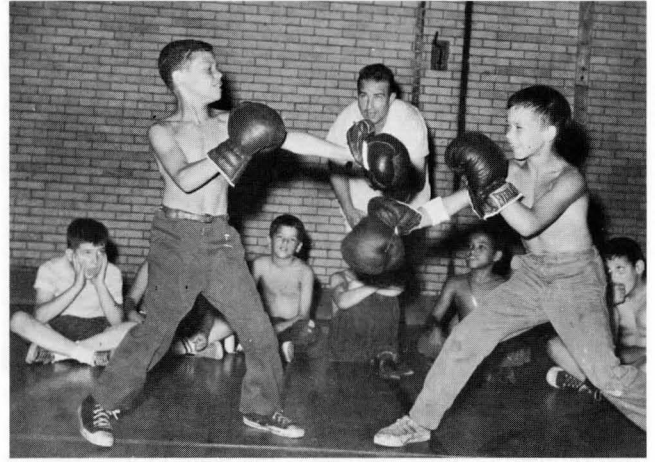


# Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association



*Rooftop Youngsters*



*Boxing Recreation*

The history of the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association begins with a free kindergarten established in a borrowed room in 1890 by Mary Wells, of the Normal College class of 1880. In 1894 this project was taken over by the Associate Alumnae of Normal College and housed in a rented building on East 72 Street. "Lenox Hill," now at 331 East 70 Street, has grown from this beginning into an institution that offers many services to the community surrounding Huter College. As the only settlement house on the east side between 3rd and 93rd Streets, it is intimately involved in the lives and problems of the residents of the area. It is open to all ages, races and creeds, who find the staff of Lenox Hill ready to use their skills, techniques and experience to alleviate many kinds of social ills—deprived children, broken homes, housing dislocations and shortages, neglected old people, aimless and troubled youth.

Hundreds of people come to Lenox Hill every day for its diverse services. The original one-room kindergarten has grown over the years into a day care center operated jointly by Bethany Day Nursery and Lenox Hill that offers an enriched nursery school program for the young children of parents who are working, ill or overburdened. The Center cares for 3- to 5-year olds all day and for 6- and 7-year olds after school, including lunch and an afternoon snack.

Youngsters in the 7- to 12-year age group are offered a constructive after-school program of club groups, athletics, arts and crafts, music lessons, dramatics and games. The Settlement's experience in detecting symptoms of delinquent behavior among this age group has been helpful in minimizing the number of truants and in averting potential school dropouts through the prompt involvement of families and other

agencies that can help provide counseling, guidance and remedial services. Lenox Hill tries to coordinate all its community services with those of other agencies both public and private to avoid duplication of effort and to fill gaps in service.

A wide range of activities is programmed for boys and girls from 13 to 17 years of age. After 7 P.M. they occupy the club rooms, the lounges, the gym, the swimming pool, the woodwork shop and the auditorium. One evening amateur actors are busy rehearsing their next production; another evening a dance instructor teaches the latest teenage steps; on a third evening one can listen to the Teen Leadership Group discussing anything from alcoholism to Vietnam.

It has been found that the key to progress with these youngsters is the leader. The skilled professional is able to get to know the youngsters intimately, to give them individual attention, to help them develop their potentials, and to steer away from antisocial activity. A drop-in clinic has been set up for the teenagers with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Boys and girls may drop in two days a week from 4 to 5 P.M. to talk to supervisors about any problem. Those dealt with cover a wide range—severe family difficulties, heavy drinking, sexual maladjustments, inordinate anger or fear, school drop-outs, youths involved in thefts, drug addiction, etc.

Interfaith Neighbors, an associate committee of Lenox Hill, which is sponsored by 22 churches and synagogues in the area, employs four workers who cooperate with the Settlement House in combatting and treating delinquency among pre-teen and teenage youth. They work with troubled boys and girls who can't accept the discipline of a regular program and who require an exceptional amount of individual at-



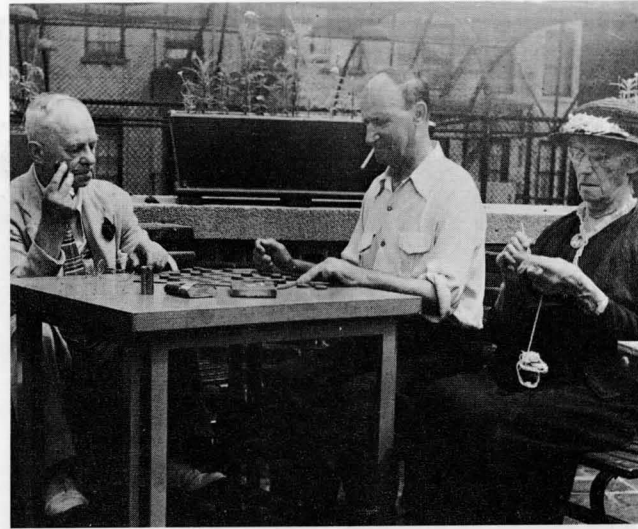
*English Class for Citizenship*

attention before they can function well in the regular activity groups. Interfaith Neighbors with the assistance of 40 volunteers also provides a tutorial program for neighborhood youngsters with learning difficulties. Tutoring in a wide range of subjects is offered, but help primarily in reading and mathematics is requested.

Adult members make full use of all the physical facilities of the settlement. Friday nights are reserved for families. They have a choice of discussion groups, special interest classes, woodworking, swimming, gym or viewing films. The House is open to outside adult groups for public meetings on topics of current interest and concern. Social clubs meet weekly from 7 to 10 or 11 P.M. English and citizenship classes for old-timers and newcomers to the country are held under the auspices of the Board of Education on Monday through Thursday for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.

Activities for Golden Agers, over 60 years of age, are programmed three full day and two evenings a week. In addition to a hot lunch, they enjoy the companionship found at Lenox Hill, classes in sewing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, singing, woodshop and swimming, as well as films, card games, discussion groups, monthly birthday parties, special holiday festivities, vacations at camp and trips away from the neighborhood.

Lenox Hill's year-round camp on Bantam Lake, Conn.—90 miles from New York City—is rented from the White Memorial Foundation for one dollar a year. There are 21 acres of woods and trails and a 1000-acre lake in a spectacularly beautiful setting. The camp program provides three-week summer vacations for children and two-week late spring and early fall vacations for Golden Agers. In addition, weekend and Christmas and Easter vacation camping is available for children, teens and families during the fall, winter and spring. During the summer a day camp is



*Senior Citizens Roof Area*

in daily operation at the Settlement House from 9:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. for 140 children aged 7 to 12. The summer program for teens includes their usual evening activities held outdoors on the second floor play roof area and also all-day trips in and out of the city.

Lenox Hill is one of three settlement houses in New York City chosen by United Neighborhood Houses to participate in an anti-poverty pilot project. This is the Integrated Pre-School and Parent Opportunity Center, a program financed by the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association and the Office of Economic Opportunity. It combines nursery education and parent participation, where the emphasis is on racial, economic and cultural integration. Mothers are required to contribute a minimum of two mornings a week to the program. Eighty percent of the families enrolled in this program have annual incomes of less than \$3,130 for a family of four. This program that tries to reach the most deprived families in our neighborhood also provides family services including afternoon and weekend cultural and recreational activities. Parents participate actively. They observe and assist teachers, attend special classes in food buying and preparation, mending and altering children's clothing, first aid, etc. The swimming pool and workshops are available for their use.

The Neighborhood Youth Corps is another anti-poverty program in operation at Lenox Hill. It provides 30 hours of weekly employment training for school dropouts aged 16 to 22 from low-income families. They receive intensive job training in food service, clerical and maintenance jobs as well as counseling. Youngsters aged 16 to 18 who are still attending school may work 10 hours weekly as assistant group leaders or in clerical jobs at the Settlement.

As its name implies, Lenox Hill's Health and Social Service Department has a double function. An effective health service that puts special emphasis on



*Teenage Girls' Camp*

health education is maintained. Last year consultations on health problems were held with 1,121 individuals. In addition, trained caseworkers gave assistance to 1,138 persons who came to Lenox Hill with personal, emotional and marital problems.

Housing is another concern of Lenox Hill. The building boom of luxury apartments in the area brought thousands of bewildered, frightened people to the Settlement House for advice on their rights and for guidance in relocation and the filing of applications for low-cost housing. Residents of the many low-rent apartments in old tenements—particularly dense east of 3rd Avenue—have sought and received advice where problems with their landlords have arisen.

The Settlement House has been successful in bringing low- and middle-income housing into our predominantly luxury-apartment area. York Hill and Rosalie Manning Apartments, two middle-income co-operatives, built under the provisions of the New York State Mitchell-Lema Law, were sponsored by Lenox Hill. The Neighborhood House was primarily responsible for the erection of Stanley M. Isaacs Houses and Holmes Towers, the first two low-income developments in Yorkville. Of present concern are the site of the United Nations School on the corner of 70th Street and First Avenue, and the site of the Rupert Brewery in the east nineties, where it is hoped the influence of Lenox Hill will bring about the erection of additional low- and middle-income housing.

Lenox Hill sponsors the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, 415 East 93 Street, which has been operating since January 1966. It provides group work programs, club and Golden Age activities. The Settlement has been asked to sponsor a neighborhood center in Holmes Towers as an extension of the Isaacs Center, one block to the north.

To the casual observer, the presence of so many luxury dwellings in the Lenox Hill-Yorkville area may

give the impression that there is little poverty here. This is far from being so. The majority of those served by Lenox Hill suffer as acutely from poverty, urban blight and under-employment as those in the ghettos.

Neighbors of limited income have first call on the services provided by Lenox Hill. There is no charge for case work, housing and health services. Low fees are charged for participation in group activities and the camp programs. Scholarships are offered on the basis of need.

By 1911 it was obvious that the Alumni Association could no longer be responsible for the direction and financial support of "our" settlement house. At that time it was incorporated as an independent agency. However, the by-laws provide that Hunter Alumni serve on its board and an Alumni committee contributes funds and services. The Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association owes its further expansion and growth to a succession of dynamic, forward-looking executive directors. Lillian D. Robbins, the present director, carries on this effort with a special style and excellence of her own.

Cooperation between Hunter and Lenox Hill takes place in many areas. In recent years 40 to 60 undergraduate sociology and education majors have been assigned to Lenox Hill for field work credit. The students, most of whom plan graduate study in social work, give 30 hours per semester and work usually as club leaders. Student volunteers—mostly early childhood education majors—work on a non-credit basis in the Day Care Center and the Parent Child Opportunity Center. Graduate students of the Hunter College School of Social Work receive field placement at the Settlement each year. This year one was assigned to casework and two to group work. They work two or three days a week under the supervision of a professional worker to obtain field experience and practical training. Hunter High School classes give parties for club groups and raise money for needy families. The Elementary School contributes baskets of food and \$100 in cash each Thanksgiving. The food is an important contribution to the Golden Age lunch program.

Since the days of Mary Wells, many Hunter alumnae have made significant contributions to Lenox Hill. Irene Brandon Graff, '98, who served as chairman of the Alumni Association's Lenox Hill Committee from 1939 until her death in October 1967 at the age of 89, writing in the 1963 Alumni Quarterly, said, "The Settlement is the oldest project of the Hunter alumni, a great source for good in the neighborhood . . ." The Lenox Hill Committee counts on the support of all alumni to continue this tradition of neighborhood service.

*Hannah Markstein Diamond, '39  
Chairman, Alumni Association  
Committee of the Lenox Hill  
Neighborhood Association*