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The Role of the Myrtle Heege Community Center in the Recreation Program of Kalamazoo

Fletcher S. Cooper

Western Michigan University

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THE ROLE OF THE LYRTLE NEIGHBOR COMMUNITY CENTER
IN THE RECREATION PROGRAM OF KALAMAZOO

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Division of Western Michigan College of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

by

Fletcher S. Cooper

Western Michigan College of Education

July 1954
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank Dr. George G. Mallinson, Professor of Education, Western Michigan College of Education, for his extended help and advice to the writer.

Acknowledgment is also made to Mable Parker, former secretary for the Methodist Union; Harold Newman, Director of the Myrtle Hege Community Center from 1940 to 1944; and to Louis Lovette, present Director who provided data for this study.

To my wife, Shirley A. Cooper, I owe a debt of appreciation for her patience during the hours spent in preparation, of this thesis. To my parents Mr. and Mrs. Bennett S. Cooper a debt of gratitude for their constant encouragement in the preparation.

Fletcher S. Cooper
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CHAPTER I

THE GROWTH OF THE HEEGE COMMUNITY CENTER

The Problem

For many years Kalamazoo has prided itself on the program of recreation offered for its citizens. At the present time many people believe that this program is adequate, that numerous playgrounds, playfields, and parks under supervision are available to the public during the entire year. Within certain limitations this is probably a reasonable assumption.

Kalamazoo is a city with a population of approximately seventy thousand. The community is composed of citizens from all walks of life who face the same problems that all citizens face. At present there is the problem of an overcrowded school system. Because of the increasing number of school-age children in the city, two new junior high schools have been erected in the past five years and another is now under construction. In the near future, it is likely that certain improvements will have to be made in the senior-high-school system which is also badly overcrowded. There is of course the problem of overcrowded elementary schools which is relatively universal. However, in no section of the city is there any concentration of schools comparable with that on the southeast side of town. In this section east of
Burdick Street there are no less than six schools namely Christian High School, Saint Joseph School, McKinley School, Washington School, Harding School, and Edison School, the last four being elementary. At the present time Washington School is reported to be the one with the largest enrollment but the others are not far behind. The situation just described of course certainly is related to the adequacy of the recreational facilities that were developed for much smaller populations of children and adults.

Hence, it is the purpose of this study to determine whether the after-school and evening recreational opportunities in the southeast section are adequate, and whether the many children, when school is out, find facilities for desirable recreation. The latter point applies especially to the Heege Community Center that services the area just described.

Early History of Heege Community Center

From an agency affiliated with the Methodist Church to a Settlement House, from a Settlement House to Community Center - this delineates the history of the Myrtle Heege Community Center Inc., since February 1921. The Center, as it will be referred to in this study, has served all ages, religious groups, and sexes during the past thirty-three years. At the present time, it seems to have reached a point in its development at which certain changes seem desirable.
Any such changes, of course, should contribute to the future progress and the betterment of recreational facilities of the city of Kalamazoo. In order to study the functions of the Center as they have emerged through the years, it is most practicable to begin with a survey of the early plans for it.

During the period 1916 to 1920, the Methodist Churches of Kalamazoo decided that an area east of Portage Street between Vine and Grace was in need of religious services and activities because the large number of foreign-speaking families living there had none suitable. Hence it was decided among the various Methodist Churches of the city to draw plans for a project in order to help solve the problem. However even prior to activating the project, the need was intensified because of the increase in number of families. Hence the churches were stimulated to set the plans into early action. The first step was to find housing. The early surveys were carried on at several points in and around Mill Street. Finally the resident workers, namely the deaconesses appointed by the Methodist Church to organize the program, together with church officials, purchased a large building and two lots on Third Street (Crosstown Parkway) east of Mill. The first lot was purchased from John and Dina Johnson on February 8, 1921, and the second from Frank and Katherine
Hindes of Sacramento, California on January 17, 1922.\textsuperscript{1} With
the purchase of this land and property, The Methodist Union
believed it had acquired the necessary space for effectively
carrying on the contemplated program.

Location of Center

Geographically the Center is located at the eastern edge
of Kalamazoo. It is within two blocks of the city dumps, and
within one block of three of four truck terminals. In addition
there are several stores and a truck repair garage within the
same area. Hence it cannot be said the Center is located in
an area amenable to good recreational standards. Another
drawback is the fact that there is no adequate bus service
in the area. This probably discourages many parents from
having their children participate in the program. Further
west on Portage Street, four or five blocks from the Center,
there is adequate bus service to the downtown area of Kalamazoo.
Hence many children find it convenient to ride a bus to
downtown recreational establishments rather than to walk
down the poorly-lighted streets to the Center at the eastern
edge of town. Without doubt the Center was placed correctly
for the purpose it served under the guidance of the Methodist
Church. Since then, however, the Center serves more people

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}County Registers Office, \textit{Library} 208, p. 492; \textit{Library} 213, p. 250.}
from outside the original area than within. This has caused a change of program and philosophy. A clearer statement by the present administrators of the present aims and objectives would help clarify this situation as to the area to be served and would serve as a guide for future development.

The Development of the Program

The resident workers under the superintendent, deaconess Letta Adams, began to provide instruction in both religious and group activities among some four hundred families touching twenty-one different nationalities.\(^2\) The program during the early days included activities however for small children, adolescents, and adults. For the small children there was the nursery school program, the Baby Clinic conducted by the city physician and public health nurses, story telling periods, instruction in scouting, and music classes. The day nursery was started for the convenience of working parents and meals were served twice a day to the children. Activities for the adolescents included Boy Scout Troop 14; classes in Manual Training; "Girls Reserves," a club which specialized in character development; the "Home Guards," a business, study, and work group; "The Goodwill Club" - an organization that met twice monthly as a devotional, business, educational and social group; classes in both cooking and sewing with general
instruction in home economics; and prayer meeting groups. Adult activities were designed to help the large foreign speaking group learn "The American Way" and classes were given several nights each week in English.

Sunday activities included Sunday School, Junior Church, and young peoples devotional service. In addition the Community Center owned a small library and the children were free after regular school hours to browse around. In 1940 the Methodist Churches could no longer support the Center's operation. The Methodist Union leased the property to the Third Street Community Center Inc.

The original Third Street Community Center had been staffed by the deaconesses. They were assisted by volunteer workers some of whom came from the Western State Normal College. The superintendent lived at the Center and was in a good position to see the needs of the people in the community. With the transfer of the property, Mr. Harold Newman, a specialist in Settlement House work, became director. His term lasted from 1940 until 1944, when Chaplain John Henry was appointed. Chaplain Henry remained only a short period and was followed by the first woman director Esther Tappan, who was in charge of activities from 1945-1947. Mrs. Noble followed next from 1947-1951. At the present time the director is Louis Lovette,
a specialist in social work, who has been at the Center in this capacity since 1951.

Some of the responsibilities the new corporation assumed when it purchased the property were the continuation of religious services, the discharge of all duties connected with repair and general upkeep of the building, and the responsibility of meeting all operating expenses. The Corporation, however, paid no rent.³

In 1942 a board of 24 members of the community took charge of the Center and applied to the Community Chest of Kalamazoo for operating funds. In 1945 the building was sold to the corporation for $2,000 with each member of the board furnishing or raising $100 from interested citizens.

Change in Philosophy

The philosophy of the Center changed somewhat in the years following 1940. The program was similar to that of a settlement house, namely providing for both children and parents activities in which they were interested. Classes in citizenship were held, families were counseled and discussions were held concerning the homes and living conditions in the community. On weekends the Center cooperated

³Third Street Community Center, "Center News." (August 1, 1947), 1.
in the activities of the lodges and different churches in the area. The general emphasis seemed to be changing toward meeting the secular needs of the community rather than the religious. There was an increase in recreational activity with the club groups sponsoring softball teams. In addition a gym program was established and the facilities at Edison School were rented from the city. One of the board members at this time, who later became president, was Myrtle Heege. She was an energetic woman whose efforts in behalf of the Center were later to win her much recognition and praise. Upon her death in 1950, the Center was renamed The Myrtle Heege Community Center Inc.

The present day pattern of activities at the Center is largely recreational. It is now an affiliate member of the National Recreation Association and conducts a program that emphasizes club groups and activities. However the workers attempt also to teach children to grow up to be good citizens through the media of social affairs, crafts, games, sports, and education. The Center is no longer restricted by affiliation with any religious group. Now the Center welcomes adults as well as children from practically all sections of the south side of the city.
Activities at the Center

Activities still take place after school hours and in the evening but a much wider range of activities is now offered to certain age groups. The "Optimist Club of Kalamazoo" is responsible to a great extent for the wider range. The efforts of this organization of business and professional men in behalf of the Center cannot be underestimated. This group has spent considerable time and money in providing the materials that the Center needed to grow and prosper. The "Optimist" have purchased a bus which the workers use for transporting the children to various parts of the state. The group also sponsors Christmas parties, outfits the athletic teams, provided materials for the shop program, has purchased a television set for use at the Center, and has aided in the development of worthwhile clubs and oratorical groups. All these contributions have helped immeasurably. The Executive Director of the Center is a member of the "Optimist" and several members of Optimist Club are represented on the Board of Directors of the Center.

The children are classified into different age groups so they will be playing, participating, and learning with girls and boys approximately of their own age and size. The children from five to twelve attend activities in the afternoon at the conclusion of the school day, while the program for the
teen-agers takes place in the evening. Several activities such as the Well Baby Clinic, the day nursery school, and the scouting program, are still conducted as they were years ago. Among the other activities sponsored by the Center are field trips to landmarks in the area, trips to factories, swims at the local lake resorts, basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball programs, annual street dances, special crafts, games, and parties for the younger children.

**Attendance at Activities**

At the present time the majority of participants at the Center come from two areas. One is east of Portage Street and north from Lake to Gibson; the other, south of Lake to Stockbridge and east to the city limits. The latter area falls far south of the original area served by the Methodist Church. However, other children who live in sections as far west as Burdick Street as well as in other widely scattered areas attend. This increase in the area served means that more children than ever come in contact with the Center whether it is for the weekly movie or for participation in other forms of activity. The current yearly attendance figures for the last few years for all groups is approximately twenty-five thousand. The increase in attendance figures is possibly due to the greater variety of activity. The
increased use of gym facilities, swimming program, special activities such as the annual Easter Egg Hunt, and the street dances, no doubt contribute also to the greater participation.

The Present Building

The present building is old, so old that the foundation is uneven and weak. Originally it was a three-story frame house. The upper two floors are used as living quarters for the Director and his wife with the exception of one room which is used for the nursery-school program. The entire program for those over five takes place on the first floor.

For many years problems have been confronting the Center, staff and board of directors. As already stated these problems have in part been caused by the change of the Center through the years from its association with the Methodist Church to its present status. Because of the use of facilities and the relationship with the principal and teachers at Edison Public School children have become conscious that there are activities offered after school hours that are not under public-school jurisdiction. Perhaps for this reason children desirous of competing in games and athletics travel to the Center or to the gym. It is possible that the children also become interested because the south side of Kalamazoo offers little in the way of recreational opportunities during the after-school
hours, particularly between the months of September and June. It is natural for these children to want to play where there is some form of organized recreational activity at a minimum of cost. A child after becoming acquainted with one part of the program is likely to find other interesting activities in which to participate. This results in a greater attendance than can be handled easily since there is insufficient space to permit each to pursue his own interest. Other space problems arise also. Only a small shop and game room have been added since the building was purchased and these through the efforts of Myrtle Heege. The shop is used not only for classes in woodworking but for storing games, chairs and other items that cannot be left in the lounge or library. When the shop is used for storage part of the regular shop program is curtailed. There is also a lack of space for storing clothing, particularly during the winter season. The cloakroom occupies the same room as the heating plant, and there is insufficient hanger space. Hence wraps are draped over the floor polisher, thrown on top of the furnace, and hung on the pipes leading to the furnace. If all these facilities are in use coats and jackets and caps are thrown on the floor. The effect of this practice on habits of neatness is obvious.

The largest room in the building is the lounge which is comfortably furnished. Ordinarily it should be a place for
children and adults to meet, read, talk, watch television, or relax. Instead it is used as a game room and the children must haul tables and equipment from the library and shop to be used here. At the same time the back game room may be used for boxing, wrestling, and square dancing, or for numerous other activities. Obviously when forty or fifty teen-age girls and boys meet in such a situation it is impossible to keep all of them as active as would be desirable. On movie night the back game room is so crowded that nearly twenty children have to sit on the floor. Yet despite such inconvenience eighty to one hundred ten children attend the Friday night movie, and the yearly movie attendance runs between five and six thousand.

Outdoor Facilities

The outdoor facilities include a small play area for children. This area has swings, a sand box, a slide, and a climber. Within this small area are stored the garbage and trash cans, benches which cannot be stored inside the building because of lack of space, and the bus. Behind this fenced in area is a small area 10 rods by 26\(^4\) which is used more or less as a play or as a practice field for sports and games, and as a place for the adults of the neighborhood to
throw rubbish. At least once each year a group must remove
the high weeds which grow around the edges of the field and
pick up the bottles and broken glass so as to make the field
safe for the children. The only other facility is the softball
field at Red Arrow which is about five hundred yards away from
the Center across busy Kings Highway (United States Highway 12).
This latter facility in addition to being adjacent to the
railroad tracks is used as a parking spot for people who wish
to watch games at either Riverview Park or the CAA field.
This field is adequate for softball except when it is used
in one of these other capacities. However it is not adequate
for baseball. Yet with the use of this field the Center
sponsors one touch football team, three softball, and two
baseball teams yearly. It is now considering the organization
of a soccer and two more softball groups in the future, all
of which will use this field also.

Need of More Staff Members

At the present time the Center is staffed by three full
time workers, the Executive Director who resides at the
Center and a girls-and-boys worker. In addition there is
nursery-school director who conducts this phase of the
program five mornings a week. The Center is helped part time
by several students from both Kalamazoo and Western Michigan
Colleges which send prospective teachers to gain experience
in working with children and who in turn receive credits toward some of their college courses. One of these student teachers directs the shop program while the other students assist on "teen-age night." The latter also assists in the gym program for the smaller children during the afternoon. Assistance has also been received from several team members at Western Michigan College in developing the athletic program. All this assistance is helpful and has proved invaluable in handling some of the larger groups of children. It indicates that the Center is recognized by the colleges as a place in which children can be observed and helped to learn to cooperate in an atmosphere slightly different from that of a school room. Much of this part time help, however, is available only in the period from October through May or June, not during the summer months when a peak period of attendance at the Center is reached. It has always been difficult for the Center to obtain help during these months. As a result the program of softball for the boys receives little or no preparation for participation in the City Recreation Softball Leagues. This is intensified by the fact that much time must be spent with the baseball teams in the summer. In the past the same boys have been playing on both teams. However the new procedure will be to limit boys to participation on one team and in that way to insure a maximum number of participants.
Lack of Opportunities for Those Over Sixteen

A final handicap especially to those over sixteen is the lack of opportunity for adolescent and adult activity. The program as set up today emphasizes activities for the children from nursery school age through roughly the fifteenth year. This is caused by the lack of facilities and personnel. The city sponsors athletic leagues for such persons. However for the Center to participate in any such activities would necessitate one of the staff members being away at least one or two evenings a week. This would mean cancellation of part of the program for these nights and would deprive a younger group of activities. Many of the older children resent the younger ones who can still represent the Center on teams, and dislike the fact that there is so little for them to do. All the workers at the Center at one time have heard these complaints. However under limited facilities the Center is doing all it possibly can. Yet it is not a wise procedure to neglect this older group in which most delinquency occurs. Many of the boys in this age group lounge at a combination bowling alley, tap room, and snack-bar in the area. Other groups apparently gather in the Washington Square area and have been known to annoy passers-by. Many of them have never come in contact with the Center. Nevertheless it is
possible that with a more extensive program the Center could offer this older group some desirable activities.

Thus this study was undertaken to determine what measures might be taken to improve the program to meet the needs of all age groups that might be using the Center.
CHAPTER II

THE PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION
OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Problem

The purpose of this chapter is (1) describe the manner in which the questionnaire was developed, and (2) the manner in which it was disseminated.

The Development of the Questionnaire

Several approaches were examined for obtaining data. However, it was decided that a questionnaire would be as accurate and practical an approach as any other. The use of the questionnaire in this type of study is supported by Good, Barr, and Scates\(^5\) who state that "the questionnaire procedure normally comes into use where one cannot readily see personally all of the people from whom he desires responses or where there is no reason to see them personally." Hence a questionnaire of the short-answer and check-list variety was assembled. The questions were designed to obtain opinions with respect to recreational opportunities on the southeast side of the city.

A tentative form listing activities for both adults and children in the areas of club groups, athletics, summer activities, and general recreation was drawn up. The questionnaire was submitted to the instructor for criticisms, changes, and corrections. In light of the criticisms and suggestions a final form was made. A copy follows.
PLEASE RETURN IN ATTACHED ENVELOPE TO:

Fletcher Cooper
C/O Heege Community Center
1206 Crosstown Parkway
Kalamazoo, Michigan

COMMUNITY CENTERS IN KALAMAZOO

Please check the answers to the following questions in the appropriate manner. All replies will be kept confidential. This questionnaire requires about ten minutes to answer. You need not sign your name.

1. Family Information.
   a. How long have you lived at your present address?
   b. What is the specific job of the wage earner in your family? (i.e., plumber, machine tender, banker). If there is more than one wage earner list all their jobs.
   c. List the ages of the children in your family in order of oldest to youngest.

   Boys
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   Girls
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

2. A. Have any of your children or family members ever participated in activities at either of the Community Recreation Centers in Kalamazoo? (Heege or Douglass). Please Check.
   Yes ________ No ________
b. If so in which of the following activities did they participate?

**Adult Groups (Please Check)**

1. church groups
2. physically handicapped
3. men's club
4. scout work
5. parent-child nights
6. other (Please list)

**Childrens Activities (Please Check)**

1. sports
2. recreation games such as pool or billiards
3. ping pong
4. shop or woodwork
5. attended movies
6. other (Please list)

3. Do you believe a town the size of Kalamazoo has enough opportunities for after-school and evening play for children?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Are any types of public recreation facilities available within two (2) blocks of your home? (Example: parks, school gym, etc.)
   - Yes
   - No

5. Would you personally participate if a Community Recreation Center program were offered to you and your family in the vicinity of your home?
   - Yes
   - No

b. Would you encourage your friends and neighbors to participate in such a program?
   - Yes
   - No

6. If your answer to either part of question 5 is "Yes" Check which of the following programs you would especially like to see continued or started. (Check).
a. Adult Program (Please Check)
1. child-parent nights 
2. mothers club 
3. mens social club 
4. program for physically handicapped 
5. other (Please State)

b. Shop or trades program (Please Check)
1. wood work 
2. metal work 
3. leather work 
4. crafts 
5. other (Please State)

c. Club groups (Please check)
1. model airplane 
2. Cub Scout and Boy Scout 
3. Optimist Club 
4. art club 
5. photography club 
6. other (Please State)

d. Summer program (Please check)
1. camping 
2. softball 
3. Baseball 
4. swimming 
5. picnics 
6. parades, games and activities for those under ten 
7. other (Please state)

e. Athletic program (Please check)
1. touch football 
2. soccer 
3. basketball 
4. baseball 
5. ping pong tournament 
6. pool or billiards 
7. other (Please state)
f. Nursery program for children under school age (Please check)

1. games _______  6. build character _______
2. singing _______  7. morning or afternoon
3. outdoor swings _______  refreshments _______
4. slides _______  8. other (Please state)
5. parties _______ _______

g. Mixed activities for Teen Agers. (Please check)

1. dances _______  4. tobogganing or winter
2. parties _______  skating parties _______
3. roller skating _______  5. other (Please state)
    parties _______

h. Juvenile work (Please check)

1. boy and girl representatives to meet with directors and;
   a. plan Community Center policies regarding conduct _______
   b. help plan group activities _______

7. a. Do you believe those families who participate in a program should have opportunity to help plan the program together with Directors of the Center?
   Yes _______  No _______

b. If time permitted would you be willing to serve with such a group?
   Yes _______  No _______

8. Could you suggest a possible site of unused land which would make a good location for a neighborhood Community Recreation Center? (Answer in as few words as possible). ____________________________
9. List any comments or criticisms you may have on the possibility of moving the Myrtle Hoege Community Center to the Washington Square Area nearer a center of population.

__________________________________________

Thank you for your time in filling out this questionnaire. Your answers will be very helpful in any decision that may be reached in regard to the problem stated in Question 9. Please feel free to use the space below or on the backs of the sheets for any additional comments.
Distribution of the Questionnaire

A map of Kalamazoo was obtained and on it the area serviced by the Center was outlined. The boundaries of this area were north of Lake Street to Gibson and Walnut, south of Lake Street to Bryant Street, east of Portage Street to Fulford, Division, Clarence, and Kings Highway (United States highway 12), and west of Portage Street to Jasper, Walter and Bank Streets. It was decided that a random sampling of the population in this locale would be the best method of conducting the survey. Two lines were drawn, one running north from Bryant Street to Gibson Street, the other west from Fulford Street to two blocks west of Portage street. Twenty-five equally spaced lines were drawn from the western to the eastern boundary. These lines were crossed by eleven equally spaced lines running south from Gibson Street to Bryant Street. A questionnaire was distributed to the dweller at each of the intersecting lines or as close to them as possible. No attention was paid as to whether the family was registered at the Center. The questionnaire was distributed personally by the author with a brief description about the purpose of the survey. Residents were informed that all information was confidential. Self-addressed envelopes were attached to the questionnaire to aid in the forwarding of returns. A total of two-hundred
seventy-five questionnaires were distributed and to date, one hundred thirty-five have been returned. The tabulations are made on this basis.
CHAPTER III

TABULATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The Problem

The problem of this chapter is to tabulate the information obtained from the responses to the various questions on the questionnaire.

Methods Employed

For convenience, it was decided to tabulate the responses in the same order as they appeared on the questionnaire. All data were separated into two categories, those from participants, and those from non-participants. The tabulations follow:

Table I deals with the extent of participation at the Community Center.

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Participating families</th>
<th>Non-participating families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating families among respondents</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27
A total of 135 questionnaires were returned, sixty-six from participants and sixty-nine from non-participants.

Table II contains information dealing with the length of time the respondents had lived at their given addresses.

Table II

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED AT YOUR PRESENT ADDRESS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Non-Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 years</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less than one-fifth of the participants had lived less than two years at their given addresses. While nearly two-fifths of the non-participants had lived less than two years at their given addresses.

Table III deals with the employment status of the respondents.
Table III

WHAT IS THE SPECIFIC JOB OF THE WAGE EARNER IN THE FAMILY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job of Wage Earner*</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Non-Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucker or mechanic</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The specific jobs were categorized under general headings in the table.

The wage earners in the families of both participants and non-participants were employed in all types of positions.

Table IV lists the total numbers of children in the families from whom questionnaires were received.

Table IV

CHILDREN IN THE FAMILIES OF THE RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Families</th>
<th>Total Number of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating families</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participating families</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among the families that responded a total of four hundred sixteen children were potential participants in the Center.

Table V deals with the types of activities in which the adults participate.

Table V

ACTIVITIES OF ADULT PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church groups</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically handicapped clubs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's clubs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-parent activities</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a decided lack of participation in so far as adults are concerned. The largest percentage who do participate are in activities for both adults and children.

Table VI deals with the types of activities in the children's program and the extent of participation.
Table VI

ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPATING CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children's Activities</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational games</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Training</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie Program</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VI indicates that children participate more extensively in the activities of the Center than do adults.

Table VII deals with play opportunities offered for children in the city.

Table VII

DOES KALAMAZOO OFFER CHILDREN ENOUGH AFTERNOON AND EVENING PLAY OPPORTUNITIES?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Opinions of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Participants</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of participants and non-participants believe that the city is not providing enough recreational facilities for its children.
Table VIII deals with the proximity of recreational facilities to homes of respondents.

Table VIII

ARE ANY TYPES OF PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES AVAILABLE WITHIN TWO BLOCKS OF YOUR HOME?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Replies of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Participants</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three-fifths of the participants are not served adequately by a public-recreation facility such as a school yard, park, or playfield. An even greater percentage of the non-participants were not adequately served.

Table IX deals with potential participation if a recreational program were offered nearer the homes of the respondents.

Table IX

WOULD YOU PARTICIPATE PERSONALLY IF A RECREATION PROGRAM WERE OFFERED IN THE VICINITY OF YOUR HOME?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Participants</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four-fifths of the non-participants expressed a willingness to participate if a Community Center were established nearer their homes.

Table X is concerned with the extent to which the respondents would encourage others to attend a recreational program nearer their neighborhoods.

Table X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would You Encourage Your Friends and Neighbors to Participate?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table X seems to indicate that the respondents would encourage friends and neighbors to participate if a Center were closer to their homes.

Table XI deals with activities that adults would favor in a community recreation program.

Table XI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Any of the Following You Would Like to See in a Recreation Program for Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-parent program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mens club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program for physically handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table XI seem to show that the respondents are interested in joint child-parent activities and in a program for the physically handicapped.

Table XII is concerned with interest in a manual training program.

**Table XII**

**CHECK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING YOU WOULD LIKE INCLUDED IN A MANUAL TRAINING PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Arts</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodworking</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal work</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather work</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>241</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A great portion of the respondents are interested in a program of arts and crafts.

Table XIII deals with neighborhood interest in children's club activities.

**Table XIII**

**CHECK ANY OF FOLLOWING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE STARTED OR CONTINUED AS CLUB ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Groups</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model Airplane</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scouting</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimist Club</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Photography</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>237</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Between three-tenths and three-fifths of all respondents indicate a decided interest in all forms of club group activities for children.

Table XIV is concerned with community interest in a summer program for children of various ages.

Table XIV

CHECK ANY OF FOLLOWING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED IN A SUMMER PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer Program</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnics</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for those under 10</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>446</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The great majority of the returns indicate great interest in the summer program. Four-fifths of the returns favored the swimming program as the most important part of the summer program, while strong interest was shown also in the weekly picnics, and games for the younger children.

Table XV is concerned with the athletic phase of the Center's program.
Table XV

CHECK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING YOU WOULD LIKE INCLUDED IN AN ATHLETIC PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athletic Program</th>
<th>Number Answering</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Touch football and soccer</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Tournaments</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool and Billiards</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>370</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table XV indicate that between three-fifths and four-fifths of all respondents favor continuation of the athletic program.

Table XVI is concerned with the reaction of the community toward a program for pre-school children.

Table XVI

CHECK WHICH OF FOLLOWING YOU WOULD LIKE INCLUDED IN A PROGRAM FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nursery Program</th>
<th>Number Answering</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Games (swings, slides)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties and singing</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Building</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>315</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the respondents indicate an interest in programs for pre-school children.
Table XVII deals with the program involving mixed teen-age activities.

Table XVII

CHECK ANY OF FOLLOWING YOU WOULD LIKE INCLUDED IN A PROGRAM FOR MIXED TEEN-AGE GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed Teen-Age Activities</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parties and dances</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special activities</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>226</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately four-fifths of the returns favor mixed activities for teen-agers. A few suggested hiking, sleigh rides, and ice skating as possible activities in the program.

Table XVIII is concerned with the planning of policies and activities at the center.

Table XVIII

GROUP PLANNING BETWEEN CHILDREN AND DIRECTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Child Participation</th>
<th>Number of Favorable Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children help plan policies regarding their conduct while around Center</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children help plan group activities</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A slight majority of returns favor participation of children in planning their activities and assuming some responsibility for their conduct while at the Center.

Table XIX deals with family participation in planning the program.

Table XIX

| DO YOU BELIEVE FAMILIES WHO PARTICIPATE IN A PROGRAM SHOULD HELP PLAN IT? |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
|                   | Yes | No | Don't Know |
| Should families who participate help plan? | 83% | 17% | 0% |
| Time permitting would you serve on such a committee | 79% | 21% | 0% |

A large number of respondents favor family participation with the directors in planning the program. A slightly lower percentage expressed willingness to help if time permitted.

It was then decided to poll the respondents with respect to their views concerning a new location of the Center.

Question Eight

Could you suggest a possible site of unused land which would make a good location for a new neighborhood community recreation center?

1. Upjohn Park.

2. South Side Playground.
3. Area on the corner of Reed Street and Portage Street.
4. Where City Produce Market is now located.
5. Hays Park (corner of Palmer and Race Streets).
7. The fire house at Washington Square.
8. Washington School play area.

Since Washington Square has been suggested frequently as a favorable site for relocation, it was decided specifically to poll views on this location. The following question deals with this issue.

**Question Nine**

List any comments or criticisms you may have on the possibility of moving the Myrtle-Heege Community Center to the Washington Square area nearer a center of population.

1. Washington Square is a desirable place.
2. Too much business and traffic at Washington Square.
3. Proposed move is fine if it is near Edison School, but not too close to Washington Square.
4. Had never heard of the Heege Community Center. Think a move would be good.
5. Washington Square would be a more central location.

7. Leave the Center where it is now and build a new one at the Square.

8. Present location not environmentally satisfactory.

9. There is a need for it.

10. South Side children need a recreation center.

11. Having a center in Washington Square would solve leisure time problems.

12. New location would be better for the younger children.

13. Center should be big enough to take care of increased attendance such a move would require.

14. Would children who need center where it is now feel comfortable coming to the Washington Square area for recreation?

15. Good bus facilities at the Square.

16. Would give more children an opportunity to attend if it were moved.

17. Want children where the Center is now to benefit regardless of location.

18. Should be more community centers. They are good.

19. Training of children starts at home. More interested parents would help some of the present problems of delinquency.

20. Must interest families in project before anything can be done. Tell public of needs.
21. Would be used by more people if it were centrally located.

22. Teen age boys are the problems, not the younger children.

23. A move would not be quite as convenient but would serve more people as the present site is too small.

24. More suitable.

25. Move closer to Portage Street.

26. Center is all right where it is now.

27. Move would take teen-agers off sidewalks and streets.

28. Moving Center would be "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

City needs more recreation centers.

29. More families would take interest if it were moved to a more business like district.

30. If not beyond Washington Square a good idea otherwise it would be too far away.

31. Kalamazoo needs a place for children to go where it does not cost their folks so much.

32. Distance has prevented mine from attending lately. It is too far away at its present site.

33. Different location would improve reputation of Center.

34. It was always there leave it.

35. If you do not have room to expand move where you do.

36. At its present location it is too far away from little ones in this vicinity.
37. We think we need a Center around Mill Street, Crosstown Parkway, and East Walnut.

38. A move would bring more adult help.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Problem

The problem of this study was two-fold: (1) to survey the types of recreational facilities available in the southeastern section of the city of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and (2) to determine whether the Myrtle Heege Community Center, Inc. could better serve the citizens if it were moved to another location.

Methods Employed

Because of the nature of this study, and the large number of families involved, it was decided that a questionnaire, designed to obtain information on the problem, should be circulated to two hundred seventy-five families living in the southeastern section of the city of Kalamazoo. The families to whom the questionnaires were sent were selected by means of the random sampling technique from the area serviced by the Center. A preliminary questionnaire was drawn up by the author and submitted to the sponsor for criticism and suggestions. From these criticisms and suggestions a final copy of the questionnaire was drafted.
The questionnaires accompanied by return envelopes were then distributed. The questionnaires that were returned were analyzed and the responses tabulated.

Conclusions

In so far as the techniques may be valid, the following conclusions seem defensible.

1. Approximately one-half of the respondents in the area surveyed make some use of the Center. Therefore the Center apparently fails to service one-half of the population in the area.

2. The longer a family has lived in the area the more likely they are to be aware of activities offered by the Center. Thus it would seem that knowledge of the Center comes from word of mouth rather than from any directed effort. It would appear some attempt should be made to acquaint new families with the program offered by the Center.

3. The families that participate in the activities of the Center are from all types of economic positions. Thus it would seem the Center is capable of operating democratically and without any particular affiliation.

4. Recreational activities are the most popular activities conducted by the Center. Many families believe the city does not offer enough recreational opportunities. Thus it would seem reasonable to assume that the Center should provide
more recreational activities than educational.

5. At the present time few adults participate in any part of the program at the Hegge Community Center. Many families in the survey, however, expressed a desire to do so. Hence it would seem as though some plan could be formulated to draw parents into the program as participants or planners. This might lend more support to joint child-parent activities which are popular.

6. Because of the strong interest shown in the woodworking and craft programs the Center, it might be worthwhile to determine if some other types of manual training program should be made available.

7. Since a majority of respondents favored a scouting program, it would be worthwhile to consider the formation of a regular Boy Scout Troop. Since interest was also shown in some of the other types of clubs possibly more club activity should be started.

8. The majority of returns indicated strong interest in both the summer and athletic programs. This great interest in outdoor activities might be exploited by the Center in developing participation in more varied forms of outdoor activity.

9. Since interest was shown in nursery school activities, and the majority of people do not realize such a program is offered, something should be done to make people more cognizant
of the value of such a program and perhaps to extend the program
that the Center now offers.

10. Families indicated strong interest in mixed-sexed
activities for teen-agers. Thus it would seem as though there
should be greater stress on such activities since many of the
respondents believed such programs tend to keep youngsters out
of trouble.

11. Respondents believe that children should assume some
responsibility for planning some of their activities. The
general belief was that such responsibility taught them to
think and act for themselves.

Recommendations

In so far as the conclusions just stated may be defensible,
the following recommendations seem reasonable.

Recommendation 1: Hege Community Center should decide
on a definite area that it intends to serve. Such a decision
would tend to limit overcrowding at the Center and in activities
away from the building. It would tend to foster more loyalty
to the Center in participants who realize the Center is designed
for a certain geographical group of families. If it is decided
that the Center should serve people from all areas of Kalamazoo
increased facilities would be desirable.

Recommendation 2: At present activities for children
between the ages of three and fifteen are emphasized. There
is little emphasis on activities for older teen-agers or adults. While, the early program included activities for both these groups, during the past few years the activities of the Center have become recreational in nature, and hence, many of the adult and older teen-age activities have been dropped. In view of the high rate of juvenile delinquency, it seems that some activities should be designed for these people. If more adult and teen-age activities were offered, perhaps more adult help in other function would be forthcoming.

**Recommendation 3:** The results of the survey seem to indicate a lack of recreational opportunities for children in Kalamazoo. Many families are not served by recreational facilities near their homes in this section of the city. An expansion of the Center would help meet this lack of opportunity. However, a more extensive program would require more adult help and more money.

**Recommendation 4:** Activities offered by the Center for younger children seem to appeal to the people in the area. Therefore it would appear advisable to continue the present program for the age groups from five to fifteen, and perhaps extend it.

**Recommendation 5:** Since many of the respondents expressed not only an interest in a neighborhood advisory board, but a willingness to serve on such a board, it would seem desirable
to permit some members of the community to help in this capacity and help formulate the program. In this way it might be possible to obtain adult help at Center functions since the people in the area would become identified with the Center.

Recommendation 6: The respondents in the recent survey believe that the Washington Square area would be a good central location for some type of recreational facility. The present location is quite inaccessible to many families who desire its use. Bus service to the Washington Square section is quite adequate. The area is heavily populated and because of the large number of school age children any new recreational opportunities would no doubt be heavily taxed. The fact that most junior-high and high schools are located on the west side of town is perhaps another factor to suggest that this section would be good one for some new type of recreational program.

Families participating in the program at the Center now generally favored such a relocation and the belief is that if no farther away than Washington Square, it would not be too far away as to be inconvenient for them to attend. Therefore it would be wise to consider this area if any future expansion of the Heege Community Center is contemplated.

Recommendation 7: Because a large number of families in the southeastern section of the city know little of activities carried on by the Center, it would seem advisable to publicize the program more. This could be accomplished by some type of
monthly paper, edited by the participants at the Center. It could contain dates and times of special activities as well as a recapitulation of activities carried on previously. Such a paper was published some time ago. This type of publication should list the activities of all groups who participate in Center functions. The paper would be mailed to families registered at the Center as well as to board members and to other interested people. This might tend to interest more families in events that are taking place and make it easier for parents to follow the aims and objectives of the Center, as well as the activities.
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