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## DIGEST OF DISSERTATION

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### THE REORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF A SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The sending of children to the country for vacations during the summer has long been a definite and important part of organized welfare work in New York City. This movement has been in existence for over fifty years and has been steadily growing in scope and importance. The selection, assembling and sending of the children have in the past been the major concern of the welfare agencies. It has been only in recent years that these agencies have given more serious consideration to the aims, program of activities, and methods used in caring for the children in these vacation places. This field study deals with the problem in general, but in particular with the program and activities of two specific ~~summer~~ camps or summer vacation places which have been a part in this big movement.

The plan for the reorganization and operation of a summer camp program as described in this manuscript, has been carried out over a four-year period in two summer camps sustained by Life's Fresh Air Fund. This association, sponsored by Life Publishing Company of New York City, and supported entirely by contributions from friends and readers of the magazine in all parts of the world, was organized in 1887. Life's Fresh Air Fund is only one, however, of many welfare agencies in New York City devoting their efforts to providing better camping opportunities for needy city children. It maintains two camps: Life's Boys' Camp, Camp Raritan, located near Pottersville, New Jersey; and Life's Girls' Camp, located at Branchville, Connecticut. The boys' camp provides places during the summer for six hundred and fifty, and the girls' camp for four hundred and twenty-five.

The sending of children to the country for vacations, by welfare agencies, has been known as "fresh air work," a term in common use among welfare agencies. They were not much concerned about what happened in the vacation places, but rather with the problems of transportation and getting the children out of the city to the country for fresh air and a vacation. Logically, then, this type of activity, largely a relief measure, has been and still is referred to as "fresh air work," although this expression is gradually being supplanted by the word "camping."

Camping as an organized movement means working for the fullest development of character and citizenship of the individual and the group through meeting life situations in the more primitive ways of living, which can best be offered in the isolated environment of camp life. Camp is more than a place to keep children while they are not in the city; it furnished a positive, purposeful, carefully planned program of enjoyable living, the outcomes of which are educational.



### Purpose

The purpose of this field problem in particular has been, first, to set up a plan for the reorganization of Life's Summer Camps, based upon the hypothesis that camping should be essentially an educational enterprise and not merely a relief measure or a means of providing fresh air; and second, to operate these camps for a four-year period, making such applications and recommendations as seem warranted basing them upon an analysis of the program in operation.

### Procedure

To bring about the reorganization of the camps required a study of the early developments of camping as carried on by the various welfare agencies in New York City, from its beginning up to the present time. This was necessary in order to have the proper background for planning the reorganization and future development of Life's Summer Camps.

Special consideration was given to a study of vacation homes and camps made by the Children's Welfare Federation. Life's Summer Camps are affiliated with this Federation and were included in its survey. The camp buildings, equipment, activities, records, and reports of Life's Summer Camps were studied in relation to the findings of this ~~xxxxx~~ survey.

In preparing the specific recommendations for the plan for reorganization, a statement of aims was formulated. This was based upon the hypothesis that camping is an educational program. In formulating the plan of reorganization and program of activities, the best present practices of the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Young Men's Christian Association, and Camp Directors Association were utilized.

The practical phase of this field problem consisted of putting these recommendations into operation in Life's Summer Camps, selecting and training a staff, directing the activities during the four-year period, and making an analysis of the outcomes.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAMPING AS A PART OF WELFARE WORK IN NEW YORK CITY

In this chapter is presented a history of camping as a part of the welfare work in New York City, starting with the first fresh air home, established in 1872, and tracing its development to the present time. Since 1925 there has been a decided change from the fresh air type of work to a more progressive program of camping.

## CHAPTER III

### STATUS OF VACATION HOMES AND CAMPS

Through a special committee of the Children's Welfare Federation, of which the writer was a member, a careful study was made of the various vacation homes and camps. The results of these investigations showed that there was much need for improvement in the management of the welfare camps.

The various camps affiliated with the Children's Welfare Federation's Committee on Vacation Homes and Camps, were given valuable assistance, through its various



-committees, in bringing about many needed changes. These sub-committees arranged conferences, discussion groups, and prepared much helpful literature dealing with various camp problems.

Considerable progress was made in the welfare camps during the three-year period of the investigation, but there is need for still more improvement and a continued effort to raise the standards of the camps.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### EDUCATION IN CAMP LIFE.

Chapter IV takes up a consideration of the aims of welfare camps in general, and continues with an application of the aims of education to the camp problem. There are also presented principles for selecting and judging activities in the camp program which have been adapted from certain principles used in the construction of school curricula. An analysis is made of the camp environment as it affords desirable situations in which the learning process goes on with good results.

#### CHAPTER V

##### THE PROGRAM OF LIFE'S SUMMER CAMPS

This chapter contains the specific recommendations for the reorganization of Life's Fresh Air Farms made in 1925, which were the objectives to be accomplished and the plan for reorganization to be carried out.

There is also included a description of the methods of organization and administration of the program in operation and a detailed report of two of the major activities.

#### CHAPTER VI

##### OUTCOMES

Chapter VI Shows some of the outcomes resulting from working out the field problem during the four-year period.

A special dietary study was made covering a three-year period, which showed that accepted dietary standards have been satisfactorily met. The study also includes a summary of the procedures followed in the purchase of foods, tentative menus and a plan for keeping records for dietary calculations of large quantities of food.

Contributions for the support of the camp work have increased greatly, and budget and accounting systems have been established, with a policy for financing the program a year in advance. A method of healthful living has been built up. Counselor turn-over has been lessened.

A system of permanent records, including the home environment, health record and camp activities, has been established, in which a duplicate report on each camper is returned to the organization sending the child to camp. There has been an increase of about fifty per cent in each camp in the number of campers returning. Small units, or outpost camps, have been set up, providing for a more primitive type of camping.

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A basis for the selection of children to go to camp has been worked out, making it possible to get the most deserving children. A plan has been worked out making it possible to suit the length of stay to the individual needs of the camped; and also one for keeping in touch with the children throughout the year. Cooperative relationships have been established with the Welfare Council, co-ordinating the work of the camps with the city agencies.