

SMALL SUMS CAN DO A LOT

At Ford, Do-Gooders on the Assembly Line

By REESE CLEGHORN

OUT AT THE Ford plant in Hapeville, John W. Brown and seven of his buddies on the assembly line are earning more than they have ever made before, and they are thinking they ought to help some others who have been left behind.

Their average pay is about \$137 a week. Before he got this job three years ago, John Brown, who is 30 years old and the father of two, was a delivery man for a furniture store, at \$75 a week.

He is doing much better now because some job opportunities have opened for Negroes. He and seven Negro friends on the assembly line have formed a club and assessed themselves \$5 a month to further its ends, which are, generally speaking, to do some good with youth in the slums.

They have sponsored some athletic activities. Now they are planning an all-day barbecue on May 27 in Vine City to raise money for sponsoring baseball teams there, possibly through the Little League organization, which mostly is for people who are better off and whiter than those in Vine City.

"We used to live in an apartment on West End Avenue," Mr. Brown says. "Once we moved to Vine Street I saw how these kids were living, how they had nothing. My wife works at the telephone company and I have a good job, so we decided we ought to help do something.

"We're moving out of Vine City pretty soon, to a house that is a lot better. But we decided we're going to try to come back and help as often as we can.

"Right now, our club wants to raise enough money to have a real sports program for the kids. And we'd like to tell them to stay in school, and show them something a lot of them don't know—that if they'll try, they can get good jobs later on, too."

THIS LITTLE CLUB is one of a number of organizations now moving, in a small way, into the gap left by a century of neglect of the slums. It and others have found that a small amount of money can do a lot.

If a small amount of money could be found right now, slum children could have intramural sports, go to a summer camp, or be taken to a zoo this summer.

If more small amounts could be found, Vine City could rent the old but improvable building it badly needs for a supervised recreation center and get its tutorial program under way for high school students who now are at the drop-out level.

The pitifully limited pre-school program for Summerhill-Mechanicsville could be expanded for at least three days a week. Summerhill's younger children could have a good day care center, and openings to the world that would come with it.



THAT IS A SMALL list, representing a much longer one, of some of the urgent needs in Atlanta's slums at this moment. You may break it down further. For instance, \$4.70 would buy the shuffleboard needed in Vine City's new-unequipped recreation center, or \$11.25 would buy the two footballs, or \$2.00 would buy the 10 pounds of clay dough needed for the smaller children.

Right now there is a big question about whether needs such as these will be met by private response. Government is not filling them. People who have said all along that they are in favor of the goals of this or that government poverty program but don't like to see the government do everything—they are not filling the needs, either.

LOOK AT WHAT HAS happened in Atlanta.

Last summer, the poverty program was beginning to reach into the slums. Then came the big reduction in federal funds for Economic Opportunity Atlanta. Many poverty-area programs were eliminated.

For instance, last summer there was \$89,000 for operation of more than 35 centers where children were brought into intramural sports; picked up for trips to the Atlanta Zoo, the Capitol and Stone Mountain; and otherwise thrust into a broader exposure to the world and to responsive adults than many of them had ever seen before.

THIS YEAR THERE IS NO money for that.

This time, also, there is no money for pre-school programs and day care centers in some areas where they are most needed.

That is the situation. Because of what has gone before and because many of the needs now have been defined and some of the means for meeting them have been tested, small amounts of money can go straight to the mark.

SOME OF IT IS COMING, but only from a few sources.

The Atlanta Labor Council, AFL-CIO, has sent \$3,000 to the City of Atlanta so its parks and recreation department can renovate a camp at Lake Allatoona and send poor children there this summer. An organization of family campers has sent \$1,000 for the same purpose.

The Rich Foundation has put up \$28,500 to buy portable pools for the city's playlots in the slums. A church is buying the equipment for a recreation center and financing some counseling for teen-agers. The Atlanta Jaycees are helping in the slums.

But a mighty gap remains as private organizations begin to move toward parts of the city that have been neglected.

Wanted: Do-Gooders.