



—Journal Staff Photo

PART OF THE ACTIVITIES at Carver Community center, a Red Feather agency, include dancing lessons for youngsters. In this picture Instructor Barbara Karrick demonstrates tap dancing fundamentals for (left to right): Jacqueline Diane Harris, Phyllis Marie Brown, Charlotte Earline Brown, Deborah Williams, Cheryl Grant and Margaret Jean Ellis. They are members of the 6 to 11-year-old class in beginning tap dancing.

Red Feather Agency Builds Useful Life

By **FUNICE WILSON**
Journal Staff Writer

One job of the Red Feather, through Carver Community center, is to help the colored youth of Peoria.

For about 29 years, Carver has been the second home for hundreds of these youngsters. Such lads, for example, as 20-year-old Bob, who might have had ample reason for wanting to pay back society with vengeance. Coming from a broken home, with a mother who never quite learned how to mother, he stood a large chance of becoming a typical city delinquent juvenile.

But Carver center entered his life when he was only a lad through Cub Scouts, and scouting caught his interest. Rising fast in the ranks, he later became a Cub Scout leader.

Kept Off Streets

More of his energy was spent in helping to organize the Drum and Bugle corps in 1945; his Carver friends keeping him busy at the

center, with his feet off the streets.

While attending high school, he was struck hard by misfortune again. Tuberculosis confined him to bed for the next year and a half.

His illness might have discouraged him from finishing school. But once again he found the encouragement he needed from Carver, and he did graduate from high school.

Bob hasn't become a youthful genius, a musician, boxer or scientist; he has become what society needs today: an industrious young man with a sense of honor.

Credit To YM. Too

And a good share of the credit goes to Bob, Carver center and also to the YMCA, another Red Feather agency, which he joined in 1947. At the Y he became a respected junior leader and represented the Y at Camp Anokijig, in Plymouth, Wis.

Summer camp this year meant rest for one mother of 10 children, who didn't think she could stand it another day, and a grandmother,

who was caring for three grandchildren whose mother is dead.

Both families went to family camp. But camp leaders took charge of the children, and two women received a well-earned vacation from responsibility.

Carver Community center, which has a total membership of about 900 persons, had its first start in October 9, 1922, when the Colored Women's Aid club of Peoria first lay before the community its plan for such a youth center.

Activities Grow Fast

A seven-room house at 108 Globe street was purchased by the club and became the center until 1937. About that time Carver activities outgrew the building and a nine-room brick house, 1010 Sanford st., was bought.

Two years later, the club relinquished their control to a board of directors. In 1943 the Negro Community center became the George Washington Carver association and with completion of plans in 1944, the new Center opened its doors for a wider program of community service.

Under the direction of H. M. Harper, a staff of seven persons direct activities which draw about 600 persons. Except for small fee payments, the whole is supported by Community Chest and Council.