

The Birmingham Eccentric

Community House Seeks Aid for Next Year

WORKS WELFARE SHOWS TRUE SPIRIT OF HOUSE

OVERSEES RELIEF OF COUNTY AND TOWN NEEDY

When the great book of eternal history is spread open for the year 1931, there will be found recorded there among the millions of worthy deeds in a time of stress a fulsome paragraph, at least, of the work accomplished in Birmingham by the Community House.

For the Community House was forced to meet an emergency during the past 12 months—an emergency that has faced every community in the country to some extent—that of lending a helping hand to those in its midst whom the misfortunes of financial depression have temporarily transferred from comfort to want.

Welfare work is not a function of the Community House. It was not designed to collect and distribute charity to the village, such as Birmingham, there is no welfare problem in a normal time, nor are there the many social problems that are to be found in the cities. Ours has been always a community that has been able to meet its needs by its own resources, and it has been a village of comfortably circumstanced men and women.

A Crisis Comes
Then came 1929, 1930, and finally 1931 with all the heartbreaks, the disappointments, the disillusionments and the sorrows, the sudden change for many a family from a position of modest independence to one of complete dependence. And these people knew not where to turn for help, for as yet no policy of the organization had been worked out for such a situation. Unlike the perennial mendicant of the metropolis, they hated the very "charity" that was offered.

It was natural that they should appeal to the Community House. And although the Community House had no funds, it gladly undertook the task, for the fund-raising committee was always been to do that which is of greatest need to Birmingham. And it was the Community House that began, under the direction of Mrs. William Lynch, to bend its efforts to helping the needy. It had no funds, but it had facilities—man-power, office space, willingness to serve, and the willingness to serve everyone. So it started its activities.

These activities have been important ones. For the Community House has undertaken the task of relief to the needy in the community. It has not supplied the financial aid in general, but it has not hesitated to do so because these funds already had been provided through the County and through the Village Commission. But it has done a great deal of the work.

Aided Township Work
Mrs. Lynch has acted as investigator for both the village and township authorities. The community house has set up the necessary records, many have paid, on its budget, the entire cost of the investigations and of maintaining the records.

Working with the Township supervisor, Mrs. Lynch has acted as visitor, and as a township and in the same capacity she has done this work for the village under the supervision of the township supervisor.

Financial disability has little effect upon the pride, and its hands are not limited on either side of relieving distress. It has devoted every cent, it could spare, plus the employment of many of its generous patrons, to what might be termed special relief. And it is in this direction that the Community House has performed a service which would have gone unattended otherwise.

President



—Photo by Arnold Studios
James L. Oliver

The cause to which this section of The Birmingham Eccentric is dedicated, is the most vital, voluntarily supported activity in this community. Its continuance is dependent upon the response received during the 1932 Roll Call. The success or failure of this campaign is definitely your responsibility, and it is the duty of every citizen to contribute to The Birmingham Community House just as surely as their residence in this district makes it necessary for them to maintain the various departments of village, township, or other governmental activities.

To those who doubt the foregoing statements a careful study of the accompanying columns will undoubtedly be most convincing, and yet in the case of this most worthy enterprise the printed word expresses rather futilely the many services rendered to children, to groupings, and to the needy, amounting in number to 53,000 in 1931.

The Board of Directors realizes fully the depressed conditions of these times, and that your expenditures are, and will be, made with the utmost consideration and discretion. It is, therefore, without hesitation that they commend to you the Birmingham Community House as an investment.

Any sum invested in an enterprise such as this, is an investment in your community, in its youth, in its adults, in its unfortunates; an investment in a community service which recognizes neither sect nor creed; instituted and conducted to perform the greatest service to the greatest number.

We cannot urge you too strongly to investigate the facts concerning our Community House, to become interested in one or more of its activities, and to include in your budget this year, under the head of investments, "The Birmingham Community House."

JAMES L. OLIVER.

April 12, 1932.

ASK PLEDGES OF \$15,000 IN ANNUAL ROLL CALL

Leads Workers



J. Fred Woodruff

WORKERS TO CANVASS EVERY HOUSE IN VILLAGE

The annual roll call of the Birmingham Community House will open Monday, April 18, when more than three hundred volunteer workers, men and women, will begin house-to-house calls to obtain the financial support of the village for the coming year's activities.

Under the direction of J. Fred Woodruff, general chairman, the workers will be grouped into teams with the women headed by Mrs. L. N. Pyle and the men by Mr. James L. Oliver. Each team will be assigned to a section of the village and its members will visit every home in that section.

The roll call will begin on Monday morning, but its real official gathering will be in the evening, when the workers will meet for dinner at the Community House to report the results of the first day's work and to plan for the remaining days of the roll call. Dinner, announcement will be made of the winners of the school essay competition, and the winners of every grade above the fourth in both the public schools and the church school of the Holy Name Church.

To Canvass Every Home
Special events will precede the opening. The captains of the women's teams were entertained last week at a tea in the Community House by Mrs. Pyle, assisted by Mrs. Harvey, Mrs. Charles Shain, Mrs. Frederick H. Holt and Mrs. Norman Lyle. Tomorrow night the captains of the men's teams and their workers will dine together and receive their final instructions.

Not a single home will be overlooked by the workers. Through the co-operation of the village authorities a record has been obtained of every family in Birmingham, and no team will consider its work done until it has secured the full quota of names and has received some contribution. To stimulate interest in the roll call, every man, woman and child a part of the program, a special window card has been prepared which will be given to every home which subscribes, with the request that it be hung in a window or on the front door knob for the period of the roll call.

"There is no thought on the part of the committee to burden anyone," said Mr. Woodruff, general chairman, "but we feel that the roll call is so important, so thorough as could be desired. The Community House is an activity that touches the lives of everyone, and we are confident that everyone wants to do his part in keeping it open and in supporting its worthwhile functions that it performs. We think everyone should have a share in it, and we are going to see to it that everyone does have a chance."

Plan Family Dinner
In addition to the preliminary gatherings, there will be frequent meetings of the committees and workers during the drive, which is planned to continue for a week. There will be a second meeting of all workers on Thursday, April 21, in the form of a family dinner and dinner at the Community House.

Because the day is Thursday, when many families stay at home because there are no servants to look after the children, special plans have been made for the special ones. They will be dined in a special room, under the care of chaplains, and will be entertained by special movies while their parents are attending the regular dinner and meeting.

"We want to make this Thursday meeting a real family party," said Mr. Woodruff. "There are many people who are interested in the campaign, who have little conception of the facts that we have for entertaining all of the family. They don't come to the Community House and we hope that this meeting will show all our campaign helpers just what they can do over at the Community House, not only during the roll call but at any time during the year."

On Monday, April 25, there will be another general dinner and meeting for the workers. At that time the goal should be won. The campaign will close officially on April 28 with a dinner for all the workers.

Mrs. L. N. Pyle

A Call To Arms!

Thrift Shop Helps Needy To Maintain Self Respect

Most people, regardless of their financial station, like to pay for what they have. Gifts do not appeal, particularly if they are those that come from charity. Realizing this, yet realizing also that the price we pay is not always the gauge of the value, the Community House has been operating a Thrift Shop for more than five years—a place where people can purchase clothing and shoes at a price so far below the market as to make it a mere trifle to get a purchase and not a gift.

Under the direction of Mrs. Edith Beier a committee of volunteer workers has maintained the shop. They have received the donated garments and shoes, fixed them up where necessary, and displayed them. They also have taken their places behind the counter for three half days every week and tended to the sales work. For this no one has received any recompense. It has been a labor of service to the community.

And it has been a real task this year. For during that time 3,895 garments and shoes have been sold over the counter to people who came, found something that would meet their needs, and paid for it with what they could afford.

Demands Exceed Supply
And the committee has never had enough clothing this year to supply the demand. There has been less contributed than ever before and more calls for what has been contributed than ever before. This is attributed to two things. People are not discarding clothing this year until it has been completely used up and those who have things to give, in many cases have preferred they go direct to families, who could not afford even a slight sum for it.

Heads Welfare

A few weeks ago the class celebrated its 150th session with a play, depicting the present depression. There was a large gathering at this meeting, many of the former members of the class returning to take part in the program.

This activity has always been housed in the Community House and is a community affair although the A. M. W. was responsible for its initiation.

Mrs. Arlene Lynch

IT MIGHT BE YOUR BABY!



This little youngster is enjoying milk from the Community House—milk that his fond parents could not afford to give him. More than 3,000 quarts of milk have been given the children during the past year through the efforts of the welfare department of the House.

Community House Is Your Building—Why Not Use It?

Birmingham's Community House is dedicated to the community for its use, both public and private. In this special section of the Birmingham Eccentric is a description of the activities that it houses regularly. But it has many other uses, and it can have many other uses.

Briefly its policies are these: Gatherings of a legitimate character, which are public in nature, may meet in the House without charge. Private gatherings are offered the use of the facilities at a nominal rental charge.

Public meetings of taxpayers on questions, associations devoted to the business of general interest will find the Community House ready to help them in every way.

Death came to a home in Birmingham with the swift stroke that Death alone can command. It snatched away a young daughter.

What to do? Where to turn? How to prepare for the funeral of a pauper's burial?

The Community House heard of the facts and acted. A small sum assisted a grief-stricken father to preserve his self-respect and to insure his little girl a resting place outside the potter's field.

A Year's Work In Welfare

- 769 Visits to Needy Homes.
- 400 Office Interviews.
- 393 Quarts of Milk distributed.
- 200 Bushels of Fruits and Vegetables given away.
- 52 Pairs of Shoes purchased.
- 1947 Garments distributed.
- 120 Suits of Underwear furnished.
- Loans made to help unfortunate.
- Loans made for surgical operations.
- Legal advice furnished free.
- Infant Layette made and distributed.
- Nurses furnished to mothers.
- Medical supplies furnished.
- 1442 Jobs furnished.

Economy Course Planned To Help Housewives Save

Helping the housewife to budget her operating expenses and also to provide the most nutritious foods from a slender housekeeping purse is a new activity which the Community House is just starting.

Under the direction of Mrs. Leah Little, classes in home economics are to be started this spring and housewives invited to attend them. One of the prime reasons for the new program is the difficulties that have been encountered in connection with the distribution of the welfare departments of the village township.

The management of the building and its finances are vested in the board of trustees, which was created in 1927. It was felt that the investment in the present building should be further safeguarded by the creation of a board of trustees, which the building should remain a public place, regardless of the life of the Community House Association.

Employment Bureau Does Two-Fold Service To Many

Do you want a maid, a gardener, a chauffeur, a handy man, a carpenter or what?
Either you the Community House is your servant—at no cost to you.

The employment bureau of the Community House has probably been used by more people than any other activity and it is as well known as any. It came into being several years ago through the natural desire of a place to which those in need of work might apply and also a place to which those needing help might come.

There have been 4375 applicants for work. There have been 1442 jobs offered.

DIRECTORATE IS ELECTED

Executive management of the Birmingham Community House is strictly in the hands of the people and by the people.

ONLY 4 PAID WORKERS

No compensation is given to the directors. They serve without pay and are selected because of their abilities and interest in the operation of the Community House. Any contributor who has given \$2 or more is a regular member of the Birmingham House Association and is entitled to a vote.

Board Is Further Aided By Five Trustees To Safeguard Policies

This is an activity of the Community House that touches nearly every family. It must have its share of funds for its support.

Captains Women

The trustees advise Board
This committee was made up of five members as follows: one member of the Public Library Board, which is elected by ballot at a municipal election; a member of the school board, also an elective officer; an officer of a local bank; and officer of the Detroit Trust Company, a member of the Community House Board.

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