

From Settlement House to
Neighborhood House: 1906-1976



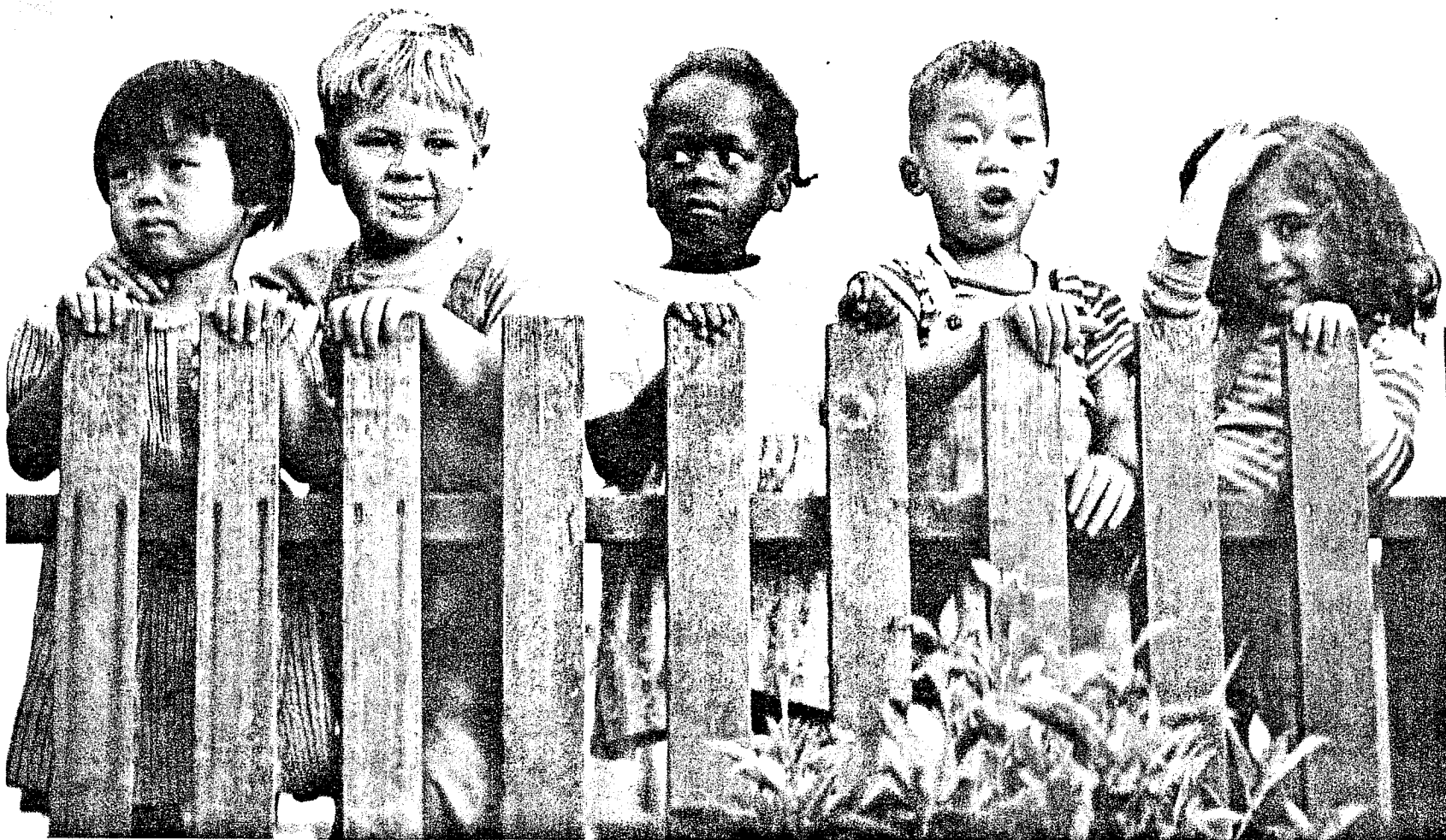
From Settlement House to Neighborhood House: 1906-1976

**An historical survey of a pioneering
Seattle social service agency.**

By Jean Porter Devine

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*This book is dedicated
to all the generations
past, present and future,
that give Neighborhood
House its meaning, and
its purpose for existing.*



The children of Yesler Terrace 1942

Settlement House 1906-1916

Seattle, in 1906, was a place on its way to becoming a city. Formed by the Alaska Gold Rush of 1897-98 and shaped by the Great Fire of June 6, 1889, it was a town still captured by the frontier spirit of its beginnings. Six months after the fire, on November 11, 1889, Washington had achieved statehood. But in 1906, its status was too recent to have molded its character.

The first decade of the twentieth century was a time of optimism — Teddy Roosevelt's world where anything was possible given a little hard work and the right kind of spirit. Seattle was a buoyant city in a buoyant age when America was a magnet drawing millions of immigrants to its shores. The Old World was dying, its ruling dynasties soon to be consumed in the flames of revolution and the carnage of the greatest war the world had ever seen. America was the hope of the world, the Land of Opportunity, the Promised Land.

By 1906, the Borens, the Dennys and the Yeslers had left the area that is now Pioneer Square. Up on the hill, on Yesler Way, the neighborhood now housed a growing population of Russian Jewish immigrants who came to America — the "Goldeneh Medina" (the land of gold) — to escape poverty, persecution and pogroms. Many fled conscription into the Czar's army where cruelty was the norm and a Jew could expect to serve a term of at least twenty years in the lowliest ranks. The new immigrants dreamed of a better life for themselves and their children. They wanted to learn the American way of life as rapidly as possible, to become assimilated, to melt into the melting pot. But they were poor; they did not know the language; and they lacked, not the will to survive, but the skills to survive.

It was to meet the needs of these immigrants that the Council of Jewish Women began a settlement house. In April of 1906, when the Committee on Philanthropy rented the lower part of a house on the corner of 12th Avenue and Washington Street as the first home of the new Settlement House, the Seattle Section,

Council of Jewish Women had been in existence for only six years. It had been organized by Mrs. Bailey Gatzert, whose late husband had been mayor of Seattle in 1875, a friend of Henry Yesler, and one of the founders of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce.

Bailey Gatzert had made his way to Seattle by way of New York and California. He was part of the large Jewish emigration from Germany that began about 1840. The German Jews, unlike the Russian Jews, were an educated and professional class who adapted quickly to their new land and had become financially prosperous by 1893 when their wives and daughters organized the National Council of Jewish Women in Chicago.

The Russian Jews coming to Seattle in 1906 were part of the large immigration of Eastern European Jews who came to this country between 1881 and 1914. In contrast to their German brethren, they had been denied access to higher education. They were herded into borderland ghettos and were forbidden to live in the Russian cities. When Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, a despotic Russian government sought to divert the revolutionary wrath of the peasants from itself by blaming the country's troubles and the Czar's death on the Jews. And so the Jews fled.

Most of the Russian immigrants crossed the Atlantic steerage class, landed in New York, and settled in the East. Some continued West and gradually found their way to Seattle. But there were some who came to America from Siberia by way of China and Japan, and Seattle became the northern port of immigration for the West Coast.

The settlement house opened by the Council of Jewish Women in 1906 was the first settlement house in Seattle. Four years later, in 1910, Deaconess Settlement (now the Atlantic Street Center) would open in the Rainier Valley to serve the needs of Italian immigrants.

The settlement house movement had its origins in the de-

mand for social change that was part of the great intellectual ferment taking place in England in the middle of the nineteenth century. Because it had given birth to the Industrial Revolution, England led the world in trade and commerce. But its industrial supremacy came from a system that brought great misery to the men, women and children who labored in its factories, often for as long as sixteen hours a day, at subsistence wages.

Men and women of religious principles and humanitarian zeal, among them Robert Owen, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and Charles Dickens, began to challenge Adam Smith's theory that individual self-interest was an all sufficient means for securing the good of society. A governmental economic policy of "laissez-faire", or non-interference, embodying this theory had obviously resulted, not in the good of the working class, but in their exploitation.

As a further result of industrialization in England, the working class had become physically and psychologically separated from the more educated, more well-to-do members of society. The farmer and the country gentleman meeting in the fields to discuss their common interests was rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Factory workers lived in urban slums close to where they worked. The gentry did not visit these neighborhoods.

The founders of the settlement house movement feared, and feared rightly, that this isolation of the poor led to ignorance, indifference, and a repudiation of responsibility by the rest of society. A sense of the inter-dependancy that exists between all members of society was being lost, to the detriment of all.

It was to change these conditions and their underlying causes that the first settlement house was opened by Samuel A. Barnett and his wife, Henrietta. Canon Barnett defined the settlement house method. He believed that only by living among the poor and experiencing their needs by day to day contact could these needs be truly understood, the trust of the poor gained, effective help given, and the underlying causes remedied by social action. It could not be done at a distance. It was necessary

to "settle" in the neighborhood.

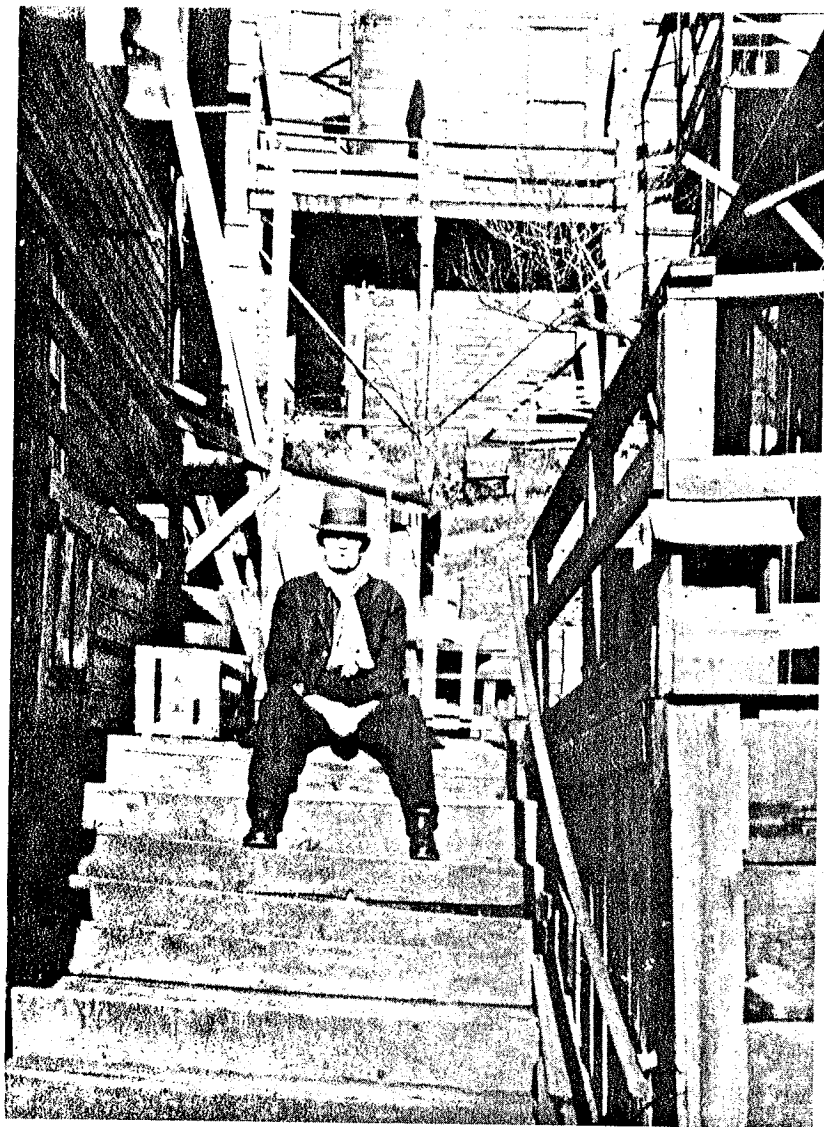
The first settlement house was opened in 1884 in the Whitechapel district of London's East Side. It was called Toynbee Hall in memory of the young Oxford economist and philosopher whose life, writings, and zeal for social reform had inspired university undergraduates to go to East London to live and work among the poor. Arnold Toynbee died on March 9, 1883 at the age of 31, just one year before the opening of the first settlement house. Toynbee Hall was the materialization of his dream.

In 1886, the settlement house movement crossed the Atlantic to Manhattan's Lower East Side with the opening of Neighborhood Guild (later called University Settlement) on Delancey Street. The Henry Street Settlement, where the first visiting nurse program was developed, was opened by Lillian Wald on the Lower East Side in 1893. The movement quickly spread, reaching the Midwest in 1889 with the opening of Hull House in Chicago by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr. And it was Hull House that the Seattle Section, Council of Jewish Women seemed to have most in mind when the decision to help the immigrants by opening a settlement house was made.¹

Settlement House in Seattle opened with a Religious School and a Sewing School. The Sewing School enrolled thirty girls. They learned to darn and to mend, to patch clothes neatly, and to make handkerchiefs, aprons and flannel nightwear — all practical garments that were not only easy to learn on, but immediately useful.

Within a year, the settlement house had outgrown its first home. By 1907, when it moved to a flat at 156 11th Avenue, Settlement House had gained its own officers and Board of Directors, a Men's Advisory Board, and had become the sole work of the Council's Committee on Philanthropy. All charitable efforts of the Council of Jewish Women were now channeled through Settlement House.

To meet the Jewish immigrant's hunger for knowledge, the Settlement House Board of Directors petitioned the Seattle



Yesler Way c. 1920

Public Library in 1907 to establish a free reading room at Settlement House. This branch of the Library recorded the fewest number of books lost of any branch in the city — surely a reflection of the traditional Jewish respect for learning and scholarship.² As attendance increased and programs were expanded, Settlement House soon became the neighborhood's second home. It was a neighborhood that needed a second home.

After the Great Fire, Seattle had suffered a housing shortage. The area around Yesler Way was a neighborhood of multiple dwellings and housekeeping rooms. Living conditions were primitive. Most of the houses had no hot water and no electricity. No one even thought of having a telephone.

A typical immigrant family would be housed in three rooms: a living room, a small bedroom without windows, and a kitchen. Cooking was done on a two burner "laundry stove." When the stove wasn't being used for cooking, a big, oval, two-handled tub was put on the burners to heat water for the laundry. The immigrants used wood as fuel instead of coal because it was cheaper.³

There were no baths in the houses where most of the immigrants lived, and it was to meet this need that Settlement House, in 1907, began offering free baths in the small bathroom in the flat on 11th Avenue. These were the first free public baths offered in Seattle. Barber shops had bathing facilities, but they charged ten cents. For ten cents the immigrant could buy a pound of meat or a three and a half pound bag of sugar.

After a year in the flat on 11th Avenue, Settlement House moved again. But this time the move was to a house — a large two-story frame house at 17th Avenue and Main Street. Sol Esfeld came to this house as a young boy of eleven. Mr. Esfeld, now seventy-eight, is President of the American Discount Corporation and has been an active and respected leader in the Jewish community for many years.

The house on 17th Avenue, as Mr. Esfeld remembers it, had about ten or twelve rooms. It was on an elevated lot. Twenty steps had to be climbed before reaching the front door. He would

come after school to seek companionship and to read the books in the library. His parents, Max and Jennie Esfeld, had emigrated from Poland, settling in Dallas, Texas before coming to Seattle in 1909, the year of the Alaska/Yukon/Pacific Exposition. His father was a tailor and opened a tailor shop here. Both his parents learned to read, write and speak English in the Americanization classes taught at Settlement House for new immigrants.

Mr. Esfeld remembers with special affection "a very kind old lady who tried to make everyone comfortable and feel at home."⁴ This was Mrs. Hannah Schwartz. Mrs. Schwartz came from San Francisco in 1908, at the request of the Council, to live at Settlement House as the resident worker. Living in the settlement house was in the tradition of the settlement house movement. She was the first paid worker at Settlement House and remained in her position for fourteen years. She became known as the "beloved House Mother" of Settlement House.

Edna (Mrs. Leo) Schwabacher, now ninety-eight, was present at the beginning of Settlement House and served as its President from 1918 to 1921. She was an active member of the Board of Directors for over thirty years, devoting much of her time and energy to the Vocational Scholarship Committee. She remembers Mrs. Schwartz as "... not a trained social worker, but much better than any I can think of. A wonderful little lady. Her efforts were untiring. She was there at any hour of the day or night that we needed to consult her. She took such an interest. She liked the people. She was one of them. Then, when she got old and did retire, and we got a trained social worker, it was very different."⁵ In 1936, when Mrs. Schwartz died, a Memorial Fund was established by the Council of Jewish Women to honor her memory.

The house of 17th Avenue, though large, soon became too small to meet the needs of the immigrants, and so in 1914, the Council purchased a lot at the corner of 18th Avenue and Main Street for a new settlement house.

The sewing classes that had begun with 30 girls in 1906, had increased to 142 girls by 1912. The Sabbath and Moral Training

Class, under the direction of Mrs. Nathan Eckstein, now had an enrollment of 110 boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 15. The Fidelia Club (girls 12 to 18) was in its third year of existence and had an enrollment of forty girls who put out a paper once a month called the "Fidelis Tatter". They also gave a play once a year.

The Hebrew Boys' Social and Literary Club also had a club paper. These were older boys, between the ages of 15 and 20, and their social program would include guest speakers lecturing on the "Wireless" or illustrating a talk on the Spanish-American War with stereopticon views.

By 1912, the Evening School for Foreigners, always one of the most important programs at Settlement House, was holding classes two evenings a week, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Sixty-three men and women were being taught by ten teachers, a pupil-teacher ratio testifying to the amount of individual attention given to the immigrants in these classes.

In 1908, Settlement House had begun to send a representative to Juvenile Court each week. By 1912, the Juvenile Court Committee could report a total of fifty visits made to homes, Probation Court, Detention Home, schools and jail. Members of the committee also appeared in court as witnesses on such matters as truancy, larceny and incorrigibility.

The new immigrants were always very eager to learn the American way of doing things. They did not want to hold on to the old ways. To them, the American way was best. Much of their "education" was done informally at Settlement House, through social clubs and social activities. Typical of these was the Mothers' Social Hour.

*The second Saturday of each month is set aside for social gatherings of mothers. Two members of the Board arrange a program for the afternoon; after which coffee and cake are served. Excellent music is provided and informal talks beneficial to mothers are given, after which all are invited to question and discuss.*⁶

By 1912, the essential elements of the Settlement House program were in place. Those that had not as yet been formalized into programs were at least present in embryo. The beginnings of many services offered at Neighborhood House today can be seen in the Annual Report for 1912-1913 presented by Lottie Lanzet Goldberg at the Annual Meeting of the Council in 1913. Mrs. Goldberg, as Chairman of the Council's Committee on Philanthropy (and therefore "de facto" President of the Settlement House Board), reported that a picnic had been held in June at Woodland Park for over 300 children. In addition, employment had been obtained for 28 people, legal advice had been available through the courtesy of Mr. Elmore Winkler, medical service had been given to ten families, and 56 Friendly Visits had been made to homes for sickness, death, births and weddings.⁷

Because the Council of Jewish Women felt that an increase in immigration to the West Coast would follow the completion of the Panama Canal, it formed a committee to work with other Jewish organizations to prepare for the expected influx. The Canal, by eliminating the trip around Cape Horn, would bring the West Coast of the United States closer to the East Coast by 8,000 miles. And so, when the Canal opened to traffic on August 15, 1914, twelve days after Germany had formally declared war on France, both the Council and Settlement House were prepared to meet and help the refugees from the Balkans and Western Europe.

The beginning of the Great War had an immediate impact on the United States, but the social fabric of the country was not measurably altered until 1917 when the United States entered the war.

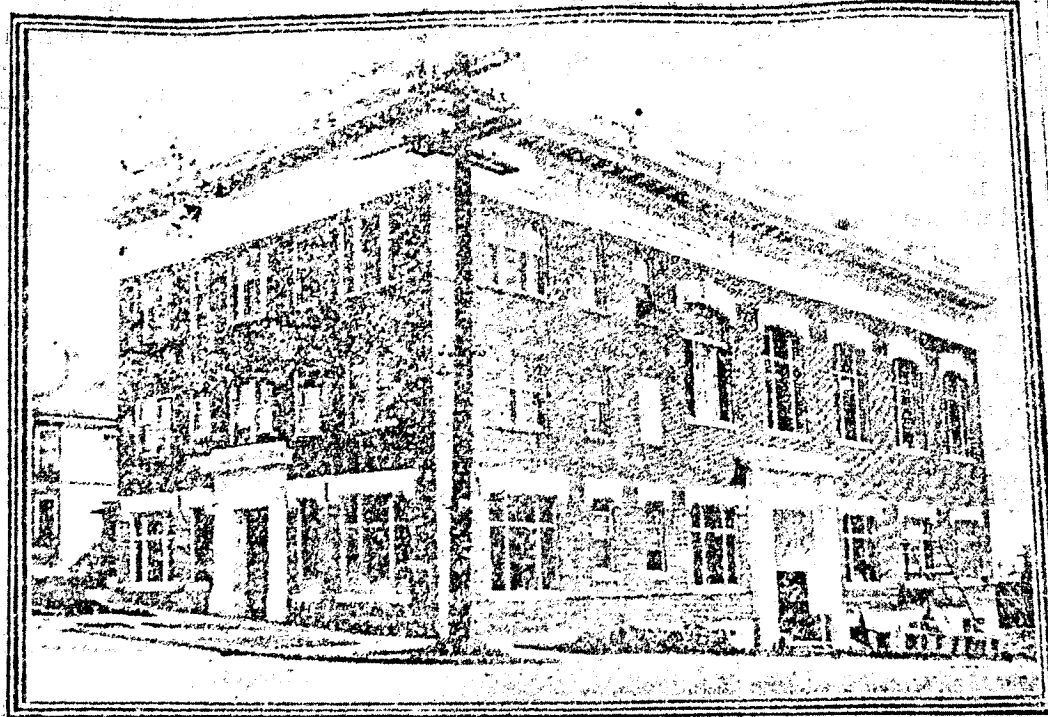
At Settlement House, space had again become a problem. Classes were meeting in the kitchen and in the hallways. The need for a new building became pressing. In her 1913-1914 report, Mrs. Goldberg appealed to the Council members to "put our shoulders to the wheel and do our part so that there may be sufficient funds to start our new home and so do our duty to-

SETTLEMENT HOUSE, COUNCIL OF
JEWISH WOMEN, NEARLY FINISHED

It Will Contain Eight Class Rooms, Social and Club Rooms, Library, Clinics and Other Equipment.

THE Settlement House, Council of Jewish Women, Eighteenth Avenue South and Main Street, is nearing completion and will probably be ready for occupancy about September 1. The total cost of construction will be \$35,000. The building is three stories high, of brick masonry and terra cotta, and the interior is finished in hardwood.

Officers of Inspect.

[illegible]

New Jewish Institution.

James Earl Ray
John A. ...
...

General and specific instructions
for the use of the instrument

There were some items as to proper combination of color and style. The young and middle-aged liked the slippers bought with them as a gift. The old people and the blind and lame liked the slippers of the same color as the shoes.

have been set apart for any immigrant
who may come to the city with
the other immigrants. There are not
many of these kids here, however,
because the parents send them back
home to look after the family from which
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wards these neighborhood children whom we have taken on ourselves the duty to befriend.”⁸

Plans for the new building had been submitted by B. Marcus Priteca, a young architect who had come to Seattle from Scotland in 1909, lured here by tales of the Alaska/Yukon/Pacific Exposition.⁹ Mr. Priteca had designed the recently completed Bikur Cholim synagogue on 17th Avenue and Yesler Way (now the Langston Hughes Center), and would go on to gain a national and

international reputation. As the architect for the Pantages Theatre chain, headquartered in Seattle, he designed the Pantages Theatre, the Coliseum Theatre, and the Orpheum Theatre. He was also the designer for Longacres and Temple de Hirsch, and converted the old Civic Auditorium into the Opera House for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair.

The Council of Jewish Women accepted Mr. Priteca's design; funds were raised and on Sunday, October 29, 1916 the new Settlement House was dedicated.

The Educational Center 1917-1948

It was a proud day, a day of great achievement. *The Jewish Voice*, in a front page report on November 3, 1916, called it “a monument to women's energy” and noted that the building was dedicated “to the immigrant with suitable ceremonies, before a vast and representative body of people.”

Mrs. Isidore Monheimer, President of the Council of Jewish Women, opened the dedication ceremonies by speaking “. . . on the ideal of helpfulness which has characterized the Jewish people ever since the first handful of that faith came to America and landed at New Amsterdam, pledging themselves to see that their people should never become a burden on the state.”

Mr. Nathan Eckstein, in speaking of the work done at Settlement House, reminded his listeners that this assistance was made available to all “irrespective of sect.”

The building, according to the report in *The Jewish Voice*, was “. . . a handsome colonial structure of three stories of red brick and white pillars with an imposing marble entrance facing Main street.” It contained six classrooms, a library and club room with kitchenette “where refreshments can be prepared for club entertainments.” It also included a matron's apartment, two emergency bedrooms, a clinic and “a spacious ball room with a

commodious stage and motion picture gallery.” The third floor of the building was really an attic, used only for storage. Next door to the new building was the Butternut Bakery, a proximity that would later prove to be of great importance. The building was built and equipped at a cost of approximately \$30,000. In March of 1917, a few months after it had opened, the name of the new Settlement House was officially changed to the Educational Center.

A stairwell ran north and south through the center of the building with stairways at each end. In 1976, Tsuguo Ikeda would remember the problems those stairways created for him in 1952, as the only male staff member supervising the twice monthly dances held in the auditorium (ballroom). He did not lack for exercise as long as any of three hundred lively young people could escape his supervision by running down one stairway and then re-appear by coming up the other.¹⁰

The first and second stories of the new building had hardwood floors and woodwork. The basement floor was concrete. The new building continued to offer free baths and showers in the expanded bathing facilities in the basement. There were two big bathtubs, each in its own compartment, a room with shower



The stairway and steam room at the Educational Center.

stalls, and a steam room up two steps from the shower room.

During World War I, the Red Cross and other patriotic organizations used the Educational Center as a meeting place. With America's entry into the war in 1917, volunteers at the Center were not so plentiful. Nevertheless, it was in 1917 that the Educational Center inaugurated a class which was to become one of the most popular at the Center. This was the Folk Dancing class, with teachers and accompanist supplied by Miss Nellie Cornish. It held such an attraction for both the children and their parents that enrollment had to be limited to those who were registered in at least one other class at the Center. In 1922, Miss Cornish established a branch of the Cornish School at the Center, and although the branch only remained for two years, Miss Cornish retained her interest in the Center's work. The Minutes for the regular monthly meeting of the Board on March 10, 1926 report Miss Cornish's willingness "to present the play 'Twelfth Night' at the Cornish School on the evening of March 27 for the benefit of the Vocational Scholarship Committee."

Drama, music, art, literature and dancing were always an important part of Settlement House and the Educational Center. The new building, with its spacious ballroom, made it possible for the Center to begin a program of neighborhood dances. They were well attended and well chaperoned with particular attention being paid "to general behaviour and decorum."¹¹ The dances were held on the second and fourth Sunday evenings of the month between the hours of 8:30 and 11:30 PM.

The music program at the Educational Center was not only extensive but ambitious. An orchestra, long a dream of Mr. Nathan Eckstein's, was begun in 1922 under the baton of Mr. Leo Wiseman. Violin lessons and piano lessons were available. In 1919, Mrs. Marie Powers' piano students gave two public recitals and several class recitals at the Center.

Operettas were prepared and performed. In 1922, the thirteen and fourteen year old girls in the Lascium Club preparing an operetta for presentation in June, were so inspired by their

work that they achieved a 100% attendance record — an accomplishment that gained them the Attendance Banner for the year. "Miss Carolyn Stern and Miss Clara Lurie have this Club in charge, and have taken great pains to help the girls in their appreciation of music and Dramatics."¹²

A Boy's Glee Club had been formed in 1913 under the leadership of a director from the Collins Playfield. By 1929, there were three Glee Clubs at the Educational Center.

Collins Playfield was a large, city-run outdoor recreational center and fieldhouse located between Washington and Main streets. It included the entire area between 14th Avenue and 16th Avenue. Its proximity to the Educational Center at 18th Avenue and Main Street, its excellent program and its wide use by the children in the neighborhood had made it unnecessary for the Council of Jewish Women to include a gymnasium in its plans for the new settlement house.

The year 1922 saw the beginnings of one of the most far-reaching programs the Educational Center would undertake. This was the Vocational Scholarship Program. When it began, its purpose was to provide financial aid to worthy scholars who would otherwise be forced by family finances to drop out of high school and go to work. "This Scholarship takes the place of the meager wage that the unskilled child would be forced otherwise to take — this child kept in school for two years additional vocational training will then be lifted out of the unskilled class."¹³ Scholarship money was a gift, not a loan; but there were many, over the years, who would voluntarily return what they had been given so that others might be helped as they had been.

The scope of the Vocational Scholarships quickly broadened from keeping pupils in high school to sending students to the University of Washington to study Chemistry, Law and Engineering. In 1925, the Vocational Scholarship Committee held an affair to benefit Ida Levine, an exceptionally talented ballet student of Mary Ann Wells. Miss Wells would later number Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino among her pupils. Ida Levine, as a result of

these efforts, was able to go to New York for a year of study with Michel Fokine, the great Russian choreographer and teacher.

Medical care had been available through Settlement House since its inception. At first, needy cases would be brought to the attention of local doctors in an informal manner and the patient taken to the doctor for treatment. A trained nurse was available at Settlement House, the first having been hired in 1911 to assist Mrs. Schwartz in her duties. By 1912, doctors were coming to Settlement House to donate their services at the Baby Clinic. By 1920, the doctor and nurse in attendance at the Clinic were being supplied by the city. This pattern, of programs being initiated by those who saw the need and then adopted by government bodies, is a pattern that defines the contribution made to social welfare by the settlement house movement. In New York City, settlement houses led the fight against sweatshops and child labor. The Workmen's Compensation Act was passed as a direct result of a concerted settlement house protest against industrial accidents.

The need for health care for the new Seattle immigrants was immediate. In the early years, because of crowded living conditions, hygiene and nutrition were a primary concern. By 1912, Council volunteers from Settlement House were visiting the public schools regularly and cooperating with the teachers by making home visits whenever the child's condition warranted it. Papers were prepared for the Mothers' Social Hour on such subjects as "Improvement of Conditions and Home", "Care of Mothers During Pregnancy" and "Care of Infants".¹⁴

Informal advice and help gradually led to more formalized programs. By 1921, a Nutrition Clinic had been established at the Educational Center, and on one occasion, Hannah Schwartz prepared and served a breakfast and a dinner for the mothers of children at the Clinic in order to demonstrate how American food should be prepared. She also wished to make the mothers aware of food values and the amount of food a child should eat.¹⁵

Until 1925, the Medical Clinic at the Center was almost exclusively a Baby Clinic, but in 1924, steps were taken to expand

the medical program.

On October 21, 1924, at the regular monthly meeting of the Board, "... Mrs. Plechner was asked to investigate the possibility of cooperation with our young Jewish Doctors in an endeavor to extend the privileges of the Clinic to the adults."

At the March 24, 1925 meeting, the Minutes record Mrs. Plechner's favorable report.

The doctors were most enthusiastic over this new activity and have enlisted the interest and services of a staff of physicians numbering about fifteen. It will be the aim of the clinic to cater to medical and dental needs of men, women, boys and girls beginning in a modest way. Minor operations will be performed for which two rooms equipped with beds, etc., sterilizer, and other necessary articles will need to be purchased amounting to \$250.

It was moved and seconded that a clinic be established at the Educational Center. The motion carried unanimously. The new Clinic opened its doors on November 12, 1925.

Its success was immediate. By May of 1928, at the Annual Meeting of the Council of Jewish Women, Mrs. Maurice Bornstein, President of the Center, could report that 1440 treatments had been given at the Medical and Dental Clinic to 1116 children and 325 adults. Ninety-five tonsillectomies had been performed, and five obstetric cases handled.

The Educational Center, in opening the Clinic, assumed its operating costs including a small fee paid to the medical staff for each clinic held. The new clinic was administered separately from the Baby Clinic which continued to be staffed and paid for by the city.

Beccy Blashko had her tonsils out at the Educational Center as a child. Beccy was a bleeder and had to remain overnight at the Clinic. She remembers that the Clinic hired a practical nurse, Mrs. Turner, to stay with her, "and she checked me the whole

night.”¹⁶ Mrs. Alexander also came down from her second floor apartment to check on her.

Mrs. Rose Alexander was the Resident Director of the Center. She had come from Kansas City in 1924 to replace Miss Gertrude Cone who had been hired when Mrs. Schwartz retired in 1922. The Educational Center, in keeping with the scientific spirit of the times, had thought it advisable to hire Miss Cone, a trained social worker, when they accepted the invitation of the Charity Endorsement Committee of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce to become a member of the then forming Community Fund. The Educational Center became a member of the Fund in 1922. The Community Fund (now United Way) became the major source of the Center’s income. Rentals to outside groups, memberships, and gifts made up the balance. Neighborhood House still retains its fifty-four year old affiliation with United Way, and their yearly allocation continues to form a significant part of the agency’s budget.

The Clinic, from its very beginning, proved to be a blessing to the neighborhood. It was an interesting neighborhood for a child like Beccy Blashko to grow up in.

I wish you could have been there in Yesler — old Yesler Way. It was so alive. All the various stores that were lined up and down the Avenue — the kosher meat markets and the delicatessen — even the old card rooms had a flavor all their own.

I remember the old neighborhood theatre. They had the Yesler theatre, and they had a sawmill right across the street from the Washington School. And on a late Spring afternoon, if it got very warm, the teachers would open up the windows and you’d hear the saw-mills — and the smell of the sawdust. And then right next door was the bakery — so we got all these wonderful smells coming into the room.

The atmosphere was great. Friday night you’d see the

*people running to the synagogue — preparing for the Friday night services. I could see all the way downtown. I could see the water — the harbor — from 17th Avenue where the synagogue was.*¹⁷

Within this neighborhood, the Clinic at the Educational Center was a place where mothers could send or take their children without fear and without worry.

To me, that was an exceedingly important thing, especially for the mothers in the community. Many of them, in the first place, couldn’t afford to go downtown — or they couldn’t express themselves too well. And there was a fear of going to see a starched nurse or a doctor in the County-City Building. There was a floor there designated as a hospital or an infirmary. That was before Harborview was built. And so, the poor mothers would have to take a sick child downtown by streetcar to the County-City Building. And so how wonderful this was to have a Clinic so near.

*By this time, they could relate to the Director very easily, and she was very sympathetic, generally. The community’s aches were her aches. She would say, “Don’t worry. We’ll take care of it. If you can pay something, you pay a little bit. If not, we’ll take care of it.” And this was the way it was.*¹⁸

Beccy Blashko came back to the Educational Center in 1935 as a part-time member of the staff. Her salary was \$14 per month. In the intervening years, she had studied Art under Mark Tobey at Cornish School, and so became the Arts and Crafts teacher. By one of life’s nice coincidences, the room where she taught her classes was the same room she had been in when she had her tonsils out.

Mrs. Alexander remained at the Educational Center for only three years. As the Resident Director, she had been responsible

for the overall supervision of the Center and all its programs, including the Medical and Dental Clinic. After her departure, the work of the Center was divided from the work of the Clinic. Separate by-laws were prepared for the Clinic and it gained its own medically trained supervisor.

When Beccy Blashko came to work at the Center, the country was in the middle of the Depression. The Yesler neighborhood was still primarily Jewish, but the early immigrants had moved to other parts of the city as they prospered, and the preponderance of Jewish families were now Sephardic Jews who had emigrated to Seattle after World War I from Turkey, Greece and the Aegean islands of Rhodes and Marmora.

The Sephardim were Jews whose ancestors had lived in Spain during the Middle Ages (the Hebrew word for Spain is *Sepharad*). After Queen Isabella expelled the Jews from Spain in 1492, they re-settled in Holland, France and the Mediterranean countries.

In 1935, the Educational Center was drawing children from within a two-mile radius of the Center. It was closed for the Sabbath, from Friday evening to Saturday evening, but on Saturday night it would re-open at 7:00 PM so that organizations using the building, such as the Sons of Israel, or the Hebrew Free Loan Society, could hold their meetings there. The Center was also open on Sunday, and on Sunday morning the neighborhood children would flock in to play badminton in the Auditorium.

The Educational Center did not escape the economic devastation caused by the Depression. On May 23, 1933 at the regular monthly meeting of the Center Board, a letter was read from the Community Fund "urging strict economies and conservation of funds, due to money stringency." In August of that same year, the Educational Center learned that its allotment from the Fund would amount to only \$6,600 — a cut of \$724 from the previous year. By contrast, the Community Fund's allotment had been raised in 1926 to \$8,400 per year. To compound the Board's problems, some of the volunteer staff were

now asking to be reimbursed for their carfare — a situation that was to re-emerge in 1974 with the gasoline shortage.

By November 14, 1933 the Board found it necessary to cut back operating expenses by twenty percent. It was decided to close down the Center for one month during the summer, to close the Nursery School during the public school summer vacation, and as a final economy measure, the paid staff was reluctantly asked to take a ten percent reduction in salary.

Closing the Dental Clinic was also considered. Its operating cost was \$1,752 per year, the largest item in the budget. Mrs. Emile (Julia) Marx investigated the feasibility of this, but reported to the Board at its November 14, 1933 meeting that "... inasmuch as other Clinics in the city were so overcrowded ... the Center Clinic was a community necessity." Mrs. Marx further stated, according to the Minutes, that she had spoken to the Clinic dentists and that they had all volunteered their services free of charge.

On January 30, 1933 at noon, Adolf Hitler had been sworn into office as Chancellor of Germany. It did not seem particularly significant at the time, but by 1934 Hitler had assumed dictatorial powers and had begun his war of extermination against the Jews. In Seattle, members of the Council of Jewish Women began meeting the boats arriving from Vladivostok with German refugees.

At the Educational Center, the financial situation continued to deteriorate. The Community Fund allotment for 1935 was reduced to \$4,770. This was almost two thousand dollars less than in 1933. When Miss Weinstein, the Financial Secretary, made her report to the Center Board at the January 8, 1935 meeting, she had to inform them that there wasn't enough money in the bank to pay the \$200 due on the building insurance.

Mrs. Koch then suggested that a meeting be held with the Board of the Council of Jewish Women to consider ways and means of raising money for the Center. Mrs. Block felt that not enough benefit was being derived from the sewing classes to justify their continued existence. Mrs. Brown said that most of

the money was being paid in salaries and comparatively little on activities, and "... if this couldn't be changed we may as well close the building."

The building was not closed, but by the next regular meeting of the Board on February 12, 1935, the Medical Clinic had not been open since the first of February. Miss Fischer, the nurse, had resigned due to "inadequacy of salary." Dr. Klein had sent a letter to the Board stating that he would have to give up Clinic work for a year. Mrs. Brown wondered why Harborview had not been consulted to see if the Clinic was really necessary. (In 1931, King County Hospital had moved into Harborview from its previous location in Georgetown.)

In answer to Mrs. Brown's question, Mrs. Sylvia Allper, the Executive Director, reported that she had already been in contact with Harborview. She had learned that Harborview felt that the Clinic was a duplication; but the Junior Red Cross, whom she also consulted, felt that the Clinic was necessary. The Red Cross Clinic and Harborview were both within walking distance of the Educational Center.

Mrs. Allper then spoke of "... the deplorable condition of the children's teeth and that whomever she has consulted has expressed the need of the dental clinic and suggested concentration on this service."

The Board considered the possibility of holding only one medical clinic a week until financial conditions improved, but it was felt that this would only lead to a deterioration in the quality of the services offered. And so, at the February 12, 1935 Board meeting, it was moved and seconded "... that the medical clinic be eliminated temporarily." It was further decided that since the dentists had served for fifteen months gratis, they would be offered \$2.50 for each clinic held for the remainder of the year.

The year 1935 was to see a further erosion in the medical program at the Educational Center. At the August 26th meeting of the Board, a letter was read from Miss Ellen Joyce, Supervisor of the Department of Health and Sanitation, Division of Child

Welfare, in which she announced "... the discontinuance of the Baby Clinic at the Educational Center. The visiting nurse will continue to make home calls and the babies and pre-school children will be taken care of at the Public Safety Building daily at 9:00 A.M. except Saturday and Sunday."

At the outbreak of World War II, September 3, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt closed the East Coast of the United States as a port of entry for refugees. The danger of attack by German submarines posed too great a risk. All refugees had now to come by way of the Orient. Seattle became the main port of entry until 1941 when the attack on Pearl Harbor closed down the West Coast. Members of Seattle's Jewish community met the refugees, arriving by boat and train at all hours of the day and night, and escorted them to rooms at various downtown hotels where they remained until homes or apartments could be found for them. The refugees were fed, clothed, re-located to other parts of the country when this was necessary, and their every need met insofar as it was humanly possible.

At the Educational Center, a special class in English was added for the German emigres. English and Americanization classes had now been part of the program at the Center for thirty years. The Depression continued to haunt the budget, but permission had been obtained from the Community Fund to organize a special fund raising drive. Members of the Board asked their friends and neighbors who were interested in the work of the Center to become "sustaining members" of the agency at \$1.00 a year per membership. By 1940, Sustaining Membership had gradually undergone a name change to Interested Membership but the one dollar dues remained the same until January 12, 1961 when Father McNeil (The Venerable Walter W. McNeil, Jr., President of the Board from 1958 to 1960) proposed at a Board meeting that the by-laws be changed to substitute "upon payment of nominal dues annually" for "upon payment of \$1.00 dues annually."

In requesting the Community Fund to allow outside fund

raising, Mrs. L. E. (Rose) Nudelman, President of the Board, cited the agency's monthly deficit and the need to supplement the Community Fund's reduced allotment. As a result of this, the agency's first membership drive, \$403.00 was realized — a not insignificant amount seen in the context of the Center's total income for the year of \$6,449.77. Even so, the Educational Center's Annual Report of April 30, 1939 still showed a deficit of \$25.49.

The most far-reaching achievement of 1939, in terms of the structure of the agency, was the drawing up of the first set of by-laws “. . . so that the future officers and members will be able to conduct the work of this organization along a definite plan.”¹⁹

But, in spite of hard times and financial difficulties, the Educational Center continued to serve the neighborhood. There were 538 boys and girls registered during 1938-1939 in classes ranging from Dramatics, Arts and Crafts, Glee Club, Orchestra, Dancing and Photography to Cub Scouts, Bluebirds, Campfire Girls and Baseball. The Nursery School and Kindergarten flourished with classes held daily from 9 to 11:30 AM for 25 children “under trained leadership.” For many of the adults in the area, the social activities at the Center were their only available social outlet. In 1939, 737 adults were enrolled in clubs and classes. Young people were being kept “off the streets” and out of trouble by “useful leisure time activities”. Elizabeth Morgenstern, the Center's Executive Director, could point with pride to “. . . the low delinquency rate in the neighborhood of the Educational Center.”²⁰

Miss Morgenstern followed Mrs. Allper as Executive Director and remained in this position until August 15, 1942 when she resigned to join the WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps). She was the agency's first non-resident Executive Director. Since the time of Hannah Schwartz, the agency's Head Worker, in keeping with the settlement house philosophy, had always lived on the premises; but in 1940, the apartment on the second floor became the caretaker's living quarters. Miss Morgenstern was given an

additional \$25 per month to compensate her for the loss of the apartment.²¹

In 1940, the neighborhood served by the Educational Center was still a stable, residential neighborhood with small grocery stores, fish markets, and family owned businesses. It was a mixed neighborhood. A little more than forty percent of the population were Asian, primarily Japanese. About eleven percent were black, and the rest Caucasian. The majority of the Jewish population were Sephardim.²²

All this was to change with the attack on Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. Within the space of a year, the Japanese had been uprooted from their homes and sent to relocation centers for the duration of the war. War workers came from the South to work on the docks and in the shipyards. There were jobs in the construction industry; there were planes to be built at Boeing. The Depression had finally ended. As fathers went off to war and mothers went into war work, the day of the latch-key child began.

The price of everything zoomed, but so did wages and salaries. The twelve and fourteen year olds in the neighborhood now had jobs after school and more money in their pockets than they had ever dreamed of. Money gave them a sense of independence and freed them from parental control. Juvenile delinquency zoomed.

The programs at the Educational Center began to suffer from a lack of staff and from constant staff turnover. It was impossible to compete with the money being paid by defense industries. Volunteers were scarce. The program had to be re-organized to meet the new needs of the community. Mothers were requesting full time care for their children so that they too could benefit from the sudden economic prosperity. The building itself had been neglected during the short money years of the Depression. It was virtually the same as it had been in 1916, and was now desperately in need of redecorating, remodeling, refurbishing, and repairs. The budget, of course, had not had time

to catch up with war time inflation.

Presiding over all this, for part of the war years, was Mrs. Meyer (Rose B.) Levin. Mrs. Levin was serving on the Board of Directors as Recording Secretary when war broke out in 1939. She was President of the Board from 1943 to 1945. She remembers the war hysteria and the fears of sabotage by a home-grown Fifth Column that impelled the evacuation of all persons of Japanese descent, citizens and non-citizens alike, from the West Coast. Many Jews were openly in sympathy with the Japanese. Jewish people could understand the situation. So much of the same kind of thing had happened to them. Considering the temper of the times, it was a brave position to take.

On April 28, 1942 the first Japanese from Seattle were evacuated to the Puyallup Fairgrounds, designated as an assembly center. On May 10, 1942 the Western Defense Command and Fourth Army Wartime Control Administration issued a bulletin instructing all persons of Japanese ancestry that they would be evacuated by 12 o'clock noon, Pacific War Time, Saturday, May 16, 1942. The area to be cleared was bounded by 85th Street and Roosevelt Way to the North, the shores of Lake Washington to the East, Yesler Way to the South, and Lake Union and Roosevelt Way to the West.

After the evacuation, and at the urging of her brother, Mrs. Levin and her husband went to Puyallup to visit a Japanese family they knew.

My brother had rented a store from a Japanese family who owned the building... on Sixth or Seventh Avenue and Jackson. And he felt very badly about the fact that these wonderful, wonderful Japanese people who were marvelous landlords — he felt that they had nothing to do with the war — that they were elegant, very fine upright citizens—and here the whole family was uprooted from this entire building where they had a store of their own. And they had to board up the place. And so my brother, my two brothers who were in business on

*the corner of that particular building, really oversaw that building, that whole area, while these Japanese were sent away to the relocation center.*²³

At the Educational Center, its most pressing problem, as it prepared to meet its new Home Front obligations, was the reorganization of its program. But a changed program could not be carried out without additional staff and a renovated building. It was decided to convert the Auditorium into a Gymnasium. It could still be used for dances, although some of its atmosphere would be lost, but as a gym, it would serve a double purpose by providing additional space for sports and physical activities.

The Center began to discuss with the Community Fund and the Public Schools (the Board of Education was now responsible for the operation of all pre-school centers) a plan to increase the number of children in its Nursery School from fifteen to thirty and to conduct the school on a six day, twelve hour basis. The Board also discussed with the Fund the need to keep the building open later in the evening, during the week, to accommodate the sixteen to twenty-five year olds who had no other place to go in the neighborhood for their social needs. An additional need for later hours presented itself in the form of young servicemen and women from Ft. Lewis and Ft. Lawton who began coming to the Center.

The war years not only changed the program at the Educational Center, but also saw, in 1942, the beginning of greater neighborhood participation in the organization and direction of the program. A House Council consisting of delegates from eight leading Jewish Youth Organizations was formed to plan and integrate all youth programs. Young mothers were similarly enlisted for neighborhood councils.²⁴ During Mrs. Levin's administration, Sephardic Jews were given representation on the Board for the first time.

I remember when I was President of the Board of Directors of Neighborhood House, there were two Sephardic

*women on our Board at that time. We had discussed that previously to a great extent, because we felt that since the neighborhood was changing, and many Sephardic young people were coming to our office and asking to be a part of our program, that we should include their parents, or representatives of their ethnic group, into our Board. And so we asked a Mrs. Rose Alhadeff and her friend, a Mrs. Rose Cohen.*²⁵

In the midst of all this reorganization, down in the basement of the Educational Center free public baths were still being offered in much the same way as they had been offered since 1907. Servicemen now followed in the steps of the immigrants. They were charged a nominal fee for soap and towels, but this was the only difference.

By 1943, the Board of Directors of the Center had had second thoughts about the advisability of enlarging the Nursery School program. The Public School representative was now requesting that the Center provide an outdoor playfield for the children. This, the Board felt, was not possible. The Center was on a corner lot next to a bakery. It had no open ground around it. In addition, the Public School representative felt that the Gym should be used more frequently and to a greater extent by the Nursery School children. This would necessitate displacing the Red Cross Sewing units, the Overseas and Allied Services group, the Scout Troops, the Badminton Club and others using the Gym daily. The Center Board did not want to eliminate these groups from the program. As a result of the new conditions set by the Public Schools, and fortified by a survey showing that the majority of the mothers in the neighborhood were not in defense work (partly because of citizenship limitations), the Board decided to ask the Council of Social Agencies and the Budget Committee of the Community Fund and War Chest, to "... permit us to operate a play School or Co-operative Nursery on a half day basis for children 2 to 5 years for which the Community Fund

would pay the salary of a part time supervisor."²⁶

This then, was the program that was adopted. It would not be until 1947, however, that the Educational Center could begin a co-operative Play School, and it lasted for only a few months. But the closing of the Play School at the Educational Center led to the opening of a much needed Nursery School in the Yesler Terrace Housing Project to provide for the children from the project who had been attending the Center's Play School and were now displaced.²⁷

The Nursery School at the Educational Center was moved into a larger building by the Board of Education in May of 1943, thus ending over twenty-four years of pre-school child care at the Center. Child care for pre-school children and infants had begun in 1919 when a nursery was set up to care for the children of mothers taking Americanization classes. At that time, the Center's only problem was to demonstrate to the mothers that their children were in good hands and that a little fresh air in the room where they were kept would not harm them.

Repairs, renovations, re-painting and remodeling at the Educational Center were finally completed in March of 1944 at a cost of slightly over three thousand dollars. In the process, the Center lost its Dental Clinic. The need for the Clinic had been diminishing. Only two clinics were being held per month previous to its closing in January of 1944, but when it closed its doors, it seemed to mark the end of the immigrant era at the Center.

When the Educational Center published its Annual Report for May 1944 to May 1945, it called it a Victory Issue. The war in Europe had been won. V-E Day was officially recorded as May 7, 1945 at 2:41 P.M. French time. The war with Japan was not to end officially until September 2, 1945 when the Japanese formally surrendered to General Douglas MacArthur aboard the battleship "Missouri" (now stationed at Bremerton, Washington). On August 6, 1945 the world's first atom bomb had been dropped over Hiroshima.

The Educational Center could take justifiable pride in what it had achieved during the war years. Its program had provided something for everyone from six to sixty. The building was in use from 9.30 in the morning until 11:00 at night. Women came to sew for Free French War Relief on Wednesday mornings. The Air Raid Wardens held their meeting at the Center one evening a week. War Bonds were sold. The Campfire Girls held Rummage and Fat Collections. (Used cooking fat was collected in coffee cans during the war and sold to the butcher. It was then used in the manufacture of nitroglycerin.) There were weddings and Bar Mitzvahs at the Center. Sunday Night Dinners for servicemen were prepared by members of the Board and their friends at their homes, and then brought to the Center for serving. When the children came to the Center after school, they found Arts and Crafts classes, Hobby classes, Woodwork and Shop, Music, Dancing, and Dramatics. There were Teen Age Athletics, Teen Age Dances, and Teen Age Forums. In the evening, the Den Dads and Scout Fathers got together. The Educational Center had continued to be what it had always been — the center of neighborhood life.

"In our comparatively small Center," Miss (Ethel R.) Feineman, the Executive Director reported in the Victory Issue, "all races and religions meet and mingle. Jew, Catholic, Protestant, Caucasian, Negro, Chinese, Hawaiian, Filipino, Indian — a colorful cross-current of cultures and traditions which must be channelled to survive."²⁸

The end of 1945 found the Board of Directors of the Educational Center making plans for greater community representation on their Board. From its inception, the Board had operated as a committee of the Seattle Section, Council of Jewish Women but had functioned autonomously. (However, the By-laws adopted by the Educational Center in 1939 did specify that any changes in general policy were subject to the approval of the Council of Jewish Women.) The relationship between the two organizations reflected a strong tradition of cooperation. In ad-

dition, the Council was the agency's sponsor, and the Educational Center, as a committee of the Council, was included in the Council's incorporation.

The Educational Center was administered by a sixteen member Board elected from the membership of the Council. The President of the Center Board, within the structure of the Council, automatically became the Chairman of the Committee on Philanthropy, and, as such, was a voting member of the Council Board. The President of the Council, on the other hand, became, "ex officio", a voting member of the Educational Center Board. To be a member of the Center Board, it was first necessary to either become or be a member of the Council of Jewish Women.

This was the requirement that the Board of Directors of the Educational Center sought to change in November of 1945. Mrs. Sidney (Anne) Gerber had succeeded Mrs. Levin as President of the Board. She strongly favored the concept of community control. Returning projects to the community was an idea increasingly being discussed by Sections of the Council throughout the country.

It was an idea whose time had come for some, but not for all. There was strong opposition to this change of policy in the Seattle Section. It was, perhaps, too radical a change to be accepted immediately. A compromise was reached. A Community Advisory Committee was established consisting of five men.²⁹ By 1947, one more step had been taken toward greater community representation. There was now an Advisory Board composed of four women from the local community. From there it was only one step more to full membership on the Board for members of the community who were not members of the Council of Jewish Women.

This step was taken as a result of a study requested by the Board of Directors of the Center and undertaken by the Recreation Division of the Council of Social Agencies of the Community Chest. (The Community Fund had now become the Community Chest. During the war, the Fund had been joined by the War



Educational Center/Neighborhood House on the SE corner of 18th Avenue and Main Street.

Chest and became the War Chest and Community Fund. This name was soon shortened to the War and Community Chest, and at the end of the war, "War" was dropped.) The study requested by the Center was completed by the Council of Social Agencies on April 1, 1947.

By 1947, the Jewish population in the neighborhood had decreased to the point where Jewish families were in the minority. The war workers had remained and the black population had increased. The returning Japanese found new owners in their old homes. Most of the Japanese resettled further south on Beacon Hill, but many re-established themselves in the Yesler neighborhood and opened up small, family-owned drug stores and grocery stores along Yesler Way.

At the Educational Center, according to the 1947 study, younger children from all nationality groups were participating in

the program, but high school age youth were not attending the Center to any great extent. Since the emphasis of other agencies and facilities in the neighborhood seemed to be on sports and lacked "... program media in regard to clubs, arts and crafts, music, and dramatics", the study recommended that these programs be emphasized at the Center for the high school age groups.

A total of 29 recommendations were made in the April 1, 1947 report of the Educational Center Study Committee. The twenty-third recommendation suggested that the Board "give some attention to the possible advantages of changing the name of the Center. Any name chosen should imply group work, recreation, social work, leisure time activities, neighborhood meetings, community organization — rather than the 'school' type of education."

Neighborhood House 1948-1956

As a result of this recommendation, the Educational Center, on January 1, 1948, became Neighborhood House. Its new name came two months after it had gained a new Executive Director. Mr. Arthur L. Solomon, Jr. came up from California to become the agency's first male Executive Director on November 1, 1947 replacing Miss Feineman who had resigned in May "due to ill health and the prospect of what the expanded program would require" ³⁰

The twenty-fourth recommendation made in the study report stated: "That the Board of Directors of the Center seriously consider changes in its own structure to meet desired objectives and changing needs. These changes should aim to involve more of the neighborhood people in the administration and responsibility for the Educational Center program."

In response to this recommendation, the structure of the Board of Directors was changed. Fifteen additional Board members were added from the community, increasing total Board membership to thirty-one. To accomplish this, the sixteen Council of Jewish Women Board members appointed, from a list submitted to them by a four-member Nominating Committee (made up of two members from the Council and two members from the community), new members who were "representatives of non-Jewish groups from the immediate neighborhood and general community . . ." ³¹ All Board members served three year terms with the exception of the President of the Council of Jewish Women who served for her term of office.

The year 1948 was further marked by Neighborhood House becoming a member of the National Federation of Settlements

and Neighborhood Centers and by President Harry S. Truman's surprise election to a second term of office.

With the ending of World War II, the United States entered a period of economic prosperity that would continue, with only minor interruptions, until the first years of the 1970's. The pent-up demand for consumer goods could at last be satisfied. Detroit stopped turning out tanks and started turning out automobiles — the bigger the better. Refrigerators and electric frying pans rolled off the assembly lines. Television became a national mania and then an international mania until, suddenly, the world had become a global village. The Marshall Plan rebuilt Europe and in Washington, D.C., on May 17, 1954, by unanimous decision, the Supreme Court outlawed segregation in the public schools.

In Seattle, Washington, the Health and Welfare Council of Seattle and King County (formerly called the Council of Social Agencies by the Community Chest) had undertaken another study of Neighborhood House. The immediate impetus for this study was an appeal for advice from the Neighborhood House Board. A situation had arisen that was seriously disrupting the program of the agency. It seems that about fifty older boys "were frequenting the building, refusing to participate in any of the established programs, and presenting a generally disturbing element in its operation."³² The beginning of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, solved the immediate problem. The military draft succeeded in disbanding the group creating the disturbances, but the experience caused the Board to request the Health and Welfare Council to review the agency's purpose and performance. Consequently, a review committee was set up in December of 1950.

One month later, in January of 1951, the Neighborhood House Board made its request to the Health and Welfare Council more specific. The Board felt that plans should be made for changes in the control and operation of the agency. It presented five questions to the Health and Welfare Council and asked for recommendations:

1. *Is it logical to enter into a five year plan, at the end of which time the Board would consist of fifteen members from the total community and three members from the Council of Jewish Women?*
2. *Is there sufficient leadership in the community to assume administrative responsibility?*
3. *Is there sufficient leadership in the community to assume the financial responsibility now carried by the Council of Jewish Women?*
4. *With the acceptance of the Council of Jewish Women, should the building be relinquished to the community?*
5. *What would be the comparative values of community control and Council of Jewish Women control?*³³

Because of a shortage of staff, the Review Committee's work took almost three years to complete. During this period it made various recommendations to the Neighborhood House Board. By the time the Committee issued its final report, on September 3, 1953, some of its recommendations had already been acted upon.

Council of Jewish Women membership on the Board had been reduced from sixteen to twelve. Three men had been recently elected from the neighborhood, bringing male representation to the Board for the first time. It was now no longer necessary that the office of President of the Board be filled by a member of the Council. Changes in policy were no longer subject to approval by the Council of Jewish Women. A gradual reduction in Council membership on the Board was planned so that at the end of a three year period the Board would be composed of 21 members from the neighborhood and four members from the Council of Jewish Women.

The Review Committee recommended that Neighborhood House be established as an independent agency, completely separate in its structure from the Council of Jewish Women. At

the time the study was made, Neighborhood House was still included under the incorporation of the Council.

On June 30, 1953, the Neighborhood House building was leased by the Council to Neighborhood House for a three year period, at the rate of one dollar per year. It was planned, at the end of this three year period, to make a final decision regarding the transfer of ownership from the Council of Jewish Women to Neighborhood House. But in 1956, at the end of the three year period, the building was not transferred to Neighborhood House. It was sold to the Wonder Bread (Butternut) Bakery next door for \$30,000.

On October 30, 1955, Mrs. Carl G. Koch, President of the Council of Jewish Women, sent a letter to Mrs. Louis L. Wilcox, President of the Neighborhood House Board. In going over the budget Neighborhood House had projected for the following year, Mrs. Koch had noted an estimated disbursement for rent of one dollar. In her letter, Mrs. Koch called attention to the fact that the three year lease agreement at one dollar per year expired on June 30, 1956.

Although the subject of the property occupied by Neighborhood House and possible future disposition of it has not come before the board of the Council of Jewish Women for decision, nor before the membership, I felt you should take into consideration that certain factors make your estimated figure for rental unrealistic.

Like your agency, the Council of Jewish Women is a non-profit charitable organization — its total budget for expenses and services must be met by its membership and it is therefore highly probably that the board will look to Neighborhood House as a future source of revenue — either through commercial sale, commercial rental, a self-occupancy of the premises for contemplated projects of the Council of Jewish Women, or

by rental of the property to Neighborhood House. As a charitable group, I personally doubt that the Council of Jewish Women could continue to rent the building at the above fee — it being, to my knowledge, the only Red Feather Community Chest agency which does not pay a reasonable rental which is figured into its requests to the Community Chest.

I repeat that these are personal opinions, not those of the Board or the membership, but I felt it my duty, for both our groups, that consideration of some future action prior to June 30, 1956 should be reflected in the rental request made to the Community Chest for the total year 1956.³⁴

Mrs. Carl G. (Joan) Koch was President of the Council of Jewish Women from May of 1954 to May of 1956. Mrs. Koch was a native of Bremerton, Washington but had grown up in the San Diego area. Her father held the rank of Captain in the Navy and she had served as a WAVE during World War II. Mrs. Koch and her husband returned to Seattle after the war. Carl Koch was the son of Rabbi Samuel Koch. Rabbi Koch had come to Seattle in 1907 to assume the pulpit of Temple De Hirsch. He had helped with the Religious School at the Settlement House and had met his future wife, Cora Dinkelspiel, there. Joan Koch, in marrying Rabbi Koch's son, became part of a highly respected Seattle Jewish family.

Mrs. Koch's letter was received with great consternation at Neighborhood House. It had been the common understanding and sentiment since 1953 that the building, at the end of the three year period, would be turned over to Neighborhood House. The Review Committee Report of September 3, 1953 in which such a recommendation had been made, had been submitted to the boards of the Health and Welfare Council, the Council of Jewish Women, and Neighborhood House. It had been accepted by all three boards.

It stated in paragraph B.1, page 9, that: "At the end of the three-year period consideration will be given to transferring ownership of the building from the Council to Neighborhood House."

At the November 10, 1955 Neighborhood House Board meeting, Mrs. Koch's letter "evoked considerable discussion." Mrs. Wilcox was authorized to "contact Mrs. Shapiro and suggest that she call a meeting of her committee consisting of representatives of C.J.W., Health and Welfare Council, Jackson Street Community Council and Neighborhood House to start on the evaluation that would lead to the recommendations called for by the agreement between Council of Jewish Women and Neighborhood House."³⁵

Mrs. Robert (Ida) Shapiro was President of the Council of Jewish Women from 1934 to 1936. She had been a member of the committee that had originally drawn up the proposal requesting the Health and Welfare Council to do the 1953 study. Her committee, the Neighborhood House Sub-Review Committee, was charged with making final evaluations and recommendations to the three boards that had accepted the 1953 Neighborhood House Review Committee Report.

In a letter dated May 8, 1956 to Mrs. Koch, Mrs. Wilcox referred to the 1953 Report and the recommendation made in paragraph B.1 on page 9.

*This group of words express clearly the feelings, thoughts and intentions of all concerned with the study at that time. I am reasonably sure, that Neighborhood House Board and the Health and Welfare Council Board would have thought long and seriously, and undoubtedly, would have made provisions, had they anticipated the possibility of the physical facility being removed from the agency.*³⁶

Shirley Wilcox was born in New Orleans on December 22, 1920. She came to Seattle in 1948. Her first association with

Neighborhood House was as a volunteer. She was the Assistant Leader of the Senior Girl Scout Troop. She became a member of the Board in 1949 and served as President from May of 1954 to May of 1957. Mrs. Wilcox was the first non-Council President of the Board, the first black President of the Board, the first Catholic President of the Board, and in 1956, she became the incorporating President of Neighborhood House.

Mrs. Wilcox and her Board, including its Council of Jewish Women members, felt that giving the building to the community "would be a marvelous legacy for the Council to leave to the community even though it was withdrawing from actively supporting the agency."³⁷ It was also Mrs. Wilcox's understanding that the Portland Council of Jewish Women had done exactly this — turned over its settlement house to the community. "And so it really came as a shock when we began to get word that there were efforts underway to dispose of the building without actually informing the Neighborhood House Board."³⁸ No formal or official communication had been received stating that the building was to be sold. Mrs. Wilcox, in April of 1956, had learned of the building's impending sale in a different way.

A member of the Council of Jewish Women, who was also a member of the Neighborhood House Board, came up to me one time while I was at the agency and she said, "Shirley, do you know that the Council is having this building appraised and that it is talking with a real estate broker about the sale of the building to the bakery?"

I was absolutely astonished, and I said, "Well, what do you mean?" She said, "They're going to sell the building! That's what I mean!"

*And this was the way we got the information.*³⁹

When Mrs. Wilcox learned that the building was going to be sold, she asked the Council of Jewish Women what its plans were for continuing the housing of Neighborhood House. She received

a letter from Mrs. Koch dated May 1, 1956 in which Mrs. Koch stated:

As you and the other members of the Review Committee were informed by Mrs. Shapiro, the board of the Seattle Section has, after much discussion and study, made recommendations to the membership of Council in regard to the Council of Jewish Women's continuation in the role of landlord to Neighborhood House.

Because, however, there are new recommendations which will be forthcoming from the Review Committee which has now begun its deliberations, the officers and board feel it only right that these recommendations have a chance to be reviewed and discussed by the board of Council before a final recommendation is forwarded to our members.⁴⁰

Mrs. Wilcox's letter of May 8, 1956 was in reply to this letter. In it, she presented to Mrs. Koch some of the problems facing Neighborhood House.

Neighborhood House is a going program, serving a great need, in a sub-cultural, international area, that needs reassurances in the ways of democracy. Could an agency with such a limited geographic service area, situated in a low economic, disunited area, rife with intercultural problems, realistically be expected to develop leadership, program and provide its own physical facilities on the spur of three years?⁴¹

Mrs. Wilcox also began to talk informally with those members of the Council who had been on the Neighborhood House Board in previous years, and tried to get them to bring their understanding to the active members of the Council.

I think with almost any of this type of organization you have your actives, and then you have your dues

paying members. And then, you know, when women have given ten or fifteen years of their lives in the active program, they sort of — become supporters; but they're not actually involved in the particular thing that's going on at the moment.

And I think we had some of that situation. The group that was actively pushing this particular phase of the activity, perhaps were not communicating all this to the total membership. And the full import, I think, came as a surprise to many of the old timers who would say to me, in family, "I thought we were going to give that to Neighborhood House."

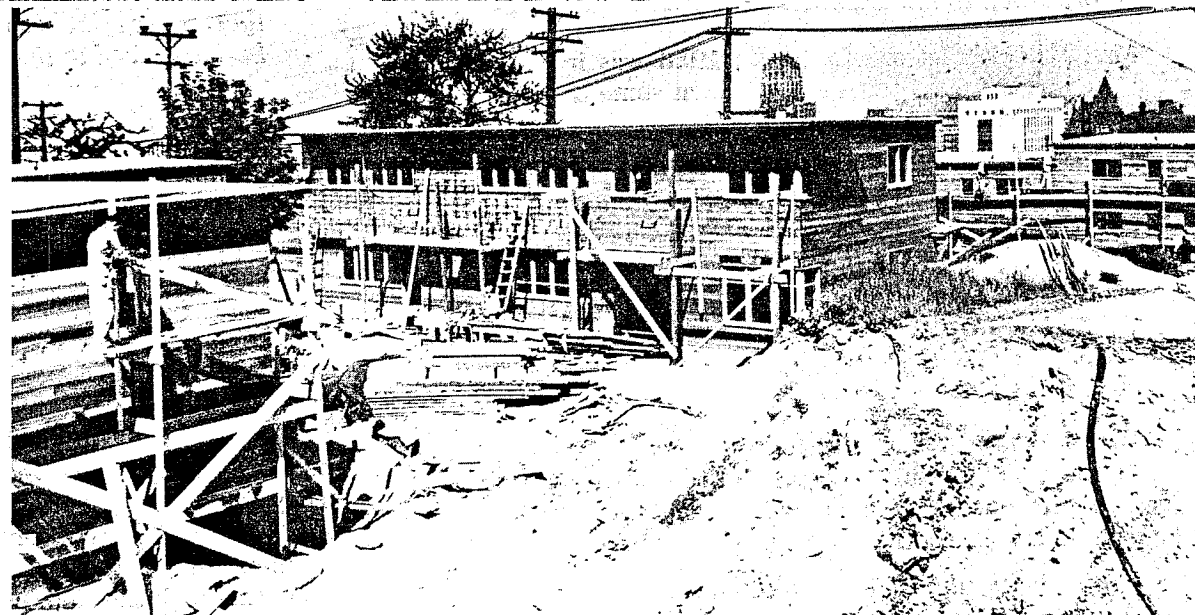
So that, even though the mechanics, and perhaps the legal aspects were being done technically, I do not feel that it was the basic sentiment of persons who had been involved in the program over the years.⁴²

The post-World War II years were a period of great mobility in the United States. People had been kept close to home by the Depression. They learned to travel during the war. They saw parts of the country and parts of the world that had previously existed for them only as colored areas on the maps in their geography books. Servicemen from all over the world trained in this country during the war and mixed with the natives. World War II repeated the experience of the Crusades. It opened up the world for a whole generation; and when the war was over, the take-over generation did not look to the past for guidance.

Since 1948, the Seattle Section, Council of Jewish Women, had been deeply involved with the Displaced Persons program. They felt a strong sense of responsibility toward those who had survived the Nazi concentration camps. During the 1950's, the momentum of the program increased. The Council was co-operating with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in this country and the Jewish Joint Committee in Europe. Once again the mem-



*Yesler Terrace Housing Project
under construction. 1941.*



bers of the Council were going down to meet the trains, finding apartments for the refugees, putting in food supplies, and taking care of medical needs.

During the middle fifties the Kline-Galland Home was being reorganized into a modern nursing home for the aged. The Jewish Family and Child Service needed time, energy and interest. The Bonham Galland Nursery School was opened in 1951. The Jewish community had to raise enormous amounts of money for these programs. Many members of the Council of Jewish Women felt that the Council had done enough for Neighborhood House. The time had come, they felt, to cut the umbilical cord. And it was this view that prevailed.⁴³

When it became apparent that nothing could save the building for the agency, Mrs. Wilcox and her Board turned with determination to the task of saving the agency for the neighborhood. The Board met morning, noon and night. "Whenever I called them," Mrs. Wilcox remembers, "they came." For a few brief months, all that Neighborhood House had was "a belief among a group of people who called themselves the Board, that we have something here that is worth saving. And from that nucleus, we began to build the independent Neighborhood House."⁴⁴

Staff morale was very low. Some of the staff had already resigned and those who had not were job hunting. The agency had lacked an Executive Director since April, when Arthur Solomon had resigned to accept another position. To carry on its program effectively, the agency needed a good Executive Director.

This was the problem Mrs. Wilcox and the Personnel Practices Committee met to discuss, one evening in early May, in the library of Neighborhood House. James White was mentioned as a possible candidate. He had come from Washington, D.C. in 1953 to join the agency as a Group Worker and had been well accepted by the youth in the neighborhood. With a Masters degree, he met the academic qualifications for the position, and he knew

the program. But, he had applied for another position with the Metropolitan Youth Clubs in Los Angeles and had received provisional acceptance. Nevertheless, Shirley Wilcox, Ida Gustanoff, Bea Dotson and the other members of the committee decided to go upstairs to Jim's apartment and ask him to become the Executive Director.

Jim White was living in Hannah Schwartz' former quarters on the second floor of the building. The apartment had been empty; he was a bachelor, and this had solved his housing problem. So Mrs. Wilcox and her committee went upstairs, sat on the couch in his living room, and asked him to become the Executive Director. And even though the agency faced an uncertain future, within a few days Jim White had accepted the position.

The next step was to have Neighborhood House incorporated as an independent agency. This was accomplished on August 21, 1956. The articles of incorporation were signed by Mrs. Louis L. Wilcox, Harvey Frankel, Mrs. R. John Garland, Mrs. Thomas Norton and Arthur Degginger. The signature of Arthur Degginger is of particular significance. His mother, Mrs. L. N. (Marie) Degginger had been President of the Board of Neighborhood House from 1947 to 1949, and his grandmother, Mrs. Nathan (Dolly Merle) Degginger was the first President of the Seattle Section, Council of Jewish Women, serving from 1900 to 1902. In signing the articles of incorporation, Arthur Degginger, in a symbolic way, joined the past of Neighborhood House to its future.

With the signing of the articles of incorporation, the Board of Directors of Neighborhood House became the Board of Trustees of Neighborhood House, Inc. The Council members of the Board of Directors remained on the Board of Trustees as community members.

There was one more step to be taken before the survival of Neighborhood House could be assured. Neighborhood House had a program, an Executive Director, a Board of Trustees, its independence, and a neighborhood to serve — but it didn't have a house.

Rose Morry was on the Neighborhood House Board. She was also the Executive Assistant of the Seattle Housing Authority. In 1956, the Federal Housing Administration was telling all public housing authorities that they could no longer provide direct leadership for recreational and social services. They could, however, provide space for outside agencies in the housing projects. Rose Morry knew that space was available at Yesler Terrace.

The Yesler Terrace housing project, designed by Jesse Epstein, was built in 1941 as part of a slum clearance program.

During World War II, it had provided housing for war workers. Many of the children participating in the Neighborhood House program lived in Yesler Terrace.

A commitment was secured from the Housing Authority to make space available to Neighborhood House at Yesler Terrace. Jim White and Ray Adams from the Housing Authority worked out the final arrangements. On September 1, 1956 a one year lease with a ten year option was signed. Neighborhood House would pay a rental fee of one dollar per year. On October 1, 1956 Neighborhood House, Inc. moved into the Yesler Terrace housing project at 821 Yesler Way.

Neighborhood House in Public Housing 1956-1976

This was the beginning of a continuing relationship between a private social agency and a housing authority that was unique in its time. No other housing authority brought into a housing project an agency that could provide a broad spectrum, multi-service settlement house program rather than a single need, single focus program.

The closing months of the year 1957 were marked by three events of great national import. On August 29, the Civil Rights Act of 1957 was passed by the Congress of the United States. Its purpose was the protection of black citizens' voting rights. While it was in many ways a watered down version of the original bill, it was, nevertheless, the first civil rights legislation passed in Congress in eighty-two years and paved the way for the civil rights legislation of the sixties.

In September of 1957, the Supreme Court decision of 1954 against "de jure" segregation in the public schools was tested in Little Rock, Arkansas as nine black children sought to attend the previously all-white Central High School. They were stopped by a

mob of white supremacists. President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent in federal troops to enforce the Supreme Court decision. A shocked nation watched on television. A national period of self-examination and self-questioning began as the need for social change became increasingly more apparent to more people and to people who had never before given it much thought.

On October 4, 1957 Russia launched the world's first artificial earth satellite, Sputnik I. The moon now had a traveling companion. A United States that had gloried in its technological supremacy now found its supremacy challenged. Future shock set in as events soon began to outstrip many people's ability to either absorb or accept them. When British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan spoke of "a wind of change blowing thru the continent" in an address to the South African Parliament on February 4, 1960, he could, as well, have been speaking of the United States.

One of the major social problems of the 1950's was juvenile delinquency. The World War II baby boom had produced a

'Visit Us to Know Us,' Suggest Yesler Terrace Teen-agers

Neighborhood House Helps Children Stay Off Streets

This is another in a series of articles designed to answer some of the questions asked most frequently of Community Chest-supported agencies in Seattle and King County.

By ALICE STAPLES

If a child can't go to summer camp, what can parents do to keep him out of mischief?



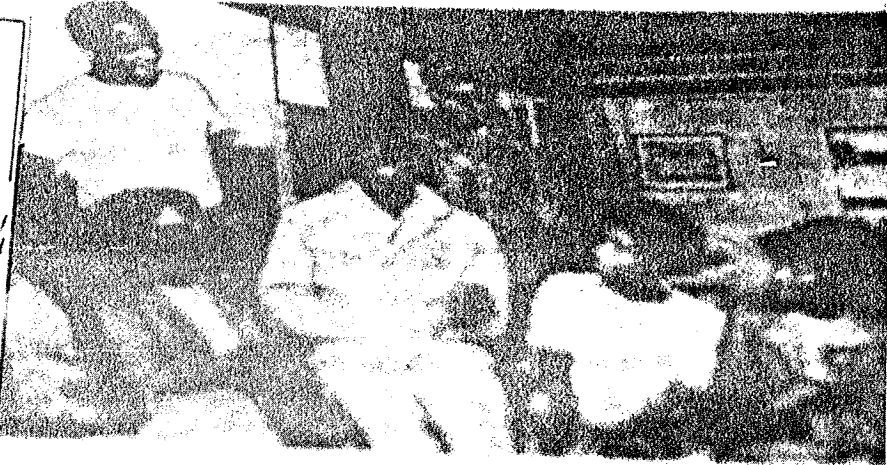
ARTHUR SIMON, JR.

That is an important question in the heart of Seattle's cosmopolitan center, where many races live in close quarters, and where in a adequate housing forces hundreds of children indoors or on to the streets. It is in this area that Neighborhood House fills an important role in the lives of hundreds of young-ers for residents of Jewish years ago as an educational er for residents of Jewish in the area, has changed with the neighborhood, under the Red Feather of Community Chest. It is

many of whom have no back yard at home, go to Neighborhood House with their lunches and carfare. Two supervisors take them for a day in a park, each day a different park. On other days in the week the children participate in arts and crafts at the House. Friday afternoons Neighborhood House jumps to the jive of 350 boys and girls at a dance.

Neighborhood House is a place for one Boy Scout and one Girl Scout Troop, a dozen assorted clubs. It is a center for adults, too, both parents and children together to seek help. House also is used for social clubs.

"If you keep children a place to their hobbies, and supervision, they are not delinquent," said Arthur Simon, Jr., director of the House. "We have included from the beginning because of behavior."



Neighborhood House Helpful

'We Made Mistake' Say Young Burglars
Dinner to Raise Money for Restitution



bumper crop of teenagers and the mobility of the post-war years had resulted in a loss of identification with the people and the places where one lived. Teenage gangs were a symptom of this rootlessness; and while Seattle was not New York, with its *West Side Story*, the Yesler neighborhood and the neighborhood surrounding the Atlantic Street Center did have their roaming groups of hostile and destructive youth.

The Director of the Atlantic Street Center in 1956 (and at the present time) was Tsuguo Ikeda. "Ike", as he is called, had been a Group Worker at Neighborhood House from 1951 until 1953 when he resigned to become the Director of the Atlantic Street Center. James White had come to Neighborhood House in 1953 as his replacement. In 1956, when both settlement houses were taking steps to seek out gang members and draw them into constructive programs, an informal team approach developed between the two directors.

The Atlantic Street Center had begun an extension program at the Rainier Vista housing project in 1956. The program could only be staffed on a part-time basis. It offered a traditional settlement house type program to about 120 of the 1,000 children living in the project. When the Atlantic Street Center decided in 1959, after a study of the agency by the Health and Welfare Council, to become a more specialized agency focusing on "youth in conflict", ie. juvenile delinquency, Ike asked Neighborhood House to take over the program at Rainier Vista. After formal requests had been made by the Seattle Housing Authority and the Health and Welfare Council, Neighborhood House opened a branch at Rainier Vista in 1959. The branch was opened on an experimental basis, but after a successful trial year, the Rainier Vista branch became a permanent part of Neighborhood House.

Jim White, during this period, had been having his own problems and his own success in coping with juvenile delinquency in the Yesler neighborhood. The Yesler gang of "young hoodlums", as the neighborhood called them, was made up of 22 boys

ranging in age from 13 to 17 years. They called themselves The Hawks. Most of the boys came from broken homes, and over half of them had Juvenile Court records. Jim White had established contact with them and had gained their trust. He managed to steer them to Neighborhood House where he organized them into a group called The King Cobras.

On November 9, 1957 nine of the Cobras burglarized a small neighborhood grocery, taking more than \$100 worth of merchandise. When the boys came to Neighborhood House for their next club meeting, Jim White noticed how confused they were. "They were running and hiding behind furniture every time someone entered the building." Finally the story came out. Jim White persuaded the boys to turn themselves in to the juvenile authorities. He was present at the hearing held in Juvenile Court before Judge William G. Long. Because Neighborhood House was working with the boys, Judge Long did not commit them immediately to a state institution. Instead, he gave them an opportunity to prove that they were willing to become good citizens. "So he conditionally turned them over to us, and one of the provisos was that they were to make restitution" ⁴⁵

On Wednesday, February 19, 1958 a restitution dinner was held in the Yesler Terrace Gymnasium. The Cobras planned the dinner, served the dinner, and washed the dishes afterwards. Several of their mothers and sisters helped prepare the meal. Ham or red snapper was the main course served to 161 guests who paid one dollar each to attend. The Neighborhood House Band, directed by Louis L. Wilcox, provided jazz music for the occasion. ⁴⁶

The dinner gained national attention for Neighborhood House, but more importantly, it changed the lives of the boys who had committed the burglary. The gang was dissolved. The boys found new directions for their energies. Ten months later, two of the boys had organized a successful dance band, several had made the athletic teams at their schools, and one had been elected to the student council at his school.



Neighborhood House Staff in 1965
Left to right: Bottom row: Anna Dress, Jim White, Mrs. White. Second row: Masao "Harry" Kawahara, Mary Healy, Mrs. Healy. Third row: Jack Oneal, Mildred Granquist, David Swanstrom. Back row: Roland Saylor, Harry Thomas, Gwendolyn Boswell.

(Jim White relayed an interesting story of the mid-1950's:

there was a highly energetic group of Caucasian young people who expressed an interest in volunteering to set up and staff an after-school program for children at Neighborhood House. They did so and had a splendid success in recruiting minority youngsters, involving them in activities, and sustaining their interest.

When it was later learned that this group had strong leftist political leanings which were of interest to the U. S. Attorney's Office, Neighborhood House staff had learned a valuable lesson: active involvement of individuals in changing those systems which affect their lives can be a far more effective "therapy" than traditional social work.

As Jim White said, ". . . while we were the social work people working with young people in terms of the psycho-sexual development model we got from Freud and . . . relating pretty much on a recreational level . . .", these political activists were "motivating the kids beyond their immediate adolescent level . . . into citizenship in terms of social action."

White recalled a young black girl who came for the first time to the program after leaving a local civil rights group's youth organization. When she was asked why she wanted to join the Neighborhood House group she looked at them and said, "Because you guys are doing things. Over at _____ all we do is sit around and talk. I want a piece of the action." *Editor)*

Jim White resigned as the Executive Director of Neighborhood House in February of 1965. He left to join a new social service agency then being organized in Houston, Texas. He had been with Neighborhood House for twelve years, serving as Executive Director for nine of those years. At the present time, he is the Director of Social Work Education at Utica College (Syracuse University) in Utica, New York.

One of the programs established at Neighborhood House

while James White was Executive Director, and one that he regarded with special pride, was the Tutorial Program.

The Tutorial Program began, in January of 1964, as the result of a request made by a group of University of Washington students from the Calvin Club of the University Presbyterian Church. They came to Neighborhood House in search of a constructive social service project. Their desire to contribute their time and energies to others was typical of the sixties. The election of President John F. Kennedy in 1960 had a revitalizing effect on the country. He brought new hope. Volunteers were everywhere. The Peace Corps was established for overseas work. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) became the Peace Corps' domestic equivalent.

When the officers of the Calvin Club expressed their club members' interest in acting as tutors for children who were experiencing academic difficulties, Neighborhood House agreed to coordinate such a program and assigned Roland Sayler from its staff to the task. All tutoring was to be done on a one-to-one basis.

During its first year, 34 students in grades 7 through 12 were tutored. By the second year, 112 volunteers, largely from the University of Washington, were serving as tutors. During its first two years, the Tutorial Program was only available at Yesler Terrace. But, because of the success of the program and the evident need for it, the Seattle Housing Authority wished to see tutoring brought into the remaining three Seattle housing projects.

Such an expansion would require additional tutors, and so, to facilitate this, the Housing Authority applied to the University of Washington for a Work-Study contract. On June 14, 1965 Charles Ross, Executive Director of the Seattle Housing Authority, said in a letter to Neighborhood House:

It is with pleasure that I am able to report to you that the Board of Commissioners, at its regular meeting on



June 14th, approved your agency's proposed extension of the tutorial program now in operation at Yesler Terrace to the Rainier Vista, Holly Park and High Point projects. To assist your expansion, the Board has allocated the sum of \$7,370 towards the administrative costs for this expanded operation and has allocated \$3,480 to be used as the ten percent local contribution required by the University of Washington College Work-Study Program which contemplates the provision of twenty-one tutors.⁴⁷

The extended program was to be further aided in August of 1965 by the addition of ten VISTA volunteers.

The Neighborhood House Tutorial Program reached its peak in 1969-70 when 900 students were enrolled in tutoring centers in the five garden community housing projects. The fifth, Park Lake, a King County Housing Authority project in White Center, had been added to the program in 1966 as a result of money made available to Neighborhood House through the funding of its Multi-Service Center proposal by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Because of its long experience in serving the needs of the poor, Neighborhood House could bring to its tutorial program the understanding that poor academic performance does not exist in a vacuum. It could not be improved merely by a more intensive concentration on subject matter. The root of the academic problem was all too often the housing project child's low opinion of his or her own worth and ability. And so the Tutorial Program at Neighborhood House aimed to improve the student's self-concept by providing a non-threatening, supportive, learning relationship with a caring person and thereby, as a result of this relationship, improve the student's grasp and understanding of specific subject matter.

The Tutorial Program continued to be funded through the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), United Good Neighbors

(the Community Chest with a new name), the Seattle Housing Authority, and Neighborhood House until 1969 when SKCEOB (the Seattle-King County Economic Opportunity Board) stopped funding all youth programs. This was a result of President Richard M. Nixon's desire to dismantle the social programs created by President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. In a television address on August 8, 1969, President Nixon indicated that he would ask Congress to turn over the major OEO programs to other agencies. Head Start would be administered by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the Neighborhood Youth Corps and Job Corps would be turned over to the Department of Labor, and the OEO would be relegated to researching the causes of poverty instead of providing the solutions.

When OEO money ceased, the Tutorial Program was able to continue until June of 1974 with funds supplied by URRDE (Urban Rural Racial Disadvantaged Education), a state program. When these funds were no longer available, tutoring was absorbed into the overall youth program at Neighborhood House and continues to be offered today.

The Office of Economic Opportunity came into being as the result of the Economic Opportunity Act signed into law by President Johnson on August 30, 1964. This act was the first major step in the War on Poverty. It had, as its general aim, the elimination of poverty in the midst of plenty. Between 1965 and 1970, the government would spend over two billion dollars on antipoverty programs. Within the ten year period from 1960 to 1970, federal spending for social welfare rose from 24.9 billion to 76.7 billion dollars. The War on Poverty was the largest national effort to correct social injustice since President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave the country a New Deal in the midst of the Depression.

The Economic Opportunity Act was, in effect, the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of July 2, 1964 — that act being the cumulative result of the Civil Rights Movement of the fifties and early sixties. President Kennedy had submitted his

civil rights bill to Congress on June 19, 1963, just five months before his assassination on November 22nd in Dallas, Texas. When President Johnson took office, he made the passage of the Civil Rights Act his immediate and primary concern.

The Economic Opportunity Act was a landmark act in many ways, not the least being its mandate requiring active participation by the poor in the entire process of program development—from decision making to delivery. This veritable revolution in government thinking, this change in approach from telling to asking, mirrored the spirit of involvement and participation generated by the Civil Rights Movement.

At Neighborhood House, the Economic Opportunity Act catapulted the agency into an expansion program unprecedented in its history. Within the space of eighteen months, Neighborhood House had opened branches in the housing projects at Park Lake (late 1965), High Point (1966), and Holly Park (1967). The agency's total budget jumped from sixty thousand dollars to over half a million dollars. All this followed from a proposal submitted in May of 1965 to the Regional Office of Economic Opportunity in San Francisco. The proposal was approved in November of 1965 and the contract signed in January of 1966.

The OEO proposal had its genesis in a meeting called by Carl W. Shaw, a staff member of the Planning Division at UGN. He had seen the possibilities inherent in the Economic Opportunity Act and had followed its progress through Congress. Harry Thomas, a Youth Worker at Rainier Vista and now the Executive Director of Neighborhood House, had been delegated by Jim White to represent Neighborhood House at the UGN meeting. "There was only a lackluster kind of approach on the part of all the United Way agencies to this potentially big funding source. I think most people, at that time, felt that federal money was bad news. It had too many strings attached to it. But a handful of people felt otherwise."⁴⁸ Included in this handful were Edwin T. Pratt, from the Urban League; Carol Richman, active in the Central Area civil rights movement; Walter Hundley, now Di-

rector of the Office of Management and Budget for the City of Seattle but then a representative of the Seattle/King County Youth Commission; and Harry Thomas. This group (and Carl Shaw) became the Steering Committee that was to write the original proposal.

The committee met at Neighborhood House for most of its working sessions, putting together a proposal for one and a half million dollars. The proposal was accepted by the Seattle/King County Office of Economic Opportunity and submitted by them to the federal office. It was funded in its entirety. Carl Shaw was then loaned by UGN to SKCEOB to become its first director.

The Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) and Neighborhood House became the two prime contractors under the proposal, CAMP receiving about \$700,000 and Neighborhood House over \$500,000. Provisions were made for the two prime contractors to sub-contract for a wide range of community services from such agencies as Seattle Day Nursery, Family Counseling Service and Planned Parenthood.

The heart of the Economic Opportunity Act was its provision that all plans and programs be developed "with the maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas and members of the groups served . . ."⁴⁹ It was to meet this provision that Advisory Councils were formed in each of the four housing project communities (Holly Park did not join the program until 1967). The members of the Council were elected directly by the people. Three members of each Advisory Council then became members of the Neighborhood House Board of Trustees.

Adding 12 Advisory Council members to the Neighborhood House Board necessitated a change in the by-laws. To accomplish this, a review committee was appointed at the November 11, 1965 Board Meeting. One of the members of this committee was Mrs. Sidney Gerber, the same Anne Gerber who had sought this kind of development in 1945. Article III, Section 2 of the By-laws was amended on January 13, 1966 to increase Board mem-

bership to 36. This change in the By-laws gave Neighborhood House a Board of Trustees with one-third of its membership drawn from the neighborhoods served and two-thirds to come from the community at large.

At the present time, the Board of Trustees consists of 36 members, 18 of whom are residents of public housing elected from the individual Community Councils that evolved from the Advisory Councils. There are three Board members from each of the five housing projects and three members from the Child Care program. The remaining 18 members come from the community at large. At-Large members are chosen to bring to the Board as wide and varied a representation as possible, so that all points of view, occupations, and economic backgrounds present in the general community may be made available to the total Neighborhood House community. At-Large membership, however, as stated in Article V, Section 4 of the present By-laws, may not exceed 50% of the total Board membership.

As a further result of the OEO mandate requiring the greatest possible participation of the poor in the OEO program, housing project residents were hired as Community Aides and trained to do "outreach" work.

The outreach program was based on the knowledge that many of the poor will not seek out the services they need, no matter how desperately they need them. Furthermore, their isolation from the larger community tends to limit their access to the everyday bits of valuable information gained through informal contact with others. Outreach workers go to the poor instead of waiting for the poor to come to them. Transportation is made available to people who have no way to get to the grocery store or the doctor. Welfare regulations and welfare rights are interpreted so that those who are entitled to this help will not be denied it by their inability to find their way through the convoluted language of the bureaucratic idiom. Outreach workers are in the tradition of the settlement house movement. At Neighborhood House, they follow in the steps of Hannah

Schwartz, who made Friendly Visits to the homes of the immigrants in the early days of Settlement House.

The OEO program not only increased the scope, range and staff of Neighborhood House twenty-fold, but also caused the beginning of a change of emphasis in the agency's thinking. Neighborhood House began to question whether it was enough to provide services to the poor without, at the same time, helping them to organize within their communities to address and modify the underlying social conditions contributing to the creation of poverty.

Today, and for the past ten years, Neighborhood House, by providing training, support services and assistance to the five housing project Community Councils, has helped them to develop indigenous leadership and to become increasingly self-sufficient and confident in coping with the various hazards presented by institutional and governmental authority.

Of all the innovative programs developed by the War on Poverty, the most popular in terms of capturing the public's imagination and interest was the Head Start program. It came into being as the result of a growing recognition that the most important learning years in a child's life are the pre-school years. Its original purpose was to give to the culturally and economically deprived child the kind of life experiences and intellectual stimulation that naturally accrued to the child from a more enriched background. Head Start was heralded as the way to eliminate poverty within one decade. This early rhetoric still clings to Head Start and tends to hamper it by clouding the significant achievements made under the program in the field of child development.

The present Child Care program at Neighborhood House began in 1966 under Head Start. Its first director was Margaret Sanstad. In its beginnings, the only facility used was the Educational Building of St. James Lutheran Church — a short distance from the High Point housing project in the White Center area. However, the program also included a large number of

family Day Care Homes. The Neighborhood House Head Start program was one of the first in the Northwest. The program has expanded today to include the five housing projects and a network of six Day Care Centers located throughout the city and in King County.

According to its present director, Robert J. Moon, "The basic overall design and philosophy of the program haven't changed since I've been with it." But it is no longer a one-solution program.

Over the years of experience in working with young children, we've learned that there is a lot more to it than simply intellectual stimulation or cognitive development. . . . We have to look at the kid's physical development; so that in Head Start there's been a tremendous thrust in the last five or six years related to the child's physical health. . . . A kid who's suffering from severe anemia or diabetes cannot function intellectually up to capacity. . . . A kid whose mouth is full of rotten teeth is going to have chronic low grade infections . . . that are going to make that kid susceptible to a wide variety of other diseases.⁵⁰

All children enrolling in the Neighborhood House Head Start program today must have a physical exam before entering the program. And, since Neighborhood House requires all children to re-enroll at the beginning of each year, a once a year look at the child's overall health needs is assured. In addition, when they are in the program, the children are screened for speech, hearing, vision and dental problems. Every possible effort is made to insure that no child will be handicapped in his development by the presence of undetected ailments.

Because of amendments made to the Social Security Act in 1967, money became available, through Title IV A, to provide more social services to low income people, primarily those on welfare. Day care was mandated under this program. As a result,

day care and child development programs expanded at a phenomenal rate, not only at Neighborhood House but throughout the country. In three years, spending for day care had reached three billion dollars.

Funds from Title IV A made it possible for Neighborhood House to develop new programs for pre-school children, and, in 1970, the agency pioneered Washington State's first major day care program specifically designed for school age children. These new programs were in addition to the services made possible through Head Start. By 1973, when Bob Moon became the Director of Children's Services, over 200 children were enrolled in the two Neighborhood House programs.

Neighborhood House has been an innovator in child care. It was recognized as one of 32 "Model Programs" in the nation at the 1970 White House Conference on Children and Youth. Today, the Child Care program continues to serve as a source of new ideas and as a training resource for the community. The agency has established a close working relationship with Seattle Community College and with the Seattle/King County Child Care Coordinating Committee. The Neighborhood House staff conducts a series of monthly training workshops for staff working in other school age day care programs throughout the city. In this it fulfills its historic role.

This agency has had a substantial effect on improving both the level and the quality of services throughout the state. This was the first agency on the West Coast, for example, to really have any organized system approach to family day care . . . some kind of support and training service that we were able to provide to family day care operators out in the community.

We developed a number of training tools . . . that the state department [Washington State Department of Social and Health Services] has since picked up and



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(Top left photo)
Rose B. Levin and
Sol Esfeld

(Bottom left photo)
Anne Gerber

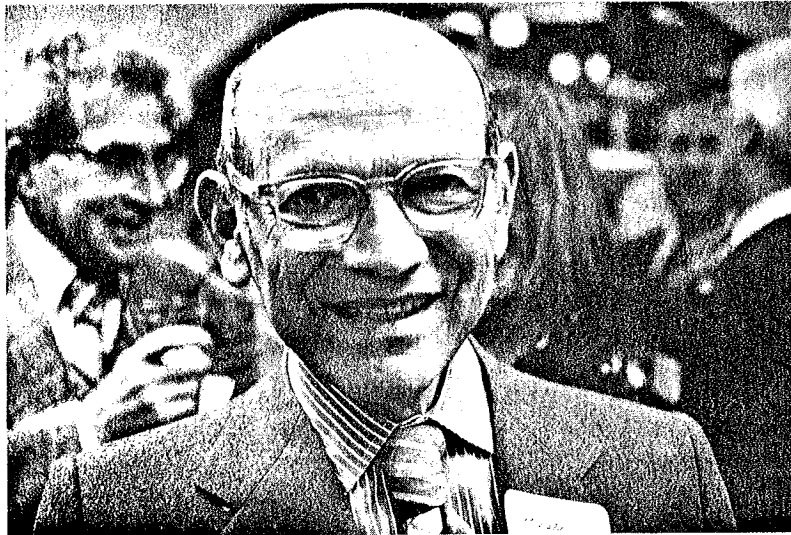
(Top right photo)
Arthur Degginger and
Shirley B. Wilcox

Page 41

(Top left photo)
Edna B. Schwabacher

(Bottom left photo)
Jesse Epstein

(Right photo)
Tsuguo Ikeda and
Cleo Sandwich



*used as training tools for family day care throughout the state.*⁵⁰

The political and economic climate of the 1970's has not, in general, been hospitable to the needs of the poor or the young. It will take a long time for the country to forgive its youth for being right about the Vietnam War before its elders were. The poor have become the scapegoats for the recession that only now is beginning to end. As recently as June 27, 1976 President Gerald R. Ford told the leaders of seven nations assembled at San Juan, Puerto Rico for an economic summit conference that "global inflation in recent years was caused by major nations trying to go too fast in relieving social ills and increasing standards of living."⁵¹

In the Fall of 1976, both the Day Care program, administered by the state, and the Head Start program, administered by the federal government through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), adopted regressive eligibility rules. Children who were eligible for free services last year are not eligible this year. The effect of the new eligibility guidelines is to force families, usually single-parent families living just above the poverty line, to pay for child care or do without. Those who have escaped welfare are finding themselves forced to return.

Neighborhood House, and all social service agencies, are finding it increasingly difficult to capture the attention of a society that seems to want to withdraw its concern from the poor. Once again, as in the nineteenth century, the poor are becoming increasingly isolated and ignored by the rest of society. Neighborhood House works to counteract this. It has been, as Bob Moon points out, effective.

I think Neighborhood House, just by its aggressiveness and the agency's support of services to young families and young children has been tremendously effective in preventing the situation from being any worse than it is.

*I think at times when things look really bad, we tend to be depressed and lose sight of the effects that we have had.*⁵²

Neighborhood House has met the challenge of the times for seventy years. There is no reason to believe that it will not continue to do so.

It is an historical cliché that there is nothing new under the sun. Basic needs remain the same and the past keeps returning in a new guise and in new ways. In 1969, the Medical and Dental Clinics were reborn at Neighborhood House as the Southwest Medical/Dental Services of Seattle (SWM-DSS). The first Medical Clinic at Neighborhood House in thirty-four years was established as the result of a determined effort by the residents of High Point to bring health care into their housing project.

During the 1960's, it was difficult for people on welfare to be seen by doctors. Not only was there no public transportation from High Point to a health care facility, but once there, welfare patients always seemed to be the last ones called from the waiting rooms. A sense of frustration and anger began to build. And so, in the Summer of 1969, a group of High Point residents, a VISTA volunteer and a Neighborhood House worker met to see what they could do about the problem. Community groups were organized to contact doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals.

As a result of these efforts, doctors and nurses offered to donate their services to the community, and a Medical Clinic was opened in the High Point housing project. During this time, the residents of the Holly Park housing project had been working independently to establish a medical clinic, and the Holly Park Clinic opened shortly after the High Point opening. Within another year, Medical Clinics had been opened at Park Lake, Yesler Terrace and Rainier Vista.

The Medical Clinics were unique at the time they were organized because they incorporated the principle of direct com-

munity control. The Health Department provided free clinics, but its policies were, and still are, controlled by the Health Department. The Clinic Boards, however, were made up of members *elected by the community from the community*. They determined the scope of services to be offered at the Clinics, the fees to be charged, and set all non-medical policy.

With the successful opening of its Medical Clinic, the High Point community gained the experience, the confidence and the courage to plan for a dental clinic. An opportunity presented itself when the Rotary Club of West Seattle offered to donate dental equipment from the estate of Joe Whiting, a West Seattle dentist. In the Autumn of 1969, the Joe Whiting Memorial Dental Clinic for Children was opened at High Point. Today there are Dental Clinics at Yesler Terrace and Georgetown (serving the Park Lake housing project) as well as at High Point.

The role of Neighborhood House in the establishment of these free clinics was, in essence, supportive. Neighborhood House staff helped the community groups to organize, to define their goals, and to raise the money necessary to achieve their goals.

In 1976, the medical and dental clinics changed their name to Neighborhood Health Centers of Seattle, Inc. to reflect the membership of the Yesler Terrace, Rainier Vista and Holly Park Clinics in the enlarged consortium. This new name more accurately described the broad geographical base of the clinics than the more limiting title of Southwest Medical/Dental Services.

The clinics have been recognized as superior models for community medicine and are now used as teaching stations by the University of Washington.

Very few people live in low-income housing projects by choice. For the majority of residents, the choice has been dictated by necessity; and necessity is not only the mother of invention, but very often, the father of crime.

In 1971, break-ins, harrassment, assault and other crimes committed by juveniles had reached a critical level in the five

housing projects. By July of 1971, requests for transfers out of the housing projects received by the Seattle Housing Authority had equalled the total of all such requests made in the previous year. The overwhelming majority of residents requesting transfers gave crime and the fear of crime as their reason for leaving. In addition, an already existing atmosphere of racial tension was increasing in intensity.

To defuse this situation, Neighborhood House began its Kijana Project in September of 1971. ("Kijana" is the Swahili word for youth.) The Kijana Project was based on the premise that teen-agers in poverty situations seek and gain prestige among their peers by committing crimes. Crime becomes the test of manhood, the test of strength and the initiation into leadership. Neighborhood gangs, their negative aspects notwithstanding, do give their members a sense of belonging, a mutual support system, and a feeling of importance. The Kijana Project sought to replace the sense of importance and self-worth gained by destructive actions with a way and a means of achieving leadership through working in and for the good of the community.

To do this, Neighborhood House gave the identified youth leaders in the housing projects constructive models to follow by staffing Kijana with adults and older teen-agers who had either grown up in housing projects or were living in the projects when they were hired. Only this very special kind of staff could serve as concrete examples to housing project juveniles by showing them that there were other ways to succeed and other paths to follow. This staff counseled and trained those enrolled in the program, and they in turn went out into the community to seek out, counsel and work with younger adolescents.

By April of 1973, the Kijana program could claim considerable success. Juvenile Court case-records and police contact reports showed an abrupt drop in the number of incidents involving juveniles enrolled in Kijana. Crime was decreasing in the census tracts containing the housing projects at a greater rate than it was decreasing in the adjacent tracts.

Intrinsic to the design of Kijana was the establishment of a Community Youth Opportunity Board composed of four members from each of the five housing project communities. The youthful offender, in appearing before this Board, could not avoid facing the harm that his actions had brought to his neighbors. Means and methods of restitution by the offender to the community were determined by this Board.

The Kijana Project did not differ in content from other youth programs in the history of Neighborhood House. It did, however, form them into a more cohesive pattern. In part, this was the necessary response to the greater demand for reports, statistics and paper work of all kinds made by sources funding the program. (Among them, HEW, SKCEOB, the Model Cities Program, and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration).

The Kijana program continued until October of 1974. It

had originally been designated as a two year project by LEAA, its principal funding source. Funding had been extended for an additional year, but at the end of that year the program was discontinued and the City of Seattle established its own Youth Service Bureaus using Kijana as one of its models.

In the seventy years since Neighborhood House was founded as Settlement House by the Council of Jewish Women, it has grown into an agency with a staff of 120, and a budget of over one and a half million dollars channelled through twenty contractual funding sources.

Neighborhood House grew from strong roots. Its history is, in microcosm, a social history of the city of Seattle and the United States. For seventy years it has served the urban poor as ally and advocate — from Jewish immigrant to housing project resident.

July 30, 1976

Footnotes

- ¹ Taped interview with Edna B. Schwabacher, Feb. 9, 1976 (Neighborhood House).
- ² "Life Begins at Forty" (Council of Jewish Women Archives, Univ. of Washington Library). Hereafter cited as CJW Archives, UW.
- ³ Taped interview with Emma Ginsberg Nelson, Nov. 30, 1971 (CJW Archives, UW).
- ⁴ Taped interview with Tsuguo Ikeda, Feb. 6, 1976 (Neighborhood House).
- ⁵ Schwabacher, op. cit.
- ⁶ Lottie Lanzet Goldberg, "Report of Chairman of Philanthropy", *Council of Jewish Women. Yearbook. 1912-1913* (CJW Archives, UW), pp. 18-21.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Lottie Lanzet Goldberg, "Report of Chairman of Committee on Philanthropy", *Council of Jewish Women. Yearbook. 1913-1914* (CJW Archives, UW), p. 6.
- ⁹ C. B. Bagley, *History of King County, Washington* (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1929), II, p. 443.
- ¹⁰ Taped interview with Tsuguo Ikeda, Feb. 6, 1976 (Neighborhood House).
- ¹¹ Edna B. Schwabacher, "Report of Committee on Philanthropy C.J.W.", *Council of Jewish Women. Yearbook. 1919-1920* (CJW Archives, UW), p. 13.
- ¹² Julia Bornstein, "Philanthropic Report", *Council of Jewish Women. Yearbook. 1921-1922* (CJW Archives, UW), pp. 13-14.
- ¹³ Ibid, p. 24.
- ¹⁴ *Yearbook. 1912-1913*, op. cit. pp. 19-20.
- ¹⁵ *Yearbook. 1921-1922*, op. cit. p. 18.
- ¹⁶ Taped interview with Beccy Blashko, Feb. 12, 1976 (Neighborhood House).
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Rose Nudelman, "Chairman's Message", *Educational Center. Annual Report. April 30, 1939* (Property of Beccy Blashko), p. 1.
- ²⁰ Elizabeth Morgenstern, "The Place of the Center in the Community", *Educational Center. Annual Report. April 30, 1939* (Property of Beccy Blashko), p. 2.
- ²¹ Melville Monheimer in a letter dated July 26, 1940 to Mrs. L. E. Nudelman. (United Way Records).
- ²² "Educational Center: Characteristics of neighborhood as shown in 1940 census compared with the average of the total city.", Nov. 20, 1942 (United Way Records).
- ²³ Taped interview with Rose B. Levin, May 28, 1976 (Neighborhood House).
- ²⁴ Rose B. Levin, "Report for the Executive Committee of the Council of Social Agencies", Dec. 18, 1942 (United Way Records).
- ²⁵ Taped interview with Rose B. Levin, op. cit.

- ²⁶ Rose B. Levin and Ethel R. Feineman in a letter dated June 4, 1943 to R. W. Sprague, Chairman, Budget Committee, Seattle Community Fund (United Way Records).
- ²⁷ "Additional Budget Request for 1947 for Educational Center", p. 1 (United Way Records).
- ²⁸ Ethel R. Feineman, "Past, Present and Future Blood Streams", *Victory Issue. Educational Center. Annual Report. May 1944-May 1945* (United Way Records).
- ²⁹ *Inter-Office Communication, War and Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies*. From Campbell G. Murphy to Faber Stevenson, Nov. 28, 1945 (United Way Records).
- ³⁰ "Additional Budget Request for 1947 . . .", op. cit.
- ³¹ "Neighborhood House Review Committee Report. September 3, 1953", *Health and Welfare Council of Seattle and King County* (CJW Archives, UW. Also at United Way), p. 3.
- ³² Ibid., p. 1
- ³³ Ibid., pp. 1-2.
- ³⁴ Mrs. Carl G. Koch in a letter to Mrs. Lewis (sic) Wilcox dated October 30, 1955, (CJW Archives, UW).
- ³⁵ Minutes, Neighborhood House Board Meeting, Nov. 10, 1955 (CJW Archives, UW).
- ³⁶ Shirley B. (Mrs. Louis L.) Wilcox in a letter to Mrs. Carl Koch dated May 8, 1956 (Personal papers of Shirley B. Wilcox).
- ³⁷ Taped interview with Shirley B. Wilcox, June 17, 1976 (Neighborhood House).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Mrs. Carl G. Koch in a letter to Mrs. Lewis (sic) Wilcox dated May 1, 1956 (CJW Archives, UW).

⁴¹ Shirley B. Wilcox's letter of May 8, 1956, op. cit.

⁴² Interview with Shirley B. Wilcox, op. cit.

⁴³ Taped interview with Mrs. S. Harvard (Leone) Kaufman, April 30, 1976 (Neighborhood House).

⁴⁴ Interview with Shirley B. Wilcox, op. cit.

⁴⁵ Taped interview with James L. White, March 12, 1976 (Neighborhood House).

⁴⁶ Stanton H. Patty, "Restitution", *The Seattle Times*, Feb. 20, 1958.

⁴⁷ As quoted by Larry W. Blakely in a letter to the Board of Trustees of Neighborhood House dated July 1, 1965 (Neighborhood House Records).

⁴⁸ Taped interview with Harry Thomas, March 11, 1976 (Neighborhood House).

⁴⁹ As quoted in OEO Instruction No. 6320-1 dated Nov. 16, 1970 (Neighborhood House Records).

⁵⁰ Taped interview with Robert J. Moon, June 10, 1976 (Neighborhood House).

⁵¹ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 28, 1976, p. A-1.

⁵² Taped interview with Robert J. Moon, op. cit.

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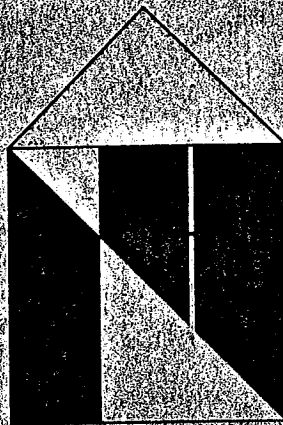
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Presidents of Neighborhood House 1906-1976

Mrs. Emar Goldberg	1906-1915
Mrs. John R. Holmes	1916-1918
Mrs. Leo Schwabacher	1918-1921
Mrs. Maurice Bornstein	1921-1930
Mrs. Emanuel Wachtel	1931-1936
Mrs. Bernard Lindenberger	1937-1939
Mrs. L. E. Nudelman	1939-1942
Mrs. Sidney Weinstein	1942-1943
Mrs. Meyer Levin	1943-1945
Mrs. Sidney Gerber	1945-1947
Mrs. L. N. Degginger	1947-1949
Mrs. Richard Aronson	1949-1952
Mrs. Alfred L. Goldblatt	1952-1954
Mrs. Louis L. Wilcox	1954-1957

Mr. Harvey Frankel	1957-1958
Fr. Walter W. McNeil, Jr.	1958-1960
Mr. Art Degginger	1960-1961
Mr. Brock Adams	1961-1962
The Rev. Peter Koshi	1962-1964
Mr. Walter Goplerud	1964-1965
Mr. Larry W. Blakely	1965-1966
Mr. Herbert Stephens	1966-1967
Mr. Marshall Hatch	1967-1969
Mr. Kenneth Johnstone	1969-1970
Mr. Jay W. Wright	1970-1972
Mrs. Sidney Gerber	1972-1973
Mr. Ronald Oldham	1973-1975
Mr. Mark Kawasaki	1975-1976



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