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A study of the program and activities of the junior police and citizens corps in Washington, D.C.

Elizabeth Jean Washington

Atlanta University

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A STUDY OF THE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES
OF THE JUNIOR POLICE AND CITIZENS CORPS
IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

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
ELIZABETH JEAN WASHINGTON

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE 1945
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Faced with a growing problem of juvenile delinquency in Washington, D. C., police officer Oliver A. Cowan, a private in the Metropolitan Police Department, organized a club program for Negro youth in 1942. This club program, known as the Junior Police and Citizens Corps, has gained much fame and publicity as a constructive program to prevent and to control the rise and spread of juvenile delinquency. The publicized success of the program in this area has caused other communities to consider the initiation of similar city clubs, under the police department, to include other racial groups than Negroes. The Negro Officer who initiated this club had hopes that through the encouragement, enlightenment, supervision, and a diversified activities program the Negro youth of Washington, D. C. would become worthy and better citizens of the community.

The neighborhood gangs and clubs of Washington were incorporated into the Junior Police and Citizens Corps and new clubs were organized in the schools. School officials sanctioned the initiation of the program of the Corps in the schools. It was felt that such activity would be a potent ally of the school. Principals and teachers have praised the work and the practical program sponsored in the club.

While the Junior Police and Citizens Corps is actually a series of clubs, organized in several precincts, references to its work as the Cowan Plan are most frequent. Its basic approach has been made through the organizational mechanism of clubs for boys and girls from six to seventeen years. This organization has been considered important in
curbing the problem of delinquency among Negro boys and girls. However, what it has done for the boys and girls in providing recreational, educational, and personality developing activities remains a question. In the light of the expressed aims of Officer Cowan, these values in group work are indicated. It is this aspect which stimulated the writer's interest to make a study of the Corps program.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the program and activities of the Corps in the light of its stated aim and purpose, and to ascertain to what extent the activities of the Corps have been beneficial to the members in the way of education, recreation, and personality development. Moreover, instances and testimonials will be presented in order to determine whether or not the organization has been of value to the members, their homes, schools, churches, and communities. It is the hope of the writer to present the findings in such a manner that other cities throughout the country may be guided in their efforts to establish a similar type of program for their youth.

Scope and Limitation

The material in this study will be limited to a portion of the membership of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps, particularly that in two schools and two churches. The two school units, Randall Jr. High, and Armstrong High, were selected on the recommendation of Officer Cowan. In each, the membership is large and the sponsors, congenial and cooperative. It was felt that under such conditions the response to the questionnaires would be satisfactory. The two church units, John Wesley, and Union Wesley,
were also chosen on the recommendation of Officer Cowan. These units of the Corps were meeting at a time convenient to the writer and in accessible districts. The material is further limited to the program and activities of the Corps and to persons interested in its work or affiliated with its program.

Method of Procedure

The material for the study was secured through several conferences with Officer Cowan, the founder of the Corps, and a careful study of the Corps' records including scrapbooks and files. Several of the club meetings were attended to observe the young peoples' activities. The writer consulted source and reference material related to social group work. Personal interviews were held with persons recommended by Officer Cowan. Units of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps, in two schools and two churches, were interviewed by questionnaires.
CHAPTER II

THE INITIATION OF THE COWAN PLAN

Delinquency in Washington, D. C.

Sinister effects on the behavior and character of America's children constitute one of the greatest evils of this war. Statistics gathered from a number of places reveal a sharp nation wide increase in juvenile wrong-doing.¹

Washington, D. C. was one of the many places, which under the impact of war conditions, showed a striking increase in juvenile delinquency. Its fight to control delinquency has been reported successful in some areas, due to the interest and foresight of one of the city's policemen.

The causes and not the effects are the concerns of those who would remedy the problem of delinquency. These causes are many: parents who spend long hours in government employment and are seldom at home; temporary homes in overcrowded areas; the absence of adult male influence caused by the draft and essential war jobs; and the bestowal of door-keys to young children—all provide the child with more freedom and leisure time than he formerly had.²

Children, in various sections of Washington, lacked adult guidance, and were not sufficiently in the program of community agencies to participate in their activities. Consequently, they roamed the streets, drifted

¹Editors, "Are We Raising Another Lost Generation", Saturday Evening Post, CCXVI (April 29,1944), 28.

into gang formations, harrassed the citizens, and indulged in many of the criminal and vicious acts characteristic of unguided and neglected youth.\(^1\)

The 13th Precinct, mostly Negro, showed an increase in delinquency. This section of the city has more saloons, nightclubs, poolhalls, pawnshops, and small businesses than any other part in Washington.

It has dirty tumble down houses through whose broken, cracked walls the wind whistles. It is crowded as only the sections of the very poor are crowded. It has the dirt and smells and squabbling that send children into the streets to find life and amusement, or perhaps escape.\(^2\)

There is small wonder, then, that children in such a section as this took their spite out on the community. They felt that they had been left out of things. Therefore, such children, possessing untold energies, sought the attention and concern they deemed their due by means of obnoxious behavior. Undoubtedly, their normal wishes had been suppressed. They had not had enough love and kindness shown them. When children face in their environment, the home, school, and community, unfavorable atmosphere for growth - they react against that environment. Children in various smaller cultural groups frequently face many social maladjustments in their homes and communities.\(^3\) Herein lies one of the reasons that Negro children seem to have too large a percentage in juvenile courts. In addition, the recreational activities available to them in leisure time are inadequate and inferior as compared with those provided for youth of other

\(^1\)Roger Butterfield, "Our Kids Are in Trouble", \textit{Life} XV (December 20, 1943), 108.

\(^2\)Maxine Davis, op. cit., p. 28.

\(^3\)S. R. Slavson, \textit{An Introduction to Group Therapy} (New York, 1943), p. 3.
races. The answer to the problem of juvenile delinquency in Washington was "the same as the answer to the whole youth problem; programs of constructive activity".  

During war-time, youth desires to have a part in developing community life. Moreover, the guidance of adults and the sense of membership in worthy activities are of paramount importance.

Adolescents need stable adults as friends and examples. As part of the adolescent's emancipation from his dependence on his parents and as a result of his general insecurity, he has always needed to be with well adjusted adults who are attractive to him. Because of their physical maturation, adolescent impulses surge forth with renewed strength and require new self-control and self-regulation. This is accomplished in part by learning to suppress some of their impulses, in part by finding socially accepted, legitimate outlets for their energies, and in part by absorbing the standards of individual adults and of adult society.  

"Now more than ever a youth desires to act according to his own ideas and plans". He misses the older boy, the adult man's influence in his life; he wants to contribute something to the total development of his home, school, and community; he wants to "belong". Officer Cowan recognized this desire for the "feeling of belongingness" in the youths he encountered on his beat in the 13th Precinct. He knew at once, when he found boys and girls running in gangs and engaging in delinquent acts, that something was amiss; that the community agencies had failed in some way; that they were not satisfying the real desires of the children. He

---

1H. M. Bell, Matching Youth on Jobs (Washington, D. C., 1940) p. 160.


learned that they distrusted and disliked the Police and citizens of the community. There remained but one thing to do namely, to align them with the Police and citizens of the city, to organize them into a Junior Police and Citizens Corps. His earnestness and sincerity could not be rebuffed nor could the appeal or prospect of being Junior Police with titles, duties and rank similar to the regular Police be refused. Gangs throughout the city immediately joined the Corps and proved willing and anxious to carry out the proposed program of recreational activities. A large portion of Officer Cowan’s free time, after work hours, went into developing the Corps. The city of Washington watched this development with anxiety, for it could not and dared not hope that this type of recreational program, inaugurated by a man who claimed no experience nor training in group work, would accomplish a mission at which others had failed.

"No one claims that recreation is a cure-all for delinquency, but experience shows that delinquency goes up when recreation facilities go down". ¹ When the Junior Police and Citizens Corps had been conducted for only a short period, child crime and truancy were reported to have fallen off sharply in the district.²

Officer Cowan, Founder of the Corps

Oliver A. Cowan is the founder and director of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps. He is a young man in his early thirties, the father of a ten year old son and an infant daughter. Although a native Arkansan,

¹Roger Butterfield, op. cit., p. 105.
²Ibid.
he was reared and educated in Cleveland, Ohio. His college training was received at Howard and New York Universities.

Settling in Washington, D. C., Officer Cowan worked with the housing project as an employee of the Department of Interior. He later transferred to a job with the Civil Service Commission from which he resigned to become a member of the Metropolitan Police Force in October, 1942.

His assignment to a beat in the 13th precinct led to a further awareness of Washington's delinquent youth and a knowledge of the conditions which influence delinquency. His contact with the boys and girls he caught engaging in some misdemeanor, coupled with visits to their homes and talks with different merchants and citizens, led him to believe, "the conduct of our youngsters is a serious refraction upon the lack of proper parental care and guidance, and impoverished or neglected home situations". He maintained, "the problem is one of adult delinquency rather than one of juvenile delinquency". In his opinion not only parents had failed their children but also their communities.

The organization of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps evidenced Officer Cowan's ability to work with children and led to his appointment by the School Boy Patrol as Patrol Coordinator. This board is composed of adults who govern the activities of the Patrol Boys. Officer Cowan's duty

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2 Ibid.
as Coordinator was to see that the patrol boys worked together harmoniously and that the school children not only understood their function but also obeyed their orders. His area covered 8 public schools with an enrollment of 5847 pupils and 126 patrol boys. This appointment was a distinct recognition, for it was the first time a Negro had attained such a position.

Officer Cowan, after three months as Patrol Coordinator, terminated his appointment in order to assume duties with the newly organized Juvenile Bureau. This branch of the Police Department was created on the basis of the work and reports which he had made in establishing and organizing the Corps. The purposes of the Bureau, which are (1) to extend the Police Department's study of the background of juvenile offenders and (2) to bring the police in closer contact with their parents, grew out of the practices which Officer Cowan had employed in acquainting himself with the gangs. ¹ Working with this Bureau allowed Officer Cowan more time to work with the Junior Police and Citizens Corps. He realized, upon investigating the homes and attitudes of parents concerning the behavior of their children, that the type of organization he had initiated would have little if any effect on the mothers or fathers or on the slum home situations. Nevertheless, he felt that proper organization, supervision, and planning provided for the young people of such slum areas could lead to constructive activity and a worthy use of leisure time.

Community Acceptance of the "Cowan Plan"

As the youth of Washington joined the Junior Police and Citizens Corps...
Corps in increasing numbers and began to demonstrate the worth of the club, in controlling their conduct, the city gave its support. As of March, 1945, there were 10,000 members in the Corps. Those citizens who had doubted the success of what they termed "an experiment" were convinced of its value, and were eager to share in its development. Others, who had been cooperative from the beginning, continued their services to facilitate the growth of the Cowan Plan, the Junior Police and Citizens Corps. The church, home, school, merchants in private and public enterprises, civic and community agencies, the Police Department, and other professional and interested persons joined forces with Officer Cowan and took their places in the program he presented. All showed a desire to cooperate with him in his efforts to develop citizenship, and to give to the youth of Washington, D. C. a worthwhile educational and recreational program. A principal of one of the Jr. High schools remarked, "The program has my hearty endorsement not as a cure-all for delinquency, but as a means of redirecting the interests and activities of potential problem pupils".¹

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN OF ORGANIZATION OF THE CORPS

Social group work utilizes a variety of organizational forms and techniques to achieve its purposes. The interest group, the troop, the team, and the patrol, each may be employed for various types of group activity. However, the club form of organization has long been employed by many organizations. McCormick, as one of the earlier workers in social group work, felt this form to be most desirable. Subsequent social group work agencies continue to use various expressions of the club idea.1

The Cowan Plan

Officer Cowan's plan was a simple one. He found that gangs of boys, and girls, instead of individuals, were responsible for the community complaints. He conceived the idea of using these neighborhood gangs as the nucleus of the organization. He sought to give the youngsters a feeling of companionship, a sense of knowing that the whole gang and not just the leader of the gang was useful. These gangs, therefore, became the units of the new organization. They kept their names and new clubs joining the Corps chose a name. Club names include: the Bombardiers, the Bull-Dozers, the Swann Street Barons, and the Bonecrushers.

Type of organization.-- As organized, the Junior Police and Citizens Corps is a "mass club". This type of club consists of a large grouping of integral units in which a variety of activities may be undertaken

1William McCormick, The Boy and His Clubs (New York, 1912), pp. 31-35.
simultaneously by different sections under their respective leaders. The club as a whole meets frequently on the basis of some common interest.¹

Classification of membership.-- Any boy or girl between the ages of 6-17 is eligible for membership in the corps. Those who do not wish to be Junior Police form the greater portion of the Junior Citizens. All members, unless they have some title as "Mayor", "Captain", and other titles of rank as employed by the Junior Police, are addressed as "Citizen". The chief officer of the Corps is the Mayor who governs the Corps with the aid of his board composed of the Mayors of all precincts included in the Corps. The order of officer in each precinct following the Mayor is the Commissioners, and the Chief of Police. Each precinct contains several areas. The chief leader is the Captain followed by Lieutenants, Sergeants and Privates. There are 21 area units in the Corps and several precincts, where Negroes live in large numbers.

Finance.-- The Corps has no regular income and does not have any financial backing. There are no fees required of youths making application for membership in the Corps. All adult workers are volunteer workers and Officer Cowan does not receive any monetary reward for his services. The Corps, at present, is free to members, and purely volunteer work. In the individual club units, dues are collected upon the suggestion of the members and for the purpose of financing some program that requires finance.

Corps facilities and equipment.-- The Corps lacks regular facilities.

There is no designated building for the Junior Police and Citizens Corps to carry out its activities. The manager of the Negro theatres donated his office in the rear of one of the theatres as Headquarters for the Corps. Here, all the orders, forms, and official business of the Corps are formulated and carried on. The weekly meetings are held in Carver Hall, the finely constructed government dormitory for men. Its recreation and club rooms are available to the Corps members. A number of schools have offered their gym facilities to the boys and girls of the Corps. Basements of churches and homes have been turned into workshops. Old lots have been granted by interested citizens and have developed into outdoor recreation centers under the working hands of the boys.

Characteristics of the Membership

Many persons, who hear of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps and know that the neighborhood gangs comprise the charter members of the Corps, conclude that the membership consists mostly of delinquent boys and girls. These people do the boys and girls of the Corps an injustice, for there are few if any Corps members who have ever been detained in juvenile court or jailed. Of the 100 members, girls and boys, who were interviewed by questionnaires, not one had ever been in jail or juvenile court. The questionnaires also revealed the age range and the grade distribution of these 100 members, thirty-eight girls and sixty-two boys. The following tables show the grades which these boys and girls have attained in relation to their age. It is not the writer's purpose to ascertain the relativity of the age and educational level as this is not pertinent to the plan and organization of the Corps nor has little, if any, bearing on the program and activities of the Corps.
### TABLE 1

**AGE AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION OF 38 GIRLS IN THE JUNIOR POLICE AND CITIZENS CORPS**

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*Includes five boys who did not record their age, and two who did not record their grade.*

### TABLE 2

**AGE AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION OF 62 BOYS IN THE JUNIOR POLICE AND CITIZENS CORPS**

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*Includes five boys who did not record their age, and two who did not record their grade.*
As indicated by Tables 1 and 2 the concentration by age and grade is for the most part greater for the boys than the girls. This is probably due to the fact that there are more boys than girls in the corps and that in the club units studied the total number of boys exceeded that of girls by twenty-four.

Tables 1 and 2 further indicate that the boys on a whole are older than the girls. The ages of the girls range from five to fifteen, while the boys' ages range from nine to seventeen inclusive.

Considering the number and ages of the girls interviewed, the grade attainment revealed in Table 1 compares favorably with that of the boys in Table 2. The majority of girls was in Grade school, while the greater number of boys was in Junior High school. One cannot say that the boys are smarter than the girls for the age range for the boys and girls in Junior High school does vary. The age range is from twelve to fifteen with one exception; there is one sixteen year old boy in the ninth grade. Although none of the thirty-eight girls were in the twelfth grade, their total number for Senior High grade attainment outnumbered that of the boys. Two girls were in the tenth and two were in the eleventh grades, while there were no boys in the tenth grade, one in the eleventh, and two in the twelfth. None of the boys interviewed was in the first or second grades, whereas the grade distribution for the girls began with the Kindergarten.

It may be concluded from this analysis that in addition to there being more boys than girls in the Corps, the boys are older. The study did not include sufficient interviews with girls and Senior High pupils to ascertain whether or not the group as a whole is below average, average, or above average in education. One other factor of interest is the youth
Adult Supervision of the Membership

The program and activities of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps are supervised by youth leaders, men and women, from Howard University, Miner Teachers College and the Senior High schools. Older boys and girls in the Corps conduct activities of the smaller ones. Government girls, teachers, and civic leaders have offered their talents in developing activities and forwarding plans. Prominent men in the community act as "Big Brothers" to some of the boys.

The Big Brother befriends the child, visits him in his home, makes what adjustments he can there, perhaps entertains him in his own home, learns to know his pals, and does whatever he may by example and friendly interest to help the younger brother unfold into manly reactions and attitudes toward the problem he faces. 2

The Advisory committee.-- The Advisory Committee is composed of adult volunteers who also serve on nine sub-committees. These committees relate to different aspects of work for the total development of the members of the Corps. (1) The Educational Committee, is concerned with testing, guidance, placement, follow-up, volunteer teachers, vocational education, industrial arts, hobbies, clubs, military drill, music, study help, library, programs, time distribution, and part time employment. (2) The Health Committee specializes in clinical work, health education, and first aid. (3) Parents and Home committee consists of the Parent Teachers Association.

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1Roger Butterfield, op. cit., p. 108.

Civic and Citizens Association, and Foster Fathers and Foster Mothers.¹

(4) Churches and Organization Agencies include the Sunday School, Catholic and Protestant, the Baptist Young Peoples Union, the Boy Scouts, the Y. M. C. A., and Camps. (5) The Police Department serves by way of the School Boy Patrol, the Juvenile Court, the Federal Bureau of Investigation program, and the Probation Officer. (6-7) The Finance, and the Expansion and Recreation committees attend to the establishment of neighborhood clubs, solicitation of aid, and the execution of the Corps plans for recreation. (8) Public Relations handles all club publicity. (9) The Girls Auxiliary Activities is composed of the Girl Scouts, the Girl Reserves, the Camp Fire Girls, the Junior Nurses and the Nurses Aide.

Resources Available to the Corps

The Junior Police and Citizens Corps enjoys the privileges of gifts, entertainment, guest speakers and other resources through several media. Merchants and business enterprises aid whenever they can. They make small donations of money or equipment, and arrange for materials to be available to the Corps. They make possible free baseball, swimming, circus, and theatre parties in which Corps members delight.

Celebrities, such as Ella Fitzgerald and Earl Hines, have entertained them. Mrs. Roosevelt and Joe Louis have visited them, and Edgar Hoover of the F. B. I. sent one of his men to lecture to them.

Radio time has been provided, and on one occasion the Junior Police male chorus was heard in broadcast. Community agencies and other clubs in the city have cooperated with the Corps in putting over its program. In

¹Foster Fathers and Foster Mothers are the names given to individuals to whom children are assigned during a period of probationary control.
return, members have been urged to take advantage of their offerings in the way of recreation, education and personality development.
CHAPTER IV

THE ACTIVITY PROGRAM OF THE CORPS

The Purpose of the Program

The Junior Police and Citizens Corps program is of interest and value to its members because it aims to develop citizenship, leadership, and character. "It does not attempt to change boy nature but adapts itself thereto and directs into proper channels, instead of trying to suppress or reverse, the inborn impulses and vitality of youth." ¹

Primarily, the program of the Corps was aimed at correcting the numerous infractions against the law which occurred in different neighborhood communities. Growth and development of the organization have led to a new purpose viz., to help youth solve their own problems. The program as it now exists is one for total development-physical, mental, social and religious.²

The Activities of the Corps

In the study of the program of activities offered in the Junior Police and Citizens Corps, it seemed advisable to the writer, for the purpose of clarity, to present the activities under a classification. The eight classifications of activities employed by George D. Butler were

¹E. R. Pendry and Hugh Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 53.

selected. They are as follows: (1) Active games and sports, (2) Social activities, (3) Music activities, (4) Drama activities, (5) Arts and crafts, (6) Nature and outing, (7) Mental and linguistic, and (8) Service activities. A number of the Corps' activities are assigned to each of the classifications.

Active games and sports.— Those activities in the Corps which fall under this heading are: the Basketball teams, the Baseball teams, Boxing, Football, Volleyball, Track, Tennis and Ping Pong. These activities are directed at developing physical fitness, sportsmanship, and fair play. Each club unit organizes the team or teams of their preference and engages in tournaments within the Corps and with out-of-town teams.

Social activities.— The Social committee, the Recreation committee, the Teen Age Canteen, parties, dances and banquets are the media of social activity but also afford a means for creating pleasurable experiences. Such activities are conducive to overcoming shyness and self-consciousness, and for raising the standard of social enjoyment.

Music activities.— The Choral Club, the Junior Police and Citizens Corps Band, group singing and solo selections may be included under this heading. These activities afford opportunities for individual musical expressions, and for the development of an appreciation of the various kinds of music, composers, and nationalities.

Drama activities.— The Dramatic club provides the girls and boys of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps a medium of self expression, creativeness,

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and personality growth through simulation, identification and comparison with characters from fiction, and life.\textsuperscript{1}

\textbf{Arts and crafts.}-- In the Corps, the activities which may be listed under this heading are: the Camera club, the Airplane Modelling club, the Fingerprinting club, and the Artcrafts club. These clubs open new channels of interest and development of skills to the members. In addition, they offer to the youngsters a chance for group approval and recognition, and provide a sense of satisfaction and self-esteem resulting from achievement.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Nature and outings.}-- The Sightseeing groups, Picnics, Boatrides, Hikes, and Trips have many values for the Junior Police and Citizens. The value of these activities are:

1. to give outlet to the travel urge universal in children;
2. to supply variety of experience;
3. to widen contact with reality;
4. to give opportunity for exploring, investigating, and discovering environment;
5. to stimulate discussion and activity;
6. to amplify and extend studies, activities and discussions;
7. to increase free contact among the club members with one another and with the leader;
8. to develop self reliance through solving problems that arise during trips.\textsuperscript{3}

\textbf{Mental and linguistic.}-- The Corps program offers mental and linguistic activity through the Poster group, the Weekly Bulletin, the Youhttown News, the Library, the Speakers Bureau, the Public Relations and Special Events group, the Special Investigators and Recruiters, and the Junior Citizen League. These activities give those with talent a chance to express it and provide others an opportunity to discover and develop ability in the fields of creative writing, drawing, and expression. Many in the Corps have

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., pp. 114-5.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 89.
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 147.
publicized its work by public appearances at churches, in school and at civic and community gatherings. The Citizens of Youhtown feel that they are really making a contribution to their communities and they don't mind discussing it.

**Service activities.**-- The activities in the Corps which may be classified under this heading consist of work with the church, the community, and the members themselves. Corps members serve on the Church Contact Committee and act as Church Ushers. This service brings the members into closer contact with the church and its programs. At the same time it has made the church realize the value in giving youth some responsibility and duty in its religious program. Community service is developed in the members of the Corps through a number of activities: the Sick Committee, the Junior Air Raid Wardens, the Junior Social Workers, the Junior Nurses Aid, the Junior First Aiders, the Girls Baby Care Assistants, the Salvage Group, the Alley Cleaning Squads, the Family Service Advisers, (the members engaged in this activity do all they can to aid needy families) the Busy Bee Home Service Club, (this club is composed of a group of boys who collect old iron and other articles and repair them) and the Shoe and Clothing Exchange (this is set up at the Corps headquarters so that children in dire need of shoes and clothes may obtain such. The articles of clothing are donated by the members of the Corps). Counselling and Guidance fosters an appreciation of adult advice, and encourages confidence in counsellors, sponsors, parents and officers. The Junior Boys and Junior Girls Cadet Corps, affiliated with the Cadet Corps in the school, emphasizes drill, obedience to command, and the value of united action. The Thrift Club increases the economic well being of the group and teaches them the value in saving. In the individual club units, small dues are taken upon the suggestion of the members.
and for their own benefit. The Charm Classes for Girls and the Escort Bureau could be classed under "Social activities" as they have the same values. The Health Clinic offers to the Corps members the medical services of experienced doctors and nurses in the city. Through the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Girl Reserves, the Campfire Girls, and the Patrol Boys, members of the Corps have the advantage of joining and sharing in the activities and benefits of the respective programs.

At the weekly meeting in Carver Hall, the writer observed that the numerous club units gathered and reported on the activities in which they had engaged during the week. They told of their plans, new activities, and presented whatever complaints they may have had against members, officers, and sponsors. In this way, they have shared ideas, practiced parliamentary and business procedures, and developed respect for authority. A sense of tolerance and consideration of others has also been developed. The recitations of the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of the meeting and the Mispah at the close have added seriousness and a spirit of comradeship to the meetings.

All of the activities, though stemming from the aim and purposes of the Corps, are reported to be the results of the expressed desires and interests of the girls and boys of the Corps. In several instances activities have been included by Officer Cowan and his staff of sponsors which they felt would add to the educational, recreational, and social development of the members of the Corps. There is direction and control of the activities by the group with only indirect supervision by the leaders and sponsors.

The Most Preferred Activities in the Corps

It is to be expected that of all the activities offered to the members of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps there were some which were preferred
to others. An effort was made to ascertain which of the activities referred to by Officer Cowan as the "Fifty Functioning Activities" were the most preferred.

Officer Cowan has stated that on the whole the boys are partial to the sport activities; the girls, to the lighter but practical activities.\(^1\)

In the following preferences, named by the 100 members interviewed, the truth of his statement can be attested.

The boys preferred: the Football team
" Volleyball "
" Baseball "
" Tennis "
" Track "
" Boxing "
" Swimming "
" Ping Pong club
" Jr. Citizens League
" Patrol Boys
" Boy Scout group
" Airplane Modelling club

The girls preferred: the Tennis team
" Swimming "
" Basketball team
" Campfire Girls
" Jr. Nurses Aide
" Girls Baby Care Assistants
" Girls Sewing club
" Dramatic club
" Library
" Charm classes
" Jr. Girls Cadet Corps

The girls and boys showed an equal amount of interest in these activities: - - - - - - the Youhtstown News
" Choral club
" Church Ushers
" Church Contact Committee
" Camera club
" Sightseeing Group
" Teen Age Canteen

\(^1\) Interview with Officer Oliver A. Cowan, February 28, 1945.
the Jr. First Aiders
" Salvage Group

The scope of the study does not include a discussion of any relationships concerning the choice of activities. It is evident, however, that in view of the wide range of activities offered to the members of the Corps, those named show a dearth of preference.

Vocational aspirations.— An effort was made to ascertain the vocational interests of the boys and girls. The vocational preferences for the boys are more varied than those of the girls. This is attributed to the wide and more varied field of occupations open to men, and the exposure of a number of the boys to training in several of the stated occupational choices. In Washington, D. C. the Jr. High school program prepares its youth for occupations, and a means of making a livelihood, without additional formal training. It also prepares and encourages them to continue their education at one of the three Senior High schools in the city, each of which offers a different curriculum namely, academic, business, and mechanical. The preferences for the girls touched a number of the few available occupations open to women.

In the following vocational choices presented one may note the influence of the school. It may be assumed that the home and the program of the Corps have also influenced the vocational aspirations of the members.

Some of the boys and girls did not name any vocational aspiration; others named one or more. The boys expressed a desire to be one of the following:

- Doctor
- Teacher
- Printer
- Mechanic
- Boxer
- Photographer
- Lawyer
- Shoemaker
- Architect
- Business man
- Movie star
- Drafter
- Locksmith
- Electrician
Veterinarian
Social worker
Policeman
Sign painter
Musician
Pilot

The girls' list of vocations include the following:

Singer
Nurse
Teacher
Music
Mathematics
Biology
English
Business
Typist
Secretary
Librarian
Pianist
Dancer
Movie star
Police woman
Taxi driver

Both sets of aspirations showed that for the most part the members interviewed by questionnaire were striving for occupations which will afford them great remunerations. The need, for guidance in keeping these ideals before them and in directing them into worthy and suitable occupational channels, is evident.

Membership Feeling about the Program

Members of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps informed the writer that they felt that the program and activities of the Corps were doing much to train them as leaders in the community, to develop appreciations, skills, and techniques, and to correlate their training in school. They declared that the Corps had done a great deal for them in providing recreation.
Typical remarks were:

"I think the Junior Police and Citizens Corps is very fine. It has done much for us. I have learned a lot being in the Corps. It is helping to train us for what will be expected of us in the future".

"I think the Junior Police Corps is a worthwhile organization. It teaches us the art of cooperativeness, courtesy at all times and how to improve our race".

"I think the Corps makes the kids feel as if they are doing something for the betterment of their communities, and themselves. It encourages them to become better citizens and to work together as a group".

"The Junior Police is a nice organization but there is room for improvement".

"I think the Junior Police and Citizens Corps is a very fine club for boys and girls my age".

"Great"

"I think it is a very necessary club".

"The Junior Police is a nice club. There could be room for improvement in this club".

"The Junior Police and Citizens Corps is a very fine club to keep us from trouble at night. But there is room for improvement".

"It teaches you to be better citizens and to help ourselves and others".

"I think the Junior Police Corps is the best and finest group for youth of America. It gives them something to look forward to".

"This organization also qualifies us for many jobs that we would like to undertake in the future".

"I think that it is a wonderful organization and glad that I am a member of the citizen corps, and that it has solved the Juvenile D. case".

"I think that the Corps is very useful at all times".

"I like it".

"I think it is a fine corps and the directors are swell. I have enjoyed working with the corps".
CHAPTER V

BENEFITS OF THE CORPS PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES

The program and activities of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps have proved beneficial not only to the members but also to the home, school, church and community.

To the Members

Members of the Corps reported to the writer that they had visited places, seen people, and become familiar with things of which they had never dreamed of contacting personally. They had visited a monastery, the world famous Franciscan Monastery, in Washington; they had attended baseball games, circuses, movies and swimming pools free of charge. With the help of Officer Cowan they had had banquets and dances. Their choices of hobbies, sports and social activities had influenced the composition of the activity program. Activities which challenged their mental, social and physical aptitudes have stimulated their thinking, and developed new attitudes and appreciations.

Religious and ethical programs, hikes, excursions to museums, famous sites in the city, and outstanding and well known speakers and guests, have greatly influenced the development of citizenship, leadership and character.

Officer Cowan has made stealing unpopular by the simple psychological expedient of making a hero of each boy who prevents a friend from stealing. Members report each others lawless acts and appear as witnesses against the culprits when they stand trial before the "Judge".
of the Corps. There is no resentment nor malice on the part of the accused or accuser. This is a result of the indoctrination of the Corps code: "I promise to keep myself out of trouble at all times, and to keep my friends out of trouble at all times, So Help Me God".\(^1\)

One boy has been given the title of "Dick Tracy" of the Corps. This young high school boy, a "Detective" in the Corps, has been instrumental in solving forty-two housebreakings.

Another started a new system of breaking up fights. He suggested to two boys that he found fighting one day that if they could not come to some agreement by talking the matter over with him, then the argument would be settled in a boxing match. This led to the establishment of the Corps arena.

Children who formerly were truants from school found it interesting and challenging after joining the Corps." One hundred and two children, twelve to fourteen years of age, who quit school in 1943 registered in the fall semester of 1944 after the club's program had begun".\(^2\)

The Junior Police and Citizens Corps has developed in the schools a "friendly out of school relationship".\(^3\) Corps members feel free to visit their teachers and often request that they accompany them to the weekly meeting at Carver Hall.

The pleasures which girls and boys have enjoyed because of the Corps have evoked so much appreciation that they have become more mindful of their


\(^2\)Washington Post, September 27, 1944.

\(^3\)Statement by Mrs. E. B. Butcher, principal of Lovejoy school, Washington, D. C. personal interview, March 6, 1945.
manners. On many occasions they have voiced their thanks for entertainment or activity which was especially satisfying.

There are also marked changes in the appearances of some of the members, boys particularly. Officer Cowan is their ideal and their attempts to be like him have caused them to become more neat and tidy. One cannot come into contact with the Junior Police and Citizens of Washington, D. C., with Officer Cowan and his adult staff without realizing that "personal interest and service to youth inspires the child".¹

The Junior Police and Citizens Corps discovers and develops leadership.

In one elementary school in the city there was a shy, rebellious boy of fifteen retarded because of truancy, who after joining the Corps reached such heights in popularity with his schoolmates that he was elected by them as "Mayor" of the club precinct. Having come out of his reserve and realizing that the school was not against him but for him he took a more active interest in it. His art contributions in the way of board drawings and posters have added to his sense of achievement and belonging.²

The club makes those who desire recognition and position strive to attain it.

One boy with a high I. Q. had proved to be an intellectual leader but desired a position in the Corps which demanded physical aptitude. His engagement in sports activity gave him a chance to gain the recognition he needed in this field, consequently the office he wished in the Corps.³


³Ibid.
Another boy refused to do his class assignment. Upon being reminded of the Corps code and the thought that Officer Cowan would hear of his behavior, he immediately performed the task required of him.1

One principal of a Washington elementary school, in commending the work which Officer Cowan has done with the boys and girls of the city, stated an instance in which he was directly responsible for an adjustment.

There is a little girl in our third grade, not quite nine years old, who would never go home at night and would not come to school. Her mother works at 3:00 in the afternoon and her father takes care of the janitor's quarters. This girl would play around the streets until very late at night without having any dinner. When she got too tired she would go to sleep in a doorway or on the cellar steps of some apartment. She knew how to keep away from the police and she had lost a great many pounds. Her mother had exhausted every possible thing she could do and had tried to place her in a private school, but she could not because of her age. Finally as a last resort and at the same time wondering if I were wasting time, I sent for Officer Cowan who had a conference with the child. He has done so much for her that she goes home every evening from school and reports on time the next day. She is gaining weight and is a different child. She is happy and contented and beams when Officer Cowan is in our school.2

Boys and girls who were isolated and unable to get along with others have become progressively more mature and better adjusted through the activities of the Corps. The activities of the extroverted child have been channelled into the quieter occupations while the introverted child has gradually come out of his reserve and joined his more active companions.3 Skillful use of activities frequently result in such behavior changes.

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1Ibid.
2Louise C. Albert, Letter to Officer Cowan, February 25, 1944.
To the Church

The Corps maintains that no member can be a good citizen unless he or she belongs to some church or Sunday school. Therefore, each member is encouraged to attend or visit some church every Sunday. The Corps has brought the youth into the church, and has made the church realize the value and necessity of recreational and social programs which will appeal to youth. By affiliating with the Corps program the church has also seen the value of giving youth some duty and responsibility in its program of religious services and activities.

To the School

The Corps program advocates that each member enter wholeheartedly into his school activities, strive for good grades and not "play hooky" from school.

To the Community

Because "the Junior Police and Citizens Corps program is intended to supplement and not supplant existing programs of agencies interested in boys"¹ it advocates that its members join in the program of other community groups and agencies. In this way the Corps has caused a number of girls and boys to enter in the activities of established agencies and to gain an appreciation of their programs.

After school employment is supported by the Corps program but only when a member has been granted a work permit from the Department of Work Permits.

In addition to providing youth a means by which to solve their problems the Junior Police and Citizens Corps has awakened the city of Washington to its duty to its youth. Homes, schools, churches and different neighborhood communities have become more conscious of their children as prospective citizens and potential leaders. There have been changes made in adult attitudes and conceptions concerning children. Officer Cowan has made them realize that the reason for the abnormal behavior of youth lies more with them than youth itself; that the changes he has effected in their behavior, and the attitudes, concepts, and ideals he is striving to develop in them, will not be permanent and withstanding without their help and understanding.

Community Opinion Concerning the Benefits of the Program

In every group worker's life there probably comes a time when he wonders whether the multitude of motions through which he goes in the course of his job are much ado about nothing or really significant contributions to the development of the community.\(^1\)

Undoubtedly, Officer Cowan has undergone these same doubts and fears. He knows his work has been contributory to the development of the community in that there has been a definite decrease in juvenile delinquency.

The figures on the drop in crime by young boys and girls based on the official records at the 13th Precinct, show that in the three months from July to October, '43, 61 juvenile arrests were made in that area.

Only 32 such arrests were made from November, '43 to February of this year (when the Junior Police and Citizens Corps got into full swing), this despite the heightened incentives to petty crime during

\(^1\)E. R. Pendry and Hugh Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 215.
the intervening Christmas shopping season.

The report similarly compares the number of arrests of young people in this neighborhood in the three months period before the war with the same period in recent months after the Corps experiment was begun.

It shows that from October to December, 1942, 54 children under 18 years of age were arrested by this precinct. But during the same period in 1943 when juvenile delinquency rocketed in this and other large cities throughout the country, such arrests by the 13th Precinct dropped to 38. ¹

Officer Cowan has to rely on the statements of those who see his boys and girls throughout the day, those outsiders who have observed them with a critical eye, for a true evaluation and appraisal of his work and that of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps.

The following testimonies are submitted as evidence of the success of the program and its worth as a group work endeavor.²

The manager of a large baking company stated, "In the past six months I have noted a complete absence of the petty and annoying practices that we had previously experienced".

A large lumber and millwork concern declared:

We have had considerable difficulty with the young boys and girls in this neighborhood, doing many things which annoyed us and were destructive to our property. Since the beginning of your work we have noted that there has been a great improvement in the conduct of these boys and girls.

The principal of an elementary school said:

The boys of M school who belong to the Junior Police and Citizens Corps are showing that they want to carry out the principles of your fine organization. Around the building they are helpful, they are kind, and I can see improvement in the conduct of many of them.

Another principal said, "They seem to be enjoying many wholesome


²Taken from letters to Officer Cowan by writers who did not wish to be identified in making this report.
experiences from their associations with other boys from other parts of
the city".

A principal of one of Washington's Jr. High schools remarked of the
Junior Police and Citizens Corps:

Marked changes were noted in the attitudes and behavior of the
boys enrolled. Other delinquent tendencies such as gangster and
intimidation practices, meddling with public and private property,
dice playing and petty misdemeanors during out of school time were
checked.

Another Jr. High school principal felt that "there has been much
improvement in the conduct of the pupils". He has observed that "they
seem to have more of a sense of responsibility about themselves and their
schoolmates".

One principal of an elementary school was of the opinion that the
Junior Police and Citizens Corps in addition to being based on the satis-
faction of the "Four Wishes", has redirected the activities of boys into
channels of purposeful usefulness.

He said:

There is little or no truancy at the A school due partly to the
organization of such pupils into the Junior Police Corps. There is
a marked pride among all of the pupils for keeping up the property
of the school and engaging in socially useful work throughout the
community as a means of carrying out the objectives of Officer Cowan.

One of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps club sponsors declared
that she found the boys and girls of the Corps sincere, hopeful, responsive
and capable when given responsibilities, and opportunities.

Another said that the girls and boys are eager and willing to
participate in suggested programs and their contributions show thought,
interest and enthusiasm.

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1W. I. Thomas, Unadjusted Girl, (Boston. 1928), p. 4.
One of the very young volunteer workers said that the girls and boys of the Corps don't like to be patronized; they appreciate a friendly and natural relationship. In return they are not disrespectful nor do they become "fresh" or familiar.

Parents have expressed enthusiasm for the Corps program due to the interest and enthusiasm of their children. One mother confessed that her small daughter had been spoiled and was consequently, a little too selfish. She feels that the Corps program has taught her child kindness and generosity. Another parent spoke of the sullenness of her child. She said that Officer Cowan and the other adults affiliated with the Corps had aided her considerably in helping her child to overcome this defective personality trait.

A pastor, in one of the churches visited, said that he felt that the program and activities of the Corps had helped the young people in it a great deal. He added that it had been a pleasure to affiliate himself with the program and to assist Officer Cowan in bringing the members of the Corps into the church. He remarked that youth and its ideas form a basis for church permanence and growth.

Further proof of the success and spreading fame of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps lies in the fact that it has not only been observed and admired in other cities but copied. In Camden, New Jersey, the Commissioner of Police Safety wished an outline of the Cowan Plan so that organization of a group of boys in Camden could occur. Robert C. Weaver, member of the City of Chicago Mayor's Committee on Race Relations, interested the Police Department in selecting a young Negro Policeman to attempt in Chicago the same kind of organization which is operating so successfully in Washington, D. C. A student at Clark University in Worcester, Mass.,
requested information about the Corps as he wished to help initiate a similar type club in a section of the city. In Philadelphia, Police have already set up a Corps among the children there.¹

¹This information was contained in the scrapbook material and letters to Officer Cowan.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Junior Police and Citizens Corps, with an enrollment of 10,000 boys and girls has proved to be a most successful group work endeavor. Its primary aim, to control the rise and spread of juvenile delinquency in Washington, D. C., has ceded to an aim worthy of its mammoth program. The present program of the Corps with its innumerable activities is designed to help youth solve their own problems. This purpose of the Corps undertakes the development of personality, the discovery and use of leadership, and the encouragement of social concerns.

In this study of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps, including interviews with 100 members, the following conclusions are made:

1. The areas of program planning include counselling, thrift, cultural, physical, and religious development, and correlation with the programs and activities of home, school, church, and community agencies.

2. The goals of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps are definitely the expressed emphasis of the Corps and an outgrowth of the needs of the individual members. Furthermore, the activities are related to the social and economic needs of the members.

3. The program and activities of the Corps satisfy the desire of the members for new experience, for security, for response, and for recognition.

4. It provides stimulating ideals and activities for the development of personal conduct and social relationships; it directs the pleasure of following as well as leading ideas, and makes possible varieties of
group activity which might otherwise be unattainable.

5. Group adhesion is maintained and group morale and loyalty developed by means of awards, offices with titles, club names, emblems and signs, and the recitations of the Lord's Prayer and the Mispah at the beginning and ending of every meeting.

6. There is evidence of group maturation in the developed sense of responsibility of one member to another, to Officer Cowan, and to their respective communities.

7. The Junior Police and Citizens Corps evidences democratic principles and procedures in its open membership, in its unit and mass meetings, in its organization, and in its program and activities.

8. The organizational mechanics could be more clearly delineated, in such a manner as, to show the relationships between groups and, perhaps, to facilitate detailed work with age or problem groupings.

9. Although much success is reported to have resulted from volunteer leadership efforts, a permanent development should look forward to the use of paid full time leadership.

10. Officer Cowan should be commended for his foresight in directing attention to the group and community organization techniques for the control of juvenile delinquency.
APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: ___________________________ Address ___________________________

Parents or Guardians Name: __________________________

Age: __________________________

Name of School: __________________________

Grade (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Jr. High Sr. High

Have you ever been in juvenile court or jail? Yes ______ No ______
If so, when? __________________________ What for? __________________________

Do you belong to a gang or club? Yes ______ No ______
If so, give name: __________________________

Do you hold any office in the Corps? Yes ______ No ______
If so, give name: __________________________

What is your vocational choice? 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______

What are you doing about this choice? __________________________

Has the Junior Police and Citizens Corps aided you in these choices? Yes ______ No ______
In what way? __________________________

Which of the following activities do you prefer? Check one (v)

Name of Activity __________________________ 1st choice __________________________ 2nd choice __________________________
The Youthtown News __________________________
The Jr. Boys and Jr. Girls Cadet Corps __________________________
The Choral Club __________________________
The Basketball Teams __________________________
The Fingerprinting Club __________________________
The Camera Club __________________________
The Shoe and Clothing Exchange __________________________
The Dramatic Club __________________________
The Artscrafts Club __________________________
The Junior Nurses Aide __________________________
The Airplane Modelling Club __________________________
The Weekly Bulletin __________________________
The Football Team __________________________
The Baseball Team __________________________
The Volleyball Team __________________________
The Tennis Team __________________________
The Sightseeing Groups __________________________
The Alley Cleaning Squads __________________________
The Social Committee __________________________
The Health Clinic __________________________
The Salvage Group __________________________
The Big Brother Club __________________________
The Family Service Advisers __________________________
The Church Contact Committee __________________________
The Counselling and Guidance Group __________________________
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Activity</th>
<th>1st choice</th>
<th>2nd choice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Recreation Committee</td>
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<td>The Speakers Bureau</td>
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<td>The Campfire Girls</td>
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<td>The Patrol Boys</td>
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<td>The Boy Scout Group</td>
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<td>The Boxing Team</td>
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<td>The Track Team</td>
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<td>The Swimming Team</td>
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<td>The Church Ushers</td>
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<td>The Jr. Air Raid Wardens</td>
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<td>The First Aiders</td>
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<td>The Special Investigators and Recruiters</td>
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<td>The Busy Bee Home Service Club</td>
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<td>The Girls Sewing Club</td>
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<td>The Girls Baby Care Assistants</td>
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<td>The Thrift Club</td>
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<td>The Sick Committee</td>
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<td>The Poster Group</td>
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<td>The Ping Pong Club</td>
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<td>The Escort Bureau for Girls</td>
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<td>The Charm Classes for Girls</td>
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<td>The Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Jr. Citizens League</td>
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<td>The Jr. Social Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Public Relations and Special Events Group</td>
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</tbody>
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Where do you follow these activities most frequently? Check (V)
- Home
- School
- Jr. Corps
- Elsewhere

What activities would you like to add to the Corps Program?

Name the new skills which you have learned as a member of the Corps.

What do you think of the Junior Police and Citizens Corps?
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