

THE ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Atlanta and Fulton County Public Schools for the past twenty-one months have been engaged in a sound and practical endeavor which attempts to provide an educational opportunity for the entire community. Thirteen schools have participated in the program by extending the hours of the school day until ten o'clock in the evening and offering activities on Saturdays. With advice from a citizens council, the activities offered provide an opportunity for each member of the family to improve himself or fulfill his leisure time with wholesome recreational activities. Each of the schools with one exception is located in an indigent community where the school has the potential to compensate for the environmental and educational deficiencies that have existed for so many years.

Although each community school has attempted to develop a program which would serve the needs of the community, there were several problems prevalent which were common to each community. Some of the problems most common were:

1. The image of the school was not a positive one.
2. Delinquency was common.
3. The dropout rate was alarming.
4. The male image was lacking in many homes.
5. Parents hesitated to participate in school programs.
6. Health problems were existent.
7. Recreational programs and playgrounds were sadly lacking.
8. The initiative on the part of the people to do anything about it was missing.

Several other factors influenced the need for community education which would establish effective communications and open the doors of the school to the residents of the community. In each community the educational level of the people was quite low and their experiences in school had been unsuccessful. Many adults needed to master the basic skills to help themselves and to keep up with their children. Other adults had not had the opportunity to complete high school and others had vocational interest which had never been satisfied. All of the social ills were prevalent in the community without a concerted effort to eliminate them.

With an awareness for the existing problem, the two boards of education implemented the Community School Program in July of 1965. Some of the purposes for implementing this program include the following:

1. To provide opportunities for school age children to participate in educational activities other than during the regular school day. This includes use of libraries; enrichment, supervised study and recreational programs during the afternoons, evening and on Saturdays, fifty-two weeks a year.
2. To provide opportunities for adults to participate in similar programs, including some pre-vocational activities, and an opportunity to improve certain saleable skills.
3. To provide an academic program for adults ranging from basic education for the illiterate and semi-illiterate to completion of high school.
4. To make the school available for all the people in the community for programs which would develop and enhance their individual, family and community lives.
5. To provide leadership which will serve as the catalytic agent to put unity in the community by bringing people together to solve their problems.

Funds made available through Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc. made it possible for programs to be started in the target areas in which community action programs were focusing attention. These funds will be exhausted on May 31, 1967 and will not permit the operation of the Summer Program for the youth unless other financial support can be derived.

Proposed Summer Program 1967

Based on the experiences of our summer program 1966, we anticipate a program which will involve the youth in each of our ^{twelve} ~~thirteen~~ communities. With the total school facilities at our disposal, recreational and enrichment activities will be offered throughout the summer months. Some of the enrichment activities for boys and girls will include:

Arts and Crafts
Typing For Fun
Archery
Ceramics
Junior Homemaking
Speech and Drama
Doll Making
Camping Trips
Leather Craft

Creative Dancing
Reading for Fun
Arithmetic for Fun
Cookouts
Knitting
Beauty and Charm
Wood Shop
Science
Music (band)

Recreational activities will provide the following opportunities:

Pee Wee Baseball
Gymnastics
Tennis
Weight Lifting
Softball
Track and Field
Soccer

Bicycle Hikes
Swimming
Basketball
Baton and Cheerleading
Judo
Volleyball
Teen Dances

Under the direction of the Assistant Principal for the Community School, the preceding activities will be possible in twelve of our community schools affected by federal funding. A request to fund the operation of these schools under Title I has been made while six additional schools seek local support for their existence this summer. For the continuation of the community school \$59,000 has been requested while the local support for six additional sites would total \$18,000. These eighteen centers would provide a vital contribution to the recreational needs in our inner city communities.

Last summer over two thousand children and youth took part each day in the program at one particular school. It would be possible for each school to accommodate approximately one thousand youth daily in the recreational and enrichment activities. The community schools stand ready to accept this challenge.

The Future

The continuation of the Community School Program in Atlanta is vital to the continued growth and development of our city. The school has the potential to improve the citizens of each community and in turn, help each community become the best possible. We are hopeful that we can look forward to many successful years of community education with September, 1967 beginning our third. Financial assistance is necessary to accomplish these goals.