

Day of the Week - There's Something Birmingham Community House

GROUPS THAT USE THE HOUSE

The Community House was planned and has always functioned since 1920 as the social, civic and charitable center of our community. It is always open and available to any group of Birmingham residents and their friends who wish to use it. To actually list all the organizations and groups who have made use of the House during the past year would be an impossible task. Almost a thousand such meetings have been held and almost seventy thousand people have used the house. However, here are a few of the groups who use the Community House regularly as a meeting place:

American Association of University Women
Birmingham Musical English Folk Dancing
French Classes
Teachers Club
Hi-Y
Garden Club
International Relations Club
League of Women Voters
League of Catholic Women
Red Cross Classes

Needlework Guild
Michigan League
Birmingham Women's Club
Oakland County Federation
Saturday Club
Young People's Club
Friendly Dancing Club
Retail Merchants Assn.
Junior Dramatic Group
Boy and Girl Scouts
Allied Youth Club
Business Girls Club
Rotary Club
Exchange Club
Lions Club
Lathrop Citizens League
I AM Class
M. S. C. Extension Class
Real Estate Board
Torch Club
Engineering Society
Horticultural Club

In addition to these organizations who use the House regularly, a great many informal groups also meet there for bridge games, rehearsals, orchestra practice, recreation in the games room, etc. The family dinners on Thursday evenings are an established and well patronized institution.

EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

Again we quote from an annual report, that of the Employment Department for the year 1937. The magnitude of the work in this department is almost unbelievable and is growing rapidly. Almost 550 more persons were given employment in 1937 than in 1936. Your attention to the following is urged.

This office during the year of 1937 has given 2,416 people employment, some steady jobs—others temporary.

An approximately correct summary of placements and services rendered is as follows:

Women day workers	1,105
Men day workers	643
Boy day workers	11
Maids	355
Part-time workers	75
Couples	19
Nurses	20
Nursemaids	4
Cooks	9
Chauffeurs	2
Mother's helpers	25
Housemen	10
Child care	46
Cateresses	57
Week-end chaperones	2
Seamstresses	2
Laundresses sent out and at home	48

Office help	3
Kitchen help	1
Furnace care	4

There have been other jobs filled which are a little different from the ordinary run such as: one salesman selling oil-burners and from all reports he is doing very well, rented rooms for 3 people, one carpenter, 2 store clerks, 1 trucking job.

Two young couples have been placed recently—the wives having a few years experience as maids but the husbands having none. Both these couples were having a hard time making both ends meet because they were laid off from their former jobs, but since being placed as a couple they have worked out their problems and told me how grateful they are for this opportunity and are proving satisfactory and are happy on their jobs.

Marjorie Rainey
Employment Director

Answers To Some Questions Occasionally Asked About The Community House

When Was the House Started?

The Community House idea was first expressed in 1920 by Charles McCurdy, who interested a group of women in it. Mrs. W. C. Harris was chairman of the group who all worked with a remarkable devotion to their cause. In 1922, the small frame building at the corner of Bates and Maple was repaired and remodeled, and on April 28 it was formerly presented to the people of Birmingham. By May, 1928, the need for a larger building was so imperative that the project was undertaken. Mrs. Chas. Shain in 1927-28 made contacts at more than 1100 meetings. The land of the present site was secured and pledges to cover the entire cost, in all \$119,000 were made. The cornerstone was laid on April 28, 1929, the sixth anniversary of the existence of the House. It was completed in March, 1930, and dedicated on the following April 28.

After the 1929 debacle, many of the pledges could not be redeemed and the mortgage still stands at \$8,500. The House is very proud that through all the dark days of the last years it has been kept open, its service to the community constantly enlarged and its interest obligations met.

What Is Its Purpose?

The Community House was planned to be and now is the social center of Birmingham—a meeting ground for all our citizens, where they meet their fellow townsmen and learn to know them well. It renders almost universal service to the town on any need, not met by any other agency. It does the charity work in Birmingham that is done by the Community Chest in other cities.

Who "Owns" the House?

The Community House is owned by the people of Birmingham through the Community House Association. This association is composed of all those who have contributed \$1.00 or more to the support of the House.

Who Governs the House?

There is a governing board of 15 members, 6 men and 9 women. This board is responsible for the administration of all affairs of the House. It elects its own officers—a president, two vice-presidents, recording and corresponding secretaries, and a treasurer. Those who have served as president of the board are as follows:

Mrs. Frank Miller	April, 1923—December, 1923
Mrs. Chas. Shain	December, 1923—September, 1930
Mrs. F. H. Holt	September, 1930—February, 1931
Jas. L. Oliver	February, 1931—February, 1933
Mrs. L. N. Pyle	February, 1933—February, 1935
Mrs. R. W. Chissus	February, 1935—February, 1937
Mr. Forbes Hascall	February, 1937—February, 1938
Mrs. L. M. Baker	February, 1938—

As the House has no endowment and no funds beyond voluntary contributions, each year there is a maintenance drive or roll call. It is hoped that ultimately everyone in Birmingham will wish to contribute to maintain the services of the House. It is felt that it is no longer economically sound, to pay such a large proportion of our maintenance costs for interest. To this end a group called the Burn-the-Mortgage Committee is endeavoring to secure gifts totaling enough to wipe out the mortgage, our only remaining indebtedness.

Who Runs the House?

The Community House had at first, two hostesses, Miss Mary Martin and Miss Dorothy Dickinson. Later it became necessary to add to the staff, an employment bureau manager, a manager for the thrift shop, assistant hostess, a bookkeeper, an entire staff of kitchen help and one or two janitors.

Those who have served as hostesses are as follows:

Miss Mary Martin	Mrs. Hope Halkren
Miss Dorothy Dickinson	Mrs. Edith Wall
Miss Esther Booth	Mrs. Carol Plumstead
Miss Ella Adams	Mrs. A. L. D. MacIntyre
Miss Mary Clark Griffith	Mrs. Julia K. Lally

The Community House personnel as at present constituted, includes Mrs. Julia K. Lally, Director; Mrs. Carol Plumstead, assistant hostess and bookkeeper; Mrs. A. L. D. MacIntyre, night hostess; Mrs. Marjorie Rainey, manager employment bureau; Mrs. Lucy Prentice, commissary head; Mrs. Josephine Ransier, head waitress, and Ben Richardson, caretaker.

Here are a few "cold statistics" of the use made of the House in 1937:

69,813 persons used the House
14,025 meals served
957 meetings of various kinds held
2,416 persons placed in positions
2,105 articles given out of welfare cupboards (food, clothing, coal, etc.)

OUR COMMUNITY HOUSE