

Boys Town...

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Dwite Pedersen, the former dean of men at Boys Town, said: "They're not taking a better boy or a worse boy out there, they just aren't taking enough."

Pedersen, who worked at Boys Town for 12½ was "phased out" of his position when program changes were made. He had worked as a counselor and orientation center director.

Before the family-teacher model, boys lived in dormitories and cottages with single men in the place of family-teachers.

"I never had any kids who didn't like the dormitories. It was always a home-type of situation," he said.

Pedersen said that a problem with family-teachers is the high turn-over rate.

"The family-teacher turn-over rate is very heavy. Married couples come in there and find out they have no privacy with nine or 10 boys. After a while they leave. The boys think they have no security. They probably come from a broken home and now their house parents are leaving them."

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But Boys Town administrators disagree. Phillips said the national average of turn-over for child care workers is under six months. "Our family-teachers stay about two years on the average."

Paul Laughlin, 17, a former Boys Town resident, said he went through five sets of family-teachers in 2½ years.

On any given day, however, Boys Town administrators say the Boys Town total population is about 1,000 students. On Nov. 9, 1979, there were 384 Omaha campus youths, 12 of whom are girls living in dormitories in downtown Omaha, some 15 miles from Boys Town, Phillips said. He included 12 admittance process youths which are those under consideration of admittance, 271 students in off-campus homes and 330 youths with a non-residential status.

The non-residential students are those from surrounding public schools who are taking classes at the Vocational Career Center—about as many as there are actual residents at Boys Town.

Archbishop Sheehan said the number of boys living on campus has decreased because Boys Town has gone to a different style of care.

"It is a more home-like surrounding than the institutionalized format," he said. "Instead of having 25 boys to take care of, family-teachers have seven or eight boys."

Opening for couple

Job Service of Nebraska lists in its Dictionary of Occupational Titles, from time to time, an opening at Boys Town for a "couple to counsel and teach skills to youth in a family style living program."

Home, food and utilities are provided, according to the job listing, at a starting salary of \$16,000 a year. A high school diploma is required, no experience necessary and the minimum age is 21.

David Coughlin, director of community services at Boys Town, said family-teachers are trained about one year before taking charge of a household.

Boys Town critics comment on other problems they have with Boys Town's current administration. Former dean of men Pedersen said about 200 employees were gradually phased out and replaced by the new administration.

Former employee Wolff said many former employees—fired, phased out or retired—agree on most of their grievances.

"About every two months the old staff members get together for dinner. At the last one there were about 30 to 35 of us and we were all in agreement that we haven't heard one good thing about Boys Town," he said.

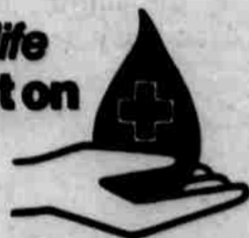
A current teacher at Boys Town said there is much dissatisfaction at Boys Town among the teaching staff.

"Before, Father Hupp took over, the employees stuck together. There was a lot of loyalty to Boys Town. But since the new administration has taken over, there was a need for the teachers to organize. There never was a need for us to do so before."

The new administration states in an article on what it labels the Boys Town revolution: "By far the most serious objection to our changes came from people who felt threatened with the loss of their jobs. In streamlining the organization—closing the dining hall and central transportation system and dispensing with services that had lost their purpose—some people did lose their jobs."

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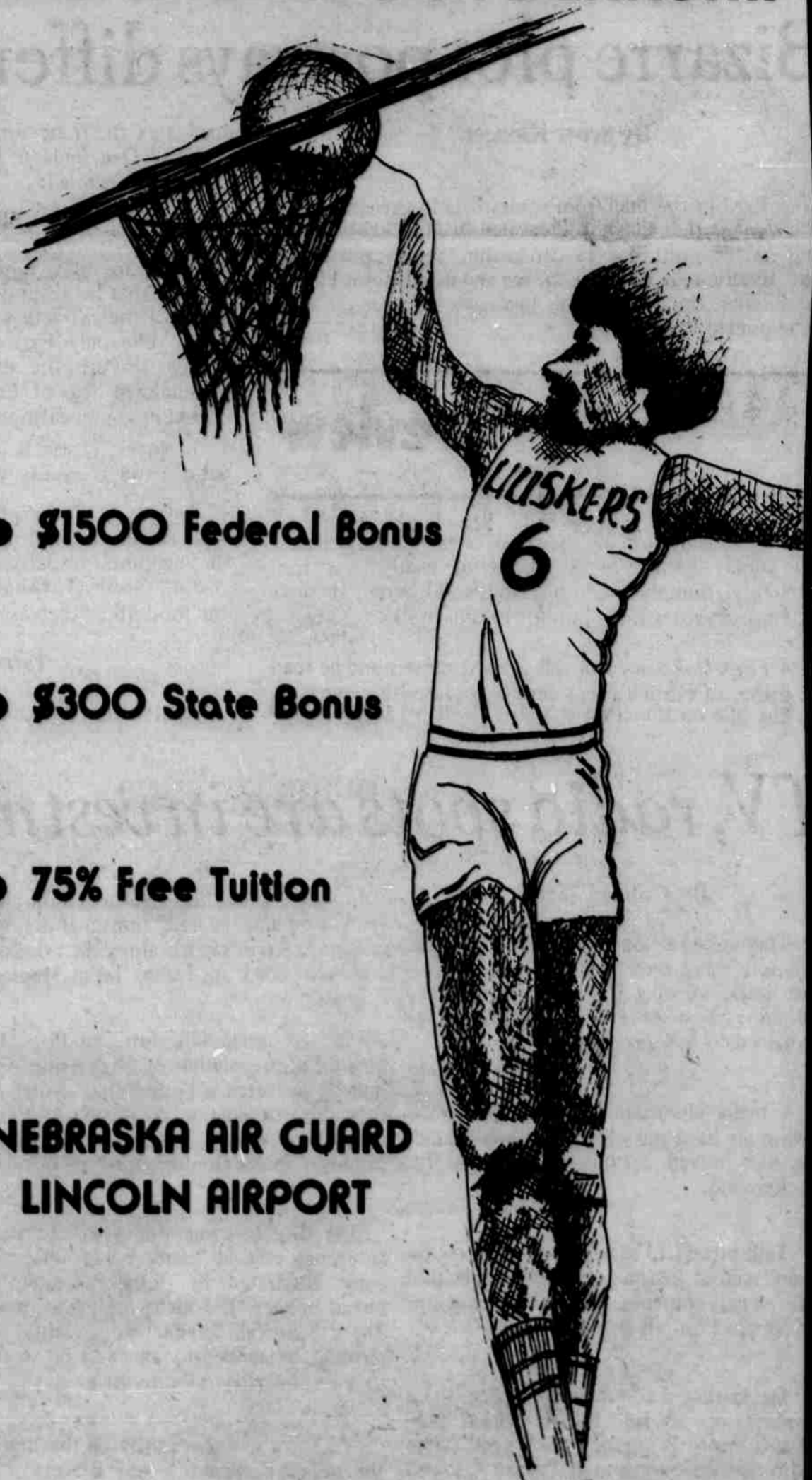


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