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A study of certain activities of the Orleans Neighborhood Center and how they are meeting some of the needs in New Orleans, Louisiana

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A STUDY OF CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE ORLEANS NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER AND HOW THEY ARE MEETING SOME OF THE NEEDS IN NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

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

BY
CHARLES CLARENCE SMITH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is in evidence of the dawn of a new era in group work. With the growing acceptance of group work in all areas of life, there comes the necessity of a more critical evaluation of group work on all levels, and particularly on the program level.

Under the impact of the recently ended world conflict, many social agencies have reacted by a re-examination of their programs. The time is ripe for sober stock-taking and honest criticism in order to determine what some of the promising programs and activities are well as what programs are in need of improvement. It is urgent that we sit down to do some real thinking. The yardstick for self-analysis includes recognition of assets and liabilities which offer clues as to what forward steps, if any, the agencies ought to take. Realism in measurement require making decisions; such decisions should not be avoided merely because they might disturb existing patterns.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out to what extent the Orleans Neighborhood Center is meeting some of the needs of the community; to find out the nature of the agency's program; and to find out the limitations of the agency in meeting some of the needs of the community.
These purposes can be used as a measuring rod in determining more or less what accomplishments this agency has made since its origin. The answer to these purposes will determine, the degree to which the agency is a liability or an asset to the community.

Also by studying the nature of the agency's program, the writer will be able to arrive at a conclusion as to whether the method of program planning is helping individuals gain the greatest satisfaction, joy and benefits from their leisure time. From these planned programs the abilities of the workers can be measured in regards to how well they utilize activities for the attainment of their desired goals.

The number of people a particular activity will serve, the extent to which it may lead to continuing self-activity, its contribution to individuals and the community in happiness, safety, health or civic value and its possibilities of becoming self-sustaining, must be considered in relation to its cost.

Considering finance as one of the limitations of the agency in meeting some of the needs in the community, the writer intends to discover what other limitations there are which might retard the progress of the agency, and attempt to see if there is some solution which may be applied to reduce these limitations.

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Scope and Limitation

This study will be confined to the analysis of the program and will also give a composite picture of some of the social needs of the community. The material used in this study will include information recorded during the years of 1945 to 1947.

Method of Procedure

The data collected for this study was obtained in the following manner:

1. Personal interviews with the Director of the agency and staff members.

2. Reading club group records, attendance records, administrative records, and any other records used by the agency.

3. Surveying literature written on the agency and material written by authorities on similar group work agencies.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The agency began in 1927 as a Junior League Nutrition Center at 111 Royal Street. In 1931 it moved to 819 Bourbon Street. An activities program (clubs, arts, and crafts, athletics, etc.) was added and the agency became a regular community center. In 1939, the agency was accepted into the Community Chest. The Junior League gave up its supervision, but not its interest, and a board representative of the entire community became responsible for the agency, then renamed the Orleans Neighborhood Center.

A complete recreation program, running the gamut from day nursery to old people's club was carried on. The trials and tribulations of curtailed budget, personnel replacements, and physical facilities plagued the agency as they did other agencies, until, in 1943, the serious housing problem which had been developing for several years, reached a crisis.

The building needed renovation and the galleries had been condemned. It was not feasible to remain at the accustomed address without making substantial repairs to assure the safety of the people who used the building. The house could not be secured for a long-term lease which would justify a substantial expenditure for renovations.

A search for another building in the same general vicinity was fruitless at a time when a program such as this
was sadly needed. There was no place to go, and it was a problem as to what to do. Unquestionably the Orleans Neighborhood Center had come to a turn in the road, and which work to follow presented problems that required careful consideration. One alternative would of course be to disband, but the majority of the Board were loath to take this defeatist attitude. This was a young agency. Perhaps because of its interesting origin, perhaps because of its good work in an area frequently in the spotlight, it was regarded with interest by those in the community concerned with social service.

At this time, the New Orleans Council of Social Agencies had just completed a careful study of the needs in recreation and group work, pointing out the "critical social areas" of the city with regard to health, housing, economic status, education, and juvenile delinquency. This study revealed many significant changes between 1939 and 1942. Juvenile delinquency in some areas increased as much as sixfold; areas formerly predominantly Negro now showed a parallel number of white offenders.¹

This study showed that the so-called "critical areas" were scattered almost all over the city. This is not typical of most large cities, since it is usual for the slums to confined to one or relatively few well defined neighborhoods.

¹Interview with Margie Peterson (New Orleans Neighborhood Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 17, 1942).
in additional, both Negroes and whites were found to be present in almost all areas in New Orleans; and if both races were to be dealt with, custom would require a dual set of buildings. This timely study offered the Orleans Neighborhood Center an opportunity to strike out in a new and important direction, to solve its building problem, and at the same time to adjust with imagination and enthusiasm to an idea that was gaining popularity the country over.

All over people were talking not only about providing healthful, creative, enjoyable leisure time opportunities for people of all ages and conditions of life, but also about housing such activities in already existing buildings such as schools, churches and housing projects. It appeared to be sound economy to use school buildings for recreational purposes; for instance, school buildings are often used for such purposes, from three-thirty in the afternoon when the last class is dismissed until around ten o'clock closing time, thereby extending the use of these same bricks and mortar by seven hours.

This idea captured the interest of the Board, and after long hours of consideration the Board voted to become a Mobile Unit Agency, taking its program wherever a proved need existed and into buildings where the workers were visitors instead of the hosts. A central office was set up in August, 1943 and an announcement of the change of program was sent out to former Board members, and the Junior League, and Social Agencies.
Thereafter the new concepts and change of program began to take effect. Requests for service were not long in coming. In some instances, the request was that the agency build a social center in a particular neighborhood and of course this type of request was unable to be filled by the agency. But others came from school principals, housing managers, and institution superintendents who were able to house the program but wanted service from the staff leadership.

Deciding where to work was the job not of the agency alone, but of a group recruited from the School Board Office, from other social agencies, and from the board of the agency. This Program Committee met in long and serious sessions each month to consider the relative needs, possibilities, and values of accepting each invitation. Housing, delinquency rate, parent cooperation, adequacy of play space, and other factors were considered before a decision was made. Projects have been developed in areas scattered from the river to the lake, and from below the industrial canal to the uptown section. White and Negro schools, housing projects, and institutions constitute the "stop" on the mobile unit route.
CHAPTER III

CONTENT OF PROGRAM

Variety Club
(Mercy Memorial Home for Pregnant Girls)

There seems to be a very strong bond that makes the Variety Club a cohesive group. The common denominator, no doubt, lies in the fact that the members of the group are pregnant. From an outward appearance they give evidence of receiving great pleasure from feeling each others abdomen as though they were comparing notes. Their ages range from 15-19, and the degree of neatness or untidiness of dress is very much apparent in the group.

This particular group was the outgrowth of a need for wholesome recreational activities for these young girls. Because of this, the director of the Mercy Memorial Home for pregnant girls contacted the Orleans Neighborhood Center requesting services of a trained worker to aid them in planning activities for this group. It was explained by the director of the Mercy Memorial Home to the director of the Orleans Neighborhood Center, that someone who had social work training would be of more help in understanding the problems of the girls and the reasons for their frustrations.

Most of the program originated from the individual in the group under the guidance of the worker. Plans of activity were formulated at each meeting for the forthcoming meeting. One of the functions of the worker was to inform the group
members of the limitation of finance and equipment; another function of the worker was that of explaining to the girls why certain type of activities would not be feasible because of their physical condition.

Some of the activities from which they received great pleasure were: dramatics, panel discussions on "proper care for pregnant women," table tennis, picnics, outings, rides into rural areas, visiting homes of some of the girls institutionalized, and arts and craft projects which included anything the individuals were capable of doing best.

Since the program was well rounded, it not only gave the girls an outlet for suppressed energy, but also contained intrinsic educational values. The art classes gave them opportunity to participate in familiar activities such as, sewing, knitting, crocheting, water painting, and clay modeling.

From all indications the Variety Club has had some success in establishing individual relationships and keeping contact with the community. This is done through the leader who serves as the liaison between the individuals of the club and community. The agency also offers opportunities for the girls to have periodic reunions with their families.

Sophie Gumbel Home
(Receiving Home for Foster Placement)

A good foster home has been the successful rival of a
poor natural home. In studying the records of the history of the Sophie Gumbel home we find, as is found in many instances that poverty and neglect were the principal reasons for taking a child away from his home and placing him in a foster home.

We know that children with behavior problems, those with chronic difficulties such as diabetes, subnormal children, those with or without natural parents, often can be given new opportunities in well selected and well supervised foster home.¹

The supervisor of the Sophie Gumbel home, realizing the necessity for child placement in foster homes, exerted efforts to mobilize other community services and resources to aid in providing adequate recreation for the children. The Orleans Neighborhood Center was requested to render group work services as related to socialization of children and understanding of each child, offering activities leading to physical outlet, endeavoring to bring about a sense of belonging to individuals in the group.

The agency took an active part toward supplementing the program of foster home care. The program consisted of such activities as:

1. Trips to-
   a. Symphony Children Concert
   b. Leaders home for chicken dinner

¹Ruth Elizabeth Beck, "Foster Family Care in Crisis," Survey Mid-Monthly, LXXXIII (Feb., 1947), 37.
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c. Fountainbleu State Park Outing
d. Escalator and Elevator Trips
e. Cafeteria for dinner

2. Parties

a. Weiner roast
b. Holiday parties
c. Barn dances
d. Birthday parties

3. Dramatics

a. Story dramatization
b. Pantomiming
c. Charades
d. Punch and Judy shows

4. Arts and Crafts

a. Basketry
b. Block printing
c. Dye and coloring
d. Embroidery
e. Home decoration
f. Knitting
g. Needle work
h. Finger painting
i. Reed and raffia

5. Other events

a. Egg hunt
b. Planting of flowers and trees
c. Tumbling
d. Dancing
e. Bird discussion
f. Scavenger hunt
g. Games
h. Yo-yo contest
i. Carnival

Some of the goals obtained from this well-rounded program were: (1) interest and emphasis were placed on the individual's need for home life, (2) a closer feeling of cooperation was established between the group worker and case worker, (3) home
officials were able to get a better interpretation of group work technique, such as, punishment should not deprive members the privilege to participate in groups.

Protected Group
(Formal Group of Unadjusted Boys)

Some characteristic of group and members.—This group was formed as a result of recommendations made by the visiting Teacher Department, May 14, 1946. It is composed of seven members who come from various school units in the immediate neighborhood. One member moved from the city in March, leaving six the total membership. The boys range in ages from nine to ten. None of them knew each other when the group was first organized except Henry and George, who attended the same grade school and have been neighborhood friends for a period of years. Three of the boys are Catholic, three are Protestant, and one is of the Jewish faith. Paul, a boy of nine years of age, lives in an institution (Protestant Episcopal Boys Home) having been placed there by his father. He was placed in this institution by his divorced parents, both of whom re-married.

Three of the boys come from families whose livelihood is obtained from unskilled labor, while the other three come from families who earn their living from semi-skilled employment. All of these children were referred to this group because of difficulty in the school setting, such as, for example, the lack of ability to get along with other children.
Qualified school social workers derive from their professional training an understanding both of the dynamics of human behavior and a realization of the great opportunity offered for referrals of incipient problems showing up in the classroom.\(^2\)

Henry's father died three years ago. His mother has remarried and has a daughter of the second marriage. His chief interest is raising pigeons and participating in sports. George, his friend and rival, is somewhat hesitant to try new things and has some degree of insecurity about participating in activities. These two boys are well adjusted and their problem seem to stem from the school environment. Harry, who is the youngest member in his family, has dropped from the group since John's departure. Clement and Paul are the most disturbed individuals in this group, they come to the Guidance Center for treatment. In this Center the boys are given opportunity for exercising democratic leadership which is basic to our present society.

Group Setting.—This group meets every Thursday afternoon at McDonough #18 Elementary School. This school contains a large room that is adaptable to certain types of crafts, table games, and other inactive games. The room contains a cabinet in which equipment is stored. Each member is given a shelf

for his individual equipment and is held responsible for the cleanliness of this shelf. Water is made available to the group in a room directly across the hall. In the meeting room are small tables, chairs, and blackboards. Generally speaking, the room has a pleasant and friendly atmosphere. The kitchen is located in the basement of the school and may be used by the group for cooking classes and parties. The schoolyard and Beauregard Square have been used for active outdoor games.

The principal of the school has been generous with the use of the school building and has been cooperative in all areas. Some of the basic equipment used in the group are: table games, puzzles, toy guns, balls, bats, carving knives, painting brushes, and construction paper. Additional equipment has been bought weekly to the meeting, depending upon the interests of the group members.

Program Content.—The leader has always taken some form of food to the members of the group. Usage of food has been primarily for the psychological value of giving, rather than to meet physical needs. The program was partly built around the chief interests of the members, dealing mainly with construction of miniature airplanes, boat modeling, and participation in seasonal games. There have been special programs conducted for holidays—Christmas, Valentine, Halloween, and other parties. The leader introduced cooking to the group which was very successful:
this activity has a real meaning for these boys. Many of them were not sure that it was all right for boys to cook, and for these particular children it was a positive experience.

Airplane modeling which lasted for two and a half months gave the leader an opportunity to recognize their skills and praise their talents and good work. This had therapeutic value since most of the boys did not think too much of their abilities.

The interest of the boys in ball games afforded the leader a chance to help them to gain more self assurance in a "real boy game." Their experiences in the latter, as well as craft and table games, help them to more adequately function in other groups of boys of their own age.

Group Meeting.—Usually the boys from McDonogh #15 School arrive first at McDonogh #18 School where the group meeting is held, since they live within walking distance of the school. The leader always had games available for them until the other groups appeared. The games were used at first to prevent one child from getting too far ahead of another, and at the same time to prevent any feeling of inadequacy among those who came late. This procedure is not used as much as it was in the beginning.

Food was always placed on the boys' shelves for them to eat whenever they desired. A period of about forty-five minutes followed in which the boys worked on some craft, or participated in some inactive game. They looked forward to this period and each boy in turn took charge of the ball.
Hard of Hearing Group

"Partial or total loss of hearing affects the individual in various ways: it may dictate the course of his education; it may affect him psychologically; it may limit his social contacts and his choice of occupation?"

This group is composed of both sexes, with definite objectives in mind. Some of these are: (1) to help group members plan activities in keeping with their interest and in carrying them out, (2) strengthen responsibility toward group, (3) develop social skills, (4) to do a demonstration job in a group setting - "learning by doing," help individuals to become normal individuals in our society.

Some hard of hearing individuals need constant attention to their speech in order to keep it from deteriorating. The speech of others has become so poor, or was so poor because of the hearing impairment that they are in need of the attention of a teacher trained in speech correction.4

The leader realized that in order to help these handicapped individuals she needed to keep two things in mind: (1) The necessity of adequate facilities with provisions to fit their needs, and (2) keeping individuals just as normal as possible without placing them with the deaf since this would tend to defeat the purpose. Keeping this in mind, she planned her activities in such a way that each person was able

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to have his or her basic needs met. Many community resources which were available were utilized by the group in this connection.

The activities consisted of the following:

I. Community Activities
   a. Bowling parties
   b. Evening roller skating
   c. Movies
   d. Picnic at Audubon Park
   e. Spaghetti supper at members home
   f. Sack party at leader's apartment
   g. Treasure hunt
   h. Trip to State School for Deaf at Baton Rouge Louisiana

II. Club Room Activities
   a. Checker tournament
   b. Charades
   c. Finger painting
   d. Dancing
   e. Rhythm projects

Like the deaf, the hard of hearing have experienced considerable employment upgrading in connection with the war. They are being accepted for many kinds of work from which they had been for the most part excluded, and they are proving, both to themselves and to their employers, that their handicap need not be a bar to their success.

Super Bunny
(Milne Home Boys Club for whites)

The training School is now conceived to be a specialized child welfare institution whose function is to re-educate and prepare delinquent children for community life. Most of the children have been treated by official and non-official agencies prior to admission and have not responded sufficiently to
such treatment to be permitted to remain in the community.  

The following reasons were primarily responsible for the admittance of children to the Milne Home: juvenile delinquency, economic status of families and family disunity. A number of cases for admittance are brought before the Juvenile Court, very often the decision rendered by this court determine whether or not a child is admitted to the Milne Home.

Cases of Institutionalization.—In this particular group were found individuals who were institutionalized because they were orphans, wholly or in part. A concrete example is the case of eight year old Bob whose mother died of tuberculosis and whose father was institutionalized because of incest (rape of two daughters). Father's second marriage was to a feeble minded woman and the family rapidly increased; all the siblings of the first marriage are in various institutions. Bob suffers from enuresis. He had been placed in several foster homes but ran away each time. As a result, he was referred to Milne Home for boys because of his inability to adjust in foster homes.

This boy has a short attention span, is irresponsible of his possessions, and, appears unkempt. In the past history of the home he suffered severely at the hand of the older boys: the reason for this was believed to have been because he refused to

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submit to homo-sexual acts with older boys. He is generally disliked by the other boys, in the Home, branded as a cheat, liar, and thief.

This second case differs from the first in that the boy, who is eleven years of age, was placed into the institution because of his first offense of theft.

His family resides in Mississippi, and is the type which is commonly called "poor white tenant farmer;" they are of dull intelligence and manage finances poorly. Here we find a step-mother with step siblings, and a large family of children who are being neglected.

In the beginning of his treatment at the Home, he escaped several times, but now accepted the fact that he has to remain in this institution for a long period of time due to the fact that his family has rejected him. He has assumed a protective attitude toward other children in the Home. John is greatly attached to the Matron who acts as a "substitute mother." She had a son, the same age as that of John, who died recently; therefore she has been able to transfer her feelings for her deceased son over to John. There is a mark of dejection shown by John in his actions and mannerism whenever there is a holiday.

Jack who is eight years of age, was placed by the Department of Public welfare in Milne Home for truancy and neglect. There is a constant report of progress to Department of Public welfare by Milne Home in view of possible placement.
He is retarded in school and has received special help, some improvement has resulted from this special attention. Jack is frail in health, often feels badly and complains a great deal, he is a victim of urethritis.

From these three cases we can easily see the basic inadequacy of the physical aspects of the Homes in which these youths were reared due to low economic status. Also, the fathers were either wholly indifferent to their sons or showed an unmistakable lack of stability. With this in mind, the worker's problem is to plan a diversified program which will meet some of the unmet needs which were denied to the youths in their home environments.

Since creative recreation helps to build character, it is obviously a potent agent in the prevention of crime and delinquency. While children or young people are engaged in recreation activities on the playground, they cannot at the same time be robbing a bank, breaking into a home or perpetrating some other crime.6

The leader taking in consideration their age range which was seven to nine years of age, worked out a program which was flexible and could be used for indoor activities. This was an important factor because the leader met with this group every Tuesday evening from 6:00 to 7:30 P.M.

An outline of the type of activities is as follows:

1. Athletic and Sports
   A. Gymnasium classes

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1. Exercises
2. Boxing: organized scientific instruction pulleys, platform bag, striking bag, shadow boxing, rope skipping, calisthenics, limited bouts.
3. Games
   a) Basketball
   b) Indoor softball
   c) Volley ball

B. Game room activities
   1. Table tennis
   2. Puzzles (jig-saw)
   3. Low organized table games
   4. Story telling

II. Arts and Crafts
   A. Leather crafts
   B. Clay modeling and pottery
   C. Water color painting
   D. Wood carving and whittling
   E. Kaffia: making of slippers and baskets

III. Personal Care
   A. Care of hair, skin, fingernails, teeth, eyes, and feet.
   B. Care of clothing and equipment

IV. Social Organizations
   A. Boy Scouts
   B. Discussion group - outstanding leaders discussed.

This program gave the boys a legitimate and healthful recreational outlet which was often missing in their home environment. For the first time the boys were absorbed into organized programs for the creative use of leisure time.

(Milne Home Boys Club for Negroes)
Milne Tigers

The group originally had ten members, all of whom were
selected by the Home. One of the difficulties at the beginning in working with this group was the fairly rapid turnover in membership. However, after a short period the group became stable and the leader was able to do some long range planning. One major aim of the organization was to instill in the boys a feeling of comparative freedom, which they were unable to enjoy in the institutional setting. To achieve this end the leader placed as few limitations on the boys as possible, in fact, only those that were tacitly dictated by the Home, as for example, boys not going into the kitchen for food.

Because of the wide range in the mental abilities as well as the chronological ages, of the members of this group, the leaders attempted to give as much attention as possible to the individuals who deviated from so-called normal and accepted patterns of behavior. Those who seemed to need aid most were Alfred and George. Alfred is a very aggressive lad whereas George is a very withdrawn boy who stutters. In working with Alfred, the leader had to place certain restrictions on him, and at the same time assure Alfred that he accepted him even while curbing certain undesirable manifestations. For instance, Alfred always liked to have his own way and frequently "bossed" the others in an effort to achieve his objectives. The leader recognized his own ambivalent feelings toward Alfred at the beginning of his relationship with him, which the boy undoubtedly sensed. It was not until the leader was able to view Alfred objectively that he was successful in helping him. Alfred
however, was released from the Home before the end of the pro-
gram.

In the early stages of the club, George presented an ex-
treme pattern of withdrawal. He was always daydreaming and
never spoke to anyone unless approached first. The first time
that he showed evidence of coming "out of his shell" was at
the meeting to which he brought a harmonica and began to play.
The leader complimented him and was able to get him to talk a-
bout it. He, with another member, later ran away from the Home
during one of the meetings. Upon his return to the Home, he was
placed in detention, but was allowed to come back to the club
after he returned to the dormitory. The leader's acceptance
of George after this incident helped immensely in showing him
how much he was liked and from that time on progress was rapid.
He has reached the point where he participates actively, speaks
readily, and is even willing to fight if he thinks it is neces-
sary. His stuttering has also greatly diminished and at times
is unnoticeable.

When the group was first organized, there was little con-
sideration for the opinions of feelings of others. Each boy
was primarily interested in himself, and no one else. Toward
the end, however, there was a definite feeling of group unity,
brought about by group interaction. This was much more
noticeable when Edward, who had escaped with George, but who had been confined and restricted for a much longer period, returned to the group. He was still self-centered, but the group brought pressure on him by refusing to allow him to participate in group activity. In this way the group was able to get him to conform to their standards.

That the club meant a great deal to the boys was evidenced at the end of the program when the leader informed the group members that he would not be with them during the summer. A number of them asked him if he wouldn't try to arrange it so that they would be able to remain in the club. It may be a point of interest to note here that the leader was a white student from Tulane University. One of their main interests was taking trips in the station wagon. This was to be expected because of their inability to get away from the home very often. In addition to riding in the station wagon, they were interested in basketball and softball which were helpful as outlets for their suppressed energy. Simple crafts were used, but because of the wide range of the members abilities, this activity did not go over too well. Active games were used frequently in the early period, but they were in less demand toward the end. Most of the members also enjoyed listening to stories; these had to be on early school age level, illustrated stories having greatest appeal.

Recommendations by the leader:

1. This club was grouped very poorly. The range in age was from 10 to 17 years. He suggested that the boys be regrouped
and that the selection be more scientific.

2. It is desirable that some rooms be supplied by the Home which could be used as a meeting place. When they met in the dining hall, there were frequent interruptions by the boys who worked in the kitchen. In the summer, it was somewhat better, because they were able to meet outdoors.

3. The director of the home is very cooperative and desirous of working more closely with workers. The leader suggested that the next leader take advantage of this willingness to cooperate by scheduling regular conferences with her.

Recreational Program at Lafon Boys Home (Negro)

This institution is operated by a group of Negro Nuns, of the "Holy Family Convent." They requested services from this agency through Catholic Charities of this city. The Director of the Orleans Neighborhood Center after viewing the situation at the home, and realizing that small group formations were not possible at this institution at this time, held a conference with the sister in charge and the result was the rendering of mass recreational services. It was felt by both the Sister and Director that these children were starving for any form of wholesome recreation which could be used as a means of utilizing excessive energy.

The group meets every Thursday from three to five in the afternoon. The main purpose of this program is to meet some of the essential basic needs of individuals, which might be
considered as physical, mental and spiritual satisfaction. This can be accomplished by allowing the individuals free participation in certain forms of activities. In them a child will be given an opportunity for self-expression and personality development and they can be used as outlets for his desires and interests.

The boys were divided into three groups in an attempt to meet the needs of the various age levels. The divisions consisted of older boys, middle age boys, and youngsters. The program for each group was planned to meet this division of groups each evening the leader met with them.

We will consider the older boys. Their ages ranged from twelve to seventeen, with approximately thirty individuals included. It was from this group that our volunteer leaders emerged. These volunteer leaders were called upon to assist the professional leader in carrying out the program with the other groups. There were three outstanding volunteer leaders, each in his own field of interest. Of the three, Jackson, had more control over the other groups. Probably it is due to the fact that he is aspiring to become a priest and the boys have respect for him. Junius and Holloway are best suited along athletic lines because athletics is their chief interest. In this group are found individuals who are institutionalized as well as students who attend school in this institution and live in the city. They are at the age where their chief interests are competitive
sports. Therefore, they are taught the fundamentals of such games as basketball, baseball, track and other highly organized games.

In the middle age group are found youths whose ages range from nine to twelve. This particular group is interested in such activities as soccer ball, softball and relay races. The leader starts all of these activities and calls upon his volunteer leaders to see that they are carried out under his supervision. Prior to the activities the volunteer leaders are coached in order that they might have a fair knowledge of the activities they are to supervise. These youths are interested in competitive sports but on a lower level.

The youngsters were those considered between the ages of five and nine. On several occasions some entered the group whose ages were below this age level. With this particular group, their activities might be considered as "free play." Here the leader allows them to participate in anything which is not a hindrance to their physical and social growth. Most of the supervision of this group was given by the professional leader personally. Each week the leader brought several story books for the group. Some of these were read to the group by the leader or individuals within the group. Along with these story books, other stories were told by the leader. The technique used by the leader was to only tell stories as long as some one in the group could tell one also from the previous week.
Another thing which seems to captivate their interest is standing by the fence and observing the cars passing on the highway. This seems to be a game in which they get pleasure out of saying "This is my car," or "That junk car is yours." Because of their short span of interest, it was always necessary to be available to direct their attention into different or new channels.

The worker at this institution not only filled the capacity of a recreational supervisor, but was also looked upon as a "substitute father" for the group. This was shown by the attention showered upon him by the boys. Children from the ages of two to twelve fought to hold the leader's hands or coat. Perhaps this was due to having only two other males present; they were a lay teacher and the caretaker of the farm and dairy. Therefore, one can see why they would readily accept any male person present.

One of the greatest problems of modern civilization is loneliness. Loneliness is partly due to the fact that leisure is not used creatively, that the leisure time becomes a period of lostness. The working day has been shortened, due to technological and social changes which have greatly accelerated in the past generation. Leisure we have—we need to learn to use it creatively. For it can be destructive, or it can be a means of building physical, mental stamina, or generating power and inspiration."

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CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF PROGRAM

In the evaluation of the program of this agency, the writer is cognizant of the fact that all of the participants will not be helped alike. As a basis for evaluation, the writer will use Sullivan's definition of Social Group Work.

Social Group Work is a method of personality development in which the group itself is utilized as the chief tool. The dynamics which operate when several individuals are brought together are a result of the interaction of one personality upon another. These dynamics are influenced by factors contained in the individual personalities.

Factors which will be considered in the evaluation are: (1) standards of group work programs, (2) kinds of programs in relation to group work, and (3) program activities that will endeavor to meet the needs of the individuals.

The Orleans Neighborhood Center activities include: art, folk dancing, dramatics, handcraft, teen-age dance nights, playground activities, the teaching of games for use in the schools during recess and rainy day doldrums. The creative activities give an engrossing leisure time interest; they also are helpful in the freedom and growth of personality. Actively aligning with other people ourselves make for an increased ability to get along with them (and it is certainly

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true that if we cannot live with people, we still cannot live without them) which is important for happy and useful social adjustments. The director of the agency prefers working with small groups where the impact of one personality upon another is of paramount importance. The constituency at present is comprised chiefly of children (except for talented old timers' group) but constant efforts are being made to interest parent-teacher groups and other adults, both for their own leisure time pursuits and for planning with them for their children.

Important as arts and crafts are among the creative activities, there are other ways in which this desire finds expression. Some individuals achieve it through the composing of music, others through the writing of poetry, for the creation of characters in a story or play. In a sense the dancer, the actor and the director of a dramatic production create the personality of the characters portrayed.2

From these illustrations a clearer picture can be obtained in regards to the desire for self-expression through creation of plays in the recreational life of people.

Because most forms of recreation are essentially group activities or may be carried on by individuals with others, they minister directly to man's need for companionship, social relationships, and cooperative activity.3

Therefore, the director insists that the worker provide a variety of activities to meet the needs of most of the children, but does not require the same projects to be

3 Ibid.
carried on at all units. This gives the leader an opportunity to change the pre-arranged program to meet the immediate interest of his group. Even though the leader makes tentative plans for the group, he keeps in harmony with the cardinal principles of group work, allowing the program to stem from the group.

Another important factor considered by this agency in planning program is the needs of the particular age groups to be served. An example of this may be shown in some of their planning. Activities which require strenuous physical exertion are offered youths; while on the other hand, for adults, the agency offers recreational reading, social activities, hobbies, social services and home activities such as gardening, which play an important part in the leisure time of adults. With this in mind the activities meet the needs of some at each age level.

For judging the educational values of the program of this agency the following criteria, formulated by the Industrial Department of the Young Women's Christian Association, were used:

1. Is it based upon actual felt needs and interest of the girls so that there is purposeful, intensely interesting activity.
2. Does it take into consideration the interests and needs of the whole group?
3. Does it lead to an ever increasing number of active interests?
4. Is it sufficiently elastic to make possible the following—out of these new interest when they develop.
5. Does it provide practice in the making of conscious choices, and are the consequences of these recognized and experienced by the girls?

As was previously stated, activities were planned in accordance with the actual needs of the individuals in particular units or groups. The director holds regular semi-monthly conferences with the leader in order to discuss the problems of the agency as well as the individuals in his various groups.

In order to gain a further knowledge of the needs of these various communities surveys have been made which include such factors as population statistics, age, sex, nationality, racial groups, occupational distribution, educational recreational, religious, housing, and social and community resources. Having a clear picture of the communities, the activities planned will satisfy some of the immediate needs of the community. An example of this may be shown at the James Lewis School. Here is a community densely populated with both races; adequate recreational facilities have been provided for the whites living in this community, while on the other hands no provisions have been made for the Negroes. With this knowledge as a background, the agency at once sets up a recreational center in the schoolyard from three to five in the afternoon on Tuesday and Thursday. From this stemmed many club groupings according to age and interest. Later groups were formed with so called "problem children" who were recommended by teachers. After a period of eight months, the teachers made acknowledgement that these individuals seemed to be able to
relate easier in the school room setting after having been exposed to group work technique.

There can be no conclusion to a discussion of the art of helping any more than there can be a last chapter in the art of living: for living continues as long as life, and life touches life subtly and unmeasurably down through the generations. Forever, while man is part of the universe, the process of adjustment will endure, always involving new relationships and new situations, shaping and changing him and carrying with it ever the issue of happiness or trouble.

Up until this point the evaluation of the program has been made on a positive level; now it will be considered from a non-plausible viewpoint. The inadequacy of the agency's program may be exemplified in this illustration: At the Lafon Boys Home there are approximately two hundred boys, whose ages range from two to seventeen. One worker is assigned to the unit, and is expected to provide some type of recreation for the majority of these boys. The equipment available consists of two soccer balls, one football, one basketball, a softball bat and ball, and several story books. Even though the worker makes use of volunteers, the limited amount of equipment prevents the expansion of the program. In viewing the situation as it stands, very few group work techniques can be applied, and program planning must be made for the masses rather than for the individual.

At the present there is a vague understanding of exactly what the agency is doing, even though the director submits a schedule of the planned program to the principals and directors of the various institutions at the outset of each period.

The writer feels that there should be monthly meetings between the director of the Orleans Neighborhood Center and all of the principals of the various schools and the directors of the institutions in which the programs are being conducted. In these meetings explanation will be given in regards to exactly what progress has been made. The administrative heads would be allowed to bring any acute problem which prevails at their institution to these meetings. Here a workable solution might be reached through suggestions offered by other members present. This spirit of cooperation will aid in making the programs a success.

The agency does not provide instruction for group leaders who are lacking in skills, such as, arts, crafts, games, etc. If the agency would adopt the policy of instructing unprepared leaders the results will be shown in the type of programs the leaders produce.
CHAPTER V

NEEDS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE AGENCY

The Orleans Neighborhood Center is composed of multiple units, but without personally owned buildings and very little equipment other than office headquarters and summer camp. Confronted with these needs and limitations the agency has to depend largely upon the ingenuity of its leadership.

Every community must provide leadership in government, education, and social work, sufficiently able and foresighted so as to bind all the dis-associated segments of community life into an articulated and functioning whole. The effectiveness of this achievement spells a successful community. Such achievement is the result of leadership, intelligent administration, and above all a broad minded conception and understanding of major forces.¹

The agency's personnel consists of five full-time paid members, four part-time paid staff members, student staff members and eight volunteers.

A director, three staff workers, and an office secretary, comprise the full-time staff. The work of the staff is to organize new groups, coordinate activities, and supervise assistants. All of the full time staff, except the office secretary have had supervised experiences with groups and have learned how to help groups to be meaningful and helpful to the participants as possible.

However, regardless of the efficiency of this paid

staff, there is a great need for more full-time qualified workers. This is based largely upon the recent expansion of the program. At the present, a weekly program consists of forty-three activities in nine different units with further requests for service coming in constantly. This in itself indicates a need for more supervisors.

To emphasize the need for more Negro supervisors the following illustration is cited: there are five "Negro units" with only one full-time Negro staff member, who is required to fill the capacity of a group leader, as well as that of a supervisor. Whenever there is a need for a supervisor in any of these units, Negro and white students doing field work in the agency are used.

Because of the mechanical trend of the world today, and the policy of agencies to offer more leisure time to their staff, individuals are finding themselves with more leisure time than they can account. They overcrowd the various social agencies which offer leisure time recreational activities. With this additional responsibility placed upon the Orleans Neighborhood Center, the already overtaxed supervisors are called upon to do additional work at night. Since the responsibility of carrying out the program of any social agency depends largely upon the caliber of its supervisors, one can readily see that an overworked supervisor will not produce an effective program as one who has rested
from the daily routine.

The part-time members who are specialists in arts, crafts, athletics and discussion groups work from three to ten hours weekly in the agency's program. Combining a teaching knowledge of their speciality with a group work approach, these staff members make a substantial addition to the program. The specialist seeks to bring into his work new ideas and revived inspiration.

With only four part-time workers, there is an inadequate number to assist in carrying out the program. There are times when even this number is not available because of meeting and other obligations which prevent them from reporting to work. The absence of these part-time workers prevents the working out of a well balanced program, in as much as they assist and cooperate with other staff workers, supervisors, and the director.

Volunteer help in this agency greatly increase the effectiveness of the program. Volunteers teach acrobatics and tap dancing, airplane modeling, club leadership, and give important assistance to the teen-age canteen. They add an enrichment to the program that is stimulating to the paid staff as well as to the children involved, and probably gain a great deal themselves in the experience.

The agency has publicized the fact that more people interested in volunteer service are constantly needed.

Inasmuch as every plan for activities of the agency must have its counterpart in plans for raising money, the director,
sometime in collaboration with the president of the board and chairman of the finance committee, is responsible for preparing the budget which includes such items as payroll, rent, insurance, repairs, taxes, equipment and supplies. The director is expected to keep his expenditures within the budget allotment. He is apt to base the budget on departmental recommendation plus general administrative items. The executive or chairman of the finance committee presents the budget to the budget committee of the Community Chest which in turn reviews the budget item by item as listed above.

As a result of this reviewing board, we find that the amount allocated for personal services and programming is inadequate. The inadequacy of this budget result in the following: (1) places limitations on hiring sufficient number of staff workers, (2) prevents expansion of program, (3) unmet areas cannot be cared for and (4) a limited amount of equipment and supplies may be purchased.
The study of the Orleans Neighborhood Center in New Orleans, Louisiana has revealed the following:

The agency began in 1927 as a Junior Nutrition Center and was accepted into the Community Chest in 1939.

Learning the give-and-take found in small groups helps to develop better family members, neighbors and citizens. We need to see groups at work democratically in order to appreciate how to give and take of a pure discussion which is not a debate, throws new light on old ideas, shifts emphases, corrects aberrations and even softens emotional antagonism.

Gaining status in the company of one's peers helps the shy child to become more self confident and poised.

Group membership under good adult leadership helps the overly aggressive or otherwise a social child to become more acceptable to others and more repose.

Warm, friendly, group relationship help the rejected child to feel wanted and therefore happier.

Learning arts and crafts such as, dancing, dramatics, making puppets, and painting, enrich one's life.

That the budget allocated for the operation of the agency is inadequate for: hiring sufficient number of staff members, expansion of program content, caring for needs in unmet areas,
and purchasing the proper amount of equipment and supplies.

Volunteer help in this agency greatly increase the effectiveness of the program.

That there is a need for more Negro Supervisors and full-time staff members.
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