

# Lenox Hill Settlement: *A DREAM COMES TRUE*

Irene Brandon Graff '98, *President*

It is not often that a beautiful dream comes true, but this one did. It was in the mind and heart of *Mary Wells '80*, a graduate of Hunter when it was Normal College, who dreamed of establishing a free kindergarten for the poor children of the East Side.

In 1890 she took a small room in Dr. Hall's mission at 63rd Street and Third Avenue and carried it on for four years. It was so successful that she then turned it over to the Board of Education, the first free kindergarten in the city. The next step was to give comfort



and relaxation to overworked mothers. Clubs were formed and a haven established.

It was in 1894 that the Associate Alumnae of Normal College, with vision, enthusiasm and effort, took over this project, and rented a house at East 72nd Street. Thus was founded the Normal College Alumnae House, and *Lenox Hill Settlement was born*.

Since that time Lenox Hill has had three homes, and has greatly increased its program. In 1928 the present plant was constructed at 331 East 70th Street, where the Settlement is now housed.

With its great development the financial strain was too heavy for the Association to carry and the group was expanded. But by its charter there must always be seven representatives of the Alumni Association on its Board of Directors and a committee for the Alumni to contribute to its support.

It is this committee which I have the honor to head and which now pledges \$3500 annually.

The House is now used by 1,000 persons a day; we serve 25 nationalities. Our Day Care Center has 85 children of working mothers, whom we care for from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The After-School program for children from seven to twelve years of age includes clubs, sports, cooking, dramatics, and group games.

*Tween and Teen* groups over twelve enjoy the above

and other varied social events. A Pre-teen project for seven to twelve-year-old youngsters who may be facing difficulties has just been established.

The Golden Age program is for oldsters from sixty to ninety years. They have a three-day program with lunches, and two evenings with dancing and music. Our Health Service operates a clinic, and free medical examinations are available to our House members.

Our greatest problem today is the prevention of juvenile delinquency. To this end two committees have been formed—Neighbors United and Interfaith Neighbors. Both try to reach unhappy and maladjusted youngsters and refer them to appropriate community services.

Lenox Hill has a fully equipped summer camp at Bantam Lake, Connecticut, which takes care of 250 children for three weeks, and a group of the aged for two weeks.

As one realizes the scope of the work, it is easily understandable that a large budget is necessary. Our part in the over-all support is very small but very important. It can always be relied upon; since 1894 we have never defaulted on our pledge; and with your help we never will.

However, my goal has been something more than just financial support. It has been an effort to forge a strong link between the College, the Alumni and the Settlement. To this end we now have 55 students from the College who assist in the children's program, help with the Golden Age lunch, do case aide work, and get credit on their college record.

The Settlement is the oldest project of the Alumni, a great source for good in the neighborhood which it has served for 69 years. With your active interest we can keep this dream a reality.

