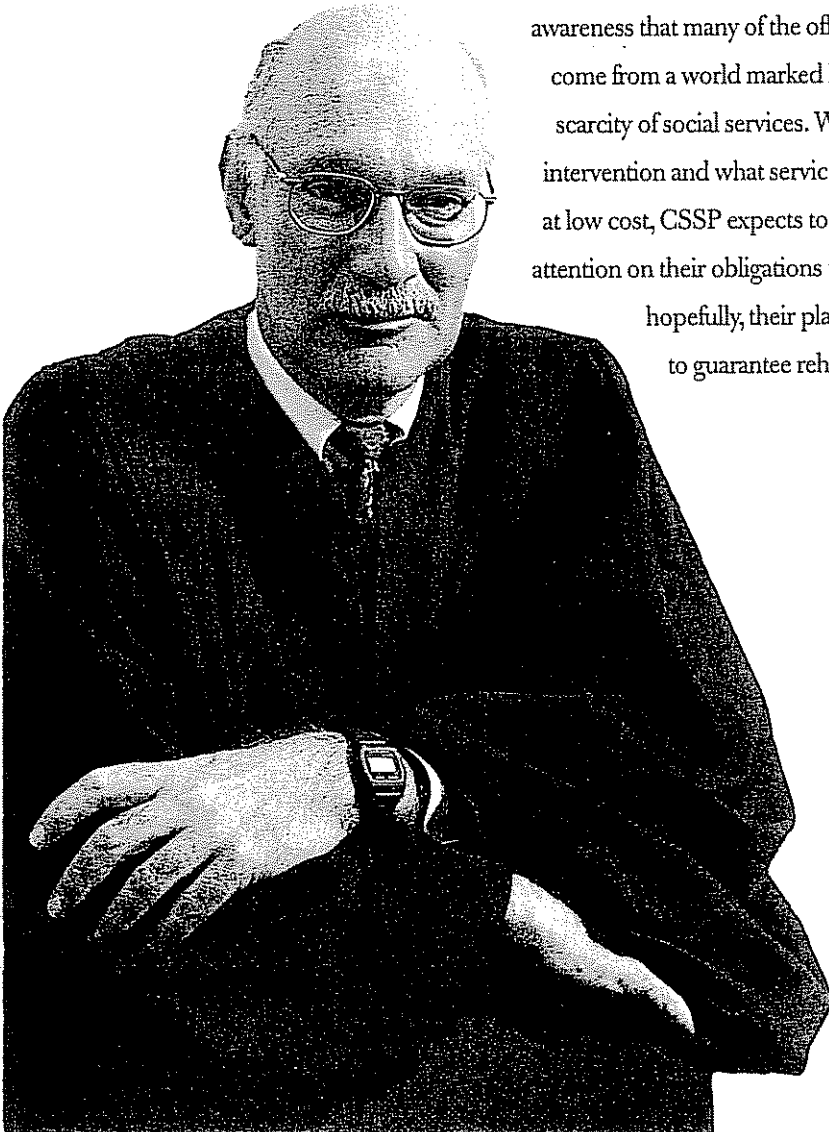
SUPPORT

To help participants complete CSSP, our support service coordinators meet their immediate needs—whether for a bag of groceries, shelter for a few days, or work boots in the winter. Those participants who are motivated to make changes in their lives are referred to outside assistance, including drug rehabilitation programs, vocational training, and employment placement services.

The kinds of support we provide reflect an awareness that many of the offenders in CSSP come from a world marked by poverty and a scarcity of social services. With our brief intervention and what services we are able to offer at low cost, CSSP expects to focus offenders’ attention on their obligations to the court and, hopefully, their plans for the future, not to guarantee rehabilitation.

PROFILE OF CSSP PARTICIPANTS

90%	Male
82%	Unemployed
71%	30+ years old
68%	Single
49%	No high school diploma or GED



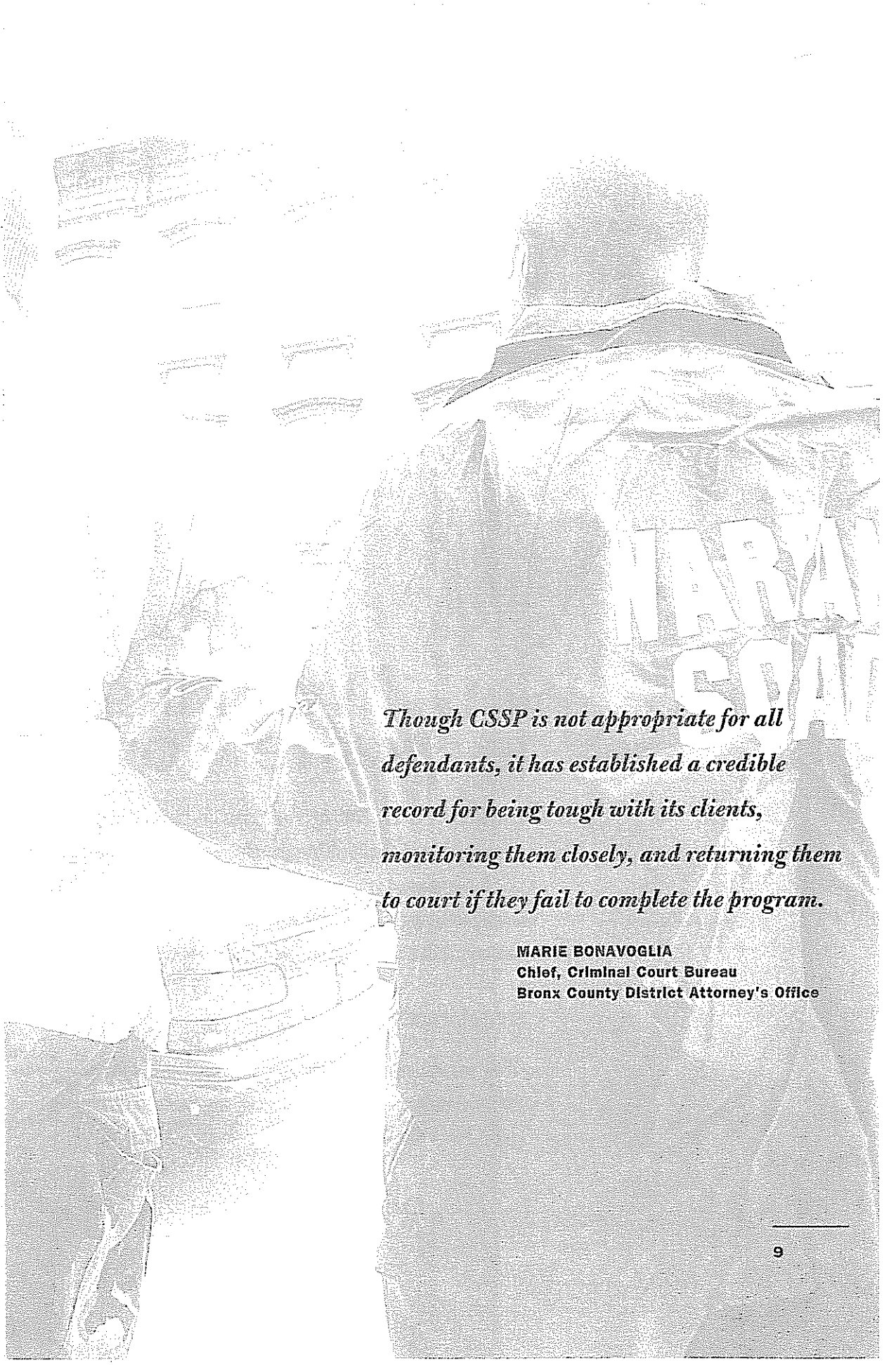
WARRANT SQUAD



Some members of the CSSP enforcement team.

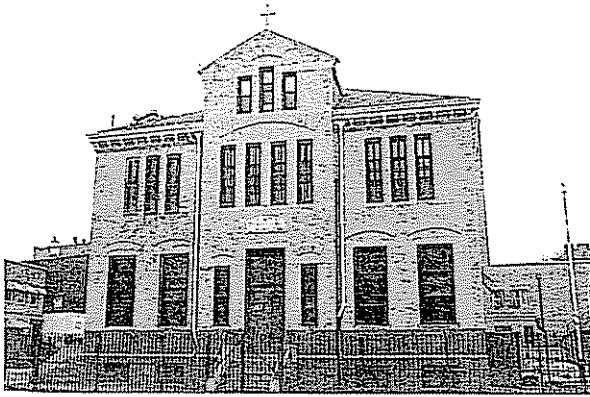
ENFORCEMENT

When on-site supervision, daily calls, and support services are insufficient, CSSP's enforcement team of retired police officers steps in. In the case of "no-shows," our enforcement officers visit participants at home and talk to family or friends. They make every effort to persuade participants to complete CSSP. As a last resort, the officers can and do use their authority to obtain and execute arrest warrants.



Though CSSP is not appropriate for all defendants, it has established a credible record for being tough with its clients, monitoring them closely, and returning them to court if they fail to complete the program.

MARIE BONA VOGLIA
Chief, Criminal Court Bureau
Bronx County District Attorney's Office



A CSSP work crew renovates the
"You Can" Community School in
Williamsburg, Brooklyn.



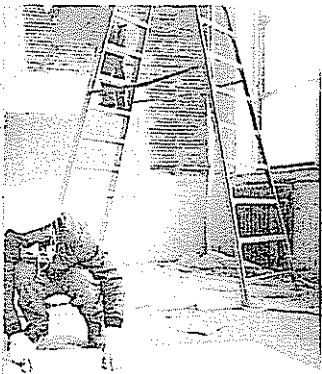
CSSP AIMS TO
LIGHTEN THE
BURDEN OF

Working for the Community

CRIME ON CITIZENS of New York City by providing meaningful restitution to the community and an affordable alternative to the high cost of short jail terms. Since 1979, CSSP has worked at more than 630 different sites, most of them in low-income neighborhoods. Each year, the program puts many hundreds of offenders to work, conserving the limited resources of the jail system.

SERVICE

CSSP participants contribute over 86,000 hours of free labor every year to community groups—nursing homes, day care centers, elementary schools, housing projects, and




community gardens. For the City, this labor means more than \$430,000 worth of renovation and repair that otherwise would not be done or done so quickly. But for the residents of neighborhoods where we work, the service means more. Vacant lots are transformed into gardens, rundown buildings are revitalized, and senior citizen centers are brightened by paint and repairs.

Recent public discussions about social reform—from welfare to public education to crime control—have emphasized the importance of citizens’ responsibilities to society. Parallel to this idea is one that identifies the community, rather than government or its institutions, as the primary locus of change. Through community service, offenders’ obligations to the community are reinforced, and the community itself participates in the control and management of offenders. In this way, we facilitate a symbiotic relationship between the criminal justice system and the people it is meant to serve.

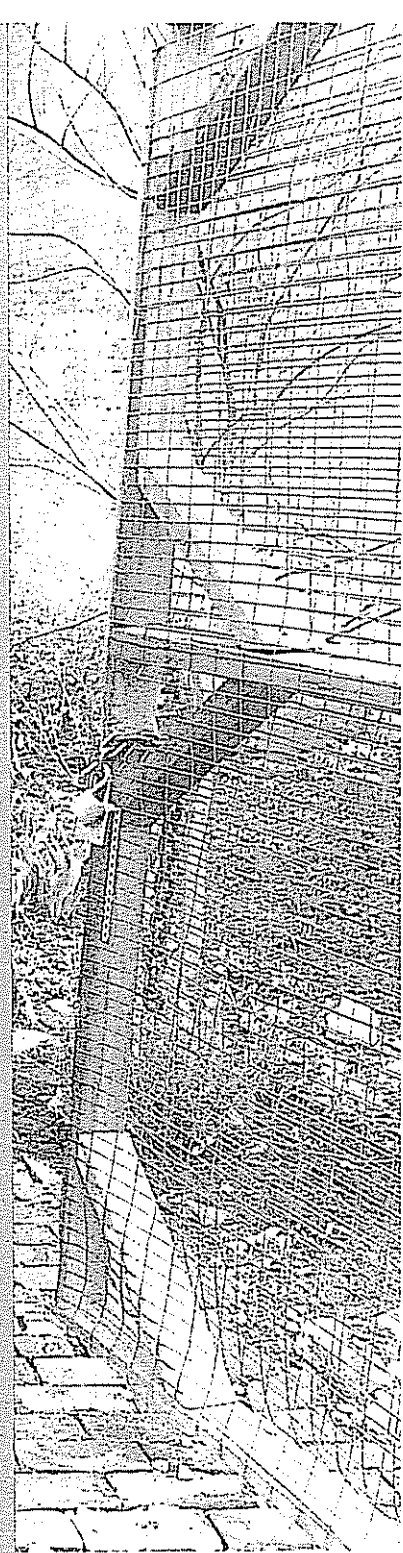


Fourth graders at the P.S.76 garden on West 121st Street in early spring to check on last year's plantings. The lot was cleared of debris and prepared by CSSP participants. *Inset:* Participants make way for a new community garden in the South Bronx, one of hundreds CSSP has helped create around the City.



*Where would P.S. 76 be if it
was not for CSSP? We might have
a school but we would not have
the garden that is our pride and
joy. Three years ago we had a
nasty, rubble stream lot. Today,
the children of P.S. 76 have a lush,
nature classroom right in the
heart of Harlem. It seems
whenever we are in dire need,
we know where to call. CSSP
helped plant our garden with
smile and love.*

BARBARA CHYD
Principal, P.S. 76



SAVINGS

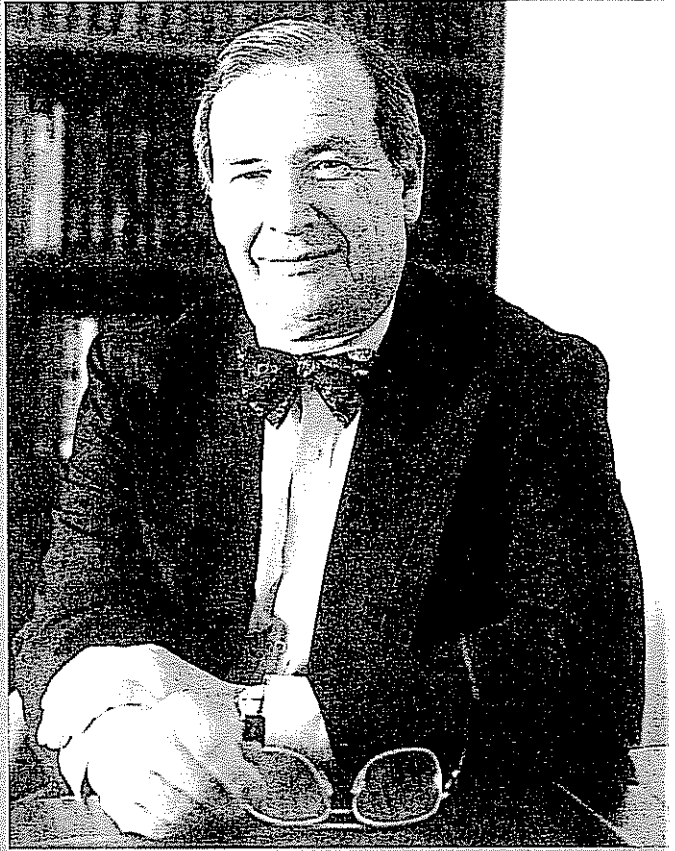
In fiscal year 1995, CSSP saved the New York City Department of Correction a total of 43 bed-years of jail time or about \$2.5 million. (We estimated this effect on the jail population by studying court practices to determine which factors have the most bearing on sentencing outcomes.) When the \$2.5 million in jail savings and the \$430,000 value of restitution are subtracted from the \$3 million cost of the program, CSSP becomes a highly effective punishment that is virtually free to taxpayers. With the recent changes in selection criteria and the offenders targeted by CSSP, these savings to the jail system are expected to increase substantially in future years.



INNOVATION

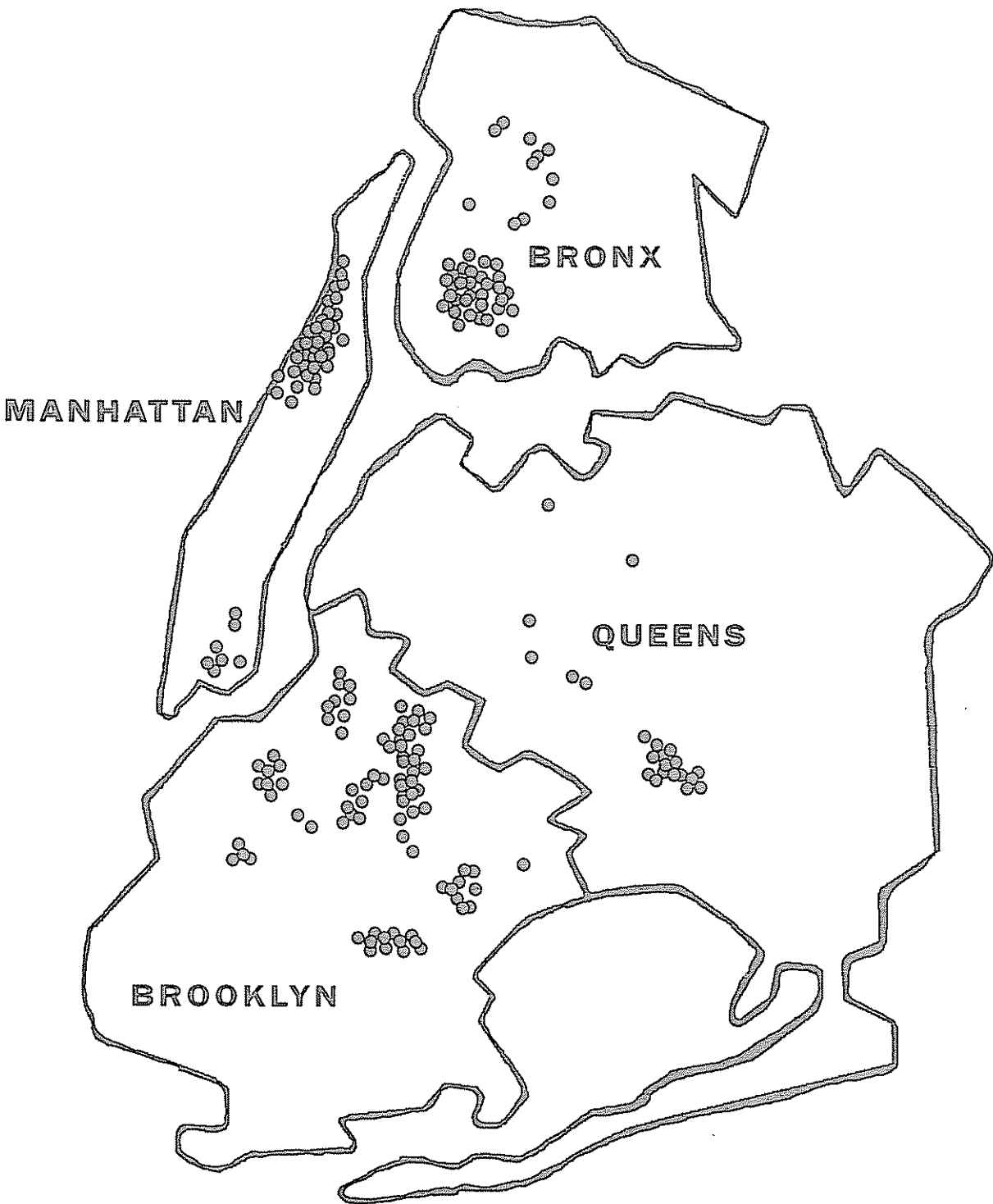
When CSSP began in 1979, it served as a middle point between two divergent sentencing options then available to judges for repeat petty offenders—jail or a “walk.” At the time, there were no other community service programs and few intermediate sanctions of any kind available to the Criminal Court. Now, several programs work with offenders convicted

CSSP participants repaint the Abrini Nursing Home in the East Village in Manhattan. on misdemeanor charges. In response to these changes, beginning in July 1996, CSSP will serve only as an alternative to incarceration for jailbound misdemeanants. By increasing the proportion of participants who would be headed for short stays in jail, CSSP will generate greater savings and help the City build a graduated array of criminal sanctions between probation and prison.



CSSP is widely recognized as the most closely monitored and evaluated community service program in the country. Since the program began, the supervision and enforcement efforts have continually improved, and the completion rates have steadily increased. CSSP is ready to push ahead and bring in more jailbound offenders.

ROBERT G.M. KEATING
Former Judge and CASES Trustee



CSSP Worksites

Since 1979, CSSP has worked at over 630 sites
in neighborhoods throughout the City.

About CASES

THE CENTER FOR ALTERNATIVE
SENTENCING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
(CASES) operates the two largest and longest-running
intermediate sanction programs in New York City: the

Community Service Sentencing Project, described in this brochure, and the Court
Employment Project, which provides intensive supervision and services for felony
offenders. Both were originally demonstration projects of the Vera Institute of Justice.
CASES targets offenders who would otherwise be incarcerated and advocates in court
for their admission into our programs. By effectively managing over 2,500 offenders
outside the confines of jails and prisons, CASES seeks to help end the overuse of
incarceration as a response to crime.

TEXT

Brenda Coughlin

PHOTOGRAPHY

Harvey Wang

DESIGN

Davidson Wolff Design



CASES

Joel Copperman, Executive Director

Elida Palre, Director of CSSP

CENTRAL OFFICE

346 Broadway, New York, NY 10013

(212) 732-0076

BRONX CSSP OFFICE

215 East 161st Street, Room M-29, Bronx, NY 10451

(718) 681-7500

BROOKLYN CSSP OFFICE

120 Schermerhorn Street, Room 811, Brooklyn, NY 11201

(718) 237-0400

MANHATTAN CSSP OFFICE

100 Centre Street, Room 1535B, New York, NY 10013

(212) 285-0055

QUEENS CSSP OFFICE

118-20 Queens Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Forest Hills, NY 11375

(718) 793-3002

Joel Copperman
Executive Director, CASES

Elida Fahie
Director, CSSP

CENTRAL OFFICE

346 Broadway
New York, NY 10013
(212) 732-0076

BRONX CSSP OFFICE

215 East 161st Street, Room M 29
Bronx, NY 10451
(718) 681-7500

BROOKLYN CSSP OFFICE

120 Schermerhorn Street, Room 811
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 237-0400

MANHATTAN CSSP OFFICE

100 Centre Street, Room 1535B
New York, NY 10013
(212) 285-0055

QUEENS CSSP OFFICE

118-20 Queens Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Forest Hills, NY 11375
(718) 793-3002

**Community
Service
Sentencing
Project**

**a program of
the Center for
Alternative
Sentencing and
Employment
Services**

Community Service Sentencing Project


As of July 1996, CSSP court staff will use the general criteria outlined here to identify candidates for the program.

As in the past, they will also review the circumstances of the crime, the defendant's criminal history and outstanding warrants, and will consider the individual's health, drug use, and willingness to perform community service.

Referrals from judges, assistant district attorneys, and defense counsel are welcome and will be reviewed with care.

Selection Criteria

CASE DISPOSITION STAGE	TOP ARRAIGNMENT CHARGE	NUMBER OF PRIOR CONVICTIONS
At Arraignment	Misdemeanor	0 1 2 3 4 5+
	Felony	0 1+
Post Arraignment	Misdemeanor	0 1 2 3+
	Felony	0 1+

 Darkly shaded areas represent categories of defendants that are eligible for CSSP.