

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY CENTER A RECORD OF CIVIC LOYALTY

(Continued from Page 1)
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At the first meeting the administrative committee was formed, including the following persons: Mrs. J. McGregor Adams, Mrs. Ferdinand Wiegand, Mrs. T. C. Boynton, Mrs. Robert Gregory, Mrs. C. N. Kimball, Mrs. Albert Paul Smith, Mrs. Annette R. Jones, Mrs. Julius Rosenwald, Mrs. W. A. Alexander, Mrs. A. A. Putnam, Mrs. R. C. Jacobsen, Mrs. Lloyd Bergen, Mrs. Sewall Truax, Mrs. J. L. Holbrook, and Mrs. Fletcher. Miss Blanche Mason was made president. Mr. Myron Adams served in an advisory capacity.

One week after the appearance of the original appeal, the Highland Park Press printed a short paragraph, asking for contributions—a masterly miscellany including flags, phonograph records, magazines, chairs, stationery, clothes brushes, screens, rugs, and liquid soap—to be sent to the Army and Navy Center, next door to the Post Office west.

The Army and Navy Center opened its doors to men in uniform on July 4th, 1917, and was promptly filled to overflowing. The first and greatest problem, of course, was that of finance, but two important factors helped to make this less of a burden than might have been expected. Mrs. George R. Jones became chairman of the finance committee and treasurer. The town itself appeared to have been waiting with bated breath for the chance to support the center. In the first week Mrs. Jones sent out several hundred cards asking for pledges of monthly donations and, without delay, the cards began to return with pledges signed. The wheels of the center had been set into motion with practicality and no expenditure of money, thanks to the amazing generosity of everyone. Running expenses during the summer amounted to about \$150 per month. In the later fall, when the activities of the center had become somewhat elaborated, this figure rose to nearly \$300. By this time, however, the Highland Park Defense Council had taken over all subscriptions for war work in Highland Park, and, after December, handled the budget of the center. This state of affairs continued until late spring when, in anticipation of a Community War Chest, the mayor dissolved the Defense Council. Subsequently, the War Chest campaign of the center was in a desperate condition. At this juncture the National War Camp-Community Service in Washington was appealed to, with satisfactory results. In June Mr. William J. Hopkins was sent on to organize the War Camp-Community Service on the North Shore and especially of Highland Park. He engaged Leon Harris to take the directorship of the center. From November, 1918, all expenditures were met by the Illinois branch of the War Camp Community Service.

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lowers might "the kids and the policemen are enjoying the community show."

As Professor Charles E. Merman, Highland Park, has said, "As the cities go, so goes the nation." If every community does a good job of running its affairs, providing efficient service, schools, and healthful recreation, the national problems will be fewer and more easily solved. This is truly "the American Way."

Outstanding communities like Highland Park can set an example worthy of its people and tradition in rounding out through the development of the Community House and ultimately through an enlarged Community Center, the service to youth and all citizens in better community living.

Officers and Directors of Community Center

Current officers, directors and committee chairmen for the Center include the following: F. J. Roman, honorary president; Renslow P. Sherer, president; J. B. Garnett, vice-president; R. L. Erskine, treasurer.

Executive committee: Renslow P. Sherer, J. B. Garnett, R. L. Erskine, Mrs. Tom R. Wyles, Clarence Witt, A. T. Shihler. Board of Directors: H. B. Aiston, K. G. Anderson, W. J. Currott, D. J. Davitt, Harry Earhart, R. L. Erskine, J. B. Garnett, Mrs. B. K. Goodman, Leon F. Harris, A. C. Houser, Mrs. J. S. Johnson, Mrs. Geo. R. Jones, Albert Larson, Mrs. M. Murray, J. L. Martin, Mrs. P. M. Murray, Mrs. F. C. Noermborg, C. E. Pfister, Mrs. Charles Rubens, Renslow P. Sherer, Leo J. Sheridan, A. T. Shihler, M. W. Stin, A. H. Swanson, Richard Tausig, Chou Wampler, C. H. Witt, C. G. Wright, Mrs. T. E. Wyles, H. A. Zischke.

Advisory Council: F. N. Bard, F. Adele Everett, Harold M. Florshelm, P. Boynton, Wm. M. Dooley, Mr. Earl W. Gsell, Saml. M. Hastings, Geo. R. Jones, Geo. A. Mason, Mrs. O. L. Olesen, Frank J. Roman, Maurice L. Rothschild, Mrs. M. R. Stern, John L. Udel, Gen'l. Robt. E. Wood. Director and secretary: George Scheuchpnflug.

Committees: Finance, A. T. Shihler, chairman; House, J. B. Garnett, chairman; Furnishings and equipment, Mrs. George R. Jones, chairman; Youth activities, Harry Earhart, chairman; Public information, A. C. Houser, chairman; Rifle and pistol, F. W. Parker Jr., chairman. Committees for various other activities including art, camera, crafts, drama, music, etc., will be announced shortly.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lack of space does not permit the mention in detail of many of the activities sponsored by the Community Center. Foremost among these is the Young Men's club who will move into its permanent headquarters in the Center on Saturday. This organization under the leadership of its president, Dr. Baker M. Hamilton has filled a need long felt in the community for a unified and constructive activity program for young men.

We also wish to express appreciation of the cooperation rendered the editors of this souvenir edition of the HIGHLAND PARK PRESS to Hecksweiler Studio, who photographed the various scenes of the Center depicted herein.

The Highland Park Press

THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 1940

COMMUNITY CENTER WELCOMES ALL

by RENSLOW P. SHERER
To the Citizens of Highland Park:

With the opening of the Community Center on June 29 and 30, 1940, there is beginning to take shape the Recreation Center which a small group of women began to plan and save for over 20 years ago. Three cardinal points have been kept in mind over the years:

It would serve the whole community—all could enjoy its facilities. Thus, community life and activities would revolve about a Center and become more closely knit and neighborly.

It would serve young and old, but would emphasize its activities for young people. Recreation would be wholesome play and more—it would "re-create" by offering an attractive meeting place, expert supervision for group activities and facilities for creative work, play, and exercise.

It would be managed by a representative group of citizens operating under a "non-profit charter" and financed by the citizens to supplement such modest revenues as might come from the rental of certain facilities.

The dedication ceremonies have pledged the directors to the perpetuation of these policies from this point on, in the development of this idea is in your hands. It can be as useful as you care to make it and will grow soundly in its development of additional facilities and services if there is a need for them and an alert citizen interest in their development.

The experience of other communities points to the likelihood of such development. In Winnetka, the community is said to revolve about the Community House. The young people of that community look upon it as a prized possession and their parents realize the constructive value it has been, in providing wholesome recreation, organized play and creative work and hobbies.

And in its national aspects, the Community Center idea is of increasing importance. Thousands of communities have recognized the need for such centers, both because of increased leisure time and because of unemployment problems of youth. Adult education groups, Americanization classes, hobby groups, etc., have proved invaluable in broadening individual horizons and developing better citizens. Naturally, the Community Center provides a logical focal point in a community for such activities.

Young Men's and Young Women's clubs are readily organized and easily maintained once a central public meeting place and recreational center has been formed. This is well illustrated by the success of the Highland Park Young Men's club has already obtained by a large membership and a full schedule of athletic and other worthwhile activities. One amusing sidelight on this is the statement of Winnetka Community House director that on Highland Park (Continued on page 4)



Built at a cost of more than \$700, this authentic reproduction of a Williamsburg Colonial fireplace, expresses a warm welcome.



High in the ranks of those who have given untiringly of their efforts to further the cause of the Center are, left to right: Renslow P. Sherer, president, Mrs. George R. Jones, chairman of the Furnishings and Equipment Committee, and James L. Martin, chairman of the Dedication Reception Committee.

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY CENTER

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Blanche Mason Tellis and Adele M. Everett the Highland Park Army and Navy Center, predecessor of the Highland Park Community Center, appeared out of the nowhere in answer to a demand. With the coming of the war Fort Sheridan, at the gates of Highland Park, and Great Lakes Naval Training Station, just beyond, began to fill rapidly with men. Of these the first to appear in numbers about the streets of Highland Park were the student officers of the first training camp who arrived early in May, 1917. Their hours of duty were long, and their leisure was given them each day. As absolutely no provision had been made for their reception and entertainment, they continued to stand first on one foot and then on the other, about the streets and in the shops of the city. After several weeks the idea that something must be done began to germinate all over town. It so happened, however, that Mrs. George R. Jones and Miss Blanche Mason were the first to act. On June 21st an article by Miss Mason appeared in the local paper, announcing the project to open a public "sitting room" for soldiers, with possibly, magazines and newspapers and, perhaps, a phonograph or some other merry-making device. Plans were (Continued on page 4)