

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

BULLETIN, 1918, No. 11

# A COMMUNITY CENTER

WHAT IT IS AND  
HOW TO ORGANIZE IT

BY

HENRY E. JACKSON

SPECIAL AGENT IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION



WASHINGTON  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
1918



THE TWO AMBITIONS.

Frank F. Stone. See page 42.

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"A system of general instruction, which shall reach every description of our citizens, from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so it shall be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest."

Thomas Jefferson.

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION,  
*Washington, February 19, 1918.*

SIR: To make more valuable to the people those things from which the people are accustomed to derive value has very appropriately been said to be the prime business of legislators. That the schoolhouse, whose value to the people is already great, may become still more valuable to them, is the purpose of the community-organization movement which this bureau has undertaken to foster.

A great democracy like ours, extending over more than three and one-half million square miles of territory and including more than 100,000,000 people, must be alive, intelligent, and virtuous in all its parts. Every unit of it must be democratic. The ultimate unit in every State, Territory, and possession of the United States is the school district. Every school district should therefore be a little democracy, and the schoolhouse should be the community capitol. Here the people should meet to discuss among themselves their common interests and to devise methods of helpful cooperation. It should also be the social center of the community, where all the people come together in a neighborly way on terms of democratic equality, learn to know each other, and extend and enrich their community sympathies.

For this purpose the schoolhouse is specially fitted; it is nonsectarian and nonpartisan; the property of no individual, group, or clique, but the common property of all; the one place in every community in which all have equal rights and all are equally at home. The schoolhouse is also made sacred to every family and to the community as a whole by the fact that it is the home of their children and the training place of future citizens. Here all members of the community may appropriately send themselves to school to each other and learn from each other of things pertaining to the life of the local community, the State, the Nation, and the world.

The appropriation of the schoolhouse for community uses has well been called "a master stroke of the new democracy." These facts are not new, but the emphasis on their importance is new and

amounts to a new discovery. The Nation's immediate need to mobilize the sentiments of the people and to make available the material resources has directed special attention to the schoolhouse as an effective agency ready-made to its hand for this purpose. The national importance of this new organization is evidenced by the fact that the Council of National Defense has planned a nation-wide movement to organize school districts or similar communities of the United States as the ultimate branches of its council of defense system, believing that the organization of communities will enable the Council of National Defense to put directly before the individual citizen the needs of the Nation, to create and unify their sentiment, and to mobilize and direct their efforts for the defense of the Nation.

In order that this organization may be most effective and be made permanent, the council has expressed a desire to cooperate with the Bureau of Education, and I have detailed one of the specialists in community organization to cooperate with the council for the accomplishment of our common purpose. That the people may have information in regard to community organization in its simplest form, I recommend that the manuscript transmitted herewith be published as a bulletin of the Bureau of Education. It has been prepared at my request by Dr. Henry E. Jackson, the bureau's special agent in community organization.

Respectfully submitted.

P. P. CLAXTON,  
*Commissioner.*

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.



Your State, in extending its national defense organization by the creation of community councils, is in my opinion making an advance of vital significance. It will, I believe, result when thoroughly carried out in welding the Nation together as no nation of great size has been welded before. It will build up from the bottom an understanding and sympathy and unity of purpose and effort which will no doubt have an immediate and decisive effect upon our great undertaking. You will find it, I think, not so much a new task as a unification of existing efforts; a fusion of energies now too much scattered and at times somewhat confused into one harmonious and effective power.

It is only by extending your organization to small communities that every citizen of the State can be reached and touched with the inspiration of the common cause. The schoolhouse has been suggested as an apt though not essential center for your local council. It symbolizes one of the first fruits of such an organization, namely, the spreading of the realization of the great truth that it is each one of us as an individual citizen upon whom rests the ultimate responsibility. Through this great organization we will express with added emphasis our will to win and our confidence in the utter righteousness of our purpose.

WOODROW WILSON.

THE WHITE HOUSE.

March 13, 1918.

[Letter to chairmen of State Councils of Defense.]



## FOREWORD.

The challenge of the World War to all thoughtful people is to organize human life on saner and juster lines in the construction of a better sort of world. This bulletin aims to make a suggestion toward an answer to this challenge.

The sorrow and tragedy of the war cause men and women everywhere to ask themselves not only what sort of a world they ought to work for, but also how and where they can begin to work for it. To find a practical answer to these questions is the persistent prayer of all who believe in democracy. Honest prayer is the expression of a dominant desire for what we believe is best *and also the willingness to cooperate in bringing it to pass.* The following pages are addressed to those who are willing to cooperate in answering their own prayers, to those who know what sort of world they ought to work for but are at a loss to know what is the best instrument to be used for constructing it. This bulletin suggests such an instrument.

It is a curious fact that usually it is comparatively easy to interest ten men in an indefinite scheme about which they have nothing to do but talk, whereas it is difficult to induce one man to undertake a more modest but definite piece of constructive work. But the war has awakened the desire of all people of good will *to do something.* They want to make a motor-reaction to the war's challenge. They say: "We see what needs to be done. What is the best instrument with which to do it? That is the difficult thing to find." The suggestion here made is intended for such people, who have discovered the futility of attempting to purify the water in a well by painting the pump, and who therefore seek a constructive plan in the process of building a better world.

The instrument here suggested is The Community Center, which may be put into operation anywhere, in city, village, or countryside. If we desire to get anywhere, we have to start from somewhere. The place to start from is where we are. The best point of contact with the world problem, raised anew by the war, is to be found in the community where we live, for the world problem exists in every community in America. All political questions, if considered fundamentally, will be found to apply to human needs which are at once

local, national, and international. The international problem is now, and has always been, how to organize and keep organized a method of mutual understanding by which nations may cooperate rather than compete with each other. The national problem is to do the same for the social and economic forces within the Nation itself. The problem in any local community is to do the same for the forces operating in that community. With reference to this present and permanent world problem the writer has attempted to answer two questions—what is a community center, and how ought it to be organized. He has endeavored to make the answer as brief as may be consistent with clearness.

Our three most urgent national needs are to mobilize intelligence, food, and money. But it is not possible to mobilize them until we first mobilize the people. The Nation's present need has made apparent the necessity of organizing local communities. The Council of National Defense discovered it through its experience in the war. The Bureau of Education had begun the task before we entered the war. These two organizations have now united their forces for the accomplishment of their common purpose to promote community organization throughout the Nation. The slogan of the one is, "Every school district a community council for national service." The slogan of the other is, "Every schoolhouse a community capitol and every community a little democracy."

President Wilson has clearly indicated the profound significance of this movement in the letter he wrote to commend it. He elsewhere says that our present need is "to arouse and inform the people so that each individual may be able to play his part intelligently in our great struggle for democracy and justice." This is a perfect statement of the aim of our movement. With the addition of one word it would be a complete description of it. That one word is "organize." The aim of the movement—to arouse and inform the people, to enable each individual to play his part intelligently—can be achieved only when the people organize themselves.

The creation of a democratic and intelligent social order is essentially the same task, whether our approach to it be local, national, or international. This fact has been clearly understood by thinkers as far back as Socrates, who said: "Then, without determining as yet whether war does good or harm, this much we may affirm, that now we have discovered war to be derived from causes which are also the causes of almost all the evil in States, private as well as public." Anyone, therefore, who attempts to remove these causes in a local community is working at a world problem, and he who attempts to remove them as between nations is obliged, in order to preserve his honesty and self-respect, to make the same effort within his own

nation and in his own community. It magnifies the value and stimulates one's zest in working for it to remember that a community center is the center of concentric circles which compass not only the local community but also the larger communities of the Nation and the world. To establish free trade in friendship in all three communities is the goal of the community center movement.

HENRY E. JACKSON.

FEBRUARY 1, 1918.

# A COMMUNITY CENTER—WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO ORGANIZE IT.

## PART I.

### WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CENTER?

#### THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY.

"All men naturally desire knowledge," is the buoyant sentence with which Aristotle begins his great book on Ethics. It states our ground of hope for the possibility of progress and for the success of democracy. No democratic form of government can long endure without popular education or the means of acquiring it. The first and chief aim of the community center movement is to deepen the content and broaden the scope of the term "education" and to extend the activities of the public schools so that they may evolve into people's universities.

When it is remembered that only 10 per cent of the adult citizens have had a high-school education and only 50 per cent have ever completed the grammar grades, it becomes apparent that one of our greatest national needs is a university for the education of grown men and women. The public school as a community center is the answer to this national need. The community center movement recognizes the fact that the mind matures more slowly than the body and that education is a life-long process. While the public school is dedicated primarily to the welfare of the child, it is becoming daily more evident that the Nation's welfare requires it to be used for adults and youths as well. Notwithstanding the fact that it is our finest American invention and the most successful social enterprise ever undertaken, its golden age lies before it. It is now being discovered anew in its possibilities for larger public service. The fact that all men naturally desire knowledge is the fact which has justified the investment of \$1,347,000,000 in the public-school equipment; it is the fact which now justifies the use of this

equipment by adults. In every part of the country there is a manifest tendency for the public school to develop into a house of the people to be used by them for "mutual aid in self-development." This is the significant fact at the heart of the community center movement and the touchstone of its value for the national welfare.

#### THE COMMUNITY CAPITOL.

"The walls of Sparta are built of Spartans," sang an old poet. The walls of America likewise are built of Americans. The primary function of the public schools is to make, not merely good men and women, but good citizens for the Republic. From the standpoint of citizenship, therefore, every schoolhouse ought to be used as a polling place. This is the first logical step toward making it the community capitol, although it may not be the first step chronologically. This use of the schoolhouse would save every State many thousands of dollars each year. When the people already own these houses, conveniently distributed in every section of the country, why should public funds be wasted in rent for other buildings? But economy, while a sufficient, is not the chief reason for making the schoolhouse a polling place. The best reason is the ideal for which the ballot box stands. It is the symbol of citizenship in America. As such it deserves a worthy place. In the last presidential election, President Wilson voted in a fire-engine house in Princeton, and Candidate Hughes voted in a laundry in New York City. Hitherto any kind of a place has been considered fit for the highest act of citizenship.

In the Hebrew republic the symbol of the nation was a small richly decorated box called the "Ark of the Covenant." It was kept in the most honored place in the national Temple at the capital. The corresponding emblem in the American Republic is the ballot box. It ought to occupy a place befitting its importance. The one fitting place is the public schoolhouse, the community capitol and the temple of American democracy. Moreover, the voting instrument, which is the chief national emblem in every democracy, should be constructed with architectural dignity and established permanently in the schoolhouse, because of the ideals it embodies and the supreme function it serves. It would thus be a perpetual reminder that the function of the school is to make citizens for the Republic. It would cause the question repeatedly to be asked, What kind of school subjects are best calculated to make good citizens? It would help to keep the curriculum vitalized, by connecting it with practical and national processes.

It can continue to be vital only by the continued process of adapting itself to meet the Nation's expanding needs. A fixed curriculum is a false curriculum. The significant fact about a school is not the



condition in which it is, but the direction in which it is moving. It's only safety, like that of an individual, lies in moving on. It will be stimulated to move on by making the practice of citizenship to be its goal. A constant reminder of the practice of citizenship is the presence of the polling instrument in the school.

#### THE COMMUNITY FORUM.

It may or it may not have been a mistake to have granted suffrage to the average man. An educational and character qualification for voting may now be the wiser policy to pursue in regard to both men and women, for no man is fit to govern another unless he has sufficient self-control to govern himself, and yet no man, however intelligent, can be trusted to govern another man without his consent. At any rate, universal manhood suffrage is the present fact, and nothing is so convincing as a fact. Inasmuch as the right to vote on public policies is now in the hands of the average man, it is of paramount importance that he should be given the opportunity to make himself fit to perform this function intelligently. This is the necessity on which the community forum fundamentally rests. It is a school for citizenship.

The community forum is the meeting of citizens in their school-house for the courteous and orderly discussion of all questions which concern their common welfare. A community may begin with questions in which local interest is manifest, such as good roads, or public health, or the method of raising and spending public funds, or methods of production and transportation of food products. A discussion of these questions will reveal at once the fact that they transcend local limits. A road is built to go somewhere, and it will relate one community to another. Local health conditions can not be maintained without considering other localities, for the causes of local disease frequently lie elsewhere.

A local community pays part of the revenue raised by the county. The expenditure of these funds, therefore, is the affair of the local community. The same is true of the administration of State funds. The question of production and transportation is no longer regarded as a rural problem or a city problem, but a national problem. The reason why no community should live for itself is because none exists by itself. Every community is at the center of several concentric circles. The subjects of most value for discussion in a local forum are those which connect it with county, State, and National interests. And herein lies the educational value of the forum.

One of the folk high schools of Denmark maintains a regular study called "A Window in the West," the purpose of which is to acquire new ideas from England and America, that Denmark may use them

for its own improvement. Such a course should be in the curriculum of every public school. The aim of the forum is to put a new window into the mental outlook of every community. The value of an open mind can not be calculated. Every great leader of the world's thought and action has insisted on its indispensable importance. Confucius expressed it in the golden phrase "mental hospitality." Socrates used a phrase out of which was coined the word "philosopher." He said, "I am not a wise man; I am a lover of wisdom, the spirit of truth." So highly did he regard it that he called it a holy spirit. The reason why these masterful leaders of men so prized the habit of being open-minded is because they understood that without mental hospitality no progress in any line is possible.

Ours is a Government by public opinion. It is obvious that the public welfare requires that public opinion be informed and educated. The forum is an instrument fitted to meet the most urgent public need. It is organized not on the basis of agreement, but of difference. It aims not at uniformity, but unity. It would be a stupid and unprogressive world if all were forced to think alike. We are under no obligation to agree with each other, but as neighbors and as members of America it is our moral and patriotic duty to make the attempt to understand each other.

Public discussion renders a great variety of services to spiritual and social progress. It puts a premium on intelligence, liberates a community from useless customs, puts a check on hasty action, secures united approval for measures proposed, creates the spirit of tolerance, promotes cooperation, and best of all and hardest of all it equips citizens with the ability to differ in opinion without differing in feeling. This habit can be acquired only through practice. The forum furnishes the means for mutual understanding. It aims to create public-mindedness.

#### THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB.

The basic assumption of the community center movement is that democracy is the organization of society on the basis of friendship. "Man is a political animal," said Aristotle. He requires the companionship of his fellows. His happiness is largely linked up with their approval. His instinctive need for fellowship leads him to create a sort of social center out of anything available for the purpose. The post office has served as such a village center, but the free delivery of mail is destroying its social uses. The corner store has acquired fame as an informal forum and neighborly club, but the mail-order house is rapidly robbing it of members, and at best it serves only a few. The saloon has served the purpose of a neighborhood club and friendly meeting place on equal terms for large numbers of men, but moral and economic considerations have doomed it to extinction.



The post office, corner store, and saloon are passing as social centers, but they must be replaced with something better if they are not to be replaced with something worse. For only he can destroy who can replace. The public school therefore stands before an open door of opportunity to become a neighborhood club, where the people can meet on terms which preserve their self-respect. Almost every individual lives in the center of several concentric circles. There is the little inner circle of his intellectual and spiritual comrades; then the larger circle of his friends; beyond that the still larger circle of those with whom the business of life brings him into contact; and the largest circle of all includes all members of the community as fellow citizens. There need be no conflict among these circles, no suggestion of inferiority or superiority. It is never to be forgotten that these circles are concentric. The experiences of life make them natural and necessary.

The community center is limited only by this last and largest circle. It seeks to broaden the basis of unity among men, to multiply their points of contact, to consider those interests which all have in common. It is not difficult to discover that these are bigger, both in number and importance, than the things which separate men. The list of things which can only be achieved as joint enterprises is long. Roads can only be built by community cooperation. Only so can the community's health be safeguarded. Food, clothing, and shelter are the common needs of all. Production and transportation are therefore questions of social service. The Greek word for "private," peculiar to one's self, unrelated to the interest of others, is the original of our word "idiot." The corresponding modern term in our common speech is "crank." The community center is a sure cure for "cranks." It aims to promote public-mindedness.

The schoolhouse used as a neighborhood club renders therefore an invaluable public service. It seeks to create the neighborly spirit essential for concerted action. The means employed are various—games, folk dances, dramas, chorus singing—which require the subordination of self to cooperative effort, dinner parties, where the people break bread in celebration of their communion with each other as neighbors. These activities not only render a service to the individual by promoting his happiness and decreasing his loneliness, they discover in the community unsuspected abilities and unused resources. To set them to work not only develops the individual but enriches the community life.

The same is true of the spirit of play in general. To cultivate the spirit of play not only meets an instinctive human need for physical and mental recreation, but renders a distinctive service to democracy on account of its spiritual value. One can carry on the work of de-

struction by himself, but he must organize in order to produce. He must cooperate in order to play. He can not monopolize the victory; he must share it with the team. Play thus develops the spirit of sportsmanship, the willingness to play fair, the capacity to be a good loser.

It thus becomes apparent that the neighborhood club furnishes the key to the possible solution of a variety of problems—the Americanization problem, for example. The object of the community-center movement is to achieve “freemen’s citizenship,” both for native and foreign-born alike. But citizenship means membership. It is obvious that the teaching of English to aliens is not sufficient to make them members of America. To acquire the language as a means of communication with their fellows is, of course, a necessary preliminary. But it is only a means to an end. If they are ever to feel that they belong with us, the right hand of fellowship must be extended to them. The neighborhood spirit alone can create in them the spirit of America. One of the by-laws of the constitution of the Hebrew republic was to this effect: “Love ye, therefore, the resident alien, for ye were resident aliens in the land of Egypt.” This law does not enjoin citizens to teach them the language of the land. The necessity for that is assumed. The chief thing needful, it says, is to love them. Friendliness is not only the soul of democracy but also the most successful method of securing practical results. The community center is the most available and effective instrument through which this method can be applied. The process of Americanization consists essentially not in learning a language but in acquiring a spirit.

Cooperation and the spirit of sportsmanship are indispensable qualities for citizens of a democracy. The spirit and purpose of a neighborhood club are clearly suggested by the significant questions asked and answered by a negro bishop of Kansas. “When is a man lost?” he asked. “A man is never lost when he doesn’t know where he is, for he always knows where he is wherever he is. A man is lost when he doesn’t know where the other folks are.”

#### THE HOME AND SCHOOL LEAGUE.

The free public school is at once the product and safeguard of democracy. The kind of public school, therefore, which a community has is an accurate index of its community consciousness and its estimate of democratic ideals. “The average farmer and rural teacher,” says T. J. Coates, “think of the rural school as a little equipment where a little teacher, at a little salary, for a little while, teaches little children little things.” The object of the home and school department of the community center is to substitute the word “big”

for the word "little" in the above statement, to magnify the work and function of the school, to make it worthy to occupy a larger place in the people's thought and affection. This is the work which Home and School Leagues are now doing. The community center in no wise interferes with their work. It is not a rival but an ally. Its plan is to give to and not to take from the Home and School League. Indeed, it is probable that the Home and School League quite generally may become the parent organization out of which will be born the community center. This is the natural and logical thing to happen, and in many places it is the process of development now in operation. Wherever this occurs it is against the natural order for the mother to be jealous of the daughter. If and when a Home and School League expands itself into a community center, it ought to become a department of the community organization.

By becoming a department of a larger organization and limiting itself to its own special task, the Home and School League will not only do its work better, but it will find it more than sufficient to occupy all its time. Its specific work is to promote the progress of the school and to improve the school equipment. To this end it seeks to secure closer cooperation between the home and school, the parents and teachers. When Madame de Stael asked Napoleon what was needed to improve the educational system of France, he replied, "Better mothers." The noblest influence on any child is that of a good mother. Every school, therefore, ought to strive to keep a close bond between the home and itself. It ought to do so not only for the sake of the children while they are in school but also before they come to school and after they leave it. To build battlements around girls and boys at the point of their greatest danger, during the period between 16 and 21, when they are most neglected, is a task worthy in itself to enlist the deepest interest and occupy the entire energy of the Home and School League.

The three unsettled questions which schoolmasters are always debating—the content of the curriculum, the method of teaching, and the business management—will be illuminated if there is brought to bear upon them the viewpoint of parents who own and support the schools and who are interested to get the proper return on their investment. The same will be true of all school questions if considered from the standpoint of the community center. It will connect school activities with life processes. This means vitality for the school. For, as the great educational reformer Grundtvig said, "Any school that has its beginning in the alphabet and its ending only in book learning is a school of death."

Inasmuch as the key to a better school is a better teacher, the home and school department of the community center will make it its spe-

cial aim to develop the type of teacher described in Herbert Quick's "The Brown Mouse." It will endeavor to secure for teachers not only a larger degree of moral support but more adequate financial support, which is not the only thing needful, but the first thing needful toward the attainment of this goal. The constructive service rendered to the Republic by public-school teachers is as important, if not the most important, rendered by any class of public servants, and they are not mercenary or lacking in heroic devotion to the common welfare. But it is idle to expect that the right type of teacher can be secured or retained without a decent living wage. If Henry Ford is able to make \$5 the minimum daily wage for the work of producing his machines, there is still more justification for fixing this as the minimum for the far more delicate and difficult business of making citizens for the Nation. When a community offers such a wage, then and then only will it be able to secure a \$5 type of person for the position. In order to retain them after they are secured there ought to be a school manse—a teachers' house—as part of the necessary equipment of every school. Proper support and housing in order to secure the right type of teacher in itself constitutes a worthy program for this department.

The home and school department will naturally have charge of such school-extension activities as evening classes for youths and adults. These classes should be designed not only as a part of the work in the Americanization of immigrants, but for the better equipment of all citizens. "It is the prime business of legislators," said Confucius, "to make more valuable to the people those things from which the people are accustomed to derive value." This states in brief the function of the home and school department. The Nation's destiny was decided at the beginning by the establishment, for the first time in the modern world, of a free public-school system. To keep vital its processes and to improve its equipment that it may be still more valuable to the people is the chief business of this department.

#### THE COMMUNITY BANK.

The purpose of discussion in a community forum is not entertainment but action. It is responsible discussion; that is, it is discussion by citizens who bear the responsibility for voting on the question under discussion. Such questions will be many and various. Some will have a temporary and some a permanent value. They will naturally grow out of community-center activities. But in order to guarantee that these social recreational and educational activities shall be related to life there ought to be established one or two departments to meet concrete human needs.

One of the best of these is a community bank, for it not only meets a practical need but also cultivates an ethical view of money and uses



it as a means of moral culture. A community bank is primarily a savings bank both for children and adults. As regards children, it ought, so far as possible, to be a part of the curriculum of the school. Such banks are now conducted in many schools for children. Cooperative banks are conducted for adults in some States under the name of credit unions. New York State has a good law on credit unions, on which the laws of other States have been modeled.

But a real community bank is designed to serve other purposes than those of saving. Its aim is to multiply the efficiency of the people's savings by pooling them for cooperative uses. Its aim is to capitalize character and to democratize credit. It serves a community use by enabling the people to do jointly what they can not do separately. By clubbing their resources they can use their own money for their own productive purposes.

Such a bank, operated for the common welfare, will not only furnish the working capital for community enterprises, but will also be a loan society. It will make small short-time loans to its members on reasonable terms. It will thus become the salvation of the poor from the tyranny and degradation of the loan shark. It will also make large long-time loans to young men and women who desire to marry and start homes, in order to enable them to become the owners of houses. It will permit them to repay the loan on the amortization plan. No community could render a more statesman-like service to its members. The service already rendered by building and loan associations, which are in fact cooperative banks, is a guarantee of the success of the plan. There are in the United States 7,034 such associations, with a membership of 3,568,342, and assets amounting to \$1,696,707,041. These figures are eloquent and tell a significant story. They show how ready is the response of men to the opportunity of owning their own houses and that this opportunity needs to be vastly extended. The motto of the United States league of these associations is "The American Home, the Safeguard of American Liberties." The motto is both sentimental and accurately true. The well-being of a nation depends primarily upon the existence of conditions under which family life may be promoted and fostered. The family is the true social unit, older than church or state and more important than either. The welfare of family life is every statesman's chief concern.

The community bank enters not only a vitally important but a practically unoccupied field, and will meet felt needs unmet at present. The cooperative handling of credit is not new. It has been done in Europe for 50 years with marked success. The community bank is the adaptation to American conditions of the Raiffeisen Bank of Germany, the Luzzatti Bank of Italy, and the Government Bank of New Zealand. It is a democratic bank; that is,

it is *of* the people, in that it receives the people's money; it is *by* the people, in that it is operated by the people themselves; it is *for* the people, in that the money is used for the welfare of the people who saved it.

A community bank's ability to render these needed public services depends wholly on the people's desire and capacity to save and their willingness to pool their savings. To cultivate the habit of thrift is the first necessity. That America needs to acquire this habit is too obvious to need comment. Americans are the least provident of peoples. Compared with a list of 14 other nations, the number of people out of every thousand who have savings accounts is only about one-sixth as many in America as in the nation highest on this list, and less than one-half as many as in the nation lowest on the list. Switzerland stands highest, with 551. Denmark is next, with 442. The lowest is Italy, with 220. But in America it is only 99.

The economic welfare of a community, however, is not the most important result which the habit of thrift produces. Since money is the commonest representative of value and a symbol of the property sense, it is the best practical means of moral culture. A community bank will furnish the best antidote for the common desire to get something for nothing, "the determination of the ownership of property by appeal to chance," the habit of gambling, which is distorting the moral sense of all classes of people.

The community bank is designed to promote an ethical view of money. When we consider that if a man earns \$100 for a month's labor he has put into this money his physical force, his nervous energy, his brain power, that part of his life has been given away in return for it, then money becomes a sacred thing. When we consider the humiliation and suffering of a destitute old age entailed by a lack of economy, then the need of thrift assumes a new significance. When one considers how manifold are the bearings of money on the lives of men, and how many are the virtues with which money is mixed up—honesty, justice, generosity, frugality, forethought, and self-sacrifice—an ethical view of it is unescapable.

A small competency is necessary to make life what it ought to be for every man, especially in a democracy. "Whoever has sixpence," said Carlyle, "is sovereign over all to the extent of that sixpence; commands cooks to feed him, philosophers to teach him, kings to mount guard over him, to the extent of that sixpence." An assumed competence, however small, gives the priceless blessing of independence. Not only personal health and happiness but social and political independence are involved in a man's saving fund. The kind and amount of service which a community bank can render to democratic ideals is beyond calculation.

## THE COOPERATIVE EXCHANGE.

The fundamental aim of the community-center movement is to secure cooperation for the common welfare. But if cooperation is to be anything more than a beautiful dream, there must be cooperation about something. It must not only be good, but be good for something. When the spirit of cooperation has been created, it must have an outlet in action, for to stir up the emotions and give them no outlet is mere sentimentality and is dangerous to moral health.

This principle is at once the reason and impulse back of the cooperative enterprises now carried on in schools. They assume a great variety of forms. Sometimes it is a cooperative creamery and cheese factory, which in some rural sections has meant new hope and larger resources, not only for the school, but also for the homes of the community. Sometimes it is a farmers' club for the purchase of farm supplies. It may be a canning club in which the women meet in the school to preserve fruits and vegetables and sell them at cost, in order to raise funds for community uses, or for the national Red Cross. It may be a housekeepers' alliance, in which the women meet to exchange ideas as to the best methods of buying and preparing foods. In one community center the people have agreed to get their milk from one source and to pay for it in advance, in order to eliminate the wastes in distribution and receive the benefit of the money thus saved. For the successful handling of farm products it is essential that they be standardized both in form and quality. For this purpose it would be well to use a trademark or label, which would be of psychological value in suggesting teamwork, and also be a guarantee of quality.

All of these activities are now in the process of being grouped together under a buying club, or cooperative exchange, for the organization of which there is a rapidly growing demand. The State of North Carolina has already passed a law authorizing communities to organize them in the schoolhouses. Cooperative buying and banking has been operated with notable success for 50 years in England, Denmark, and other countries. It has met little success as yet in America, because Americans have been too rich and too individualistic. There seems to be an obvious need for an intermediate step between unlimited competition and the European type of cooperative society. It seems probable that this need will be supplied by the buying club. It is not a shop in the English sense, nor a store in the modern sense, but a store in the original American sense—that is, a storehouse, a distribution station for goods kept in their original containers. Indeed, for the most part no goods need to be kept in the schoolhouse at all. The schoolhouse is used chiefly for the stimulation and formation of plans of operation.



Three things are necessary to success in any practical cooperative enterprise—a desire to save, good business sense, and the spirit of cooperation; of these the greatest is the last, because cooperation is primarily a state of mind: it is a matter of education. It is significant that the cooperative societies of England not only gave the name "society" to their organization, but also devote 2½ per cent of their annual profits to the education of their members in the principle and practice of cooperation.

Thus there grew up in these stores real social-center activities. In America social and civic activities are already started in the schoolhouses, and out of them practical cooperation is now developing. Our approach is the reverse of the English experience, but the principle is the same. It is highly important to see clearly that the other community-center activities are an educational necessity to the success of its practical cooperative enterprises. A buying club unattached to the means of creating the cooperative spirit is almost sure to fail.

It will save time to recognize at the beginning that to acquire the spirit and method of cooperation is a slow process of education. The chief danger to be guarded against is the common tendency on the part of Americans to demand fruit the day the tree is planted. While the spirit of cooperation is difficult to acquire, like all other good things, yet it is worth all it costs. Cooperation in buying and banking is itself the best of means for moral culture. Its educational value is of the highest. It minimizes the evils of debt, cultivates self-control and self-reliance, checks reckless expenditure, develops a sense of responsibility, quickens intelligence and a public spirit, and prepares citizens for self-government in a democratic state. The schoolhouse is not only the appropriate place to acquire these educational values and cooperative virtues, but it also furnishes the inspiration for success in the process, because the American public school is itself the most successful social enterprise yet undertaken in this or any other nation.

#### THE CHILD'S RIGHT OF WAY.

It is because there exists in America a marked degree of independence and initiative, and consequently a wide divergence in local conditions, that community centers differ widely in the kind and number of their activities. While variety in unity is the democratic law of development, yet unity in variety is the other half of the same law. There are certain kinds of activities required by universal human needs. The activities herein described are the typical activities adapted to the average normal community, both rural and urban. If then one were asked what a community center aims to be, it is a

sufficiently full and accurate answer to say that it is, what has just been briefly described, a people's university, a community capitol, a forum, a neighborhood club, a home-and-school league, a community bank, and a cooperative exchange. It is all of these in one organization. The unity among them is vital and organic like the unity of the fingers in a hand.

Whatever the number and variety of activities undertaken, the distinguishing mark of the community center is the fact that it is organized not on the basis of personal pleasure or private profit or any political or religious creed, but on the basis of responsibility for the welfare of children. The "house of the people" in which it meets is the symbol of its central idea. The public school is the only national institution primarily dedicated to the welfare of the child.

Here as nowhere else men and women forget their partisan and sectarian divisions and breathe an atmosphere which accentuates their resemblances and minimizes their differences. Childhood is the ground floor of life. It takes us beneath all superficial and artificial distinctions.

Centuries ago a great statesman and philosopher said that the key to any right solution of our social and economic problems is to be found by "putting the child in the midst of them." Jesus regarded the child as the model citizen in the Kingdom of God, which was his term for democracy. The child is still the most respectable citizen we have. The position of Jesus on the place of the child has been shown by John Fiske to be abundantly supported by the biological history of the race. The prolonged infancy of the human baby is the factor which developed motherhood and all our altruistic sentiments. And it will be by keeping the child in the midst of our thought, by giving the child the right of way in our economics, by making the child's welfare the formative principle in our social and civic activities that we will transform these activities into community interests.

This the community center aims to do. In brief, it is a movement for the extension of the spirit of the home and fireside, the spirit of childhood, of good will, of intelligent sympathy, of mutual aid—the extension of this spirit to all the activities of the community. The indispensable importance of this spirit can not be overemphasized, for without it a community center is a body without a soul, and a body without a soul is not a living thing. A community center's capacity to produce practical results is always to be measured by its capacity to create such a spirit. For, as John Dewey wisely says:

The chief constituent of social efficiency is intelligent sympathy or good will. For sympathy, as a desirable quality, is something more than mere feeling. It is a cultivated imagination for what men have in common and a rebellion at whatever unreasonably divides them.

## PART II.

### HOW TO ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY CENTER.

What needs to be done is fairly clear; how to do it is the difficult thing. "If," said the shrewd Portia, "to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces." Nevertheless, to discover how, while difficult, is an inspiring task. In the organization of a community center the essential factors to be considered are its membership, its size, its executive officer, its board of directors, its finances, and its constitution. The suggestions here offered concerning them, together with the reasons for the suggestions, are the product of experience and have been tested in operation.

#### A LITTLE DEMOCRACY. ✓

The organization of a community around the schoolhouse as its capitol is the creation of a new political unit, a little democracy. It is new in the sense that it is the revival and enlargement of an old institution that we ought not willingly to let die. Thomas Jefferson did not exaggerate when he said:

"Those wards called townships in New England are the vital principle of their governments, and have proved themselves the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government and for its preservation. . . . As Cato, then, concluded every speech with the words, 'Carthago delenda est,' so do I conclude every opinion with the injunction, 'Divide the counties into wards.'"

The movement to organize local self-governing communities takes us back not only to the New England town meeting but still further back to the Teutonic "mark," the Russian "mir," and to the ancient Swiss cantonal assembly. The fact that free village communities in some form have existed in so many parts of the world is a significant indication of a universal conviction that such organization is a necessity to human welfare.

The community center aims to form such a free village community, a town, a borough, a little democracy, both in the cities and the open

country. Its capitol, or headquarters, is the schoolhouse, because this is the most American institution and the only one suitable for the purpose. It alone provides a place where all can meet on equal terms of self-respect. It is conveniently distributed in every city, town, and village in America. The term "center" applies to the schoolhouse, the place of meeting. The term applied to the organization of the people themselves is "community association."

The first step in organization is to define the boundaries of the community. These ought to be determined along natural lines, such as the territory from which the children in the school are drawn, or a district in which the people come together for other reasons than the fact that an artificial line is drawn around them. It ought not to be too large.

Being a little democracy, all adult citizens, both men and women, living in the prescribed territory are members of it. It must be comprehensive if the public schoolhouse is to be used as its capitol. It must be nonpartisan, nonsectarian, and nonexclusive. You do not become a member of a community center by joining. You *are* a member by virtue of your citizenship and residence in the district. Everywhere else men and women are divided into groups and classes on the ground of their personal taste or occupation. In a community center they meet as "folks" on the ground of their common citizenship and their common human needs. This is the distinguishing mark of the community center.

It is quite true that this democratic ideal is difficult to operate. That is nothing against it. All worth-while ideals are difficult. Fisher Ames says, "A monarchy is a merchantman which sails well but will sometimes strike a rock and go to the bottom, whilst a republic is a raft which will never sink, but then your feet are always in the water." Let us grant that it may be even hot water, but it is quite as true that the very difficulty in operating the democratic ideal constitutes its fascination and its worth. When a thing becomes easy of accomplishment it loses much, both of its value and its interest.

#### MEMBERSHIP IN AMERICA.

It is possible for the form of democracy to exist without its spirit and method. The term "community" is not merely "a geographical expression." It applies not only to a geographical area, but embodies an idea. Its real content includes the spirit and method of democracy. Unless it promotes this spiritual ideal its meaning is of small value. The Century Dictionary quotes the Attorney General of the United States as saying, "The phrase, 'a citizen of the United States' without addition or qualification means neither more nor less than a member of the Nation."



Membership implies obligation and responsibility. It gives not only a new sense of pride, but an intimate feeling of duty to the common welfare for a man to say to himself, "I am a member of America." To make citizenship mean membership is one of the obvious needs in every community. The outstanding characteristic of the American Republic, which is unlike any other in the world, is that it is a double government, a double allegiance. It is a "Republic of republics." Every citizen feels two loyalties—one to his State and the other to his Nation. In addition to these two he feels a third loyalty. It is to his local community. And just as every man is a better citizen if he is first of all devoted to his own family, so will he be more loyal to the State and Nation if he is loyal to his own community.

To induce citizens to recognize their responsibility for the administration of public business, to become active members of their own communities, to assist in the improvement of local schools, of politics, of roads, of the general health, of housing conditions—this is the result which the community center aims to achieve. It is the law of all improvement that you must start from where you are. If a man can not love his own community, which he can see, how can he love the whole country, which he can not see?

The success of the work in any community depends on the amount of public-mindedness existing there or the possibility of creating it. Those who undertake community-center work ought to guard themselves against the danger of expecting too much at the start. To develop public-mindedness is a slow and difficult task. It ought never to be forgotten that democracy, like liberty, is not an accomplishment but a growth, not an act but a process.

It is of the highest importance that this fact should be perceived by pioneers in community work, in order that they may not be deceived by the passion for size and numbers. A dozen public-minded persons are sufficient for a beginning. One of the biggest movements in history began with a little circle of 12 men.

They who have discovered the meaning of democracy do not need large immediate results to keep up their courage; they only need a cause; and the greatest of all causes is constructive democracy. The people will respond when they understand. In the entire history of the community-center movement there has never been a time more than now when they were so ready to respond. Let no worker in any community despise small beginnings. It is always better to begin small and grow big than to begin big and grow small.

#### THE COMMUNITY SECRETARY.

Nothing runs itself unless it is running down hill. If community work is to be done, somebody has to be the doer of it. The growing

realization of this fact has led to the creation of a new profession. The term applied to this profession is "community secretary," "a keeper of secrets," a servant of the whole community. This community executive should be elected by ballot in a public election held in the schoolhouse and supported out of public funds. There are now four such publicly elected and publicly supported community secretaries in Washington, D. C., and eight more such offices are in the process of being created. It seems certain that it is destined to be one of the most honored and useful of all public offices. Its ideal was expressed by the "first real democrat in history," when he said, "The kings of the Gentiles are their masters, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. With you it is not so; but let the greatest among you be as the younger, and the leader be like him who serves."

The qualifications for this office are manifestly large, and its duties complex and exacting. The ablest person to be found is none too able. The function of the secretary is nothing less than to organize and to *keep organized* all the community activities herein described; to assist the people to learn the science and to practice the art of living together; and to show them how they may put into effective operation the spirit and method of cooperation. Who is equal to a task like this? In addition to intellectual power and a large store of general information, one must be equipped with many more qualities equally important. The seven cardinal virtues of a community secretary are: Patience, unselfishness, a sense of humor, a balanced judgment, the ability to differ in opinion without differing in feeling, respect for the personality of other people, and faith in the good intentions of the average man. When one considers the requirements for this office, one's first impulse is to do what King Solomon did. After making a rarely beautiful description of a wise and ideal wife, he ended it by asking, "but where can such a woman be found?"

There will be no dearth of able men and women to fill this office, when once it is properly created and adequately supported. For there is a particular satisfaction, not otherwise obtainable, to be derived from the service of a cause bigger than one's personal interests. Where possible, the community secretary ought to be the principal of the school. But where the principal can not be released from his other duties sufficiently to undertake the work, the secretary ought to be a person who is agreeable to the principal, in order to insure concerted action. In thousands of villages and open-country communities the teacher's work lasts for only part of the year and the compensation is shamefully inadequate. This is a great

economic waste as well as an injury to children. If these teachers were made community secretaries, were given an all-year-round job and were compensated for the additional work by a living wage, it would mean a better type of teacher and a better type of school. The bigger task would not only demand the bigger person, but the task itself would create them. Moreover, when the teacher's activities become linked up with life processes the community will be the more willing to support the office adequately. It seems clear that the office of community secretary is the key to a worthier support of the school. It will magnify the function of teaching, give a new civic status to the teacher, and make more apparent the patriotic and constructive service which the school renders the nation.

While the demands which this new profession makes may seem discouragingly high, nevertheless therein lie its merit and charm. "Our reach should exceed our grasp," or there is no opportunity for growth. The position is so big that it can not be outgrown. It is worthy of anyone's life-time loyalty. A change to any other vocation is not a promotion. A teacher who is a community secretary, or who is associated with one in community work, is justified in having the same degree of self-respect and exalted regard for the worth of his work which was expressed by a great pioneer in the same field, Pestalozzi. At one period of his career, he went to Paris, and a friend endeavored to present him to Napoleon the Great. Napoleon declined. "I have no time for A. B. C.," he said. When Pestalozzi returned to his home his friends asked him, "Did you see Napoleon the Great?" "No; I did not see Napoleon the Great, and Napoleon the Great did not see me."

#### THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

However able a community secretary may be, no one alone is able enough for the constructive kind of work which the community center requires. Since it is a cooperative enterprise, it is necessary that it be democratically organized. The next step in its organization therefore should be to provide the secretary with a cabinet. It may be called a board of directors, or a community council, or an executive committee. These names suggest its various functions. Its first function is to give council and advice to the community secretary, to act as a little forum for discussion, out of which may develop wise methods of procedure. Its next function is to share with the secretary the responsibility for the work, the burden of which is too heavy to be borne by anyone alone. But the cabinet is not a legislative body alone, to determine what is to be done, but also an executive body as well. It is not only an executive body, to carry



out the general plans of the association, but also a body of directors to plan and conduct special kinds of activities. In every community there are men and women who have the ability and leisure to render public service. As directors they would have a recognized position and channel through which they can more effectively render such service.

Each director ought to be the head of a department of work, or at least the head of every department of work ought to be a director. The head of each department ought to choose the members of his own committee. Thus by having the heads of departments of work on the board of directors, the entire work of the association can be frequently reviewed, and the departments of activity can by cooperating not only avoid needless waste through duplication but also stimulate each other. The board of directors ought to hold regular meetings in the schoolhouse, and in order that the work may be responsive to public opinion the meetings ought to be open to any who wish to attend them, just as the meetings of a town council are open. The community center stands for visible government and daylight diplomacy.

In the conduct of the association's activities a large measure of freedom ought to be granted the directors as well as the secretary. There can be no responsibility without freedom. The test of democracy is its willingness to trust its leaders. It is a test which democracies find it difficult to measure up to. The association ought to hold its officials to strict accountability, and it has the power to recall and replace them, but while they are in office and bear the responsibility they ought to be given freedom to use the means and methods which in their judgment are best suited to produce the results expected of them. The question here raised by democracy is not the extent of authority but its source. The principle of democracy is preserved if the source of authority is limited; the efficiency of democracy is secured if the extent of authority is enlarged.

The directors in community-center work will not only feel the need of taking counsel with each other, but also of getting suggestions from other communities. In every city and county the community associations would do wisely to form a league for the purpose of pooling their experience and helping each other in what is manifestly a difficult task. In such a conference the representatives of local communities would discover that there may be many good roads leading to the same goal. Moreover, while it is possible to agree on our goal, it is rarely possible to agree on the methods of reaching it. No principle is more important to observe in conducting community work. If, then, we can agree on our goal, we may well spare criticism on our fellows who travel a road different from ours.

## THE TROUBLE COMMITTEE.

It is not so difficult to organize a community center; the difficulty is to keep it organized. By no means the only one, but the chief means of securing a permanently useful community center is to have a wise and constructive program, big enough to merit interest. A good way to formulate such a program is to appoint a permanent committee which we may call "the trouble committee." The function of this committee is not to make trouble, but to remove it. Its task is to discover the causes of trouble in the community, to learn the reasons for dissatisfaction, to state the problems which ought to be solved, to exhibit the thing that needs to be done.

A community center can get helpful suggestions concerning programs from State universities or extension committees, and it will naturally want to discuss the questions prominently in the public mind, but the most interesting and constructive program is the attempt to improve conditions of living on its home soil. In such a program the first thing needed preparatory to action is diagnosis. Problem making is almost as important as problem solving. To know what the problem is, is half the battle. When the terms of a problem are accurately stated, the problem itself is partly solved in the process. It was a frequent experience of Lincoln that, after he had stated the facts of a case in court, the trial of it was arrested and called off.

The work of the trouble committee is problem making. For example, why are country-bred boys leaving the farm in such large numbers; is farming a profitable industry; to what extent is the food of the country produced by the unpaid labor of children; does it pay better to rent or to own a farm; could an average young man earn enough from a farm to pay for it by honest labor in a reasonable number of years; why do half the girls and boys fail to finish the grammar grades in school; is the work of transportation and distribution of food supplies economically done; why is the cost of living so high? If any community center should attempt to discover the causes of these unsatisfactory conditions, it would be a vital and attractive program sufficient to occupy it for several years.

The function of the trouble committee is to furnish nuts for the community association to crack. No one believes in diagnosis for the sake of diagnosis any more than he believes in "amputation for the sake of amputation." Its only use is to reveal the disease and to point the way to a remedy. The aim of the trouble committee is to point out the difficulties at the bottom of our social problems for the sake of removing them. Whenever they are removed, the problem vanishes. The method of the committee is constructive democracy.

No community, however, ought to assume that it can solve all of its problems, at least, not speedily. "We are not born," said Goethe, "to solve the problems of the world but to find out where the problems begin, and then to keep within the limits of what we can grasp." This is a luminous remark, and the trouble committee merely assumes that in treating any problem the place to begin is at the beginning of it, and that the beginning of it is its cause. It assumes that "there is no alleviation for the suffering of mankind except veracity of thought and action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is." It assumes that it is not possible to purify the water in a well by painting the pump. It is painful to think how much social energy has been wasted in this process. No community center whose program is limited to painting the pump can either win or long hold the support of thoughtful men and women. Nor does it deserve to. The test of sanity used in some asylums is to take the patient to a trough partially filled and into which an open spigot is pouring new supplies of water. The patient is asked to bail the water out of the trough. If he attempts to do so without first turning off the flow he is regarded as insane, and properly so. It is obviously sane to turn off the spigot, to remove the causes of disorder, if we ever expect to produce a social order in harmony with the intelligence and conscience of the Nation. This is the purpose and function of the trouble committee. For the most part, this committee holds the key to the success or failure of a community center.

#### PUBLIC AND SELF-SUPPORT.

The finances of an organization usually constitute its storm center. Money is the kind of thing it is difficult to get along with and impossible to get along without. After a community center determines its plans and policies, the next question in its organization is finance. But since money is the root of so much trouble, it ought to be kept in the background. It is properly called "ways and means." It is not the end; human welfare is the end. Money is a detail, and ought always to be treated as such.

The superior advantage of a community center over private organizations is that it does not need an amount of money sufficient to cause it any distress. To begin with, there are no dues. They are already paid when the taxes are paid. The schoolhouse, together with heat, light, and janitor service, and in some places a portion of the secretary's salary, is provided out of public funds. Thus the overhead charges are comparatively very small. The time will doubtless come when the entire expense will be provided out of public funds, but the movement is new; and for the present and immediate future, if the building, heat, light, and janitor service are provided, it is all that can reasonably be expected.

2 The community center needs, for the present, to supplement its public funds. The highest salary paid out of public funds to a community secretary in Washington, D. C., is \$420 per year. This is not a salary, but a contribution toward a salary. This amount must be increased if we can hope ever to secure and retain the right type of person for this position. Then there is the stationery, postage, printing, and clerical work. How are these needs to be met? The only way is by voluntary effort. Each department of activity ought to be self-supporting. Those departments, like the buying club and the bank, which have an income ought to contribute a certain regular percentage to the association as a whole, because its general activities are necessary to the success of these departments. This percentage should be considered part of the necessary operating expenses of each department. The members of the community association ought to register to indicate their intention to take an active part in its affairs. When they do, a small registration fee should be charged.

These two sources will doubtless net sufficient funds. If they do not, then voluntary contributions and entertainments should furnish what is needed. It ought to be clearly noted that for a community center to raise part of its funds by voluntary effort does not mean that it is privately supported. The community association is a public body. As such, what money it raises is public money. It is not private support, but voluntary self-help. In a community center, public support and self-support are one and the same thing. Since the amount needed to be raised by voluntary effort is smaller than the amount received from public funds, there is little danger that large givers will have the opportunity to dominate the policies of the community center through their gifts. Above all others, this is the one danger most to be guarded against. Because it is chiefly supported by public taxation, the community center is a place where all can meet on the basis of self-respect, where a man's standing is determined not by gifts of money, but by character and intelligence. Whenever this condition ceases to exist the community center dies.

But so long as the finances are organized democratically, the need for the community itself to raise part of its fund is a moral advantage and is social justice. For until public opinion becomes informed and unified a city or county must be fair to all its communities. To compel one community, without its consent, to support the activities of another is manifestly unjust and undemocratic. Whitman's definition of democracy, "I will have nothing which every other man may not have the counterpart of on like terms," is our guiding principle in community finances. For a community to raise part of its funds is not only social justice to other communities but a benefit to the community itself. The community center is an enterprise



for mutual aid in self-development. The process of raising part of its own funds is one of the means of such development. The people are compelled to pay taxes, but what they freely choose to contribute to their own enterprise is the only trustworthy guide to their attitude toward it and the best stimulus of their devotion to it. There can be self-development only where there is freedom. Partial voluntary support by a community insures local autonomy. "Democracy," says Bertrand Russell, "is a device—the best so far invented—for diminishing the interference of governments with liberty." But political freedom is conditioned upon financial freedom. A degree of self-support, therefore, frees a community from the domination of city and county governments. These considerations, if accepted as true, convert apparent burdens into blessings and weights into wings.

#### A WORKING CONSTITUTION.

What's a constitution among friends? It's a necessity if they are to continue to be friends. As the word itself suggests, a constitution establishes the basis on which friends may stand for the accomplishment of their common purposes. Its value is always to be measured by the importance of the purpose to be accomplished. Inasmuch as the purpose of a community center is of the highest value not only to the welfare of the local community, but also to the welfare of democracy in the Nation and in the world, the making of its constitution is a highly important item in its organization. "If democracy," said Havelock Ellis, "means a state in which every man shall be a freeman, neither in economic, nor intellectual, nor moral subjection, two processes at least are necessary to render democracy possible; on the one hand, a large and many-sided education; on the other, the reasonable organization of life"—nothing less than to state how these two objects may be secured is the purpose of the constitution of a community center.

It will thus be seen that this constitution is very different from that of an ordinary society, which merely aims to give information about officers and meetings. This one may deeply affect the spiritual and economic life of a community. As the expression of certain ideas in a document known as "Magna chara," was a great gain in the long fight for freedom in the English-speaking world, so the expression of a community's new social purpose may mean new freedom for it.

As regards the work of the community center, the constitution is a working agreement, a clear understanding as to what is to be done and who is to do it. A clear statement will prevent needless friction.

and confusion. As regards the growth of the work in the community, the constitution will serve the purpose of propaganda. If a new or uninformed member of the community should ask an active member, "What is a community center and what is its purpose?" a copy of the constitution ought to furnish a full answer to his question. Therefore, it should not be too brief, if it is to answer this purpose.

Each community ought to draft its own constitution, not only because the needs of communities vary, and not only because it should be the honest expression of the community's own thought and purpose, but especially because a constitution brought from outside and dropped on the people's heads has little value for the community. Of course, it is possible for a community to work over and assimilate another community's constitution until it becomes its own. It ought also to get help and suggestions from as many constitutions as it can find. For this reason there will be found in Part III the copy of a constitution which the writer prepared to meet the needs of the Wilson Normal Community in Washington, D. C., his own community. It was patiently considered in committee and thoroughly discussed in public meetings. It is now in operation.

It is better for the people to make their own, either by creating a new one or adapting others to their needs, even if it is not as well done as somebody else could do it for them. In starting a community center an organizing committee should be charged with the task of drafting and submitting a constitution. If several weeks were spent on the task both in committee work and in public discussion, the time would be well spent. The educational value of the process is too great for the people to miss. The process would educate a considerable number who will grasp the meaning of a community center and who will therefore be equipped to a degree for conducting its work.

While the types of constitutions will be very various, yet there are certain formative principles which are basic in the structure of a community center. They are so essential to the life of the community ideal that the writer has called them "The ten commandments for a community center." They are as follows:

- I. It must guarantee freedom of thought and freedom in its expression.
- II. It must aim at unity, not uniformity, and accentuate resemblances, not differences.
- III. It must be organized democratically, with the right to learn by making mistakes.
- IV. It must be free from the domination of money, giving the right of way to character and intelligence.
- V. It must be nonpartisan, nonsectarian, and nonexclusive both in purpose and practice.

- VI. Remember that nothing will run itself unless it is running down hill.
- VII. Remember that to get anywhere, it is necessary to start from where you are.
- VIII. Remember that the thing to be done is more important than the method of doing it.
- IX. Remember that the water in a well can not be purified by painting the pump.
- X. Remember that progress is possible only when there is mental hospitality to new ideas.

#### DECREASE OF ORGANIZATIONS.

Edward Everett Hale reported Louis Agassiz as saying that when he came to America one of the amazing things he discovered was that no set of men could get together to do anything, though there were but five of them, unless they first drew up a constitution. If 10 botanists, he said, met in a hotel in Switzerland to hear a paper read, they would sit down and hear it. But if American botanists meet for the same purpose, they spend the first day in forming an organization, appointing a committee to draw a constitution, correcting the draft made by them, appointing a committee to nominate officers, and then choosing a president, vice president, two secretaries, and a treasurer. This takes all the first day. If any of these people are fools enough or wise enough—"persistent" is the modern word—to come the next day, all will be well. They will hear the paper on botany. This is a good-natured, but well-deserved, criticism of the common tendency to start a new organization if anyone has an idea he wishes to propagate.

The resulting damage of a multiplicity of organizations is that so much energy is consumed in the work of organizing that there is not enough left to operate them. It is like the steamboat of Lincoln's story, with a 7-foot whistle and a 5-foot boiler. Every time the whistle blew the engine had to stop running.

There now exist over 80 separate organizations for the purpose of supplying some kind of war relief. Many of them have already applied and more doubtless will apply for permission to use the public schools to advance their various causes. It would be nothing short of a public benefaction if some device could be found to decrease the present number of organizations and prevent the inexcusable economic waste due to the duplication of activities. It is because we have so many organizations (plural) that we need more organization (singular) as a cure for this needless waste.

The community center is such a device. It can perform this function because it is a comprehensive organization. The center of any



American community is the free public school, the only center it has. The community center is not a rival, but an ally, of other organizations. It is more; it is their foster mother; it is the matrix which gives them their setting. It embraces them as departmental activities. It is a coordinating instrument. It is a bureau of community service. Both its spirit and method are well stated in the lines of Edwin Markham, which he appropriately calls "Outwitted":

He drew a circle which shut me out,  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;  
But Love and I had the wit to win,  
We drew a circle that took him in.

The fact that a community center is the community matrix explains why and how it can decrease the number of organizations and prevent unnecessary new ones from forming. The method of direct attack is not only inconsiderate, but is foredoomed to failure. If a community center should say to any existing organization, "We want you deliberately to disband, to chloroform yourself," it would defeat its own purpose. Human nature just doesn't operate that way. The wiser method of the community center is to relate them to each other and to itself, as departments of activity, so that duplication may be exhibited as social waste. The mere exhibition of this fact will induce some organizations voluntarily to disband or merge with others. The disease of overorganization, like some other diseases, only needs, for its cure, exposure to the fresh air. The community center furnishes the atmospheric condition of public opinion, in which unfit organizations will naturally die and the fit survive. The method is both gentle and just. It treats outgrown organizations as we always treat outgrown laws. We do not rescind them, we just let them die.

Just as fair competition in an open field furnishes the condition under which weak and less worthy organizations die, likewise it furnishes the condition under which strong and worthy ones thrive and expand. All they ask is a fair field and no favors. Their work speaks for itself. The civilian relief work of the Red Cross is a case in point. The Red Cross has enlarged the scope of its activities to include not only remedial but constructive work. Its policy is not only to cure but to prevent disease. Constructive work under the noble name and sign of the Red Cross in upbuilding the Nation's strength is so akin to the aims of the community center that they ought to cooperate in order to save needless social waste. They travel the same road; they ought to travel together as comrades. A few counties now employ Red Cross public health nurses. One State has recently passed a law which provides that each of its counties shall support out of public funds a nurse for town and country service.

It is only a question of time when a public health nurse will be attached to every community center.

The community center is the natural hub of a community wheel. It does not claim to be, it is necessarily, the comprehensive organization. But Red Cross work ought to be a department of the community center. They need each other. The community center is in a position to open just the kind of a door of opportunity which the Red Cross needs for the success of its work. There are large classes of people who have not enlisted in Red Cross work. And yet they have sons in the war and are making heroic sacrifices. They desire to do war work as they have always been willing to do relief and constructive work in times of peace. But they will not come to fashionable hotels or similar exclusive places. For obvious reasons they will come to the schoolhouse. If, therefore, Red Cross units were organized as departments of community centers, the Red Cross could enlist in its service a multitude now outside of its reach, and the Red Cross, because of its resources and its semiofficial character, could put the aims of the community center into operation. The opportunity for mutual service is such that it would be a statesman-like move if the Red Cross should devote time and money to the establishment of community centers as the most practical and economical instruments through which to expand its activities. A Red Cross unit ought to exist as a department of the community center in every school district of the United States.

The community-center movement and the Red Cross have the more reason for uniting their strength because the preventive work which they both aim to do, while more important, is less dramatic and usually attracts less popular support. But it is to this kind of work that the world gives its verdict of approval when the perspective of time enables it to distinguish between the big and the little. It is doubtful whether to-day one man in a thousand knows the names of the two generals who commanded the opposing armies in the Crimean War. Even when they are mentioned—Lord Raglan and Gen. Toddleben—they sound strangely unfamiliar. But there was one participant in that war whose name is now a household word—Florence Nightingale. Yet it was the generals who occupied the conspicuous positions; it was they who rode horseback and wore showy uniforms; it was they for whom the bands played and the soldiers applauded, while this Red Cross nurse did the apparently commonplace work of giving cups of cold water to wounded soldiers and easing the head of some homesick man as he lay dying. But these wounded men kissed her very shadow where it fell. It was a healing shadow. Such constructive work, even though it consists in little deeds of wayside kindness, is work for the ages. Such constructive work will be so needed to heal the wounds of the social,

industrial, and political world in the reconstruction days immediately ahead that the community center and the Red Cross would do wisely to unite their strength, not only to meet the Nation's present need but to assist in building a better sort of world. The task of the community-center movement is at once so difficult and so essential for the success of our experiment in democracy that it needs the assistance of every agency whose aims are similar to its own. In helping to create community centers the Red Cross would not only be serving itself but rendering a national service of the highest importance.

We are thus equipped with a wise principle always to be observed in the organization of a community center. It should adapt itself to the organizations already in the field and cooperate with them. It does not antagonize them but assists them to expand into something bigger. It may more speedily reach its goal if it would evolve out of some good existing organization. A community center never loses sight of its ultimate purpose, but it does not disdain to make use of the instruments which lie at its hand because they are imperfect. Lincoln applied this principle in the policy of reconstruction he had begun. Although he was bitterly criticised for it he defended it in the last speech he ever made. "Concede," he said, "that the new government of Louisiana is only, to what it should be, as the egg is to the fowl; we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it."

#### THE HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE.

Whenever an idea gets itself embodied in concrete form, visible to the eye, it becomes the more potent and persuasive. The reason why the ancient and common use of symbols renders a distinct service to ideals is obvious. Sense impressions received through the eye-gate are more vivid and permanent than those received through any other gate. We say, "in one ear and out the other"; we do not say, "in one eye and out the other." As an efficient means of propaganda, therefore, it is profoundly important that the community ideal should be embodied in a type of school building which represents it. If it is to be used as a house of the people, it ought to look like a house of the people. A community which plans to build a new schoolhouse or to adapt an old one to new community uses must consider two questions: First, what are its internal needs? Second, what style of building best serves these needs? The two questions are one and inseparable. They are related to each other like a man and his clothes or like ideas and the words which express them.

What are the internal needs and community uses which the new type of school buildings is required to meet? The essential needs may fairly be regarded as seven. They seem to require a large expenditure, but from the standpoint of community finances the

facilities here suggested obviously mean a wise economy, because they will prevent a needless duplication of buildings. They are used not only for school activities, but also for every variety of activity by youths and adults. These essential facilities are as follows:

1. *An assembly room*; to be used also for social games, folk dances, dinner parties, and gymnasium purposes.
2. *Classrooms*; to be so arranged that they may be used also for departmental activities of the community center.
3. *A workshop*; to be used also for vocational night classes and for mechanical experimental work as recreation.
4. *Library and reading room*; to be used also as a neighborhood club, conference room, and a clearing house for information.
5. *Kitchen and storeroom*; to be used also for household economics, community dinners, and cooperative exchanges.
6. *An open fireplace*; to be used for its spiritual value in creating good cheer and the neighborly sense of fellowship.
7. *Voting instruments*; to be erected permanently and used not only in the curriculum of the school and in public elections, but also as a symbol of the aim for which both the school and community center stand.

In addition to these seven practical and typical features of a community schoolhouse, there is one small luxury which properly may be regarded as a necessity. On the lawn of every community school should be erected a sundial. Its use is not the ordering of the day by the sundial rather than the time-table in order to stimulate good and honest work; nor is its use to act as a reminder of the need of leisure for personal growth, although it would serve both of these purposes. But its chief use is to be the symbol of an idea, without which a community center can not live. Charles Lamb said that if a sundial could talk, it would say of itself, "I count only those hours which are serene." It operates only when the sun shines. It illustrates the wisdom of looking on the bright, not the dark side of things; of being positive, not negative; of accentuating the resemblances, not the differences; of cultivating one's admirations, not one's disgusts. Without the practice of the principle of the sundial, the people of the community can never be mobilized for effective concerted action and national service.

In view of patriotic ideals like these which the school is designed to serve, the question concerning the style of building acquires a new and profound significance. What type of architecture most fittingly represents the institution most characteristic of the American ideal, the community schoolhouse? Two types have been generally suggested and widely used. They are the colonial and the Tudor or collegiate gothic. Both have real merits, but both have defects which seriously handicap their use for our purpose. The colonial has



simple, effective lines, but is cold, rigid, puritanic, and lacking in joy. Moreover, in its more elaborate forms, it was the common type used for the elegant mansions of southern aristocracy. Their pillared porticoes suggest a coach and four driving under them.

The Gothic type has the advantage of being more economical to build. Its chief merit originally was its "rudeness" or imperfection. The term "Gothic" was at first a term of reproach, but it acquired honor as men discovered that every great work ought to be imperfect if it is inspired by an unattainable ideal, as it ought to be. For this reason the lines in a Gothic building suggest aspiration. The distinguishing feature of Gothic architecture is that its beautiful ornaments, while always aspiring after an unattained perfection, always rest on the utilitarian principle of use. The flying buttress was not attached to a gothic cathedral as an ornament. It was put there to prop up the wall. The pinnacle on its top, ornamental as it is, was not put there as an ornament. It was put there as a weight to keep the prop from slipping off the wall.

In spite of the obvious and great merits of the Gothic type of building, which can and ought to be utilized in new forms, its defects should be frankly recognized. It has been associated in our thought with exclusive, cloistered seats of learning, like Cambridge and Oxford; it lends itself easily to indulgence in elaborate display of art for art's sake instead of for life's sake; and it is a permanent reminder of medieval ecclesiasticism, which is out of harmony with modern ideals of democracy.

It seems evident that the appropriate style of architecture to embody the democratic idea for which America stands remains still to be created. The best is yet to be. Ruskin says that:

Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts—the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three, the only trustworthy one is the last.

What men embody in material form, invest large sums of money in, and lovingly seek to beautify, is a sure index of the value they place upon it. America has not yet written her autobiography in architecture, but she has started to write it, and has begun to express her appreciation of the indispensable importance of education to a democracy, as is seen in the handsome new school buildings now being erected in all parts of the country. A rare opportunity to render a patriotic service is now afforded to those architects who are also artists, if they have the courage to discard ancient conventional standards and create a new type to represent the American democratic idea.

In this process laymen in art have a marked responsibility, because they finally determine the kind of building to be erected. In a



democracy, art, like everything else, is profoundly affected by public opinion. Moreover, laymen can prevent professional architects from imposing any one conventional type of school building upon all communities. To do so would be deadly dullness. This will be prevented also by the need for adaptation in various sections of the country to conditions of climate, to materials available for use, and to the location of buildings. But while there should be variety of form, there are certain formative principles which must always distinguish a community type of building. It must be a democratic building; that is, it must be beautiful, because hunger for beauty is universal and beauty is of the highest educational value; it must be cheerful, for to dispense joy to all is a duty demanded of the democratic ideal; it must be in simple good taste, so that the average man will feel unoppressed and unembarrassed by it; it must be economical to build, and a beautiful building is necessarily more economical; it must be low, springing out of the soil, easy of access, wide spreading, ample for hospitality, for no man can be a democrat by himself; it must be an honest building; that is, its beauty must be organic. It is not artificial adornment superimposed from the outside, but inheres in the structure itself. It is like the true beauty of complexion, which does not depend on an external application of paint, but on the rude internal facts of digestion and circulation of blood. No beauty exists in nature unconnected with her useful processes. Likewise a democratic building is natural and honest. It has little or no ornament; its charm is an inborn fitness and proportion. No canon of taste is more holy than fitness.

The style of architecture which embodies these essential principles of a democratic building more nearly perhaps than any other is the new Santa Fe type, which is a combination of the old mission and adobe style in such a way as to justify us in regarding it as a real American product. It is well illustrated in the Alhambra Consolidated School near Phoenix, Ariz. The artist-architect who has courage to escape from slavery to the precedents of yesterday and the stupid imitations of outgrown standards, and who will take for his motto "Not one thing that you do not know to be useful and believe to be beautiful," has to-day the opportunity to assist the people to create a new representative American architecture, fitted to express their new discovery of the need for a community schoolhouse. To build a real house of the people is a patriotic service of the highest order. Fletcher B. Dresslar, in his able and comprehensive bulletin on American Schoolhouses, very appropriately reminds the builders of one of these temples of democracy that "Whoever undertakes to build a schoolhouse to meet and foster these ideals ought to approach his task with holy hands and a consciousness of the devotion which it is to typify."

## FREE TRADE IN FRIENDSHIP.

This, then, is the writer's understanding as to what a community center is and how to organize it, briefly stated. To treat in brief a subject so big with meaning for the common welfare, one needs what the poet Keats calls "negative capabilities;" he must know what to leave in the inkstand, unsaid.

But after the most efficient methods of organization have been discovered and applied, there is one word which must never be left unsaid or unheeded. Organization is to the thing to be done what a shell is to an egg. And while a shell is necessary for the convenient handling of eggs, the shell is not the egg. The egg of a community center, its heart and soul, is an idea, a spiritual purpose. To sacrifice its soul to efficiency is like selling the egg for the shell.

If Ruth's sickle, used in the Hebrew republic, were placed by the side of the McCormick reaper in a world's fair, our progress in mechanical efficiency would be dramatically exhibited. But how about Ruth herself? If she appeared among the women at the fair, would our superiority in that branch of manufacture be so apparent? Is it Ruth or only her sickle we have improved? Almost every nation has at its beginning some formative principle which shapes its organization and determines its contribution to the world's welfare. In Palestine it was religion; in Greece it was culture; in Rome it was law; in America it is what? Her birth and history clearly indicate that America's high mission is the enfranchisement of manhood, the development of the individual. This purpose is the soul of the community center movement.

The community ideal is fittingly expressed in a high relief by Frank F. Stone, who illuminates it by contrasting it with its opposite ideal. In this work of art three figures are represented. On the right is the figure of a well-fed, self-centered man. The expression on the face is a freezing scorn and utter disdain of his fellow men. The crown, miter, money bag, sword, and ermine robe which he holds in his hands, all indicate that he is an egotist, who through wealth, the assumption of divine rights, the accident of birth, or the sword of force seeks power, prestige, and advantage over others. Opposite him is the type of a true democrat, who finds life not insipid, but inspiring. He is in the act of scaling the difficult heights of human achievement through his own unaided efforts. But he is unwilling to rise alone, and as he fixes his eyes on the heights which beckon him, he reaches down a helping hand to raise a weaker brother with himself. No work of art could more clearly represent the community center ideal, together with the ideal which it seeks to replace. The only effective way to destroy an unworthy ideal is to replace it with a better one.

The community center aims to realize its ideal by promoting free trade in friendship among all individuals and classes of the community. This is its most efficient means for producing results, because men are more influenced through their feelings than their intellects. This is the reason why "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." For the same reason friendship is the chief solvent of social and industrial difficulties. When David Grayson sat at dinner with a factory owner, Mr. Vedder, and was helping him to settle a strike then in operation, Mr. Vedder asked him what kind of social philosopher he called himself. "I do not call myself by any name," said Grayson, "but if I chose a name, do you know the name I would like to have applied to me?" "I can not imagine," was the answer. "Well, I would like to be called 'an introducer.' My friend, Mr. Blacksmith, let me introduce you to my friend, Mr. Plutocrat. I could almost swear that you are brothers, so near alike you are. You will find each other wonderfully interesting, once you get over the awkwardness of the introduction." "It is a good name," said Mr. Vedder, laughing. "Its a wonderful name," said Grayson, "and its about the biggest and finest work in the world—to know human beings just as they are and to make them acquainted with one another just as they are. Why, its the foundation of all the democracy there is or ever will be. Sometimes I think that friendliness is the only achievement of life worth while, and unfriendliness the only tragedy." The community center is a factory for the manufacture of friendship, and the chief business of a community secretary is to be "an introducer."

Just as the mere statement of a problem is half of its solution, likewise free trade in friendship among men would break down half the barriers which separate them, because it would remove the chief cause of their strife. For a community to carry on its work without cultivating the spirit of friendship is like drawing a harrow over frozen ground. This is so essential to success that one of its chief aims should be to promote free trade in friendship by producing a collection of community center songs, so that the people could sing the sentiment as it is expressed in such poems as Richard Burton's—

If I had the time to find a place  
And sit me down full face to face,  
With my better self, that can not show  
In my daily life that rushes so;  
It might be then I would see my soul  
Was stumbling still toward the shining goal,  
I might be moved by the thought sublime—  
If I had the time!



## A COMMUNITY CENTER.

If I had the time to let my heart  
 Speak out and take in my life a part,  
 To look about and to stretch a hand  
 To a comrade quartered in no-luck land;  
 Ah, God! If I might but just sit still  
 And hear the note of the whippoorwill,  
 I think that my wish with God's would rhyme—  
 If I had the time!

If I had the time to learn from you  
 How much for comfort my word could do;  
 And I told you then of my sudden will  
 To kiss your feet when I did you ill;  
 If the tears aback of the coldness feigned  
 Could flow, and the wrong be quite explained—  
 Brothers, the souls of us all would chime,  
 If we had the time!

The community center seeks to promote friendship, not only in local communities but also among communities, and not only among communities in a single state or nation, but among the larger communities of the nations themselves, by stimulating devotion to common ideals, for there can be no friendship unless there is similarity of aims and purposes. There is, perhaps, no more accurate or beautiful expression of that which separates and unites national communities than is to be found in the following letter sent to America by a pupil in Paris and made public by John H. Finley:

It was only a little river, almost a brook; it was called the Yser. One could talk from one side to the other without raising one's voice, and the birds could fly over it with one sweep of their wings. And on the two banks there were millions of men, the one turned toward the other, eye to eye. But the distance which separated them was greater than the stars in the sky; it was the distance which separates right from injustice.

The ocean is so vast that the sea gulls do not dare to cross it. During seven days and seven nights the great steamships of America, going at full speed, drive through the deep waters before the lighthouses of France come into view; but from one side to the other hearts are touching.

Manifestly the task of the community center is complex and difficult. Our business, however, is not to debate the possibility of reaching the goal, but to make a start toward it. When Socrates was asked, "How shall we get to Mount Olympus?" he answered, "By doing all your walking in that direction." While we keep Mount Olympus in sight to give us direction, we must recognize that the amount of possible progress toward it is determined by conditions as we find them. Our choice does not lie between the ideal and the actual. We must always choose both. We must know not only the goal but the road to it. Our practical problem is to devise a working plan which includes what is both ideally desirable and actually possible. If we are ever to arrive at Mount Olympus, we must start

from where we are, we must take things "as is;" we must "accept the universe" and try to fashion it as best we may with patience and good humor.

Although the road to the community center goal is difficult, nevertheless the hope of ultimate success has the best of guarantees. It is buttressed by unescapable necessity. The solid basis on which this hope rests is the lack of self-sufficiency. On this fact society itself is founded. On this principle, Plato constructed his republic. No community nor nation, as well as no individual, is self-sufficient. This applies both to the supply of physical necessities and the supply of food for minds and souls. No nation, as no man, can long live a Robinson Crusoe type of existence. They have a community of interests. All men are political animals. They must have with each other some kind of business, either good or bad. The community center movement merely aims to make this business good instead of bad. The obvious sanity of this policy is the guarantee of its ultimate triumph.

While a lack of knowledge concerning both the spirit and method of democracy makes the road to this goal a difficult one to travel, yet the rewards by the way are always in proportion to the hardships. The satisfaction of working for a cause bigger than one's private advantage is never lost, whatever be the fortunes of the cause itself. Eric, a dying soldier boy in France writing his last letter to his father and mother, well expressed both the satisfaction and its cause when he said: "To a very small number it is given to live in history; their number is scarcely 1 in 10,000,000. To the rest, it is only granted to live in their united achievements." This is the experience not only of vision-seeing, chivalrous youth who have not yet exchanged their ideals for their comforts, but it is the experience also of a mature man like Thomas Jefferson. When the long shadows fell across his life and he came to write his epitaph, this is what he wrote:

Here was buried  
Thomas Jefferson  
author of the  
DECLARATION  
of  
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE  
of the  
Statute of Virginia  
for  
Religious Freedom  
and Father of the  
University of Virginia.



It is highly significant that he never mentions the fact that he had been governor of Virginia, Secretary of State, minister to France, twice President of the United States. That is to say, he never mentions any personal rewards, anything that the people had done for him, but only what he had done for the people, only the service which his genius and loyalty had rendered to the community-causes of democracy and education. This alone is what he cared to remember with joy and pride. This is why the community-center movement is justified in claiming the major loyalty of all soldiers of the common welfare.

## PART III.

### A SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION.

The following is the constitution prepared by the writer for a community center in Washington, D. C., and is reproduced here as a suggestion to other communities:

#### PREAMBLE.

We, the people of the Wilson Normal Community of the City of Washington, D. C., in order to secure the advantages of organized self-help, to make public opinion more enlightened and effective, to promote the education of adults and youths for citizenship in a democracy, to organize the use of the public school as the community capitol, to foster a neighborhood spirit through which the community may become a more efficient social unit, to prevent needless waste through the duplication of social activities, to engage in cooperative enterprises for our moral and material welfare, and to create a social order more in harmony with the conscience and intelligence of the Nation, do ordain and establish this constitution.

#### ARTICLE I.—NAME.

The name of this organization shall be the Wilson Normal Community Association, and its headquarters the Wilson Normal School Building.

#### ARTICLE II.—LOCATION.

The community shall be defined as follows: Beginning at Fourteenth and W Streets, thence north on the east side of Fourteenth Street to Monroe Street, thence east on the east side of Monroe Street and Park Road to Georgia Avenue, thence south on the west side of Georgia Avenue to Irving Street, thence east on the south side of Irving Street to Soldiers' Home, thence south on west side of Soldiers' Home, McMillan Park, and Reservoir to College Street, thence west on north side of College Street and Barry Place to Tenth Street, thence south on the west side of Tenth Street to W Street, thence west on the north side of W Street to Fourteenth Street, the place of beginning.

#### ARTICLE III.—MEMBERS.

The members of the association shall be all the white adult citizens of this community, both men and women. A limited number of nonresident members may be received into membership, provided they are not registered members of any other organized community. Organizations now in operation which are nonpartisan, nonsectarian, and whose aim is the public welfare, such as

"Citizen associations," "Home and school leagues," "Red Cross chapters," "Women's clubs," "College settlements," "Housekeepers' alliances," desiring to retain their name and identity for the sake of cooperation with other branches of similar organizations, may become departments of this association. There shall be no suggestion of superiority or inferiority among the departments. The members of each department shall have the same standing as all other members.

#### ARTICLE IV.—OFFICERS.

The association shall elect by ballot from its own members a board of directors, or community council, which shall be both a legislative and an executive body. It shall consist of not less than 6 nor more than 15 members. They shall be elected for a period of three years, excepting for the first year, when one-third of the number shall be elected for one year, one-third for two years, and one-third for three years.

The chairman of the committee in charge of each department of the association shall be a member of the board of directors. A chairman may be appointed by the board or selected by the department itself and confirmed by the board. Chairmen shall have the right to select the members of their own committees.

The community secretary, whose public election is provided for by the board of education, shall be a member of the board of directors and a member ex officio of all committees. It shall be his duty to exercise general supervision over all the activities of the association, and to nominate, by and with the consent of the directors, all assistant secretaries. They shall have the right to attend all meetings of the board and take part in the discussions but shall have no vote.

As soon after the annual election as convenient the directors shall meet to organize, and shall elect from their own number a president, vice president, and a secretary-treasurer, who shall perform the duties usually performed by such officers, and who shall also be the officers of the association.

#### ARTICLE V.—DEPARTMENTS.

The board of directors is authorized to organize and operate departments of activity, such as forum, civics, recreation, home and school, buying club, and community bank, whose activities shall be supervised and whose accounts shall be audited by the board of directors.

1. Forum Department: The committee in charge of this department shall arrange for public meetings, at such times as the association may decide, for the free and orderly discussion of all questions which concern the social, moral, political, and economic welfare of the community. It shall select a presiding officer for such meetings, secure speakers, suggest subjects, and formulate the method of conducting discussions.

2. Recreation Department: The committee in charge of this department shall provide and conduct games, dances, community dramas, musicals, motion pictures, and shall promote all similar play activities, with a view to increasing the joy, health, and good fellowship among both adults and youths.

3. Civics Department: The committee in charge of this department shall provide the members with the means of securing information concerning politics, local, national, and international; it shall stimulate a more intelligent interest in government by the use of publicity pamphlets; it shall suggest ways in which the members may contribute to the economic and efficient administration of the city's affairs; it shall provide courses of studies for young men and women

as a preparation for citizenship, and devise methods of organizing the youth into voluntary, cooperative, and constructive forms of patriotic service.

4. The Home and School Department: The committee in charge of this department shall seek to promote closer cooperation between the school and home, the teachers and parents; it shall aim to improve the school equipment, to secure more adequate support and better housing conditions for teachers; it shall organize and conduct study classes for youths and adults; it shall provide such ways and means or remove such obstacles as may be necessary to enable all children to remain in school until they have finished the grammar grades, whether these obstacles be the kind of studies now pursued in school, the home conditions of the children, or the economic conditions of the community.

5. Buying Club Department: The committee in charge of this department shall organize and operate in the school a delivery station for food products with a view of decreasing the cost of living; it shall establish a direct relation between the producer and consumer in order to eliminate wastes; it shall seek to safeguard the people's health by furnishing the purest food obtainable; it shall aim to moralize trade by giving full weight and measure and substituting public service for private exploitation; it shall eliminate debt by asking for no credit and giving none; it shall practice economy and equity in order to secure a larger return to the producer and decrease the cost to the consumer.

An annual fee shall be required of all members of the buying club, payable quarterly in advance, to defray operating expenses, the amount of the fee to be determined by the committee, and it shall be decreased or increased as the number of members and volume of business warrant. All members shall secure their goods at the net wholesale cost price.

Goods shall be sold only to members of the buying club. Membership in the buying club is open only to members of the association and only to those members who are depositors in the community bank.

The buying club shall set aside annually a sum equal to 2 per cent of the amount of its sales, to be used by the association for the purpose of educating its members in the principle and practice of cooperation, until public appropriations are sufficient to provide the means for such education.

The club shall set aside annually a sum equal to 1 per cent of the amount of its sales as a reserve fund to cover unexpected losses.

The committee in charge of the buying club shall serve without compensation but may employ one or more executives to conduct the business of the club, who shall receive compensation for their services, the amount of which shall be fixed by the committee, but the amount shall be determined, as far as possible, on a percentage basis according to service rendered.

All checks, drafts, or notes made in the name of the club shall be countersigned by the chairman of the directing committee. The executive in charge of the buying club shall be required to give a surety bond.

6. Community Bank Department: The committee in charge of this department shall organize and conduct a credit union bank for members of the association in order to capitalize honesty and to democratize credit, and to multiply the efficiency of their savings by pooling them for cooperative use. It shall be known as the "Community Bank." It shall receive savings deposits both from children and adults and shall make loans. It shall, if possible, be a part of the curriculum of the school, at least as regards deposits of children. The committee in charge shall serve without compensation, but may employ one executive to conduct its business who shall be required to furnish a surety bond.



The bank shall make loans only to individual members of the association and to the buying club for productive purposes, but no loan shall be made to any member of the committee in charge of the bank. Deposits may be received from those other than members.

The bank shall issue no capital stock, but shall charge entrance fees, which shall be used as a reserve fund and returned to depositors when they withdraw from membership.

The bank may make small short-time loans secured only by the character and industry of the borrower. It may make long-time loans, secured by mortgage, character, and industry, to young men and women for the purpose of helping them to secure houses in which to start homes, and the payment of such loans may be made on the amortization plan.

The rate of interest charged for all loans shall be 5 per cent. The amount of interest allowed on deposits shall be the net profit after operating expenses are paid. The bank shall use no other bank as a clearing house which is not under the supervision of the United States Government. All loans shall be made by check and all such checks shall be countersigned by the chairman of the directing committee.

An amount equal to one-half of 1 per cent of its deposits shall be set aside as a reserve fund. An amount equal to 10 per cent of its deposits shall be invested in Federal Farm Loan Bonds, Liberty Bonds, or in other Federal, State, or municipal bonds.

The community bank shall be operated not on the principle of unlimited, joint, and several liability of its members, but it shall have the right to demand pro rata payments from them to meet any loss through unpaid loans, provided the reserve fund is not sufficient to cover such losses.

#### ARTICLE VI.—COOPERATION.

There shall be no dues for membership in the community association, the dues having already been paid through public taxation; but the association, by voluntary subscription and in other ways, may raise funds to inaugurate or support its work if the amount received from public appropriation is insufficient to meet its needs.

The association may unite with other similar associations in the District of Columbia to form a community league, in order to conduct a central forum or cooperate with each other for any other purpose which may serve their common welfare.

The association adopts the policy of cordial cooperation with the board of education and provides that a designated member of the school board may be a member ex officio of its board of directors. He may attend any of its meetings, take part in the discussions, and vote on all questions.

#### ARTICLE VII.—MEETINGS.

The board of directors shall hold monthly meetings at such times as they may determine. All regular monthly meetings of the board shall be open meetings. When a vacancy occurs, through death or otherwise, the board may fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting. If any director shall be absent from three successive stated meetings without excuse, such absence shall be deemed a resignation.

Quarterly meetings of the association shall be held on the second Tuesday of January, April, July, and October. The April quarterly meeting shall be the



annual meeting to elect officers, hear reports from all departments, and to transact such other business as may be necessary.

This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting or at any quarterly meeting if previous notice of the proposed amendment is given. In all elections the preferential ballot may be used with reference both to officers and measures; the initiative, referendum, and recall may be employed in such manner as the association itself may determine.

### AN OUTLINE FOR A CONSTITUTION.

The following is a digest of the preceding constitution for those communities which may prefer a briefer form:

#### ARTICLE I.—NAME.

This association shall be known as The Community Center Association of School District No. \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_, State of \_\_\_\_\_, and its headquarters the \_\_\_\_\_ schoolhouse.

#### ARTICLE II.—OBJECT.

Its object shall be to mobilize the people of this community for national service and organized self-help, to equip its members for citizenship in a democracy, to prevent needless waste through the duplication of activities, and to create a social order in harmony with the conscience and intelligence of the Nation.

#### ARTICLE III.—MEMBERS.

Its members shall be all adult citizens of the district. Any organization which is nonpartisan and nonsectarian and whose aim is the public welfare may become a department of the association.

#### ARTICLE IV.—OFFICERS.

The association shall elect not less than 9 and not more than 15 directors, who shall constitute the community council. The council shall elect from its own members a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer, who shall also be the officers of the association. The chairman in charge of any department of work shall be a member of the community council.

#### ARTICLE V.—COMMUNITY SECRETARY.

The community council may employ an executive or business manager to carry on its work, who shall be paid either from public appropriations or by volunteer contributions.

#### ARTICLE VI.—DEPARTMENTS.

The association shall organize and conduct whatever departments of activity it deems necessary to meet present and permanent needs, both local and national, such as forum, civics, recreation, home and school, buying club, and community bank.

## A COMMUNITY CENTER

## ARTICLE VII.—FINANCES.

There shall be no dues for membership in the association, the dues having already been paid through public taxation. But when necessary it may raise, through voluntary subscriptions and in other ways, the funds required to conduct its activities.

## ARTICLE VIII.—MEETINGS.

The association shall hold quarterly meetings, one of which shall be the annual meeting to hear reports and elect officers. The community council shall hold regular monthly meetings, which shall be open to the public. The departments shall be free to hold as many meetings as may be necessary.

