



On the Road Again
James Jones of Metropolitan Family Services
Essay for
Turn Out for Human Services Rally on April 27, 2016
Chicago, IL

A second embarkment this morning on the Road to Recovery; even though we aren't going as far as our previous trip, this one is no less important or vital: maybe even more so as this one hits closer to home. Our message to the lawmakers must make an impact reverberating through the entire state. We must strengthen our advocacy without even a hint of fading. This is why there has to be an impenetrable power behind our words and united front in our actions.

When I see men and sometimes women, sitting downtown, obviously mentally disturbed, mumbling to themselves in rags, I can't help but think and wonder "what could they have been if they had received proper treatment". They didn't get this way overnight. Somewhere along the line, they lost their self esteem; their self value. It may well have been a little self doubt here, a pinch of failure syndrome there, or even personal problems that could have been recognized and helped if they had been caught in the early stages.

This is why we can't afford to be luke-warm about our cause; we must be on blazing fire, so intense that they can't possibly ignore or attempt to extinguish us. They cannot continue foot drag or pass the buck with so many lives at stake. This really shouldn't be an issue but I was very impressed and moved by our many wheel-chair bound supporters at the rally. All these lives matter. This is why our energy level must continue to sore about our very needed facilities. If we don't keep up our concern they will assume there is none, and subtly slink back to the status quo. We cannot let this happen.

We have come too far, sacrificed too much, and above all else, worked too hard to be discarded. They often forget that we are not the masses, but human beings who care about each other as much they, the law makers, should be caring about us. We have already seen the results of their massive cuts to our communities. Since 2008 the United States Government has cut \$4.5 billion from our mental health facilities according to the PBS News Hour, so the time to act is now!

They can't keep us DOWN, if keep UP the fight!!