Baker's Dozen Pushes Drive on Juvenile Delinquency

Working for Youth Center for Teen-Agers

WASHINGTON

Back of the increasing arrests of juvenile delinquents lie frequently the sad stories of boys and girls who might have been normally adjusted If.

Some of the big "ifs" which are making problem children of the city's teen-agers are:

If their parents had given them a little more attention; if their schools were not so crowded, so drab, so unstimulating;

If their homes were clean, healthy sanctums, instead of rat infested slum dwellings; if they had wholesome places in which to play.

Baker's Dozen Faces Task

Positive action to help the teenager has lagged miserably behind the need and recognition of the need; yet one organization has concretely tackled the situation by sponsoring a teen-age recreation program.

This organization is the Baker's Dozen Inc., a volunteer group of young women who began in 1944 to search zealously for something to contribute to their city's improvement.

They found that something in the acute lack of recreational outlets for the colored adolescent.

Project a Reality

Within four years, the Baker's Dozen has grown from a group of 33 young women with much more enthusiasm and spunk than money into an incorporated organization that has purchased two buildings valued at $19,598.60 to create a youth center.

The Baker's Dozen has been able to achieve as much as it has through conscientious planning and hard work.

As a first step in getting a constructive program begun, this group called on its sociologist members to do some research.

Operated Youth Canteen

Research revealed that the health in the mid-city area of the city was far below par, that the tuberculosis rate was higher than in any other section; and that there was a constantly rising rate of delinquency.

At a suggestion from Mrs. Flasse Pinkett, director of the Northwest Settlement House, the group decided to aid the section's youth by operating a canteen.

The canteen, which opened in February, 1945, was set up on the order of an adult night club (minus alcoholic drinks), with tables, a bar and dancing space.

The Baker's Dozen, wanting to make their opening night a success, put all their ingenuity and resourcefulness into the first night program of the canteen to which all 45 members of the settlement house were invited.

Hot dogs and coca colas were served over the bar, and the young club-goers were entertained by song and dance numbers by members of the local night club casts, by college students, and were entertained with a talk and solo by Miss Muriel Smith, star of the Broadway hit, "Carmen Jones".

Time and space were allowed for games, for which prizes were awarded, and dancing.

Canteen Grows Rapidly

The settlement house members liked the canteen; and the Baker's Dozen took steps to organize it so that the teen-agers became the real leaders, relying upon advice of an adult advisory committee set up by the sponsors. The club was operated once a week.

During the 18 months of operation, the program and membership of the 515 Club, as the canteen was called, became so large that it required all three floors of the settlement house to accommodate the crowds.

This demand forced the sponsors to find larger and more permanent quarters—a step that necessitated money, which the group did not have.

Backed Ellington Appearance

Undaunted by the lack of funds and assured by the success of the 515 Club that a recreation program based upon youth's needs was needed and could have meaning in the Baker's Dozen engaged in a series of money-making projects.

Their first big event to raise funds was the presentation of Duke Ellington and his orchestra in a concert at the Watergate in June, 1946.

This program, together with donations, netted the group enough funds to purchase the two buildings for the establishment of a permanent youth center on November 21, 1946.

Setbacks Encountered

Just when success seemed to be near, the group began to suffer setbacks. Construction costs began to zoom, causing delays in plans to renovate the buildings; and the second Duke Ellington concert given in 1947 at the Watergate was rained out.

While the group lost no money, through the rain-out, none was made; and the Baker's Dozen began to conduct minor affairs to raise money while they continued to draw plans for their youth center.

Learn of Child Care

During the 18 months of operation of the canteen, the group had learned a great deal about the adolescent child.

It learned, for instance, that the adolescent has a wide range of interests, that he likes to pattern his behavior after adults, and that he likes to feel independent.

On the basis of these and other facts, the Baker's Dozen patterned plans for the youth center, which is to have:

A main lounge with space provided for pool, table tennis, quiet games, dancing, dramatics, music programs, talent shows, exhibits and public meetings; a thrift shop where the youths will sell articles they have made, together with other merchandise, to sustain the center.

A director's office, check room and counselor's office, hobby rooms, where each child can pursue a variety of special interests, and a library.

Deed Buildings to Cause

The future of this community project has been secured by deeding these buildings in trust, with the specific provision that should the Baker's Dozen ever dissolve the trustees are empowered to hold the property in trust for Howard University, to be used as a sociological laboratory in teen-age recreation.

This year is a crucial one for the Baker's Dozen. There has never been so great a need (or the kind of recreation they are seeking to promote for the colored adolescent.

According to Capt. Rhoda Millken, director of the Police Women's Bureau, badly neglected children are increasing rapidly and juvenile delinquency is on the upsurge.

Joint Concert Planned

At the same time the Baker's Dozen is raising high hopes on a series of programs that may give the money needed to open the youth center.

The first of these projects will be held on Feb. 24, when the group will present Woody Herman and the King Cole Trio in a joint concert at Uline Arena.

It is hoped that profits from this affair will supply most of the large sum needed for equipment, staff and maintenance of the youth center.

Expanded Roster

The Baker's Dozen has grown in membership as its plans have broadened. The roster now includes:

Mesdames and Misses Hazel B. Adams, Mildred U. Alfred, T. M. B. Baker, Beatrice Y. Black, Flaxie P. Browne, Mildred S. Carr, Margaret P. Dyson, Maxine C. Edwards, Henrietta B. Franklin, Evelyn C. Freeland.

Sarah H. Irving, Beatrice M. Johnson, Mignon B. Johnson, Ada F. Jones, Julianne B. McDonald, Jewel C. Mazique, Carol H. Parris, Frances P. Roberson, Lucille B. Roberts, Ruth B. Spencer and Dorothea B. Stewart.

In the group are several sociologists, teachers and social workers, who have had quite a bit of experience in working with groups of youngsters. While the club members are a serious, civic-minded bunch, the group is a gay, happy and closely-knit one.

Start The Ball Rolling

Members don't have any illusions of personal greatness nor do they feel that they can solve the problem of juvenile delinquency.

We want to start a ball rolling that may help to solve this problem and get the interest of other groups," petite Ruth Spencer, the club president, said.

The Baker's Dozen has already started a ball rolling that may appreciably improve the lot of the teen-aged child who is being robbed of his chances for a good life by living in the unhealthy conditions of Washington's unsavory black belts.

Mrs. Ruth Brannum Spencer (above), president of the Baker's Dozen, and Miss Flaxie M. Pinkett, concert committee chairman, are whipping into shape final plans for their club's presentation of Woody Herman and his orchestra and the King Cole Trio in a joint concert at Uline's Arena, Feb. 24. The Baker's Dozen, a civic-minded group which has declared war on juvenile delinquency, is giving the concert to raise funds for a Youth Center.

They Push War on Juvenile Delinquency

AME Minister Slated to Address Baptists

NEWARK

The Rev. Mansfield F. Jackson, pastor of St. James AME Church, will be the principal speaker on Monday at 1:30 p.m. at the meeting of the Baptist Ministers' Conference at 208 Broadway, which AME ministers are also expected to attend.

It Happened In Court

BARS NO BAN FOR BLIND MAN

Fred Harrison, 42, of the 900 block St. Barnabas Ct. was arrested Monday night for being drunk and disorderly in the vicinity of Pennsylvania Ave. and Mosher St. Detective Lloyd Johnson testified that Harrison, who is partially blind, had been begging in taverns but had also been drinking heavily.

Harrison contended that he is totally blind, has been so for five years, but did admit having a few drinks in the home of a friend. Magistrate Fitzpatrick noted that he had been jailed for five days "for a rest and respite from liquor." Carrying his white cane and tin cup, Harrison was led back to a cell.

'I HIT HER FOR PROTECTION'

"Yes, I hit her. I had to protect myself. After all, there's just so far a man can let his wife go then he has to do something about it." Thus spoke 21-year-old Israel Black of the 600 block N. Woodyear St. in police court, Tuesday, when arraigned on a charge of beating his wife.

The wife, Mrs. Beulah Black, also 21, testified that her husband had beat her on previous occasions but she had declined to order his arrest. Magistrate Fitzpatrick lectured to the couple who have been married four years then dismissed the charge and warned the husband.

TROUBLE DODGER DUCKS INTO TROUBLE

When a free-for-all disturbance broke out in his home in the 900 block Jordan Ct., late Monday, Joseph Robinson, 59, ran into the street, armed with a club and blowing his police whistle. He created such a furore, however, that police placed him under arrest on a disorderly conduct charge.

Robinson, who parks cars at the Fifth Regiment Armory, explained: "Judge, your honor, I ran out of the house to get out of trouble and ran smack into trouble when this officer locked me up. I was merely looking for a cop when one came up." The magistrate was sympathetic, and dismissed the charge against Robinson.

BICYCLE THIEF RIDES TO JAIL

Identified as the man who took a bicycle from Wallace Jones of 934 Pierce St., Robert Jones, 21, of 708 Woodyear St., was sentenced to 30 days in jail on Wednesday, by Magistrate Preston Pairo in Western police court.

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Louis Watkins, 32, 200 block N. Exeter St., jumped out of the frying pan into the fire following his arrest late Saturday, for allegedly smashing a Gay St. show window. Police said they found a lottery slip on him when searched.

A fireman stationed at the Ensor and Gay Sts. engine house said he was attracted by the sound of breaking glass and saw a man later **identified as Watkins run from the scene.** During the chase, the suspect was apprehended.

During a hearing in Central police court, Watkins was placed under $1,500 bail on the attempted burglary count and held under an additional $500 bail on the lottery count.

At another hearing, Leroy Jackson, 23, 1400 block Lafayette Ave., was fined $25 and costs for the theft of a pair of shoes valued at $19 by owner, Cecil Joyner 700 block N. Carey St.

HAS GUN, GETS 3 MONTHS

The possession of an automatic revolver cost Jasper Howard, 43, 1025 Myrtle Ave., three months in jail, Monday. Officer Frank Treck testified that upon arriving at the address in the 900 block Pennsylvania Ave., on an anonymous phone call, he found Howard and weapon. The accused explained he had been drinking but could give no account of the gun.

TOOK WATCH FOR SAFEKEEPING

William Brooks, 32, 1409 Mosher St., was arrested early Monday for stealing and pawning the wrist watch of his friend, William Welsh 600 block Franklin St. His alibi was they had been drinking together and he took the watch for safekeeping. Magistrate Fitzpatrick gave Brooks 30 days "for safekeeping."

5 Local Men in D.C. for Tribute to Lincoln

Marse Callaway, Republican leader, and four other Baltimoreans attended the Lincoln Day dinner forum in Washington, last Tuesday, addressed by Gov. Thomas E. Dewey.

The other four were the Revs. J. Timothy Boddie, W. J. Winston and Rev. H. F. Moore, and Linwood G. Noger, attorney.

Mr. Callaway also heard Gov. Dewey address a Lincoln Day dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on Saturday.

Former Teacher in Va. Given Last Rites Here

Funeral services for Mrs. Alice C. Allen, former teacher and church worker of West Point, Va., were held there recently, at the Mt. Nebo Baptist Church.

She is survived by five children and one grandchildren, among the latter, Misses Gloria and Lillie Sturgis of Baltimore.

Tells of NCNW Work

NEW YORK (NNPA)—The importance of the membership drive of the National Council of Negro Women was the topic of a Lincoln Day broadcast here on Friday over Station WMCA. It featured Miss Dorfothy I. Height, president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and Miss Daisy Lampkin, a member of the NCNW executive board.

Delaware State Students Strike

WILMINGTON, Del.—Students at Delaware State College, Dover, Del., refused to attend classes on Tuesday, it was reported, in protest against pending action against a freshman who assertedly was distributing literature derogatory to the school's administration.

Dr. Howard D. Gregg, president of the college, talked to the 300 students at a meeting in the auditorium; and it was reported that they later returned to their classes. The school head could not be reached immediately for comment.

A political tug-of-war over the school has been brewing ever since the Democrats gained the Governorship at the last election; and impartial observers state that the school's activities have been influenced by outsiders.

Assemblyman Asks Probe

Meanwhile, the same afternoon, a Democratic member of the State Senate introduced a resolution calling for a general investigation of the college.

The proposal was referred to committee, but it was doubtful that the Republicans, who control the Assembly, would agree to such action.

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