

Phyllis and David York, the founders of the International *TOUGHLOVE*® movement, hold college degrees in psychology and biology. They have had extensive work experiences and training in addiction counselling, adolescent problems and treatment, and family counselling.

The most educating of all their experiences has been the on-going, on-the-job training offered by their own family, consisting of three daughters and five grandchildren.

The York's' view of the world is fashioned by what they call "primary experiences." These have occurred in this order:

Their early years were spent in New York City, where David taught at N.Y.U. and was a substitute teacher in the public high schools. Phyllis had babies, painted, and become a typical 50's homemaker. Ambition, along with the urge to learn and change, took them to Goddard College in Plainfield Vermont. David taught and Phyllis went to school and earned a B.A. degree. Goddard's co-operative, creative community opened up a whole new view of the world. They experienced the power of the community to affect the individual.

The next primary experience came at Eagleville Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre at Eagleville, Pennsylvania. Here they learned the depths and practices of their trade. Eagleville, is a therapeutic community where the entire staff including nurses, secretaries, doctors and psychotherapists function in a therapeutic capacity. The client population consisted of skid-row bums and prison and alcohol addiction. They worked in this exciting and dynamic atmosphere as therapists, supervisors, trainers and program designers.

The York's moved on to Today, Inc., in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, one of the first rehabilitation centres in the country. Here they worked with adolescents. They designed and ran a family counselling program as well as trained counsellors and therapists all over Pennsylvania.

During this professionally challenging position, the York's found out that their own family was in trouble. Their children were lying, stealing and using drugs.

They were just as confused as any other parents, and felt a grief and helplessness that gave them a new compassion for others as well as the realisation that they had to re-evaluate their work and beliefs. It was their friends who gathered round to support and guide their family back toward sanity and

responsibility, not the expert technicians, the counsellors, or the therapists.

From this primary experience with their own children they developed a process to help other families. They created *TOUGHLOVE*® INC. in 1979 and started the first community support group. In November, 1980, the Philadelphia Inquirer put *TOUGHLOVE*® on its front page, and on the map. Over the next few years, the York's were the focus of a Phil Donahue Show, the Ann Landers column and the Family Circle Magazine. This started the *TOUGHLOVE*® phenomena, which has made it the fastest growing self-help program in America. Every major publication, television program and radio show has helped to sustain the growth of this organisation that keeps helping kids, parents, families and communities.

In October of 1985 the ABC Movie *TOUGHLOVE*® was shown, which helped boost the number of parent groups world-wide to over 1700.

In 1986 Phyllis and David started their first *TOUGHLOVE*® KIDS PROGRAM, which is being used in over 300 communities in the United States and Canada.

On October 8th, 1983 Phyllis fell down a flight of stairs and injured her spinal cord. She became paralysed from her chest to her toes. This event enlarged the York's' mission to include the hurting families of the disabled. During this entire experience, the York's' found that the power and strength they needed to survive the crisis came from friends, family, and the medical community. They were the ones who gave the understanding, compassion and support needed for the survival. Phyllis recovered her zest for life and the capacity to be the dynamic figure she was before the tragic event. The entire experience tested their very individual selves and the marriage they share. They emerged from the crisis more focused, and more able, than ever before, to help people through TOUGH-TIMES.