

Tribune Task Force Reports from Inside

THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE begins today an extraordinary report on the misery and plight of hundreds of persons living in a shadow world of our society. They are the unfortunate confined to poorly staffed and equipped nursing homes in the metropolitan area.

Today's account and eyewitness stories which will appear in the next several days have been compiled by a task force of reporters. It is the first assignment for this special unit of TRIBUNE reporters and introduces a new concept in comprehensive news gathering.

Director Wins Prizes

The task force, directed by William Jones, 31, a reporter who has won numerous awards for investigative reporting, has worked for six weeks in a thoro investigation of the shocking conditions in nursing homes.

Other members of the task force are William Currie, 29, Philip Caputo, 29, and Pamela Zekman, 26. All are outstanding reporters on the TRIBUNE city staff.

The concept of using a team of reporters enables THE TRIBUNE to pre-

sent to its readers, quickly and comprehensively, stories which will analyze the major concerns of society today.

The task force will have varied assignments which will take it into the complexities of government, the maze of social programs and the dilemmas of urban affairs.

Work with B. G. A.

To compile the material for the nursing home series, the reporters worked as janitors, medical aides, kitchen help and even supervisors. Investigators of the Better Government Association worked with THE TRIBUNE to make possible a compilation of reports from 21 nursing homes. Without such a team it would have been impossible to make such an in-depth report on the barren lives of the elderly and mentally handicapped, virtually left to die in bleak rooms.

This assignment involved personal risk and long hours of hard and tedious work. Task force reporters found themselves emptying bed pans, changing sheets, scrubbing floors and painting rooms. They faced ominous warnings from fellow workers who suspected them of being state investigators.