

Concluding Portion of North Study Report

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the final portion of the text of the report on local juvenile and teenage problems which was released Jan. 13 by the special youth study committee of the Council of Community Services of the Birmingham-Bloomfield-Franklin area. The council's board members considered this report at a Jan. 19 meeting, and adopted a recommendation to establish a youth committee. (See story on Page One, Section One.)

SPECIAL SERVICES FRONT

The second phase of our inquiry concerned "special services" to children and adults who need resources outside of their own family circles to aid in the solution of their personal and family problems. We reviewed conditions within the public school system and among community agencies to determine if needs were being met adequately.

As indicated above, eight to ten per cent of the children of the Birmingham school system exhibit behavior patterns which adults feel indicate a need for help. The greatest amount of difficulty seems to occur about the sixth year, the tenth year and from twelve to fourteen years.

Birmingham school people and police feel there is an upward trend in children who are not adjusted to academic requirements and school community living.

IT SHOULD be noted that a training course in inter-personal relations for elementary teachers was instigated by the Birmingham board of education. This program, as it continues, will be of increasing value to this eight to ten per cent group and to the majority groups.

In considering the 12- to 14-year group, the rapid changes in growth and development appeared to be an important factor. Lack of participation in the existing recreational activities and lack of recreational program more suitable to the need appear as a problem.

In senior high school it is noted that the drop-out rate is considerably lower than the national average. Those who drop out do so because of lack of interest due to academic or social inadequacy.

POLICE RECORDS indicate a low incidence of delinquency among Birmingham high school students. But there is indication that anti-social attitudes established in earlier years carry over into the later teen years where the child receives help in gaining security and social acceptance.

Recurrent throughout our investigation appears one factor—children who have serious difficulties generally come from homes in which one or more parents are either missing through divorce, desertion or death, or in which one or both of the parents is incapable or unwilling to assume his responsibility and obligation to the family.

Birmingham police records show that arrests of local juveniles more than doubled between 1952 and 1953. Total juvenile arrests in Birmingham rose two and one-half times in the same period. Increase in population is partially responsible for this rise. Also it is well known among police officers that many young delinquents choose to go outside of their home towns to cause trouble.

THE COMMITTEE feels that blocks in the detection and treatment of emotionally disturbed

that we do not have an acute juvenile problem at the present time, but that there are definite indications of one developing. We do have a community climate which is not favorable to the optimum development and growth of all of our children. We believe that it is important to use every means at hand to meet the current problem.

HOWEVER, we do feel that the more effective and satisfying area in which to work will be the development of a community which will eliminate the causes of juvenile delinquency and give future generations an opportunity to develop in a wholesome social environment. Believing that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, we propose preventive work with children. Early detection of difficulties allows the correction of conditions. Prevention is the proper development of well-adjusted children.

THE FAMILY FRONT—The committee studied the need for, and potentialities of, an educational program in home and family living as a means of preventing the occurrence of serious problems among children and youth.

It is recognized that secure, happy and creative children come from homes wherein parents provide the conditions under which these qualities may develop. Our studies indicate that most parents in the community are wanting a pretty good job of helping their children to grow up to be happy, useful citizens.

Some, however, are unable to establish the most desirable conditions. It is possible that all could do better. Are we giving our children the very best climate in which to grow?

MOREOVER, family living extends to neighborhood living as well as to living within the walls of the home and their own backyards. As youth grow older, many of their activities take place on a community level. Thus the attitudes and understanding of adults generally within the entire community affect the development of the growing individual.

Psychologists, educators and other professional people have learned much about human development in recent years. Knowledge is fairly extensive concerning the physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of children and adults. The principles of good human relationships are well established. This knowledge should be made readily available to the people of the community.

THE COMMITTEE believes

than an effective means of preventing the development of problems among its youth lies in extending understanding of the principles of good home and family living. Particularly should efforts be made to help young people entering into marriage and the parents of young children in this respect.

The committee believes that a broad, well-coordinated program of community education in home and family living should be developed and inaugurated. Planning and coordination should be done with the help of professional persons in the fields of human relations and program planning to insure that sound information is presented in interesting ways.

Many service groups in the community have expressed willingness to help our youth. Parent-teacher associations, churches and other groups might be invited to sponsor specific phases of a coordinated program.

ALTHOUGH not recommending specific action until a comprehensive unified program has been developed, the committee recognizes many possibilities for concerted endeavors. These are presented only suggestively.

Adult classes and discussion groups might be formed. Pertinent information should be presented in interesting ways. Most information about family living is directed to women. Men are parents, too. Programs to help Dad understand his youngsters better are needed.

Lectures on mental hygiene by well known authorities could attract sizable audiences. Analyses of the characteristics typical of children of specific age groups make interesting studies.

MEETINGS of high school students and adults could be arranged wherein the students and adults would explore the possibility of greater understanding between members of different generations.

Young people need to have an opportunity for free discussion concerning international, national, and community affairs. Since their adult status is imminent, formation of concept and opinion along with greater understanding, could provide more feeling of security for this group.

Young people should be encouraged to participate in activities for the benefit of the community and in all family life educational programs.

In planning discussion work and programs for young people, volunteer leader training is essential and should be provided for.

PARENTS should have an opportunity to learn about the work of family agencies and child guidance clinics, and the community resources available to them. A special reference sheet of materials pertinent to these subjects might be set up in the public library.

It is evident that the study so far has inspired some movement toward improvement of present conditions. But we are aware that a committee of professional and lay people active in youth work should be empowered to plan coordinated action on adopted recommendations, and to direct other groups toward action.

THEREFORE, we propose that the board of directors of the Council of Community Services of the Birmingham-Bloomfield-Franklin Area establish a youth committee to be responsible for analyzing specific youth problems recommending special help and correlating the activities of all groups working with youth.

We also recommend that the board of directors make provision for consultant service to that committee.

CONCLUSION

This is a progress report. It covers part of the problem only, and part of the community. Reports from Bloomfield Hills police and school system have not yet been received.

The juvenile court has not been explored by the committee. The entire field of health services for children is untouched. Young people have not formally presented their views. The churches have not been invited to report on their activities.

The committee recognizes that the many phases of work with and for the youth of the community, in-lieu and personal must be in balance in order to be most useful to our children.

We also believe that through the efforts of a well-informed people working within a coordinated plan, a balance of facility, program and personnel can be achieved which will provide the greatest good for all of our children.

WE FEEL an obligation to the

Four Teams Ready For Membership Drive at YMCA

With four teams vying for honors during the month of February membership enrollment of the Birmingham YMCA, General Chairman Arthur Blackless is looking forward to competition as teams endeavor to bring in the largest number of members.

Four teams will start a mileage contest from Detroit to Chicago and return as points are credited for members and dollars turned in.

Serving as vice-admiral of the Michigan fleet is Warren Neville who has Captain Wayne Nett-bacher in the boat. Y-boy, assisted by Everett Allen, Mrs. John Cowen, Del Ingram, J. Huber Smith, Frank Hardy, Isabelle Hewitt, Ted Appel, Lynn Russell and others.

BOAT MARINER is under the captaincy of John Slater and has Robert Graham, Tom Ward, Colin Campbell, George Hays, Robert Hurvitz, J. H. Mason, Elaine Jones, William Gordon, Dave Curry, William Roberts, James Ralston, Ray Peck, Ralph Cowan, Robert Kirkpatrick, and Marion Cannon.

In the Lake Huron Fleet, Harold M. Kalbfleisch is serving as vice-

admiral with Captain Ernest Robinson in Champlain with crew members Bob Andrews, Morgan Barstow, Phil Bettele, Bob Brown, Paul Arlene Davis, Shirley Bud James, Don Kinker, Bob Lotz, John Nelly, Helen Parent, Elsie Wright, John Schmidt, Al Madison, Walter Allmon, George Ely, H-Y Clubs assistant.

Captain Roland Erickson in Boat Action has Mrs. Leslie Schaeffer, Charles Thurston, Carl Nepper, Arthur Blackless, Shirley Powers, Doris Harris, Indian Guide Tribes as crew along with others.

ALL BOATS will get underway Monday January 31 at a dinner meeting when first reports will be announced and advanced memberships reported.

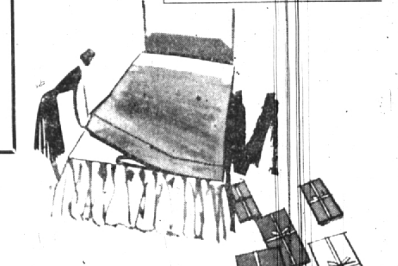
George E. Callen, Jr. of Detroit Controls will be the kick-off speaker and will stress the necessity of obtaining the 2000 members to give Birmingham a firm base for its anticipated building drive. The dinner is at 7:30 p.m. and invitation is by reservation only.

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