

"I'm 11 years old. I'm in the sixth grade at Lincoln School. My name is Billy Jones.

"I learned to smile at the Center. Miss Whittaker says I never used to smile. Then she looks away, flings her fingers around and uses words they don't teach in my grade, but I do smile.

"Mom and Daddy and Bobby and Jimmie and John and Berwyn and Bryan and Roberta and I used to live next door to the Center. I'm glad we moved. I have my own desk for my things and a bunk bed to sleep in. All of us kids go to the Center. Bobby, he is my older brother. Jimmie and John are twins. Roberta is the baby. I like her very much.

"At the Center I learned to play chess, checkers, horse-shoes. I went to camp. I took part in plays, I like the long parts. I helped to build props and scenery. Most of all, I like to learn my part in plays and be in a play. Miss Whittaker says it has something to do with learning to smile, I don't know.

"I can read, write, add, subtract - but I don't know much about Cuba or compound interest, or how to build a building. But I like the Center. I don't know where money comes from, but I know you have to work hard to get it, because my father does. I've seen pictures of the new building for the Center, a great gym with a stage clear across one end.

"What goes on at the Center? All the kids have fun, even Roberta likes it. But you'd better ask a grown-up about what goes on. I like it. I can smile."



Since 1922, the activities of Carver Center have twice increased, so as to demand more space. In 1935, the Center moved from 108 Globe Street to 1010 Sanford and in 1943, to the present location at Sheridan and Third. Now, in 1961, the increase in participation again demands expansion.

More than 50,000 people will participate in the Center activities this year. The increase is due, in part, to the increase in population within the area served by the Center and to a growing program of activities and interest on the part of the participants.

Within the Center there are 27 functioning clubs. Each club holds regular scheduled meetings every week and pursues its interest in some particular problem or project. The club activities are directed by a member of the Center staff, and are centered around four departments: boy's and men's activities, girl's and women's activities, Drama and Fine Arts, and Music.

Under the direction of Miss Juliette Whittaker, the drama and fine arts department is making outstanding contributions to the cultural life of Peoria. These contributions are so significant as to draw national attention. The contributions which Miss Whittaker makes to the dramatic organizations to Peoria is recognized by all members of the community.



Mrs. Rachel Washington directs choral groups, orchestras and teaches piano and vocal students. Those who take part in the music department study, practice, and participate in Center activities as well as civic functions in Greater Peoria. The Cherub Choir is well known for its concerts.



The boy's and men's department, the girl's and women's department, under the direction of Frank Campbell and Mrs. Dorothy Cornish develop the activities of the clubs within the Center. These clubs, working along lines of special interest, are the nucleus of Carver Center. This year, due to additional outdoor play space, an increased program is offered to more boys and girls. The summer also includes experiences in camping as well as special trips to out-of-town points. In addition to these things, story telling and motion pictures complete the summer events. The Trophy Case in the lobby of the center speaks of winning teams in basketball and other sports. Stage sets are designed and executed. Practical skills are presented in the workshop. Posters, decorations and displays for Center activities come from these active groups of boys and girls.

The girls and women have club activities and classes in sewing, and home economics. They find new recipes and build new menus. In the fall and winter they have their own basketball team and they are very proud of their Drill Team and Cheer Leaders.

Every staff member of the Center, every activity, every club is actively interested in helping all participants to become better, more useful citizens. A dance is more than a chance to have a good time. It may even be a lesson in dress and etiquette for those who attend. Of varied backgrounds, boys and girls from the city, from the country, from Peoria, from the deep South, those who grew up here, those who only recently came here - meet, mingle, dance, play and work together. In these normal experiences, guided and directed, they mature and grow.

Beyond the quiet, unseen guidance of group activities there is the constant alert interest in the individual. Over 1,100 individuals, in 1960, had personal counseling interviews with staff members. Some came, asking for help. Some were sought out by staff members and offered help in a personal, sometimes acute problem. Many times, a conference ending in the "small hours of the morning" succeeded in solving the personal problem, in finding a satisfactory job, in standing a struggling boy or girl on their feet. This is the contribution of the Center to Peoria.

In addition to maintaining a full program for members of the Center, the staff encourages other organizations in the community to use the building for their activities. The following groups used the Center in recent months: Henry Brown Lodge F. & A. M., Eureka Court of Calanthe, Social Art and Literary Club, Baptist Ministers Union, Colored Women's Aid Club, Maceo Lodge, Knights of Pythias, Order of Eastern Star Lodge.

Committees of the Chest and Council, Greater Peoria Council of Churches, Inner-City Study Commission of the Council of Churches, Women's Christian Temperance, 11 Carver Area Churches, Peoria Beautiful Committee, and Peoria Drama Groups.

The entire activity of the Center, program, finance, membership drive, relations with Peoria Community Chest and Council and with the citizens of Greater Peoria is the task of the Executive Director, Henry M. Harper. In this effort he has the cooperation of an inter-racial Board of Directors and the Trustees.

Billy says: "The kids have a good time at the Center."

Billy learned to smile. Such direction, such individual recognition and attention - oft-times without knowledge that it is being given - develops boys and girls and helps them become sensible citizens.

As important as the current Expansion Program is, this is more important. THIS IS THE REASON FOR THE EXPANSION.

CARVER CENTER STAFF

Henry M. Harper - Executive Director - Since 1944
Western Michigan University B.A. - 1932
Graduate Work - Bradley University - Sociology
Frank Campbell - Assistant Director - Since 1944
University of Michigan - AB - 1937
Mrs. Dorothy Cornish - Director - Girl's & Women's Department - Since 1959
Yale College - B.S. - 1932
Miss Juliette Whittaker - Director - Drama & Fine Arts - Since 1948
Yale College - BS
University of Iowa - MA
Mrs. Rachel Washington - Director - Music - Since 1952
Studied Piano, Organ, Music history, Composition, Music education at
Lincoln University (Jefferson, Missouri), Bradley University, Chicago
Conservatory of Music.
Mrs. Mary E. Cornell - Secretary - Since 1948
Academy of Our Lady
Mid-State College of Commerce

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"Billy Smiles"



CARVER COMMUNITY CENTER
A Red Feather Agency

Sheridan and Third

Peoria, Illinois

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