Community Education, a Cooperative Effort

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION, A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

by

Mary Tracey

A Project Report
Submitted to the
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in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
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COMMUNITY EDUCATION, A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

Mary Tracey, Ed.S.
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The summer of 1981 was the period of an internship with the community education programs of Grandville, Jenison, and Hudsonville. It offered the opportunity to work closely with the directors of the three programs and to become actively involved in these programs. Special projects to work on were assigned in addition to the regular duties of the community education directors. One new program was introduced and put into operation during the internship; another was proposed but not accepted and referred back to a citizens' advisory committee. This paper will show how the three communities work together to share materials, personnel, and resources in order to provide a good program for the members of the three communities. Programs are held for all ages from preschool to senior citizens. This internship taught the importance of community education to the total educational picture of the community.
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David Bly, Community Education Director of Jenison.
Virgil Leatherman, Community Education Director of Grandville.
Chris Cornwell, Community Education Director of Hudsonville.
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Mary Tracey
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PREFACE

This paper will serve as a summary of my experience as an intern in community education. During this internship I worked closely with Virgil Leatherman, director of the Grandville Community Education Program, and David Bly, director of the Jenison Community Education Program. I also spent some time with Chris Cornwell, the director of the Hudsonville Community Education Program. Brief periods of time were also spent with other division heads within the community education program.

The directors of the Jenison, Grandville, and Hudsonville Community Education Programs worked together sharing personnel, facilities, and materials thereby saving the individual school districts money. This internship gave me the opportunity to observe the teamwork of these three communities.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

History

Education is an everchanging process. It begins the minute we are born and ends the day we die. A small portion of our education takes place in a formal institution. The balance is gained by our own experiences, reading, on-the-job training, and interaction with others. Public education is the means society has decreed as the best way to provide a formal education for all the children of all the people.

The Constitution of the United States is the basic law of the land; it covers a wide range of powers, duties, and limitations, but at no point does it refer expressly to education. Thus education becomes a state function under the Tenth Amendment. Michigan law requires children to attend school from age 6 through age 16. Students start school with kindergarten and continue through high school graduating at age 18. Some continue their education by attending a college or university of their choice. For many years, serving this age range was considered the only responsibility of the schools, but society and the needs of those within that society began to change.

There were many students who could not succeed in the regular formal school setting. These students plus others who had dropped out of school for one reason or another wanted to continue their
education. Older citizens who had never been able to complete their education wanted to return to school. The work week was shortened and people had more leisure time. They wanted to learn how to fill those leisure hours. The schools stepped in to fill these needs by beginning community education.

Community education is the name given to activities and programs which provide different educational opportunities outside the formal school structure. Classes may or may not be held within a school building, and they may or may not be offered for graduation credit. Two of the school systems in which this internship was completed began their community education programs in 1973. Once the programs were started, they continued to expand to include activities for preschool, senior citizens, leisure time classes, summer recreation, and classes required for earning a high school diploma.

Today, when declining enrollments are major problems facing schools, the community education programs continue to grow. When other formal education institutions face financial crises, most of the community education programs run in the black. Why is one program growing while others decrease? What are they doing that brings about this success?

Selecting an Internship in Community Education

The specialist degree program in the Educational Leadership Department at Western Michigan University requires that an internship be completed in an administrative role. Selecting an internship in community education gave me the opportunity I wanted and
needed in order to learn about community education. It also gave me an opportunity to become actively involved in its operation.

One of my goals was to find out what major programs or activities were offered in community education. The financing of these programs was also of interest to me as was the organization and administration of the total program. I wanted to learn how this program which served so many different segments of the community was organized so that personnel, materials, and sites could be used without conflict.

I have been an assistant principal for 5 years and during that time have had the opportunity to work with some of the community education personnel. I was aware of some of the services they had to offer but did not know the entire scope of the program. There were times when I was contacted by the community education office for use of our building or for sending notices home with our students. It was evident that community education was a very important part of our total educational program and I wanted to learn more about it.

Community Education Programs in Three Cooperating School Districts

Three cooperating school districts in neighboring communities worked very closely together to provide complete community education programs for the inhabitants of the three communities. They shared facilities, materials, and personnel, while developing classes and programs within their respective neighborhoods.
My internship was planned to involve me in working with all three communities spending the majority of my time with two of the school systems. There were certain programs I particularly wanted to work with: the Adult Community Education (ACE) which provided high school completion for any residents in the community, the leisure time classes, the senior citizen program, the preschool program, and the summer recreation programs.

I wanted to learn which of these programs were run on an independent basis by each community and which programs were run together sharing personnel, materials, and sites. I was interested in being in on the planning sessions for the shared activities. I also wanted to learn how they shared expenses and how the budgets were set up. The following sections give a brief description of the areas I wanted to work with and observe.

Adult Community Education (ACE)

Adult Community Education (ACE) provides a high school education for those who are unable to attend classes in the regular school environment. ACE also could include adults who had to quit school and go to work or those who quit but later decided that they wanted to continue their education and earn their high school diploma. Another segment of society whose needs are met by ACE are those students who could not succeed in the regular school environment. ACE offers an alternative form of education, allowing people to finish a high school education in an atmosphere in which they can succeed.
Services for senior citizens also were provided by ACE. Some of these citizens were in nursing homes. They participated in academic classes as well as leisure time classes. The majority of the senior citizens met in their senior citizens buildings or rooms they owned or had rented. Teachers conducted ACE classes at these sites for those who were interested in continuing their academic education or in pursuing leisure time activities. Senior citizen groups were primarily social organizations but they did enroll as groups in classes provided by the ACE. Most of the senior citizen activities were self-supporting, and the activities were intended to fulfill the needs of the citizens who have retired and have many good, useful, and interesting years ahead of them. In a society where one's life expectancy has increased and where many are forced or desire to retire at a specified time, this is a service that is needed.

Leisure time classes also were a part of ACE. These classes were offered to all residents of the community. There were classes for all ages beginning with the preschool program for the very young children and ending with the programs for the senior citizens. Included were classes in homemaking skills, home repair, music, art, physical activities, and special classes such as literature and foreign languages.

Leisure time classes were sponsored jointly by the three neighboring communities under the direction of the community education directors. They shared materials and personnel. The tuition was set by the three community education directors and was based on the number of hours the classes met, the cost of the instructor, and the
materials needed. It was a self-supporting program and usually operated from September through May.

Preschool Program

The preschool program was one of the more recent programs sponsored by community education. This program was designed for 4-year-old children. It was self-supporting, the cost being covered by the tuition paid by the parents. The classes were held in one of the elementary schools and children were taught by certified teachers with the aid of assistants hired by the school system. This program was growing at the time of the internship and usually had a waiting list. The sessions met for 3 hours a day for 2 days a week. There were classes in the morning and in the afternoon. In order to accommodate all the children interested in attending the program, four sessions were held. Some sessions met on Monday and Wednesday, while others met on Tuesday and Thursday. With this schedule it was possible to run four sessions. Fridays were used by the teachers and their assistants to work on lesson plans for the following week.

Summer Recreation Program

Summer recreation programs were operated separately by the three community education directors. The activities they provided depended on the facilities available in the community and the demand for the activities. Two of the programs were run entirely by community education. The responsibility for the third program was shared by community education and the city. Community education provided
all the sites for the programs and the city hired a director who administered the summer programs. Activities were held for all ages and included indoor and outdoor programs.

These were the basic programs I wanted to know more about when I started my internship. As the internship progressed, I found that these were only a part of the duties of the director and only a part of the total program.
CHAPTER II

OBJECTIVES OF INTERNSHIP

The internship program for the specialist degree at Western Michigan University requires that the intern write a prospectus for the internship. This prepares the intern for the learning experiences that are to be gained from the internship. It also is a guide for the intern's supervisors in setting up work experiences that will meet the goals of the intern.

I had spent 20 years working within the formal school structure. I had come in contact with community education and had observed it as it grew. I wanted to become an active participant in the program, to learn as much as I could, and to see how it fit into the total educational structure of the community.

Community education throughout the country had grown in size and scope. I had watched the growth in the three neighboring communities for 9 years. It had become an important part of the educational system. Many students as well as adults completed or continued their education through community education.

Educators, especially those in administration, must be cognizant of the entire education picture in the community. The internship described here was selected to give me an opportunity to gain an overview of the entire educational program in the community. It also was designed to allow for practical working experiences in all areas of the program. There was an opportunity to examine how the
K-12 education program and the community education program work together to provide the best education for all members of the community.

The internship also provided a rare opportunity to observe the three school districts working together. I knew that they shared some aspects of the program and worked independently on others. I was particularly interested in where the funding for the program came from, which funds were shared by the three communities, and which ones were not. There were some instances where sites were shared as well as some resources and materials. Personnel was another area that showed a cooperation between the communities and I wanted to find out how they financed this part of the program. This was important to me because I knew that for some programs a tuition was charged while other programs used money from the general school fund.

My first objective was to learn the complete scope of community education by discussing with the directors what components made up the local community education program. I also wanted to learn what the relationship was between the three cooperating school districts in regards to the components of the programs. Plans were made to observe and visit each program and each program director.

The effectiveness of the alternative education programs for meeting the needs of students and meeting high school graduation requirements was examined and studied. This was done by observation of the programs, examination of files and records, and discussion with students in the program.
There were other programs that were of interest to me. There were large senior citizen groups in the three communities and I wanted to observe what services were being provided for this age group. Leisure time activities had become important to many of the citizens in the community and I wanted to find out how they selected the many different classes they offered, how they were financed, and how the three communities cooperated together in this area. Summer recreation programs were offered in all three communities and I wanted to find out if this was an independent project or if there was some sharing between communities. One of the objectives of this internship was to become involved in community activities and to work directly with the directors on the projects.

It is important to be cognizant of the financial aspects of any program. I wanted to spend some time with each director to see how they financed their particular program. Discussion and inspection of the budgets for the three community education programs was an important aspect of my internship.

My last objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the community education program in the total educational program of the community. I wanted to find out if it was meeting the needs of the citizens of that community and how many different people and age groups were being serviced by community education.

Chapter III will explain how I met the objectives of my internship. The many experiences I had are not in a chronological order, but rather deal with the many diverse activities of the community education director.
CHAPTER III

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

Learning Experiences in Community Education

The internship provided many different learning experiences. The three directors included me in all of their meetings, answered my questions, gave me free access to their materials, and helped me in every way. I began my internship in the spring; I wanted to observe one of the alternative high school programs before they dismissed for the summer. The balance of the internship was during the summer months.

I spent 1 day in one of the school systems, observing some of the summer programs and talking with the director. The rest of my time was divided between the other two communities. I had the opportunity to observe and work with all aspects of the community education program. Some of my first experiences were those which brought me into contact with the local city government. Working directly with the city officials is an important part of any director's job.

Working With City Officials

The directors from all three cities worked closely with the city officials. One city's Park and Recreation Committee met regularly and the community education director usually attended the
meetings. The community education programs used the city parks and shared in the maintenance and upkeep of the parks. The Parks and Recreation Committee donated money to the community education programs to help finance some of the activities held in the city parks that were free to the citizens of the community. Complaints concerning these parks were handled by the city council and the community education director.

One day we were asked to meet with neighbors who lived on the boundaries of one of the city parks. They were concerned about the overgrown brush along the boundaries which was attracting trash and small wild animals. The brush had originally been left there so as to define the boundary lines and also provide a little privacy for the homeowners. The homeowners did not want to remove the brush entirely but wanted to control trash accumulation and the proliferation of small wild animals. Together a solution was reached and positive feeling in the community relationship was advanced.

Another very important duty of the community education director in one of the communities was working on the annual celebration for the 4th of July which was usually a 3-day affair. Local citizens chaired the committees and recruited workers, but they found it necessary to work with the community education director. The director helped to schedule events, arrange for building and property use, and answer questions. He was available at all times to help with emergencies that arose and was usually present during the actual festivities to give advice and help whenever and wherever needed. Following the director around for those days was tiring and yet I
only had the physical strain, none of the mental pressure and stress that goes along with the responsibility of the director.

My internship gave me the opportunity to observe the director, especially the week before the big event. The phone in his office rang constantly as workers sought help and advice on last minute details. He also worked with the chief of police on public safety and the safeguarding of money receipts for the different activities. It was a very busy but rewarding time. Positive relations were fostered in the community.

The director of community education received some unusual job assignments, many of them appointed directly by the board of education. These assignments also brought the director in contact with members of the community.

Special Assignments

At the time of the internship one school system was in a desperate financial crisis. The school board discussed at one of their meetings the possible sale of some land they had originally purchased for expansion. Citizens had been asking why they held on to this land while they were being forced to close existing schools because of declining enrollments. The community education director was directed to check over these properties and advise the board at its next meeting on the feasibility of selling some of the properties.

While going over the deeds it was discovered that one piece of property was supposed to have two oil wells. The existence of one
was known but not the existence of the other. It was decided that the director and I would go and look for this oil well. One very hot day was spent hiking over acres of land, fighting off mosquitoes, picking off burrs, and looking for paths through thick underbrush. Our efforts brought no success, we found only the oil well we already knew existed.

This experience led to another and that was my first lesson with changing the topography of a land site. One of the elementary schools in one of the communities wanted to expand their playground area. They had more property surrounding the school than they needed for the playground. The school district could not afford to finance the playground. It was suggested that some of the land be sold to pay for the playground. There was a buyer who wanted the land for some low income housing. I was invited to attend a meeting with the engineering company. They were reviewing plans with the community education director to show how the topography of the land would have to be changed so that it could be used for a playground area and also the homes that were to be built. At the same time, they discussed other property that was being considered for sale and the cost of changing that topography in order to make it usable for homes. It was a fascinating experience, one I had never encountered before and definitely one I did not know the community education director was responsible for.

This led to another business experience which was also the responsibility of the director, that of renting a vacant school building. One school system was forced to close one of the elementary
buildings because of declining enrollment and financial problems. A local church group was interested in renting the school for its own school. The director and I met the representatives from the church at the school site. It was an interesting experience not unlike renting a home. They asked about storage space, kitchen facilities, utility bills, and plumbing. They discussed changing the room structures for larger quarters in some instances and smaller rooms in others. The playground was checked over, and the nearness of the highway was also a consideration. No decision was reached that day, but another learning experience had been added to my internship and the fun was just beginning.

Summer Recreation Programs

Most of my internship was done in the summer, and working with the summer recreation program was a large part of my responsibility. I worked with three different communities, but most of my time was spent with two of them. Both programs were excellent but there was a difference in the way the programs were run. One program was headed by the community education director; the other was under the direction of a supervisor hired by the city. This supervisor had control of the program but worked closely with the community education director in that community. The first week I worked with the supervisor hired by the city.

It was an interesting week, visiting programs at neighborhood schools, working in the office, seeing how schedules were set up, checking out the programs at the parks, meeting as many people as I
could, and attending as many activities as possible.

One day was especially enlightening. The soccer program was big in one of the communities and a new soccer complex was being built. We visited the existing field and then went out to look at the new fields. Drainage pipes were still being installed and parking facilities were being discussed. One of the city officials went with us to check on the progress of the area. That same week I had the opportunity to observe soccer lessons being taught to the children and to watch an evening game played by adults.

Ordering films, arranging bus transportation for field trips, and taking supplies to neighboring centers were some of my duties that week. There was also the opportunity to participate in interviews that were being held for a few job opportunities that were still available in the summer program.

The next week I spent doing much the same thing with the other summer programs. There were differences from the program described above. The main difference was the leadership responsibilities. The community education director had the responsibility for the total program. Another difference was the soccer program. There was a soccer program but it was not as large a program as the one previously described. A greater variety of classes were taught at the junior high school building for a special fee. I had the opportunity to observe a gymnastic program, cheerleading clinic, model building, plus the regular playground activities.

All three communities had separate summer swim programs for their communities. The programs included swim lessons, "free" swim,
and age group competitive swimming. My duties were varied, making announcements for the swimmers to take home regarding special events, buying ribbons and trophies for the swim meets, working at the meets, and planning the banquet for the end of the season.

It was interesting to meet the many dedicated people who spent their summers working with children. Not only the children were served by the summer recreation program; there were activities for the adults as well. Organized leagues for golf, soccer, and softball were all arranged by the community education director. Special services also were provided for the senior citizens in the community.

Senior Citizens

The senior citizens were another aspect of the total program for the community education director. Many of the programs that the senior citizens participated in were established by the director. I visited the facilities for the citizens and was very impressed. The centers were attractive and very homey. Crafts that the senior citizens were working on were in evidence, monthly schedules of activities were posted, and the coffee pot was always on. Classes took place at the centers but others were scheduled at nursing homes and in senior citizen homes. I had the opportunity to observe five senior citizen homes where special living accommodations and classes were made available for the senior citizens. Some of the classes taught were current events, physical health, arts and crafts, music, Bible as Literature, and ceramics. The number of senior citizens in the three communities was large and it was necessary for the welfare
of the schools to have the support of this segment of society. The community education program contributed much to fostering positive relations between the senior citizens and the schools.

There were two very special services that the schools provided for the senior citizens. A van had been donated to one senior citizen organization, but they could not get insurance for it. This concern was brought to the school board within that community and they voted to add the van to the school vehicle insurance policy since the van technically belonged to the community education senior citizen program. This allowed the senior citizens to use the van because the school system insured it for them.

The senior citizens in this community also rented a large room from the school for their own activities at a much lower fee than it would cost them elsewhere. Housed in the same building was the Learning Center where they took many of their classes. The Learning Center was a part of the ACE program and served also as the office of the community education director. Many of the senior citizens were on a fixed income and could not afford an increased assessment to pay for a senior citizen center. The convenience of having their classes in the same building was an added advantage.

Adult Community Education (ACE)

Adult and Community Education (ACE) was a cooperative program of four communities. These programs included high school completion and leisure time classes. I had the opportunity to work with the coordinator of the community learning center. She invited me to
attend the meeting she had with her staff. This included not only those who would be working at the learning center but also those who would be teaching evenings in the neighboring community schools. She also explained the concept of the school. Nongraduates and persons under the age of 20 enrolled free of charge; graduates over 20 enrolled for a fee of $40. Counselors evaluated the credits the students already had and suggested a course of study to meet the needs of the students. Credits could be earned through work experience, trade school training, GED test, and/or a homemaker test. Classes were designed for adults; however, public school day students enrolled for a tuition fee of $40 per class and the approval of the ACE staff and the students' high school counselor.

There was another way for high school students to complete their education and that was at the Sunshine High School.

Sunshine High School

One of the first programs I observed was Sunshine High School, an alternative high school for those students who were unable to "make it" in a regular high school situation. They had their own building and the staff was hired by the community education director. The building was run by an advisor also hired by the community education director. The staff developed their own curriculum to meet the special needs of the students and graduation requirements as established for the regular high school in the community.

Students had their own lounge where they were permitted to smoke. I spent one complete day with them and it was a totally new
experience. One must have a different mind-set to understand and see the value of the program. It takes a special group of people to work with these special students, but there was success and a feeling about belonging that you do not always see in a formal school setting. The students I spoke with said they felt that someone finally cared for them and were trying to meet their individual needs.

Leisure Time Classes

Another area of ACE was the leisure time program. These classes were held during the regular school months and I did not have a chance to observe the regular classroom situation. I was included in meetings during the summer when the schedule was established and the catalog was being prepared for printing. The program was self-supporting and the fee for each class was determined by the formula established by the three community education directors. This formula was based on instructor costs, maintenance fees, materials needed, and the number enrolled in class.

Preschool Program

My experience with the preschool program was brief. Preschool classes were held during the regular school day and I could not get away from work to observe the program. I was able to attend the meetings held for the parents to introduce them to the program. I was amazed at the number of mothers and fathers that attended the meetings. Their questions showed that they were interested in a
program that gave more than just a baby-sitting service.

Observing the existing programs was very interesting and provided me with many learning experiences, but the most exciting meetings were those I attended for the formation of new services being planned by community education.

New Programs

Two new programs were being considered for one of the communities. The first was a program for those who had been placed on probation by the courts for a misdemeanor against society. Attending class would be a part of their probation as defined by the presiding judge. It would be the responsibility of the probation officer to see that this requirement was met. The community education program would provide the class for the probationer. The second new program was called Latch Key.

The first meeting I attended for the program for those on probation was with the community education directors from the three communities. The purpose of that meeting was to get the opinion of the three directors, what they thought the attitude of the superintendents would be, and what kind of support they would get from the school boards. The second meeting was with the three directors plus the superintendents from the three school districts. The project was discussed and approved and the directors were commissioned to find someone to direct the program. Interviews were held and the supervisor of the Sunshine High School was given the responsibility of organizing the program. The program was to be implemented during
the winter term of the 1981-82 school year.

The other new program was the Latch Key Program. This was a program to fill the needs of those students who did not have any supervision at home before or after school. They were called "latch key children" since there was no one home after school for them and they always carried a key so they could let themselves into their homes at night. This program was brought to the attention of the community education director in one of the communities. He talked to me about it and we also met with the directors from the other two communities. One director decided to follow through with the idea. We then met with the curriculum director from the first community and he supported the idea. The next step was to present the idea to the school board. The item was put on the agenda and discussed at the next meeting. Three of the board members felt that this was carrying responsibilities of the school too far and that the program was just a babysitting program. It was recommended that the project be turned over to the Citizens Advisory Committee.

The community education directors also thought it would be good for me to have special projects of my own to work on during my internship. They felt that since I already had 4 years of administration, that it would be of value to work on these projects rather than administrative detail duties.

Special Projects

My first assignment was to work with a principal of the high school in one of the communities on obtaining a grant for a computer
program to be shared by the public high school and the parochial high school. My work consisted of checking out the organizations that contributed financially to such requests and contacting them by letter or phone to set up an interview. The high school principal was in charge of writing the grant and I was his aide. I was to do most of the preliminary work while he completed the project.

The second project was concerned primarily with public relations. The last millage election had left some bad feelings in the city and the superintendent wanted articles published in the monthly newspaper to help create a more positive image about the school system. The purpose of the articles was to show that the level of education was high even though drastic cuts had been made in the budget. Writing the articles meant interviewing principals, teachers, aides, supervisors, and bus drivers. All articles had to be approved by the superintendent and the community education director.

My third project was working with community and business leaders of the community. One of the community education directors had been the United Way chairman for 3 years and he thought that this would be a chance for me to work with community leaders. He asked me to be chairman of the United Way Campaign. It taught me organization skills and techniques I had never had to use. All these new skills could be applied directly to any leadership role and were very beneficial. I enjoyed the experience and offered to help again the next year.

The first objective of my internship was met. I had the opportunity to work with and observe the many different areas of
community education. My second objective was to find out why this program continued to grow, while the regular program was decreasing. The next chapter deals with this objective.
CHAPTER IV

FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Financial Comparison of Traditional and Community Education

Education has been a top priority with most people throughout the history of this country and was thought of as the responsibility of the total community. Life revolved around the school and families were willing to sacrifice to get their children educated. In the 1960's there was a population explosion and schools were built or added on to in order to accommodate increased numbers of children. The population explosion leveled off and enrollment began to decline.

Statistics compiled by the National School Public Relations Association (1981) show that public school enrollments today are significantly down from previous years. Table 1 gives a dramatic picture of this decline.

These figures show that in 35 years we have lost 85,453 school systems in the country. Some of these have been consolidations of small school districts, but others are districts that have been forced to close because of the declining enrollment and diminishing funds.

The postwar baby boom is over and society is taking another view of large families. There are numerous reasons why the family size is decreasing: working mothers, inflation, the "pill," abortion, and the financial burden of having children. In 1969, 50% of
Table 1
Declining Enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School systems</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945-46</td>
<td>101,382</td>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>26,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>83,718</td>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>19,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>63,718</td>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>16,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>47,594</td>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>16,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>35,676</td>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>15,929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. From "National School Public Relations Association." In Communique, a pamphlet distributed by Jenison, Michigan, Public Schools, November 6, 1981.

the people in the United States had no children in school. In 1980 that percentage had increased; 68% of the people had no children in school (Gallop Poll, 1980, cited in "National School Public," 1981). When we ask for a millage increase, we are asking for all of the people to pay for the education of children of only 32% of the general population.

Historically speaking, there has been a strong commitment on the part of the people of the United States to pay for this education. But the amount that is being requested continues to increase. In 1929, 3.1% of the Gross National Product was spent on education; in 1978 that amount had increased to 7.1% of the Gross National Product ("National School Public," 1981). Even counting for inflation the U.S. commitment to education has increased dramatically over the
years. Table 2 shows the per pupil expenditure of the United States public elementary and secondary schools.

Table 2
School Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Expenditure in dollars</th>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Expenditure in dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-30</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>1,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>1,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>1,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>2,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>2,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>654</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. From "National School Public Relations Association." In Communique, a pamphlet distributed by Jenison, Michigan, Public Schools, November 6, 1981.

A dramatic picture of educational problems today is unfolding. The number of school systems has declined drastically and yet the cost per student has escalated beyond belief. As enrollment declines, the taxpayers are voting down the additional millage that schools are requesting just to keep up with inflation. These national figures affect everyone and Michigan is no exception. Local school districts are being forced to eliminate programs, lay off teachers, and in some cases close schools.
The community education program on the other hand is experiencing an increase in enrollment. The programs in many instances are self-supporting. The cost is paid for by those enrolling in the class. A close look at cost figures show why this is possible.

Cost Analysis

The average salary of a school teacher in the community in which I work was $21,500 for the 1981-82 school year. That figure does not include the following fringe package:

- $1,776 Hospitalization insurance
- $324 Dental insurance
- $95 W/C
- $1,025 Retirement
- $50 Life insurance

$3,260

The total financial average cost per teacher was $24,820. According to the 1981-82 educational association contract, the teacher was employed for 185 working days, 6 hours per day.

$24,760 divided by 185 working days = $133.84

$133.84 divided by 6 hours = $22.30 per hour

Teachers hired by the community education program are paid $8.78-$9.75 per hour with no fringe benefits. The average community education teacher taught 7.03 hours per week. There were 14 teachers hired by this program for a total of 98.42 hours per week. It would take three full-time teachers to replace the 14 part time community education teachers. The average community education teacher would receive $61.25 per week for a total cost per week of $857.50. Three contracted teachers would be paid a total of $2,007.60 per week.
These facts point out that the cost differential between a regular contracted teacher and a community education teacher was the reason for the financial success of the program. If a contracted teacher were to be used in the community education program, they too would be facing the same financial crises as the traditional program. These facts do not detract from the premise that this program is a huge success, only the reason for the financial success.

My other concern was why the community education program continues to grow while traditional programs decline. The tables at the beginning of this chapter (Tables 1 and 2) show why there was a decline in enrollment but do not address why community education was expanding.

Why Community Education Continues to Grow

There are many different reasons that people avail themselves of the services of community education. The ACE program is growing at least in part because many people now have leisure time that they did not have before. They have the time to indulge in hobbies and interest areas. Many adults want to complete the education that they were not able to finish earlier in their lives. They now have the time to return to school in the evening. Campaigns have been sponsored by the community education programs, advertising their services and showing the people how easy it is to return to school and earn their diploma.

Small families and working mothers have made the preschool programs popular. Many times this is the only time the children have a
chance to play with others their own age. Tuition for preschool was not as much and definitely not more than what it would cost for a baby-sitter for those same hours. This frees the mother for work, shopping, or interest activities of her own.

A longer life span has given rise to the senior citizen program. With many useful years ahead of them, these centers provide the companionship and activity that these people need to live a full life. Many times the younger generation has moved to another community or state to make their living, and the older people have to rely on friends for companionship. Senior citizen organizations are not for everyone, but for those who need it, it is an answer to their loneliness and self-satisfaction.

The community education programs grow because they meet the needs of the community. They are constantly searching for new ways to expand their program in order to meet the needs of a changing society. The regular public school system is much slower to change; they are bound by laws and rigid structures. It is my opinion that these are some of the reasons our traditional schools are having a problem and the community programs are not.
CHAPTER V

EVALUATION

Evaluation of Specific Areas of Community Education

The experience of working with the community education directors from the three communities was valuable. The opportunity to work with the three directors gave me an opportunity to observe how the programs work under the leadership of different supervisors. All three were efficient and were meeting the needs of the community.

One of the summer recreation programs was superior to the others because of an additional supervisor. In two communities the community education director supervised all the summer recreation activities and hired all the personnel for the program. This was in addition to their other duties. The other community supplied all the sites, but the city hired a director to supervise just the summer recreation program. The program with the extra supervisor was more effective. He was able to devote all of his time to the program. He visited the school sites more often, worked closely with all personnel, and had more time to plan new activities for the program.

I had the opportunity to visit all three programs and the difference was evident. The program with the special summer recreation supervisor had more continuity in the organization. They also had the advantage of having experienced personnel supervising the individual school sites. There were two main reasons for this: jobs
were hard to find that summer and people were working for organiza-
tions in which they had seniority. One of the on-site directors was
a principal at one of the Christian elementary schools and had done
this for the past 5 years. He enjoyed working directly with the
children and found this a good change of pace from his administra-
tive duties. The other communities ran good programs but the direc-
tors were not able to devote their total time to the summer program.
The summer recreation program was only one facet of their summer
duties.

The ACE programs were doing an excellent job in meeting the
needs of the community. Many citizens returned to school to earn
their diploma. The dedication of those working with the students
was great. Extensive files were kept on all those who enrolled and
the records were kept for 5 years. Community education advertised
its programs, keeping the citizens aware of the services they had to
offer. The traditional school programs should take a lesson from
community education. They have to communicate the services they have
to offer and how they could benefit the public.

It is very important to have the support of the senior citizens.
Only 32% of the general population has children in school. That
means we have to appeal to the other 68% for tax monies to run the
schools. The senior citizens comprise a large portion of the 68%
and it is vital to keep the lines of communication open, to listen
to them, and to foster a positive relationship between them and the
schools. The community education program worked very closely with
the senior citizens and they did a great job at fostering positive
relationships. The community education department did more with and for the senior citizens than any other organized group. This was a valuable continuing service of community education.

Preschool was often the first exposure young couples had to a school system. The impression they got of the school system depended on this first meeting and their experiences with the schools during the first years. They could be voters in the school system for many years and their support is needed. The community education program provided a service for these young couples and helped promote positive feelings about the school system.

Working on the special assignments were worthwhile experiences and helped me to develop and work on techniques that would be useful in any administrative capacity. Doing something worthwhile for the school districts gave me a positive feeling about my internship. The projects also were an opportunity to work with many different people in the community and gave me a much broader picture of what community education is all about. The skills will be of use to me in my present position as well as any future role I may strive for.

General Evaluation

The directors of community education that I worked with during this internship were excellent supervisors. Their willingness to take me into their organization, share in all their meetings, and participate in as many different learning experiences as possible demonstrated their concern for me and their dedication to their profession. Each day was a new experience, something new was added to
my portfolio. I did things I would never have dreamed were the duties of a community education director. It also taught me the importance of community education to the total school system.

Marketing education has become a popular item with school boards. Many districts are experiencing a decline in enrollment and some of this is due to the expansion of private schools. Some people have become disillusioned with public education and it is the responsibility of the schools to show the people that they are doing a good job of educating students. Promoting a positive image is an important component of this marketing procedure and that is where community education has taken a leading role.

Community education reaches a much larger segment of society than the regular formal educational structure. The image that benefits the entire system is the one put forth by community education. We are dependent on the voters in the local communities for the funds to run the entire program. People are tired of taxes and they will not vote to pay for a tax that they think is being misused. If they can see a value and a service in their educational program, they will be more willing to pay those taxes. People expect a return on their investment. We must convince them that investing in the public school system is one of the best investments they will ever make. Working with the community education program has made me aware of the importance of public relations.

I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in the internship program with community education. I would highly recommend this internship to those interested in learning about the total
school system and those who would like to play a major role in the administration of a school system.
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