

HATTIESBURG COFO -- VERY ACTIVE

Hattiesburg, Feb. 24 The COFO staff in Hattiesburg Mississippi has been very active in all phases of civil rights work in the last two months. At the moment, the staff is very caught up in helping to coordinate the NAACP testing of local public accommodations. This testing promises to last all week.

On other fronts HATTIESburg COFO has been operating a community center, running a literacy program for adults, setting up health, welfare and federal programs neighborhood meetings, and is doing work with the Freedom Democratic Party. The Mississippi Student Union is very active in Hattiesburg, and received much help in the form of transportation and advice from the COFO staff.

The employment problem is being examined. Two of the regular Voter Registration workers are trying to organize a maids and gardeners union. Thus far they are talking to individuals to compile a list of grievances and discover leaders.

D. Gordon, a worker for SSOC, is working off the campus of University of Southern Mississippi. He will set up meetings between COFO people and a nucleus of interested USM students. Through these meetings, and through some previous contacts with the Newman club, COFO hopes to establish a dialogue between the white and the black community.

The voter registration campaign continues. There are four full time voter registration workers on the staff. Each is assigned to a portion of the Negro community where the workers establish one-to-one relationships with many of the citizens and thus try to influence them to try to register to vote. They also find any special needs that a family might have and take steps to assuage these needs.

The Hattiesburg project had been operating two community centers untill Christmas. At this time one of the centers was closed down by the city because of alleged "faulty ~~wx~~ wiring." The other center is operated on a 7 - day a week basis by two local girls on SNCC staff. This center features a day care center for children under five, and regular teen-age activities. A COFO branch library is located at this center.

Miss M. Phyllis Cunningham, a registered nurse from Minnisotta, is in charge of the health and welfare programs. She has established a complete file of federal program material and is planning sex education classes for young girls. There are about three neighborhood health and welfare meetings a week under her direction.

Miss Corneilla Mack, a native of Wisconsin who has her MA in genetics, is in charge of a very intensive literacy program. She uses the latest in programed adult education materials. She has been working in the state for some eight months.

Mr. Richard Kelly, a high school teacher from Chicago, is on the voter registration team. Kelly has become ~~work~~ a constant figure in the Negro community since he has established many close relationships with local families. Kelly is very active in guiding the M.S.U. He has been considering applying for a job in the ~~x~~ Negro high school.

Mr. Howard Hammerman and Mr. Richard Heitler are students from Antioch College who are working with COFO for three months as part of Antioch's work-study plan. Hammerman is temporary office manager. Heitler works with the voter registration team.

Miss Sherry Ann Maxie is a ~~native~~ native of Hatties and the captain of the voter registration team. Miss Maxie ~~has~~ has been active in the movement ~~for~~ since it came to Hattiesburg. She is on SNCC. Presently she is active in setting up block meetings.

Mr. Joseph Schwartz is the head of the federal programs and is instrumental on the voter registration team. He is a native of California and has a Phd. in nuclear ~~Phy~~ physics from the University ~~of~~ of California at Berkeley. He has been working in Hattiesburg since last July.

Miss ~~Mary~~ Louise Crosby and Miss Imogene Wilmer are in charge of the community center. They ~~is~~ both are natives of Hattiesburg and have attended numerous workshops on community centers. Miss Crosby has also been very active in public accommodation testing.

Mr. Douglass Smith is the Project Director. He is a native of Hattiesburg and is responsible for the creation of the Mississippi Student Union here. He has been project director since October and for three months was also district director for the fifth district.