

The Diary of a Child Care Worker (CCW)



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Message from the Author

The Diary of a Child Care Worker is a booklet created as a joint project between me and my administrator. It was written purely for entertainment, in the spirit that humor makes a difficult job easier. People that have worked in residential child care will most appreciate it, you that are just starting soon will. The illustrations were done by my administrator back when he was a houseparent. The story is based in part on my experiences over the years, the experiences of other houseparents I have known, and parts are downright Fiction!!! Depending on your experience, there may be parts of the story you can't relate to. But, I think anyone who has ever been a child care worker can totally relate to others. If you are thinking about working in residential care, please don't let this scare you away. Like I said it is very much embellished for humor sake. I hope you all enjoy!

Visit the Site at: www.houseparent.net

July 1 - Talked to my wife today. I feel this overwhelming desire to serve society. She seemed somewhat nervous about my ideas, but wasn't negative. I will work on her some more later.

July 4 - Off from work - spent the day surfing the Internet. Found a really cool website. The Houseparent Network. It has lots of cool stuff about childcare. There seems to be lots of places to work and the pay is not too bad either. They give you a place to live, food to eat, and vehicle to drive. What more could you ask for. I think I will pursue this more.

July 5 - I E-mailed several facilities. One responded right away. The director thought we were very qualified, and felt my childhood experiences would serve me well as a child care worker.

July 7 - Finished proposal to my wife. Pointed out all the positives. We can spend more time together. I will be home every day to help her with the kids, kitchen staff, free food, free shampoo, deodorant, and other personal items. Recreation, Recreation, Recreation!!! She seemed much more positive.

July 8 - Called back the Director of Good Servant Children's Home. He is sending us an application.

July 12 - Received a large package today - very excited.

July 18 - Completed 34 page application. Notarized in six places. Included finger prints, blood & hair samples, 15 written character references from family and friends that have known us since birth (including kindergarten teacher and OB nurse), resume, statement of faith, photos from the last ten years, driver's license, birth certificate, social security card, High School, Jr. High, & Elementary school diplomas. Spent \$48.00 to over-night 12 pound package back to Good Servant. They said they would call when they receive it.

July 22 - Called Good Servant today, wondering if our application was lost. Hoping it wasn't because I am still recovering from carpal tunnel surgery from completing the first one. They received it on the 19th, but the director left on a week-long camping trip with the kids will call when he gets back.

July 29 - Called Good Servant again. Talked to the director. He looked at our application and wants us to come and visit. He apologized for not calling, said something about being busy making plans to attend National Convention of Child Care Administrators in Hawaii.

August 10 - Leaving tomorrow to visit Good Servant. We will be there for two days meeting the kids and staff. Not sure what to expect.

August 11 - Arrived at Good Servant. Everyone seemed really nice. The director seems real laid back. Told us how good the kids are. Met some of the kids, funny thing though, a lot of the kids were gone, some sort of monthly visit. I would have thought they would plan our visit when they were there. The kids we met seemed very well behaved. We ate in the dining hall, excellent food. The director says they eat like that all the time. The other houseparents seemed real excited to have us there. They all seemed to have a gleam in their eye. We feel really good about this position.



August 12 - Woke early this morning. I'm very excited to spend another day with the kids. Spent the morning meeting with the director. He told us he was looking at several couples, but that we were one of the top candidates. He would let us know after we met with the campus counselor. Spoke to the counselor for about an hour and had to take a written test. It is supposed to tell how honest we are. He said we were a little whacked, but fell within the parameters of a child care worker. Spent the afternoon with the kids. Everyone in the home went to the local water park. We had a lot of fun. The director was sure to point out that there are not many jobs where you get paid to play. We departed after supper with a feeling of joy. We were offered the position and without hesitation we accepted, we just knew this was the place for us. The opportunity to change the lives of the children almost brought me to tears. As we left the building I thought I heard the sound of laughter, but I think it was the birds singing and sharing our joy.

August 13 - Resigned from our jobs today. Start at Good Servant on the 1st. Decided not to sell the house. We will rent it instead and use the money to supplement our income.

August 25 - Had a huge garage sale to sell most of our stuff.

August 31 - Arrived at Good Servant. They said there was a different cottage that has come open and asked if we would take it. We said, "Sure, we want to serve where ever you need us." Kids were very helpful, they made short order of unloading our truck. They were especially helpful and had a special glint in their eyes as they unloaded our electronics. When the truck was unloaded we took some time to visit with the staff. We spent 15 minutes talking about the kids. They handed us a set of keys and left. I was very surprised.

September 1 - Our first full day as Child Care Workers. Through love and discipline we will change lives. Very good first day, the kids were very helpful filling us in on rules and policies.

The cottage they gave us is not as nice as the one we looked at when we interviewed. I counted 28 holes in the sheet-rock, ranging in size from a quarter to a basketball. 3 doors are missing, and two more have holes. One couch is missing its legs, and the other has several large holes in it. The kitchen table looks like a work bench and the stacked milk crates as chairs add an interesting touch. Three lights are hanging from their wires, the kids said Johnny was hanging from them, and I wish I could figure out what that funk is in the boy's bathroom and staff bedroom. Now I wish I would have kept my furniture, but we can fix it up and make it nice with a little work.

September 4 - Honeymoon is over. Learned a new phrase today - "My old houseparents didn't do it this way". Also learned, "NO & you can't make me" & "I'm calling my Social Worker."

September 7 - Day seven as a child care worker. Gave up on getting up at 5:30 AM to cook a hot breakfast. Tired of hearing, "I don't like that" & "I just want cold cereal." Started morning devotions - children turned into animals. Learned two more phrases, "This is Stupid" & "F ___ off!"

September 9 - Billy the bully was suspended from school today. Get to spend the next three days with him at home. He can help me mow my 30 acres of grass and care for pigs.

September 10 - Billy refused to get up today. He decided to take advantage of his vacation from school. Dumped cold water on him. He got up very quickly and punched a hole in the wall.

Learned another new phrase but will not repeat it.

September 15 - Did a room search today. Found: 37 packs of cigarettes, 10 cans of chewing tobacco, 3 Tupac' CDs, and 4 dirty magazines.

September 18 - Went to the Dr today. Had a severe rash under my arms. Turns out it was caused by the deodorant provided by the home. It was manufactured in the USSR in 1942 and somehow 137 cases found their way to the home. I am sure the donor got a substantial tax deduction. To this day, no one is sure of what's in it.

September 22 - My home stereo and VCR came up missing today. Nobody has any idea of what happened to them.



September 25 - Four kids ran away from Church today. Spent the afternoon driving around town looking for them. Caught one hiding out at the city park. The director said, "Don't worry, the others will be back soon enough"

September 27 - Run-aways are back. They spent two days in an abandoned trailer partying. They will not be allowed to watch TV for two weeks, by order of their social worker. I thought they should receive more severe consequences, but what would I know, I'm just a houseparent.

September 30 - Found my stereo today at Johnny's Pawn Shop. Paid \$50.00 to get it back. They sold my VCR two days ago. They could not remember how my stuff ended up in their store, something about a previous employee.

October 2 - Tried to watch football again today. I've seen a total of 6 plays all season.

October 10 - Found out the most popular donated food items are: Corn Flakes, Green Beans, Pork & Beans, and anything expired. The least donated food items are un-ground cuts of beef and seafood. You eat them when you go on relief.

October 15 - Finally go on relief today. Relief staff quit two days after we arrived. They moved to Montana. Plan to sleep for 24 hours.

October 21 - Did a room search today. Found: 10 packs of Cigarettes, 4 cigars, 8 empty beer cans, and a partially assembled AK-47.

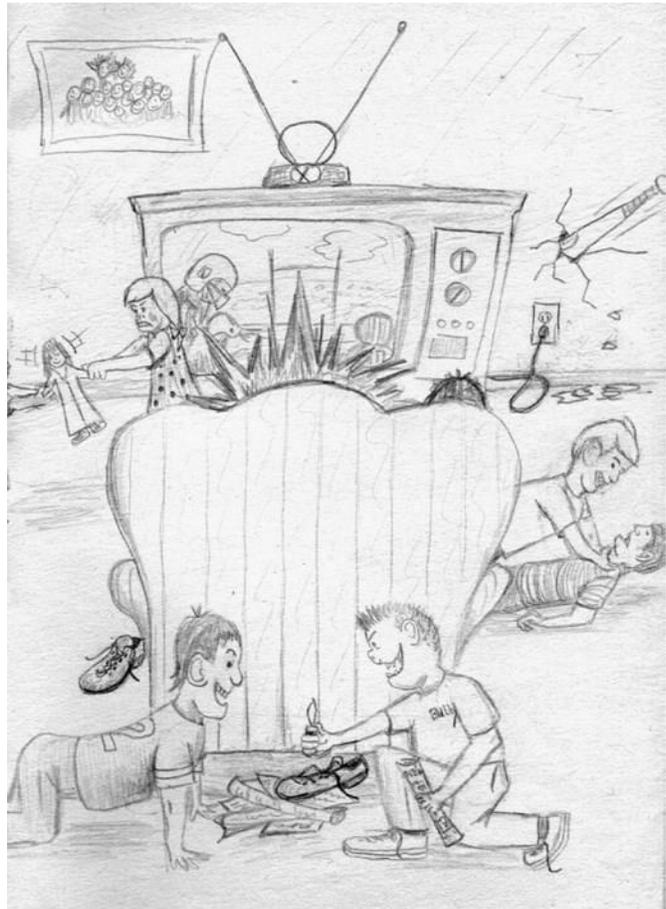
October 24 - Discovered today that I really did hear laughter the day we were hired. We hired a new couple today. Boy are they in for a shock.

October 31 - Been a Child Care Worker for two months, feels like two years. Kids TP'd house when I would not let them trick-or-treat.

November 5 - Finally finished orientation paperwork - still waiting for training.

November 7 - Cordless phone missing.

November 10 - Two boys ran away today. Took my car - wish I had full coverage insurance.



November 12 - Boys found - car WRECKED. District Attorney says they will have to pay for it when they get out of jail. Good Servants insurance will not cover it - at least the boys are in jail.

November 15 - Cat is missing, not seen since breakfast. I think he went to find a more peaceful home. Tired of being thrown in creek.

November 20 - Room search today. Found: 14 packs of cigarettes, 2 kilos of Marijuana, and plans for a nuclear weapon.

November 21 - UA day - had the dis-pleasure of watching 10 boys urinate in a cup. Spilled one on my hands.

November 23 - Phone bill arrived today, over \$700.00. Forty seven calls to various 900 numbers. Phone never recovered.

November 25 - Thanksgiving - Kids were thankful we were going on relief tomorrow.

November 26 - Relief again - slept for 21 hours.

November 28 - Went back to check on our house. Have not received a single rent check. Found the house vandalized and vacant. Renters' whereabouts unknown. Contacted our lawyer.



December 1 - Back from relief. Saw the Dr today - prescribed Prozac.

December 2 - Lawyer contacted us today. He found the renters. They moved out of state and filed bankruptcy. Lawyer says it would be impossible to prove they did the damage, so we are stuck with a destroyed house.

December 6 - The first of many Christmas parties for the kids. Traveled two hours in the van to the party and two hours home. Considering giving them sleeping pills and telling them it is "car sickness medication"

December 12 - Seventh straight day of Christmas parties. Total travel time in van 20 hours. Prozac NOT Working!!!!

December 18 - School Christmas party. Two kids suspended for spiking the punch.

December 20 - Christmas Vacation. Most kids will be gone. Building a warehouse to store gifts for kids. People are so generous at Christmas time.

January 2 - All kids are back. Start school tomorrow.

January 5 - All presents are gone. They have all been broken or sold. Money used to purchase tobacco and CDs.

January 10 - House burns down. Fire Marshal says, "It was started by the kids using a paper clip and electrical outlet to light cigarettes and fire crackers. Kids are sent to other cottages.

January 11 - Good Servant offers us another cottage. We politely decline and accept a position with Green Peace harassing hunters in Montana. That seems like a much easier way to serve society.

The Houseparent Network is a website for houseparents and other residential childcare staff. It includes job listings, a facility directory, links to resources, articles and other resources.

You can visit it at:

www.houseparent.net or www.houseparent.com

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