A study of the origin and development of Claremont House, Bronx, New York

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A STUDY OF THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT
OF CLAREMONT HOUSE, BRONX, NEW YORK

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
SOCIAL WORK

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Settlement houses are not new. The aim of the settlement or neighborhood house is to bring about a new kind of community life. It is the home of friendly neighbors, and a center of information, organization and service. The settlement should know its own neighborhood, its housing, health, recreation, industries, family and social life, political and religious associations. It should also be the center through which can flow to the neighborhood the cultural life from outside the neighborhood.

In the last decade such group work agencies have taken the programs and services beyond their four walls into the surrounding community. The result has been extension activities. From a haphazard experimental beginning extension activities have shown growth and development.

Several organizations have taken considerable interest in these activities. The National Conference of Jewish Center Workers has set aside a place on its agenda during the past years for a discussion of extension activities in Jewish Centers throughout the country. It was the thinking of this committee that the interest in extension activities had become a national interest rather than a local one. It was agreed that a round-table discussion on extension activities be held at the 1940 National Conference of Jewish
Center Workers. Such a round table was held in the spring of 1940 and again in 1941.

The Round Table publication of the National Federation of Settlements has from time to time published material on extension activities. The growing importance of this is seen in the employment by some agencies of workers to whom is delegated the sole responsibility of supervising extension activities.

Bronx House, a settlement of long standing, and the Bronx Council for Social Welfare were eager to improve conditions in their community. In 1938 and 1939, they conducted a survey of recreational facilities for Negroes in the Bronx. Revealed was the lack of any organized activities for this group. The Bronx House's concern over this condition finally resulted in their interesting the Greater New York Fund in providing funds for the establishment of an agency to meet the needs of Negroes in their community. Claremont House was the result.

Claremont House was at the outset supervised by Bronx House. Bronx House handled all funds, lent supervision, staff and conducted co-operative programs. On April 7, 1944, by a Legislative Act of the New York State Assembly, Claremont

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1Minutes of a meeting of the Extension Activities Committee of the Metropolitan Association of Jewish Center Workers held at the Jewish Welfare Board, April 3, 1940, p. 1. On file with the Jewish Welfare Board, New York.
House was incorporated. The bill for incorporation was introduced by Assemblyman Isidore Dollinger, a member of the Board of the Directors of Claremont House. This act meant that Claremont House had become strong enough to stand alone.¹

On December 1, 1940, Claremont House opened with a limited budget of $5000. It set itself the tasks of improving relations between the Negro and the white community and enhancing the family welfare in the immediate neighborhood.

The recent records show that the influx of Negro families include new residents from many states and cities beyond the New York area. The original influx began with families moving from Harlem to the Bronx for lower rentals and a better community environment for their children. As early as 1938 and 1939, school and court records indicated a rise in conflict between the new and old residents.

The depression had hit this area hard and the public welfare case loads were heavy. Both old and new residents sought some form of public assistance since the beginning of the emergency relief rolls. Instability of family life was common.²

The original site of Claremont House was a small two-story frame building on the corner of St. Paul's Place and


²Ibid., p. 2.
Park Avenue in the Bronx. There were several small rooms but not enough to accommodate the number of people that frequented the house. Because of the inadequacies of the small building, the program progressed through the use of other community facilities. These facilities included the school building across the street from the settlement house, the swimming pool, the neighborhood parks and other school playgrounds in the community.

Claremont House is now located in Public School 55 and occupies the entire second floor. It also has access to the ground floor indoor playground, which includes basketball and volleyball courts. The outside area, which includes softball courts and sprinklers for small children, may be used at anytime.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to point out problems arising in Bronx House due to the influx of Negroes, what steps were taken to set up a program to improve the relationship between the Negro and white families in the immediate community, and to evaluate in some measure the effectiveness of this program.

Scope

The scope of this study is largely the origin and development of Claremont House and the program incorporated to meet the needs of the changing community, 1940-1944.
Method of Procedure

Information was chiefly obtained from personal interviews with members of the Board of Directors of the Claremont, reports, letters, and records on file at Claremont House, literature pertinent to the study.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SETTLEMENT HOUSE PROGRAM

Among the types of social work organizations which provide leisure-time group activities, the settlement occupies a distinctive place. It may be said to have had its beginning in England in 1884 when Samuel A. Barnett, vicar of the East London parish of St. Judes, motivated and guided a group of Oxford Students in a study of economic and social problems through first-hand acquaintance with working-class members and their mode of life.

The term "settlement" is of English origin, having been applied to London's Toynbee Hall in 1880, when its leaders "settled" in the working class district of Whitechapel. The term "neighborhood house" is more characteristically American, free from implication of class distinction.

The first settlements to be established in the United States were University Settlement in New York, formerly Neighborhood Guild (1886); Hull-House in Chicago (1889); South End House in Boston (1892) and several others.¹

Traditionally associated with the settlement idea has been a group of individuals residing in the settlement building. The scope of the activities is determined by the physical facilities in or available to the settlement building

and the interest and skills of the staff, which includes workers who reside outside the neighborhood as well as the resident group.¹

The typical settlement, under American conditions, is one which provides neutral territory traversing all the lines of racial and religious cleavage. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are a considerable number of houses which have a high degree of the settlement spirit but including some of the functions distinctive of a particular smaller or larger division of the church. Where such specific religious effort is conducted without willing conscious invasion of other religious loyalties, it has not been construed as carrying the house in question beyond the distinctive limits of the settlement field. "The nature of the religious affiliation of such houses is in all cases clearly indicated and in the larger cities they are placed in a list by themselves."²

A succession of more or less informal national gatherings of settlements workers have been held from time to time since 1892. However no continuous or really comprehensive organization was provided for until 1908.³

In May, 1908, a group of twenty settlement residents from New York, Chicago, and Boston met to consult about fuller

¹Ibid.


³Ibid., p. 7.
cooperation among settlements. A study of settlement work, of which the "Handbook of Settlements"\(^1\) is a result, was decided upon. It was felt that such an inquiry would disclose a sound basis for broader and more concrete community interest.

During special discussions among the settlement delegates to the National Conference of Charities of that year, a strong feeling developed that such separate meetings should in the future be definitely provided for in connection with the Conference.\(^2\)

The National Federation of Settlements facilitates national and regional conferences, seeks the improvement of administrative techniques, personnel recruitment, and standards of work. Similar functions on a local basis are assumed by city associations of settlement houses, which are to be found in most large cities throughout the country, particularly in the North East and Middle West, where the majority of the 153 settlement members of the National Federation of Settlements are located. In addition, 50 houses are affiliated through the individual membership of staff workers. The most recent survey of the work of these houses was made in 1930. It showed that 1,500 staff members and 7,500 volunteers were employed in full or part-time capacities in 160 of these agencies; that in 136 houses, 153,268 persons were enrolled in 3,518 clubs and 6,192

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 9.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 9.
organized classes; and that 80% of the group served by these settlements were under 18 years of age.  

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDING OF CLAREMONT HOUSE

In 1911, Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., who had been sensitive to the heavy influx of immigrant families, largely Jewish, to the Bronx, proposed that provisions be made for increased recreational and cultural facilities. Mrs. Morgenthau's efforts resulted in the establishing of Bronx House in that year. In 1917, the agency became affiliated with the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropies. It was a natural step to take, as the agency was serving a Jewish clientele. Since that time, Bronx House has continued to draw its support from Jewish Philanthropy.

Thus, we see that the Bronx House origin lies in Jewish philanthropy and that the agency was organized primarily to serve the needs of a Jewish community.

In 1923, a survey of the schools indicated that about eighty-seven percent of the pupils were Jewish. In 1926, the figure fell to eighty-three percent. In 1938 it dropped sharply to sixty-seven percent, and in 1937, it went down further to sixty percent. On the other hand, while the Jewish population has been dropping sharply, there has been a steady increase in the Negro population in the Bronx House area.¹

In 1900, there were 2,370 Negroes in the Bronx; in 1930, the number had jumped to 12,000, and the most reliable estimates put the figure at about 20,000 in 1940. In 1930, there were 890 Negroes in health district 24, the chief area that Bronx House served for social and recreational purposes.\(^1\)

According to school figures there was a slight increase in the Negro population from 1933 to 1936 and an additional increase from 1938 to 1939. This increase occurred largely in the section between 169th Street and Claremont Parkway, which is within the boundaries of the Bronx House area.

'It was not until 1939 that any efforts were made to mitigate the Negro leisure-time problem on any large scale.'\(^2\)

There were some reasons for this. For one thing, from 1933 to 1939 there was some semblance of a recreational program for Negroes.

In 1933, Public Schools 2, 42, and 55 (all in the Bronx House area), faced with the situation of a population composed of Negroes and foreign born who lived in a poor social and economic environment, sought to do something about it. The superintendent, the visiting teacher, and the United Parents Association decided to attack the problem especially in terms of the Negro boys. A club was formed and a Negro

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\(^1\)Dr. Neva Deardorff, *A Recreational Program for Negroes in the Bronx House, 1940*, p. 10. On file at the Bronx House. (Mimeographed)

\(^2\)Charles Bernheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
leader secured. The Community Boys Club met in a loft and used Public School 55 for recreation purposes. Later on, a supporting parents organization was formed with Negroes and whites, Jews and Gentiles represented on its board. The school people provided funds. In 1938, due to lack of support, the project was discontinued.

In 1939, Bronx House under its family membership plan, made an effort to widen its scope of activities to reach all parents in its junior program. As a result of the plan, one Negro mother applied for membership in one of the women's clubs. Although two mothers resigned when it became evident that the mother was joining the group, the majority of the mothers accepted her. As a result of this experience, the parents' group held numerous discussions on "tolerance."

In one of the executive staff meetings the members learned of the group workers' growing awareness of the Negro in the community. Quoting from the minutes of the meeting it was observed that:

The Negro problem was discussed at some length and it was finally agreed that those individuals who applied to the House should be adjusted as far as possible into activities and clubs. Further, that there would have to be much more discussion before a set policy could be stated, and that until that time, the subject will be left in abeyance. It was suggested, however, that educational programs be carried out in the various divisions involving Negro speakers, programs on Negro culture, etc. It was suggested that the subject be referred to the Council of Social Agencies, which is concerned with the problem, in order to involve Bronx House in a community effort to combat the feeling about Negroes and help solve their
need for facilities.\footnote{1}

At a traditional Jewish party held that year, five Negro boys, representing the Douglass Society of one of the High Schools, were invited. One of the club leaders who was present remarked that when others in the lounge noticed how quiet and uncomfortable the Negro boys were, they too asked that there be discussions on "tolerance."

The study made by the Jewish Welfare Board of Bronx House was completed in December, 1939, and brought the problem into sharp focus. The report cautions:

The presence of Negroes in the neighborhood of Bronx House totaling 3% of the total population, calls for consideration. The fact that there is a gradual increase of Negroes in the Bronx House area and that a few Negroes already participating in Bronx House activities, creates a situation which may require definite action. When the presence of Negroes become a problem because of the attitudes of its white clientele, Bronx House will have to make a decision as to its policy with regard to Negroes.\footnote{2}

It became increasingly evident that the intercultural programs, sound as they were, could not solve the problem of the lack of recreational facilities nor the development of latent Negro leadership. Also, Bronx House, because of its limited facilities, could never hope to adequately serve the Negro community even if it so wished. Therefore, any plans would mean working outside of the building.

\footnote{1} Executive Staff Meeting, Bronx House, New York. October 25, 1939. On file at Bronx House.

Opportune was the offer received by the Bronx Council of Social Agencies of money for a recreation project in the Bronx. The group-work agencies in the Bronx began submitting plans. Bronx House's original plan dealt with the extension of services to unaffiliated groups in the neighborhood. However, the Bronx Council was very much concerned about the lack of recreation facilities for Negroes and drew up a memorandum outlining the needs of the Negroes in the community, pointing out the heavy concentration of Negroes in four health areas. It recommended that $5,000 be appropriated for a recreational and educational program for Negroes in the Bronx. It was the plan of the Bronx Council that the Negro project be established in Public School 55 and that the $5,000 be spent largely for personnel. The Central Admission and Distribution Committee of the Greater New York Fund responded to the request of the Bronx Council by allocating $5,000 for services to Negroes, which included youth guidance, recreation and group-work. The next task of the council was to ask for a sponsor for the project. Bronx House stepped into the picture early in 1940 when the principal of Public School 55 asked its administrative assistance in working out plans to combat the sporadic uprisings between Negro and white children. With the Bronx House already on the scene and its reputation as a group-work agency well-known, the council offered this agency the opportunity to extend its services to Negroes with a grant of $5,000.
The director of Bronx House discussed this with the board of directors, who agreed to sponsor the extension work, provided they would not have to assume the financial responsibility.

There were many questions that had to be answered during the early months of the project. Foremost among them was the decision as to whether the project was to be exclusively Negro or open to the entire community. The staff at Bronx House devoted much time to discussing the project. In the minutes of the leader's meeting of March 4, 1940, we find indicated that the staff engaged in heated discussion as to how the needs of the Negroes were to be met. Some favored the plan of a separate agency for Negroes only, seeing it as a necessary preparatory step before integrating Negroes with whites in the same agency program. This group felt that the Negroes would have to develop positive attitudes towards their own culture before community living could be a successful experience.

On May 1, 1940, a group of professional people met with the director of the Bronx House and set up the objectives of the project. This group included the president of the Board of Directors of Bronx House, the District Supervisor of Schools, the Executive Secretary of the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association, and several other prominent people of the community.

The objectives were:

1. To provide a neighborhood center for people living
in a crowded underprivileged community without available facilities;
2. To provide a comprehensive educational and recreational program including classes, workshops, counseling or referral services, etc.;
3. To conduct small group and mass activities to meet the varying needs of the child, adolescent and adult;
4. To encourage the development of native, community leadership through self-governing, councils and committees;
5. To develop a better relationship with the community in the Bronx through neighborhood and borough-wide participation;
6. To utilize to the maximum the full resources of the neighborhood and community-parks, libraries, social agencies and swimming pools.1

A personnel committee was appointed, to select a director and assistant and, possibly, a part-time physical director. It was also decided that a large advisory committee with small sub-committees would form an executive committee.

By the end of the summer, the personnel committee had elected the director. The committee had previously agreed that the director would be a Negro as the new center would be in a community predominantly colored.

Further requirements were that the director be a "college graduate," a trained social worker familiar with research, community organization methods, programming and generally a competent individual in whom the neighborhood would have confidence and who had the ability not only to develop a good program but to encourage good will among people.2

Mr. Gerald Allen became the first director of the new project. He immediately embarked upon a program of study and

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1Meeting of professional leaders of the Bronx, New York. May 1, 1940. On file at the Bronx House. (Mimeoographed)

2Ibid., p. 3.
organization. He spoke at church meetings, interpreting the tentative program to clergy and layity alike. He arranged conferences with representatives of social agencies in the community for the purpose of explaining the program and establishing working relationships with these agencies.

As the need arose, new committees were formed. A youth committee, composed of various representatives of the youth groups in the community, was appointed to interpret the program and enlist the support of the young people.

A two story frame building situated across the street from Public School 55 was purchased as the site of the settlement house. In this way the organization could work in conjunction with the school.

With the question of the building settled, the last item discussed before the opening of the center was the question of personnel. The personnel committee decided to employ group workers to supplement the work of the administrator, whose job was mainly that of a community person. The committee further decided that a woman should be one of the two workers, and that the workers should be chosen in term of their professional equipment for the job. For the two vacancies, a white male and a Negro female were chosen.

In an outline in a memorandum submitted by the Bronx Council of Social Agencies to the Central Admissions and Distributions Committee of the Greater New York Fund, the sponsoring agency was to be responsible for:
1. Invoking personnel of Public School 55 project in the agency's staff meeting;
2. Regular weekly conferences between the Administrator of the project and the agency director;
3. Opportunities for conferences with other members of the agency staff;
4. Regular visits to the project headquarters, examination of records, etc.;
5. Making available to the project program such staff of the agency as may be required to initiate, develop and evaluate the project;
6. Discussion of regular monthly reports submitted by the project administrator;
7. Working closely with the neighborhood and committee in organization and program planning;
8. Aid in the conduct of any intensive neighborhood studies to accumulate accurate and useful data on Negroes and Negro relationship.¹

Claremont House, like most services developed for the improvement of human welfare, grew out of an increasing need which, if left unmet, would have disrupted already-accomplished advances in the community.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF THE CLAREMONT HOUSE PROGRAM

Albert Kennedy indicates that the task of settlements is "the organization of life for the most part in tenement portions of metropolitan cities." The local communities in which they are situated are as a rule either in an advanced stage of physical and social disintegration, or the center of strongly homogenous national or racial groups or the seat of cosmopolitan aggregations of people with few interests in common. The variety and complexity of the community problems which settlement workers have been forced to study, to try to understand and in some measure to influence, has left them highly individualized, resourceful, inventive, and impatient of barriers. The variety and intensity of that experience in community is unique.

Group work undertakes to guide the group life of children and adults. Its underlying philosophy maintains that normal and satisfying group activities tend to develop in the individual a richer personality that is emotionally sound and effective in its adjustment to other people; also that group life is the means of passing on the social patterns, customs and conventions by which society is organized.

The review of an ordinary day in a settlement of today will give the reader some idea of what it is a settlement does.

The day usually begins with the arrival of small children to attend the nursery school which may be supported by the "house" or the volunteer services of board members and friends, or it may be sponsored by the settlement and supported by some organization. They will probably stay until after a nap has been taken in the early afternoon. Throughout the rest of the morning other activities are likely to be going on. If it is a fall or winter day there will be a basketball game in progress, perhaps as part of an inter-settlement basketball league. The players will be older boys out of school or younger men who have not been located in the labor market yet. Other boys may be occupying a club room, sitting around smoking, talking, playing cards, or doing any of the things which any other person belonging to a club does. In the early afternoon a group of young mothers will meet as a club. On particular afternoons it may be the mothers whose children were in nursery school. "There would likely be a basketball game going on in the gymnasium, and other groups in the club rooms as in the morning."¹

The settlement begins to hum with activity² as soon as school "lets out." From three o'clock to six it is a beehive

²Ibid., p. 403.
of activity. Youngsters from five years of age up to sixteen and eighteen swarm all over. They divide themselves off into the various activities available. Some immediately run off for the game room for such spontaneous outlets as the games and equipment afford. Others will use the library for a comfortable afternoon with the books they find neither in school nor in their homes.

The afternoon ends at six o'clock, the doors are closed and the staff sits down to an hour of dinner and much needed relaxation. Here, there is an opportunity for fellowship, for discussing the day's affairs and the world's news. A guest is with the group, perhaps a German refugee who was a judge in Breslay or a professor of philosophy at Goettingen. The informality of the hour, the give and take, the interplay of personalities makes this a refreshing interlude.

The evening begins at seven o'clock. Children are supposed to be at home studying their lessons, maybe they are not. The evening is for adults. Men who have been working during the day come together in a club group, perhaps just to sit around and talk. One group may be the Fathers' Club which is meeting with a speaker from a nearby university to discuss with them trade unionism or the arts of propaganda. A Mothers' Club will also be on hand, mothers who have raised a family and now have the grandchildren with them.1

1Ibid., p. 405.
The evening comes to an end, it has been a strenuous day but no more than any other.\textsuperscript{1} The time before midnight is a welcome relaxation from the incessant impact of people all day. Day after day the settlement worker carries on, finding that human contacts are stimulating and satisfying, even with all the wear and tear.

Program

When Claremont House opened, its program called for meeting the needs of every age group. In a leaflet distributed to the community prior to the opening of the house, the following program of activities was outlined. A nursery school for children three to five years, to take place in the mornings and early afternoons. The junior program open to boys and girls, six to thirteen years to take place in the late afternoon. The junior program was primarily on an activity basis with the following activities offered: woodwork, leather work, metal craft, weaving, folk dancing and singing, dramatics and painting.

In the evening there was to be a club program for young men and women, fourteen to twenty-five years of age, supplemented by special activities similar to those offered in the afternoon program. Adults were offered the facilities of the House for social and recreational purposes. "Special classes

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., p. 406.
and courses were organized -- English courses, Citizenship aid, Health Education, Child Care, etc."¹

In addition to meeting the recreational needs of the individuals, Claremont House offered services to families and individuals designed to meet the particular social and economic needs of the community. A vocational guidance and placement service was offered to help individuals, especially Negroes, find employment in defense industry. The agency cooperated with the Department of Public Welfare for the distribution of food stamps to non-relief clients, and with the Department of Agriculture for the distribution of penny milk.

Through its opening of activities to both Negroes and whites, and through consciously planned intercultured programs, Claremont House hoped to break down some of the barriers separating Negroes and whites.²

Another aspect of the program was the emphasis on fund raising affairs. Nearly every monthly report of the director of activities mentioned at least one mass activity designed to raise funds for Claremont House.³

There is another aspect of the program that was somewhat intangible, yet should be mentioned -- that is, the process involved in bringing Claremont House to the community. The

¹Ibid., p. 52.


³Ibid., p. 52.
close relationship of neighborhood people to the House made the agency a community force. Encouragement was given to the membership to use the agency as a social weapon. Hence, when a Negro member was mistreated by policemen, the agency was a prime factor in organizing the community against such police methods.

Frequently, through the program, the social relationships of the children were improved and a better understanding was reached by all. The children were permitted to enter into the discussion and thinking by their leaders when such problems arose as:

(Peading the Harlem Disturbance) a group of Claremont House boys both white and Negro, threatened to break a local merchant's store window, when he refused to sell them a certain commodity, which was scarce, because of war, but interpreted by the group as refusal on a personal basis. This led to discussion about the scarcity of commodities due to the war, and the need for us to cooperate in the entire sharing of foods and other valuable war needs. Also, a very important conclusion was reached that even if there was not a war, breaking the merchant's window would not be the right way to settle the issue.1

In the Fourth Annual Report of the Claremont House, 1944 we find the program developed to include:2

Child Study Groups.--The sponsoring groups of this part of the program were the Parents Associations of the five local schools and Parents Clubs of both Claremont and Bronx

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Houses. 1 The discussions in the group included parent-teacher relationships and the causes of racial prejudices and adolescent problems.

**Inter-racial Program.**—This group worked with the immediate families in the community and reported on racial problems facing the community at large. Frequently, when problems of this nature arose, the parents appealed to the settlement to aid them in solving such a community issue while the problem was in the "irksome stages" rather than resorting to the police and settle things through the court.

**Junior Program.**—All children in this group were scheduled for group meetings, arts and crafts twice per week and for mass activities such as movies, plays, and special programs once per week. This meant that each child came to the settlement three afternoons per week, for mass programs, which included the attendance of all children and the group programs were divided to meet the individual group interest of all children participating.

The mothers were very cooperative in serving as leaders and assistant leaders on trips of special interest such as rodeo, circus and all-day outings. Membership in this department was on a family basis.

**Youth Program.**—This program for older boys and girls presented numerous problems. The war had taken many boys and

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1Ibid.
and many clubs that were very active in the previous years of 1940-1943 were dissolved. Working boys and girls presented another problem. Not only did their working hours make them unavailable for activities, but in many instances their interest in recreational and group work activities which the agency had to offer diminished while the interest for theaters, dancehalls, and other commercial recreation grew. The major problem was the fact that the cultural interest of the older boys and girls was very low. Their major interest, which was not unusual, was for basketball, baseball and social dancing. Almost no interest was originally shown in such activities as dramatics, fine arts, crafts, etc. They wanted the Settlement to devote its program exclusively to athletics and to set up a canteen program with a "juke box." "The objective being to give athletics, social dancing and something beyond the "juke box" idea; the workers attempted to motivate the youth into more constructive activities."\(^1\)

"It was during the year of 1944 that the white members did not register for membership as they had done in previous years."\(^2\)

"The problem of juvenile delinquency was showing a decided increase, with a growth of community gangs, chiefly among the Negro groups. To help meet this problem of gangs, a Men's  


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 13.
Club was organized. Its first step was to gather information on existing recreation programs, school and court problems. During the summer months softball and baseball teams were organized for the clubs participating in the program and the diamonds at Public School 55 and Morris High School were utilized. Folk dancing and tap dancing activities were organized on the same basis and Claremont House was able to provide facilities at the House. The Public School 55 Community Center and Claremont House promoted a summer boxing bout for the older boys and completed the activities with a joint Field Day. There was a mass recreation evening program at the Public School 55. "The groups were organized and prepared to sponsor large community programs with groups from both within and outside the neighborhood stressing clean sportsmanship."  

Adult Program.--The adult program met the needs of the working parents, who wished to attend clubs and various activities. The fathers were less active than the mothers due to long and irregular working hours and in many instances due to long hours of traveling spent to and fro from work in New Jersey, Brooklyn and outlying sections. The greatest response of fathers and men was in the Sunday afternoon programs. A

1 Ibid., p. 12.

Men's Sunday afternoon group was organized. "Their interest in this group also grew from the rise of the neighborhood gangs and the havoc they were creating."\(^1\)

The Mother's Club groups were three in number: The Neighborhood Women's Club, The Consumers Club and the War Service Women's Club. The Neighborhood Women's Club was composed of parents whose children were active in the afternoon and evening program. This club centered most of its work in the area of child care programs and the building of better relationships among all community folk. It was active in the summer camp activities and provided volunteer workers for the programs. This club sponsored a "Thrift Shop" and a "Milk Bar." A successful inter-racial project undertaken by this group of women was an "Old fashion quilting bee" and a hobby exhibition. In both the above mentioned activities, the club involved members of English and Citizenship classes, composed exclusively of Jewish and Italian members.

The work of this club extended out into the community. It was active in the National Negro Congress; a Girl Scout troop was organized by the president, and a Parent's Council of five (both Negro and white) was formed from the sponsors of the troop. Its objective was to see that this troop became a mixed troop of both Negro and white girls.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 13.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 14.
The Consumers Club grew very slowly. The interest of this club grew from the Milk Bar when the question of cheap milk arose. The group was associated with the New York City Consumer Council. Speakers from the Council were invited to talk at meetings and movies from the Consumer Division of the OPA were frequently shown.

The Mother's War Service Club consisted of both Negro and white mothers who had sons, daughters or close relatives in the Armed Services. The purposes were threefold: first, to have the group think through what the war really meant and what postwar world should offer; second, morale building for the members of the House of the Armed Services that were away; third, to work with war agencies and community groups such as the National War Fund and American Red Cross. Letters, packages and papers were sent to more than 100 boys and girls of the neighborhood serving overseas during the Christmas of 1945.

Summer Camp Program.--Many contacts were made during the early spring of each year to many outside organizations for summer camp placement for the children of the Settlement House. Those organizations included the Children's Welfare Federation of New York City, Harlem Children's Camp Fund, Catholics Charities, New York City Urban League, Infants Welfare League and many others. In addition to the above number of organizations mentioned other organizations cooperated with the agency and over 100 children were sent to camp in the summer
Claremont House did not have a camp of its own; therefore, to meet the needs of the children between the ages of 6 to 17 years for summer vacation in the country, the work was carried through on a scholarship and referral basis.  

Program Appeals to Outside Groups.—The children of Public School 117 in the Bronx learned of Claremont House through their instructor who was a member of an in-service training course conducted for public school teachers. This course was given annually by the school social worker to give teachers an opportunity of visiting and seeing community agencies at work. The group had an opportunity in their visit to Claremont House to observe the children at work and play and at the same time learn more about the total program of the house. Soon after this visit the class Public School conducted a project based on "Races of Mankind." They wanted to do something to help other races in their community.

A committee of five from the class was appointed to visit Claremont House. Out of many suggestions, the class finally decided to aid the Mothers' Club with providing items for the "Thrift Shop." This was a great help for a "successful thrift shop;" meant funds for the Public School 42 project, camp scholarships and other community benefits. "The Public


2Ibid., p. 8.
School 117 class gave many good items of clothes, books and toys. The teachers of both Public School 42 and 55 showed great interest in the work of the House.\textsuperscript{1}

The director in the "Fourth Annual Report of Claremont House, 1944," expressed appreciation to the staff and Board of Directors thusly:

The deepest appreciation must go to the staff of Claremont House for its continued professional concern with the needs of the membership, the community and the field of group and social work. Their job has not been an easy one with such problems as small facilities and an almost universal need of setting and establishing program patterns of a higher cultural and educational nature in the community.

To the Board of Directors, an annual report could not be concluded without another vote of thanks being extended to you for your close and continued interest in the program and your constant desire to see our program move forward.

To the Funds' Foundation and Friends who have contributed to our financial support goes our special thanks. Claremont House was started in 1940 as a Greater New York Fund project and has continued as such. Financial grants were made to Claremont House by New York, Hoffheimer and Norman Foundations. It is only through the annual funds which we receive through these sources that we are able to keep our doors open and the program of Claremont House alive.\textsuperscript{2}

In order to carry out the above program Claremont House had the following administrative and personnel set-up:

**Advisory Committee**—To consist of members of the professional staff at Bronx House, other Bronx professional social and educational leaders and a select group of lay

\textsuperscript{1}Fourth Annual Report of Claremont House, 1944, p. 16. On file at the Claremont House.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
leaders. On this committee there will be group work specialists from the staff of Bronx House (art, nature, and science, gym health, etc.) who will assist in setting up programs either in or out of Bronx House for the benefit of members of Claremont House.

The committee represent the democratic machinery by which the board can more adequately carry out its total function.

The following workers were to be engaged:

1. **Director of the Settlement House.**—Salary $2,000 per year, graduate of a school of social work or its equivalent with experience in group work and community organization, whose function it will be to survey the neighborhood, develop community contacts, work with advisory committee, create activities, be responsible for the budget, submit reports on the program of the settlement house. Period of work six afternoons and five evenings per week.

2. **Director of Health and Physical Education.**—Salary $1,500 per year. Graduate of school of health and physical education with at least one year of previous experience. To carry out a program in existing centers, schools, playgrounds and parks involving athletics and swimming activities, train volunteer leaders and arrange for health lectures, exhibits and projects. Work schedule six afternoons and five evenings per week.

3. **Group Worker.**—Salary $1,500 per year. Graduate of Group Work School, whose duties include management of the
central office where a library of information would develop. Responsible for guidance service and program development for individuals and groups (vocational, educational, group work); specialized activity with a few selected groups, aid in the development of volunteer leaders. Hours of work -- six evenings and five afternoons per week.

Other necessities, phone stationary, equipment, rental of school gym, swimming pool, club room are to be met by local groups involved in the settlement house, including equipment, materials, room space and personnel to be provided by Bronx House.

Method of Financing

Prior to the establishment of the Greater New York Fund, the extent of experimentation in extension activities depended on what a group work agency was able to raise over and above revenue needed to sustain the normal activities of the agency. The usual method of financing was through gifts and donations of board members, endowments, dues and the money raised through the combined efforts of agencies groups in a federation.

The federation marked the first step toward a more integrated and coordinated approach to the financing of social services carried on by the agencies affiliated with them. It was able to raise the standards of agencies and effect a more equitable distribution of money to agencies in order
to assist them in carrying on their work.

The Welfare Council which was in touch with the greater majority of social agencies and which was in the position to know and to ascertain the overall needs of the city was given the responsibility for the distribution of the funds. The Council's Committee on the improved Financing of Social and Health Work set the aims for the use of the fund.

The Committee wrote,

...in carrying out its purpose, the Fund, working through the Welfare Council, and with the Federation and agencies concerned, shall see a steady improvement in the quality of the various social and health services and the need for them; and an improved coordination of these services with each other and with the public services.¹

The Central Admissions and Distributions Committee set up criteria which social agencies had to meet in order to share in the funds. Among such criteria were the following:

1. The organization must have been in operation for three consecutive years immediately prior to admissions for participation in the funds;
2. The organization must have an active board of directors or another responsible body exercising general supervision over the operation of the organization's program and control of its financing.
3. A staff qualified by training or experience for the duties to be performed.
4. Adequate records of and regular report on operation and finances;
5. Financial statement by a certified public accountant;
6. Participation in community efforts to increase efficiency.²


²Ibid.
...a better correlation between the quantity of these services and the need for them, and improved coordination of these services with each other and the public services. In order to put the above into effect a general discretionary fund was set up to be used for the purpose of broad community import and for contingencies arising out of the operation of the allocation procedure. This provision made a sum of money available for the special assistance of agencies serving Negroes and for agencies serving the people of the Queens. This money was earmarked for such purpose because these were two perfectly obvious weak spots in the social agency of New York City.¹

The Central Admissions and distribution Committee acting through its functional committee informed the borough councils of social agencies that money would be available for extension work with Negroes, and for other recreational projects where the need for such was established. The borough council of social agencies made this known to its constituent agencies and encouraged them to submit plans to the council of social agencies and thence to the functional committee.

Claremont House is the result of a plan submitted to the Greater New York Fund by the Bronx Council of Social Agencies and Bronx House, for a community into which there had been an influx of Negroes in recent years.

The Fund did not guarantee permanent subsidization of these projects. It was the hope that given the impetus and tided over for a period of time, the newly created agencies would be able to gain recognition and support for their own work.

¹Ibid. Although this took place in 1938-39, the Greater New York Fund has seen fit to continue its efforts in behalf of the Negroes and the people of the Queens.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The community — its problems and its resources mold the shape of the extension activity. In communities where there are not enough group work agencies, and where the total needs of large agencies of the population cannot possibly be met by the existing agency, the latter often undertakes to initiate new units. Claremont House represents an illustration of the above process.

In the establishment of new units, such as Claremont House, the needs of the total community — young and old — become the concern of the sponsoring agency. Hence the pattern usually followed in the creation of the new units involves the initiation of the unit by the establishing agency. After the extension has been initiated the sponsoring agency gradually withdraws its support leaving the new agency to assume an independent role in its community.

This is a type of extension work in which the group work agency seeks to extend its services to larger portions of the population through the involvement of the community in the creation of a new unit which will offer it the group work services previously denied them.

The above pattern is not the only way of meeting needs. In some communities the nature of the resources or the problem involved suggest other methods. In instances where the agency
is attempting to meet the needs of a particular group—unemployed youth, children in school, street gangs, adults, etc. It will resort to other means as was illustrated by the experiments conducted at Bronx House with unaffiliated clubs, etc.

In this type of work the agency not only initiates the work but assumes responsibility as long as the project lasts. It will supply and supervise staff. The extension work becomes a regular part of the program of the agency.

What is the problem? When do you wish to serve? What are the resources of the community? If these questions can be answered by the agency undertaking an extension project then the method of handling the activity will reveal itself.

The following is a summary of the most important findings of this study:

1. The most important factors creating the need for the Claremont House were:
   a. Lack of facilities for recreation except through the church.
   b. Termination of a Negro recreation project in the Bronx House area.

II. A settlement house was needed:
   a. To provide a community center for Negroes living in a crowded underprivileged area without available facilities.
   b. To provide comprehensive educational and recreational programs including classes, workshops,
counselling or referral services, etc.
c. To conduct small group and mass activities to meet the varying needs of the child, adolescent and adult.
d. To encourage the development of native, community leadership, through self-governing councils and committees.
e. To develop a better relationship with the total community in the Bronx, through neighborhood and Borough-wide participation.

In addition to meeting the recreational needs of the individual, Claremont House offers services to families and individuals designed to meet the particular social and economic needs of the community. Vocational guidance and placement services are offered to help individuals, especially Negroes find employment. The agency cooperated with the Department of Public Welfare for the distribution of food stamps to non-relief clients, and with the Department of Agriculture for the distribution of penny milk. Through its opening of activities to both Negroes and whites, and through consciously planned inter-cultural programs the Claremont House has made a great contribution in the direction of ameliorating the barriers between Negroes and whites.
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