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Mrs. Viola W. Weiss, Executive Director
Jewish Children's Regional Service
P.O. Box 15225
New Orleans, Louisiana 70175

Dear Viola:

Last evening Julius Hyde and I got together for his Home Kid reminiscences. (By the way, he prefers to be called "Ken" - his middle name; "Joe" is his brother).

Ken was "about seven" when he came from Texas to live at the Home; he stayed for ten years. Isolated from the rest of the kids in the Infirmary for a week upon arrival, he does recall feeling homesick and left-out.

"From the beginning, I don't ever remember a mean kid," Ken states. Woody Polewoda was a special friend of his. And he recalls others: Dave Ladner, Milton Fruitgarten, Bobby Berger. Also, there were no mean staff members; he never saw a child spanked. He felt particularly close to Rap Lawes. And Charlie Bombet, one of the Tulane Med students who served on the Staff. As an adult living in Baton Rouge he was to see Charlie again, in the role of his children's pediatrician!

Ken recalls well the Home's dietician, Mrs. Wiggington - all the boys had a crush on her. And, of course, Uncle Harry. Because of his admonition that no child should ever go hungry, there was always plenty of good food, and even an afternoon snack such as milk and graham crackers. (Nevertheless, once in a while the pantry was raided by midnight marauders, more for the adventure than hunger). After dinner on Friday nights, he remembers Uncle Harry reading action stories to the kids, and he recalls to this day the thrill of hearing him read aloud "The Three Musketeers." Every Saturday night there were silent movies; Uncle Harry was on hand to read the subtitles to those too young to read for themselves.

Ken remembers kids having to sit on their lockers for rule infractions; however, the punishment was loosely enforced and one's buddies would usually come around to kibbitz and play ball.

For a few hours every day after school, chores were performed; painting the walls was one he remembers most vividly; painting the Girls' Dorm, however, was not considered work.

Ken had a Big Sister - Mrs. Hausman - who occasionally took him out to lunch. He also well remembers a friend's Big Sister, Mrs. Stern, who loved all the Home Kids very much. He remembers JCH alumni coming faithfully every Sunday to play softball on the big field in back. His dad and uncle came to see him often, but he never left the Home to visit them.

Mardi Gras was celebrated by piling the kids in trucks which paraded all over the city. Ken remembers going to City Park, picnicking, and he recalls watching the Rex Parade from a Jewish man's property. He also remembers going to the waterfront to watch the Zulu parade. Another holiday he recalls is Hanukah, at which time kids pulled out a gift from a grab bag.

Ken attended the Home's camp at Bay St. Louis; as a matter of fact, he helped build the boys' cabins. He remembers when the sessions were for two weeks, boys only, and when they were extended and made co-ed.

Schools Ken attended included Newman, Commercial, S.J. Peters (the principal there, Ray Abrams, was well known in educational circles), and Soulé. He had no real school chums other than those from the Home.

The Home, Ken feels, taught him to be competitive, for competition between the kids at the Home was keen. If there is any criticism of the JCH, it is in the area of sex-education: totally lacking. But Ken enthusiastically and unreservedly endorses the time spent in the Home as a very good experience, full of fond memories. In fact, he declares, there should be more reunions.

Viola, I'm sending this report of our interview to Ken for his review, additions and corrections. He will, in turn, forward it on to you.

With warm best wishes from Don and myself,

Sara

Mrs. Weiss, I was known in the home as "Junior". By any other name than Junior Hyde no one would know to whom you refer. I enjoyed meeting Sara and Don. Sara did a great job of remembering the things I was trying to say.

*Sincerely
Jr. Hyde*