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YOUTH AND YOUR COMMUNITY

BY ALICE C. WEITZ





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YOUTH AND YOUR COMMUNITY

By ALICE C. WEITZ

WE have heard a great deal in recent years about what, for want of a better name, is called the "Youth Problem." Our courts have been filled with youthful offenders. Newspaper headlines scream with accounts of misdeeds committed by teen-age children. The picture presented in an FBI bulletin, already familiar to the majority of people, is alarming even though we have come to expect some disturbances in wartime. It reads:

Sixty per cent of all persons charged with robbery in 1943 were under twenty-five years of age.

Sixty-five per cent of all auto thefts were by youths under twenty-one.

Thirty-six per cent of all persons arrested in the United States and fingerprinted were under twenty-one.

This manuscript has been prepared in cooperation with the Youth Conservation Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, headed by Judge Anna M. Kross.

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The arrest of girls under eighteen years of age increased 54 per cent over 1942.

There was an increase of 130 per cent in the arrest of girls under twenty-one over the same period in 1941.

More than half of all crimes against property in 1943 were committed by persons under twenty-six.

The number of juvenile delinquency cases disposed of by 145 courts in various sections of the country increased 31 per cent—from 71,991 in 1942 to 93,984 in 1943.

In certain places which reflect the problems of swollen populations, overcrowding, and family dislocations, as in San Francisco, the increase in cases was 60 per cent—51 for boys and 84 for girls. In Norfolk, Virginia, the increase in boys' cases was 69 per cent, and of girls, 102 per cent.

These figures do not, however, tell the whole story. The FBI statistics cover only those offenders who reach the courts. There are thousands of difficult and maladjusted children who never come within such jurisdiction. Many cases are handled by attendance officials, teachers, child guidance clinics, social agencies, or by the police without going through the courts. And children whose families have sufficient resources to care for their own delinquents rarely appear on official lists. Finally, an increased number of cases reported by the courts does not always mean a jump in the amount of crime. A sharp rise in the figures may simply indicate a sudden cracking down by the police or a new method of keeping statistics. But there are enough facts available to arouse the nation to the dangers.

What War Has Done

Although juvenile delinquency has been with us a long time, its tempo has been dangerously speeded up by the emotional and economic disturbances of war. The war has disrupted thousands of homes. It called to the colors fathers, brothers, sons; it has absorbed mothers of young children into industry; and it has drawn into the labor force thousands of school children, who in some instances earn more money than their parents.

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DISRUPTION OF HOME LIFE

The stability and security of home life that psychologists claim as a "must" in the development of balanced children have received a severe jolt. The absence of one or



both parents from home has brought an unprecedented child care problem. Young people with too much money in their pockets and a new sense of independence often get into trouble. Teen-age girls from rural districts seek work away from home in "boom towns" around army camps or industrial centers where overcrowded housing, "honky-tonks," and other undesirable conditions prevail; some finally become pick-up girls. Minors marry too sud-

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denly because of a "tomorrow we may die" philosophy. Parental control becomes a casualty of war. As a result of these conditions, bungled lives at home are just as much a part of war as crippled soldiers. It is a price of war that we cannot wholly escape.

SCHOOL INFLUENCE WEAKENED

Schools have lost much of their stabilizing influence. Two hundred thousand teachers have left the profession since Pearl Harbor for the higher salaries offered by industry. Estimates for April, 1944, indicated that the number of young workers 14 through 17 years of age was 1,730,000 above normal and that the majority of these had stopped school entirely. Five and a half million women have entered the labor force of this country since Pearl Harbor, and more than one-third of them are school girls. In addition, school terms have had to be shortened. The Office of Education reports that 75 per cent more emergency permits to "underqualified" teachers may be issued in 1945 than in 1944.

Two Approaches

Faced with such indisputable facts, the previously unmoved citizen wonders belatedly how such a situation could possibly have come about and why nothing is being done about it. Much is being done, however, that is not heard about, and much more can be done.

For serious delinquency among youth we have our houses of detention, our reform schools, courts, departments of public welfare, child welfare bureaus, trained county welfare agents, police force, parole systems, and probation officers. All of these are necessary and important. But they rarely are as good as they might be if local citizens demanded a more understanding treatment of youthful offenders. And in any case they do not come into operation until much of the harm is done. For building the citizens of tomorrow, we must depend primarily

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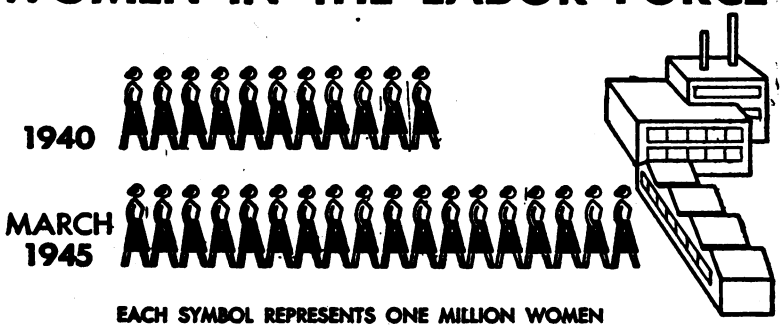
on our schools, churches, homes, clubs—and on every adult citizen.

It is wrong to speak of the "Youth Problem" as if it originated with our youth. Our young people merely reflect the instability of present-day society. Adults create the problem; youth suffers from our shortcomings.

WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE



Every child has problems, for he is born into the world lacking a sense of right or wrong, a world that, far too often, is hypocritical about "good" and "bad." Whether or not he develops into a useful citizen depends upon many complex factors that are chiefly to be found, not in himself, but in society.

What is a Delinquent?

Many of the so-called "delinquents" who pass through the courts are underprivileged children from slum districts where gambling joints, cheap dance halls, saloons, and houses of prostitution flourish. Many are undernourished, undersized, and retarded in school. Many are from homes where parental guidance or discipline is lacking.

The home is the most important influence in shaping the child's personality. But many other influences including his physical condition will also affect his behavior. The world is recognizing that the harm done to a child

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by unfortunate home conditions can be offset by favorable factors on the outside, and it is toward the development of these factors that united community efforts must be directed.

NEED OF A BROAD PROGRAM

MEASURES for the prevention of juvenile delinquency must begin with the strengthening of community services that will provide for the basic needs of youth. Youth needs above all a sense of security, a sense of "belonging," together with health, education, entertainment, and a purpose in life. These needs are met not only by "youth" agencies but by health centers, parental education, schools, child care centers, recreational facilities, provisions for mentally and physically handicapped children, and counseling and guidance centers to help young people find useful jobs and meet life's problems.

Agencies Working with Youth

Many agencies, federal, state, private, and public, and women's organizations are providing these services. Among the federal agencies are the Children's Bureau; the Department of Labor; the Office of Community War Services; the Federal Security Agency, including the Recreation Division and the Social Protection Division; the U. S. Office of Education; the United States Probation System; the Bureau of Public Assistance; the Social Security Board; and the Children's Bureau Commission on Children in Wartime. State agencies include committees of state defense councils and public welfare departments.

Other groups include churches; the great youth-serving organizations such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, the Junior Red Cross, 4-H Clubs, neighborhood houses, boys' clubs, etc.; the Congress of Parents and Teachers; and the American Legion Auxiliary. Among the larger women's organizations are the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American

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Association of University Women, the Association of Junior Leagues of America, the American Home Economics Association, the National Association of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, labor auxiliaries, women's church councils, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and various other Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish women's organizations.

If these agencies are not meeting the problem fully, it is probably because they tend to take too short a view. To a large extent they have tried to correct the maladjustments in youth rather than the weaknesses in our society that affect youth, and sometimes they have thought in negative terms—of eliminating delinquency rather than of providing opportunities for youth that will encourage normal, constructive growth and development.

What Some Communities Have Done

A growing recognition that crime is crime whether on the avenue or in the gutter and that young people need assistance if they are to develop into useful citizens is bringing forth many new programs. Although little is being done nationally, governors of states and mayors of cities are taking the lead in the organization of councils and boards for the improvement of individual localities.

SEATTLE

A reduction in juvenile delinquency has been achieved in Seattle as a result of the work of the Sheriff Callahan's Boys' Clubs, with a total membership of over five thousand. These clubs grew out of a midnight riot in 1943, when a hundred boys staged a commando raid which did much damage to property. Boys are taken into the clubs *before they become delinquent* and are provided with well-rounded health and character-building programs.

CHICAGO

Chicago has also made great progress against delinquency through neighborhood organizations in the stockyard area known as the Back of the Yards Project. This

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organization is backed by the churches, the local chamber of commerce, and the labor unions. If a boy or girl gets into trouble, it is assumed that the community or the family is at fault and a cooperative effort is made to eliminate the conditions that created the difficulty. Similar activities are carried out elsewhere in Chicago and in Cleveland by the Area Projects.

IDAHO FALLS

Similarly, in Idaho Falls, Idaho, a Youth Council was organized to meet an immediate local problem. When its first objective was satisfactorily met, the horizon widened and it began to deal with other problems. A Juvenile Delinquency Clinic was set up. When a youngster was brought before the court, his case was held up until a thorough study of his home life had been made by a welfare worker. A full report of all findings including a physical examination was made to the judge, covering the various items needed for his consideration of the case. All possible protection was thrown about the child, no matter what his record had been. Every child was regarded as worth saving.

The Education Committee of the Council secured a guidance expert to be placed on the high school staff. Adult homemaking education was provided for. A health committee was created and the chairman appointed as county physician. Housing and recreation committees came into the picture, until now, "more than ever before," declares the chairman, "we do not want to go back to anything, but forward to a fuller and better way of life, *with each family becoming America in miniature.*"

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

An encouraging report comes from San Diego County, California, the home of enormous aircraft industries. With its population more than doubled in three years, and its streets crowded as never before, the county has set up a county-wide council for the protection of its children and

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youth. The board of supervisors created a new official body "for the purpose of furthering cooperation and coordination among public departments and social agencies in a more effective program for social organization and youth welfare." During the first summer, a campaign for Youth Leaders for Summer Service was launched which enrolled 300 volunteer leaders within the city and 150 in county territory. Educational and counseling services for parents and recreation programs for unincorporated areas were set up; new facilities for juvenile transients were arranged; junior councils and youth centers were organized; the community solved many perplexing problems that no individual group could handle alone.

OTHER COMMUNITIES

Kansas City, Newark, Toledo, Des Moines, St. Louis, and many other cities have set up similar organizations to encourage public demand for action to prevent any increase in juvenile delinquency and to work out plans for youth.

Increase in Crime is Temporary

Here arises Mr. Average Citizen to say that the activity of all these agencies has so far accomplished little in arresting the increase in delinquency.

Figures, as such, do seem to prove the statement, but in this, as in many other efforts, the machinery is still inadequate. The simple fact that in many individual communities great advance has been made proves that progress is on the way. Many communities have worked chiefly with children on the borderline of delinquency, not with those who are constantly repeating their offenses. But these activities will eventually affect court reports and succeed in diminishing juvenile crime.

After the War—What?

The problem existed before the war and will continue after the war, less acute in some phases as normal life is reinstated, but more acute in others.

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The rôle of women in the postwar economy remains uncertain and depends largely on the number of available jobs. But there is every indication that they are not planning an immediate return to the kitchen as soon as the last shot is fired. In the five areas covered so far by a survey conducted by the Women's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, 80 per cent of the employed women questioned wanted to continue working. It would seem, therefore, that wartime child care centers will have to be maintained, at least to some extent.

Moreover, the return of peace will present new problems for youth. We must not forget the 1930's, when nearly half of the city young people who left school looking for work could not find jobs. Should the end of the war bring idleness and unemployment to the millions of young people who now have jobs or are in the service, we may face an even greater problem of delinquency. If we deny youth a place in the workaday world, we can expect them to seek an outlet for their energies elsewhere.

Meeting the needs of these young people will undoubtedly be the most serious problem facing society in the postwar world. What to do with the young workers who have dropped out of school and for whose wartime skills there will be no demand may be a burning question. Back to school may be the answer, but will it be practical? And what kind of schooling?

Youth Asks to be Recognized

Young minds are clamoring for a chance to take part in the affairs of state. They are conducting many constructive activities on their own. Canteens, youth centers, and recreation centers under the control of youth itself are flourishing in many localities, putting to shame some of the feebler efforts of their elders. These activities play an important rôle in the development of youth. Because they are constructive, they help reduce delinquency. But they should be encouraged in their own right. Youth needs responsibility in order to develop into useful citizenship.

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TEEN TOWN

"Teen Town" in New Orleans is a model which many could follow. The figures on youth delinquency in that city were staggering. The attention of the Council of Jewish Women was aroused to the point where they determined to find a place of amusement for the young people in crowded downtown streets that bordered the famous French Quarter. Once the house, an old warehouse, was acquired, the children themselves put it in order by cleaning, carpentering, and decorating, under the supervision of advisers. The council in its search for the necessary funds consulted the local agencies and was put in touch with the Federal Housing Administration, which was at that very time looking for an agency to set up and run a youth center to accommodate 400 young people. Almost immediately these two agencies began working together. They formed a board of governors, consisting of two social workers, a priest and a minister whose churches were in the neighborhood, two high school principals, a lawyer, a businessman, the FHA field director, and three members of the Council of Jewish Women.

"Teen Town" provides recreation and amusement for young people between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. The young people operate their own snack bar and lending library; they have organized art classes as well as a swing band. The teen-towners are governed by a Youth Council made up of officers elected by themselves, which meets regularly to settle problems and form new policies and which is supervised by a paid director who gives counsel and makes suggestions. After less than six months of existence the membership rolls had to be closed at six hundred. The council knew that "Teen Town" could never hope to fill the entire need, which is city-wide, but there are plans for other centers.

THE MOLINE PLAN

The originator of the Moline plan, a high school girl, says that it developed in answer to a newspaper article

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describing Moline as a "wide-open town where sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds enjoyed a regular liquor diet in night spots, while one-armed bandits—slot machines—played a lively tune against the town's collective bank account." A letter, which she wrote to the editor of the local newspaper about the need of a desirable place "to use as a hangout where fellows and girls could go for their good times," brought support from the Dad's Clubs and Parent-Teacher Association. A youth center was set up immediately and proved successful. Less than three months after its opening night, the police chief attributed to its good influences a 50 per cent decline in trouble with boys and girls of high school age. The REK, as it was called, opened in July, 1943, with an attendance of 300, including adult visitors, and by October of that year had a tremendous roll of 1,400. Similar groups have sprung up like mushrooms over the country.

Says one young organizer: "Certainly no miscreant is going to take it well of a person who says to him: 'You're a bad character, a menace to society, and I intend to reform you.' " But if the same person is given a chance to play and work in wholesome surroundings, he or she will have little time or inclination for deeds that lead to the reform school.

A PASTOR TAKES A HAND

In the United Presbyterian Church in Des Moines, Iowa, the pastor conducts his own recreation center in the basement of the church. Children of all faiths come to play, work, sing, dine, and study, and generally to have a good time under leadership without undue control. The spirit of camaraderie is so fine, the freedom of expression so great, and the opportunities for real fun so plentiful that there is no problem of discipline. More than that, the pastor—a very fine public speaker much sought after by organizations—is so busy playing with the young people that he says he cannot leave his church long enough to make a speech.

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NO single group has the facilities to answer all needs or is capable of mobilizing all the resources necessary to develop a coordinated program.

A Committee on Youth Recreation should be set up as part of the Community War Recreation Committee. It should be affiliated, where one exists, with the Youth Council concerned with allied problems of young people.

All interested groups, public and private, should be represented. Public agencies usually include the city recreation department, the Board of Education, park and police departments, the city council, the county commissioner, the juvenile courts, and health and welfare departments.

Civic groups usually represented include social agencies, churches, service clubs, women's clubs, the chamber of commerce, housing projects, labor unions, and commercial recreation interests. Youth groups should include representation from high school councils, church leagues, youth clubs, and working youth.

What to Do

Study and define the community's problems, created or intensified by the war, that relate to recreation for young people, such as the needs of youth in school and working youth.

Find out what is needed by the youth in the community and what resources there are to meet these needs. Develop a plan of community action to meet these problems. Often subcommittees with suitably representative membership are appointed to report on each problem.

Consider all community programs and facilities—public and private—school, church, park, and so on, to determine whether they are being used to maximum capacity and efficiency.

Find out what is not being done in your town to encourage youth and then devise ways and means for stirring

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up the adults in the community to provide the funds and leadership for the needed youth activities.

Coordinate neighborhood and community services by acquainting each with the work of the others and providing for a continuous exchange of information on planning and programs.

Recruit recreation workers, promote training institutes for volunteers, and arrange for their placement with operating agencies.

Provide support for community activities through the promotion of public understanding and interest.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANIZED WOMEN

COMMUNITY activities of this kind have helped youth to meet their own problems. In different cities different groups have taken the lead. The work of women's groups in some communities is particularly significant because it shows what could be done if *all* women were awake. It is an exciting story. Some women's organizations have come to feel that they have an unusual opportunity for assisting youth since they can reach into both the home and the community.

The combined membership of the approximately fifty national women's organizations reaches into the millions. Their programs include practically every known movement for the betterment of human welfare. Many of them have as their *major* concern the welfare of youth, and the majority are also giving youth every opportunity to blaze a trail for themselves with the full support of the adult membership.

Seven million of them, belonging to twenty organizations, are represented in Washington by a strong Women's Joint Congressional Committee, which meets once a month for the consideration of legislation with which the various groups are concerned. They have become a formidable legislative force.

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To show what can be done by alert women, some examples of the specialized efforts of the larger organizations with child welfare programs are listed in the following pages. The list is necessarily incomplete and is not meant to reflect on the accomplishments of others. Although full accounts of the activities of organized groups were available for reference in preparing this pamphlet, only a small part of this material could be used.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs

One of the oldest and largest of these groups is the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Some forty years ago this organization was working for an eight-hour working day, mothers' aid laws, child labor laws, birth registration, maternity and infancy bills, state hygiene, and child labor divisions.

In the educational field the federation has had the satisfaction of seeing a number of reforms achieved for which it worked long and valiantly. Among them were compulsory education to the age of fourteen and the establishment of kindergartens and courses in home economics and hygiene in the public schools. Kindergartens, manual training, and domestic science, regarded as fads by school boards of the nineties, were often financed by women's organizations and introduced into school curricula as experiments until the boards finally became convinced of their worth. In 1912, the federation first began to work for vocational education. It has also worked for higher salaries for teachers and federal aid to education.

PURPOSES AND TASKS

Today, the main task of the General Federation is still education with its corollary—service. Its object is to unite women's clubs and similar organizations throughout the world for the promotion of their common interest in education, philanthropy, public welfare, moral values, civics, and fine arts.

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TEN POINT PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPING
FOR



Source: Recreation Division, Office of Community War Services, Federal Security Agency

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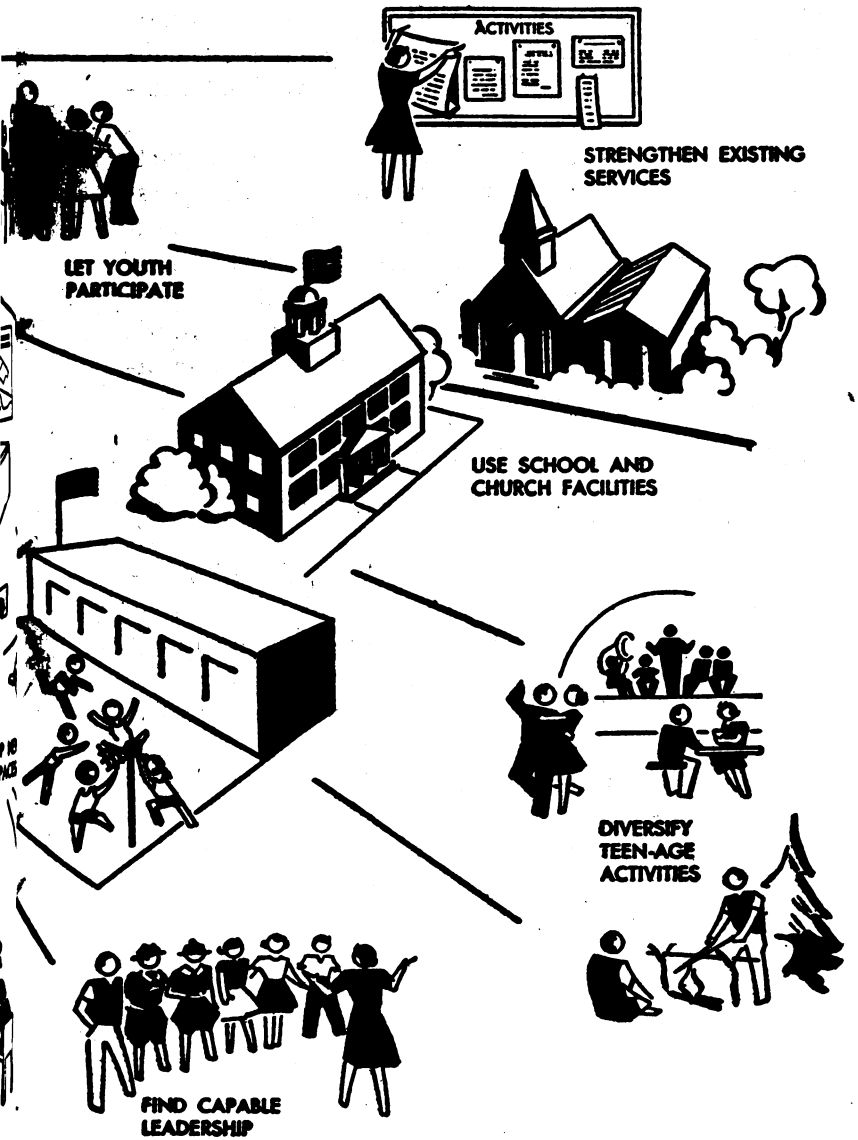
A COMMUNITY RECREATION PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



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With the turn of the twentieth century, many ugly conditions arose relating to the exploitation of women and children in industry. In cooperation with others, the federation worked for and saw achieved the eight-hour working day and mothers' aid laws. In 1916, the first federal child labor law was passed. Throughout the years, the organization has fought for a Child Labor Amendment, which now needs ratification by only eight additional states.

The creation of the Children's Bureau in the Department of Labor in 1912 was in part due to federation pressure. In the same year the organization began its campaign for birth registration and for progressive maternity and infancy bills, which bore fruit in 1921 with the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act providing for funds to carry on the necessary work and resulting in the creation of state child hygiene and child welfare divisions.

ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE FEDERATIONS

In addition to these national activities, the state federations have carried on numerous activities for the protection of youth. The clubwomen of Wyoming, for example, are working for the removal of the blot upon their state as the only state in the Union with no juvenile court system. The State Federation has distributed widely copies of proposed bills on juvenile court legislation for study. The women are working for closer coordination of youth activities in every community. They are trying to make use of such facilities as they have through planned cooperation among courts, probation officers, police, homes, and lay organizations to protect youthful offenders. Through discussion with his own constituents they hope to convince every legislator of the importance of the establishment of juvenile courts.

The clubwomen of Kansas under the leadership of the Child Welfare Division approached the solution of youth conservation by encouraging parents to permit their children to express freely their fears and anxieties within the

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home. Children cannot be wholly protected from life; they must be helped to face it.

Massachusetts is contributing to the prevention of delinquency through its clubs by urging a consideration of what proper educational privileges might do. "With the highest per capita income of all the states, shall we," asks Massachusetts, "use that income for food and clothing and living in luxury, providing only a small share for the improvement of the education of our children?" Answering this in the negative, the federation is endeavoring to promote equality of opportunity for all and to press for aid to libraries and to public education.

The following procedure against the increase of juvenile crime through street temptations is advocated in Illinois:

> Make your home inviting; welcome the friends of your children. Encourage your youngsters to have their fun at home. Your larder may be ravished, your radio blast forth deafening dance music grating on your cultured ears, your polished floors be well worn with the use of many feet, your furniture antiqued, the upholstery made shabby, and your budget strained to the breaking point, but you will be well rewarded.
>
> Your full-time job will be repaid with the satisfaction of character building, of rearing honorable citizens—right minded, high principled, with characters untarnished, chivalrous, fearless, and self-reliant, respected and self-respecting, capable of becoming eminent leaders of the coming generation.

Pennsylvania is concentrating upon nutrition programs, believing that alertness, emotional stability, and physical stamina are founded upon good health. Studies are being made to reduce the cost, through greater emphasis on adequate diet, of the cure of poor vision, rickets, decayed teeth, fatigue, etc., which have much to do with delinquency in children. Members are concerned with housing, because of its social implications. They insist that not until their 786 clubs with a membership of 89,286 members use their combined influence for clearing slums and doing away with substandard living quarters, will delinquency be checked.

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American Association of University Women

For the past two years this organization has placed a major emphasis on the need for community action to arrest the alarming increase in juvenile delinquency. Through the pages of its magazine, through several excellent kits, and through an Eight Point Program for Community Action, it has done a piece of educational work which has borne fruit in a number of local achievements. Many of its members are leaders in established social agencies and volunteer organizations in the youth field. A number of local groups have supplemented the services of overburdened school staffs through constructive individual guidance and counseling. The creation of youth recreation centers and children's art projects and the supervision of youth farm-labor crews are significant contributions of the association's groups.

SURVEYS

In the summer of 1944, 384 branches of the American Association of University Women made quick surveys of summer services for children in widely different types of communities. This survey revealed that of 384 communities, only 211 had nursery schools; that there were very few summer kindergartens for children beyond nursery school age; that there were even fewer cultural opportunities for children, such as libraries, museums, and excursions; and that little mention was made of clubs or scout groups serving the eight-to-twelve-year-old group. Although recreation centers were mentioned 310 times in the 384 communities, emphasis was placed upon the increasing need for them. The survey brought home to local association groups the need for more activities in behalf of children.

Another survey was conducted by the branch of the American Association of University Women in Pittsburgh, Kansas, a community of about 18,000 where defense plants were making war materials. A questionnaire was

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circulated among elementary and junior high school pupils with the request that they be filled out by the parents and returned by the pupils. With a more than 80 per cent return, it was learned that in this community, which sent 2,457 children to school, there were 113 families, with 192 children under fifteen, where both the father and the mother were employed outside the home. Only 10 per cent of the parents considered their arrangements unsatisfactory but, to quote from the report, "the provisions regarded as satisfactory by some parents do not appear so to one interested in child welfare." The findings of this survey definitely indicated the need for group care of young children of working mothers and suggested the need for education on standards of adequate child care in homes.

DETROIT WORKSHOP ON YOUTH

One of the most interesting projects of the American Association of University Women was a two-day forum designed to educate the community for an intelligent approach toward the welfare of youth. The primary object of the workshop was to train adult volunteers for work with young people by bringing them together with qualified leaders in the community. Fifteen agencies became cosponsors on the basis that each would contribute in some way to the project. For example, the Public Library compiled and bore the full expense of issuing a bibliography on "Youth and the Community"; the University of Michigan furnished a building for the sessions; the Y.M.C.A. housed the committee meeting; the schools, both public and private, released key members.

The workshop was planned around simultaneous "special interest" group meetings on such topics as "Occupational Adjustment of Youth" and "Parent and Family Life Education." Besides these meetings, a general session was scheduled for each day, culminating in an open forum to which the public was invited.

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The Y.W.C.A. Program for Younger Girls

Local Y.W.C.A.'s have tried to deal not only with the symptoms of delinquency but also with its basic causes. School girls in bobby-socks, teen-age "women workers" in overalls, young service men, part-time boy and girl workers, Negro, white, Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, all are part of the Y.W.C.A. youth groups in rural communities, boom towns, and crowded metropolitan areas throughout the United States. No one of these young people remains untouched by war.

In planning ways to meet youth's wartime needs effectively, the Y.W.C.A. has examined the changes that war has brought to the lives of adolescents. Perhaps the most outstanding factors affecting the lives of young people are the disruption of family life, the new importance of adolescent workers because of manpower shortages, and the acceleration of working, playing, and living that results from the war. To quote Grace Loucks Elliott, general secretary of the National Board of the Y.W.C.A.: "They [adolescents] don't want to lose out on life and they don't yet know how to live. They need help in facing both life and death and finding the meaning of both, and this concern is one which they must see not only in relation to their individual lives, but in relation to the world society of which they are a part."

Normal contacts with boys are more than ever important for teen-age girls but may be even more difficult to achieve when housing and recreation facilities are severely limited. Perhaps the most spectacular and widely known of the Y.W.C.A.'s co-ed programs are Teen-Age Night Clubs, or high school canteens. The Flamingo Club, Bar None Corral, Club Co-ed, Swing Lobby, Twixteen Club, and others have had wide publicity and have served to point up the need of young people for recreation centers of their own with understanding adult leadership. But a place to dance is not the only answer, nor is it the final answer.

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Recognizing this, a group of high school boys and girls at the Carondolet Branch of the Y.W.C.A. in St. Louis, Missouri, asked to extend their co-ed program, jointly operated by the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., to include other types of activities. On alternate weeks the dance program is supplemented by four hobby groups: crafts, music, service program, and ballroom dancing lessons; and discussion groups follow with boys and girls selecting their own topics. One series on boy-girl relationships included: *Boy Meets Girl; Parent Trouble?; It's a Date; Who to Woo and How?* Another series conducted as part of a city-wide stay-in-school campaign included: *Jobs—Just a Thumb in the Dike?; Jobs—Comes the Peace, Then What?; Jobs: The Young Worker and the Labor Movement.*

The Y.W.C.A.'s work with youth stresses the developing of a personal philosophy of life. Specifically, this means providing experiences that make religion meaningful, opportunities for adolescents to express themselves as creative persons, contacts that enable them to know enough about the lives of other people to develop some ideas about the kind of world which they, as young people, want to have a part in making. Wartime emphasizes afresh the need that human beings have to feel solid ground under their feet, the security of having a conviction about the way people must learn to live.

The Y.W.C.A. also conducts an extensive program of citizenship education. It is vitally concerned with problems of international relations, social and economic welfare, minority groups, civil liberties, and democratic rights. In many communities the Y.W.C.A.'s have cooperated with the Child Labor Committee and other organizations in combating child labor.

National Congress of Parents and Teachers

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers includes 3,054,950 fathers, mothers, teachers, and other interested citizens who are enrolled in 28,000 parent-

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teacher associations. Although the P.T.A. is not exclusively a women's organization, its women members do assume the major responsibility for carrying out the very extensive program of the organization.

In the special area of juvenile protection, P.T.A.'s activities have been directed into four major channels: providing for the physical, mental, and social welfare of all children and young people in home, school, and community; providing particular attention and protection to children who are especially vulnerable to harmful influences; controlling those forces in the community that contribute to juvenile delinquency; and making use of all available community, state, and federal services for (1) normally adjusted children and young people, (2) children with behavior problems, and (3) delinquent children.

EDUCATION A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION

Many P.T.A. committees have been organized to survey community delinquency and to acquaint the community itself with its deficiencies in planning for the welfare of its youth. Newspaper and radio publicity, forums, conferences, and institutes in which young people themselves take an active part, and parent education classes have all been used to great advantage by P.T.A. groups. Last year, more than 3,000 P.T.A. meetings were devoted to discussions of juvenile protective measures and more than 250 institutes were held throughout the country. Instruction in mental hygiene, sex, and the effect of alcohol on behavior is likewise an important aspect of the educational activity of this organization.

P.T.A.'s SERVICES

Volunteer members staff day-care nurseries and help organize recreation programs and recreation centers, regular weekly dances and parties, "Teen-Towns," and youthful "Nite Clubs." Parent-teacher associations cooperate with such groups as the Boy and Girl Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls. Together with other civic organizations

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they have investigated slums, inadequate housing, poorly supervised recreation and amusement centers, nonenforcement of child labor laws, etc., bringing such conditions to the attention of the proper authorities.

Daughters of the American Revolution

The welfare of children has always been a subject dear to the heart of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which has long had national committees such as the Junior American Citizens, Girl Home Makers, and Approved Schools. The organization now has a new program for the control of juvenile delinquency, which will be carried out through these standing committees.

Association of Junior Leagues of America

Forty thousand young women make up the Association of Junior Leagues of America. This organization consists of 157 leagues in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Since its foundation in 1901, its basic purpose has been "preparation for intelligent citizenship through volunteer service and education." The growth of the individual member, through training in accordance with her talents and abilities and through guidance in the selection of the place in her community where she will give service, has been the primary emphasis of the "AJLA."

In addition to this fundamental program of volunteer service and education, most leagues maintain some project in the community for which they assume, in whole or in part, either regular financial or administrative responsibility, or both. Such a project may be in the health, welfare, cultural, or recreational field and, preferably, offers opportunities for volunteer service. It is usually in the nature of a demonstration, undertaken for a limited period of time with the idea that the community, once convinced of its value, will assume responsibility for its continuance. A great variety of projects are undertaken by the leagues; the choice of the project is made on the basis of the existing needs of the local community.

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CAMPAIGN TO ESTABLISH A CHILDREN'S COURT

The Association of Junior Leagues may not endorse or sponsor any organization, movement, or program, nor take action on public questions. However, a member league has the right, within certain limitations, to decide its action on a local or state question. One league moved into the sphere of public action by conducting an educational campaign on the need for a juvenile court separate from the criminal court of the state. With a nonpartisan approach that enlisted the interest, aid, and cooperation of many groups, agencies, and individuals, sufficient support was obtained to bring about the eventual passage of a bill establishing such a court.

THE HOBBY SHOP

Another league, with the support of community agencies, set up a hobby center in a section of the city accessible to the type of children who were most in need of such a service. In order to recruit the children, a list was submitted by various agencies, teachers, the police, etc. These children were invited to attend the center, and after the first session were asked to bring their friends.

CHILDREN'S THEATER

During the 1943–44 season, 329,713 children witnessed 639 performances sponsored by Junior Leagues. The enlisting of other groups in the community made possible the expansion of the program. One league's Children's Theater was able to troupe to the city's playgrounds with the help of the Park Commission's trailer. Another Children's Theater group worked with the child care centers in the city to put on a pageant demonstrating the work of the centers. Other leagues have given their entertainments at new housing projects and public playgrounds.

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE SCHOOL OF SPEECH CORRECTION

In 1939 one of the leagues started a school for deaf children and children with speech defects, which now is receiving additional support from the local public school

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system and the County Welfare Board. Applicants are referred to this school by local physicians, nurses, civic organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Health, the Board of Education, and city and county schools.

CHILD GUIDANCE CLINICS

There are five such clinics sponsored in various communities by Junior Leagues. One of these, established with league funds, is designed to uncover and treat the maladjustments of delinquent children. This center will be used by the social agencies of the locality and will be administered by a community board with league representation.

The American Legion Auxiliary

The American Legion Auxiliary works in cooperation with the American Legion in the latter's child welfare program, but also on its own carries on many child welfare activities and projects that are in keeping with the authorization and standards in child welfare established by the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary through their national convention actions. The auxiliary consists of about 550,000 women who are wives, mothers, daughters, or sisters of veterans of World Wars I and II.

The auxiliary through its leaders and volunteer workers is convinced that *in order to prevent juvenile delinquency there must be concern and protection for all children.* It supports the American Legion policy of concern for the "whole child"—his physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Not much can be accomplished if a child welfare program begins to function when children have been adjudged to be delinquent by the courts.

FINANCIAL AID

Therefore, the auxiliary, in line with the work of preventing child neglect and juvenile delinquency, has contributed generously in service and financial aid to the

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dependent children of veterans of World Wars I and II. During 1944 the auxiliary, through its state departments and units, reported the spending of $555,029.23 direct financial aid to children in their family homes. Over the past twenty years, the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary have contributed financial aid in the amount of $53,998,007 to 6,749,748 children, and 96 per cent of these children were assisted while at home with their mothers. Since 1926 the American Legion Auxiliary alone has spent $8,500,000 on child welfare work. This has been a definite contribution toward maintaining the integrity of the American family home as well as preventing child neglect that might in many cases have led to juvenile delinquency.

A great deal has been accomplished by the American Legion Auxiliary, in cooperation with the American Legion, and by the Associated Women of the Farm Bureau Federation, in raising standards through state legislation regarding the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency. This has included juvenile court administration, raising the standards of correctional care in the boys' and girls' institutions in the states.

Associated Women of the Farm Bureau

The Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation recently declared in resolutions adopted at their Tenth Annual Convention:

> The American home is the foundation of our faith and ideals and must be preserved at any cost. It is the institution for which our boys and girls are fighting and dying. Upon the parents in the home rests the responsibility of preserving the traditions that have made America great. This world conflict has brought about many new problems in family relationships, management, and income.
>
> Parental apathy is proving to be the most fertile ground for the delinquency of youth. Youth is a mirror reflecting the home, the church, the school, and the community. In the hands of the younger generation is the fulfillment of the

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American ideal; and we will be committing a grave injustice to the youth of our land if we fail, now, to train them to live well-rounded lives. This is a tragic time for young people, because youth takes the heroic and terrible rôle in war, and youth pays the frightful cost, both now and after the war. Too frequently we have thought of juvenile delinquency as a separate and distinct problem when in reality it is actually the result of adult delinquency. Community institutions can and should assist in meeting this problem, but the primary responsibility must rest upon the home.

We appeal to farm women within our respective communities to develop practical and effective services in befriending and counseling youth.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

ALTHOUGH experience has shown that most of youth's problems can best be tackled in the home and the community, assistance is also needed from the federal government. Thirty national organizations interested in helping youth have recently banded together to form the Child Welfare Information Service, Inc. This agency has been set up at the nation's capital for the purpose of providing information on federal legislation on the health, education, employment, and general welfare of children and adolescents. An office has been opened at 930 F Street, N.W., Washington 4, D. C., with Bernard Locker as Executive Director.

The new organization will issue bulletins analyzing all bills introduced into Congress concerned with the protection of children as well as with important changes in administrative policies in the federal bureaus. This voluntary, nonprofit organization will take no position for or against any legislation. The groups represented in its membership will not necessarily have the same point of view on legislative and administrative problems. It hopes to serve not only national organizations interested in children and youth, but labor unions, local parent-teacher associations, women's clubs, child care and family welfare

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agencies, as well as community chests and councils throughout the country.

YOUTH CONSERVATION CLEARINGHOUSE

A PLAN is being developed for the establishment of a National Youth Conservation Clearinghouse, through which may flow constant intercommunications between the many unofficial groups working for youth conservation. The Youth Conservation Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs has held a series of conferences to explain its program to many of the other major organizations working in the same field. At one of these meetings, a proposal for a clearinghouse was made. The various organizations are considering this clearinghouse as a consultative group without any binding authority and with no powers to intervene in any manner in the programs or operations of such organizations as enter into it.

The General Federation already has set in motion a program for the survey of communities and the setting up of community activities embracing the most approved standards of youth protection and guidance. Its Youth Conservation Committee intends to stimulate the local efforts of the agencies that are now working with youth. There will be no interruption of, nor interference with, the individual programs of other agencies, but cities and towns having no community programs for youth will be helped to set them up. Wherever the activities of some one or another of the national youth-serving agencies need such strengthening and encouragement as the federation with its very large membership can give, this support will be freely given. In localities where no such programs are established, the women's clubs will become the active factor.

The funds appropriated by the federation will make it possible to project more fully within the communities those plans recommended by the professional agencies

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and other authorities. Youth itself will take part in programs concerned with health, education, recreation, employment, vocational guidance, preparation for family life, and citizenship. It will mean widespread extension of information and plans for local activities of a scope far out-distancing previous efforts to change the dark picture of our shameful inadequacies as citizens in a great democracy.

So vast is the field, so great the need, so dependent the future upon the care and direction given today's youth, that to the many examples cited in this pamphlet must be added countless others, until our record is clear. Helping today's children should become our greatest contribution to tomorrow, for which we jointly, men and women, are directly responsible.

FOR FURTHER READING

Adolescents in Wartime. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 236, November, 1944

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