

DR. THOMAS J. RILLO
OUTDOOR EDUCATION

EDUCATION AND THE SUMMER CAMP
AN EXPERIMENT

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY
OF PHILOSOPHY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS
Teachers College, Columbia University
NEW YORK CITY

1930

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to the counselors and other members of the staff who have aided greatly in carrying on the work at the two camps, and to the representatives of the welfare agencies for their coöperation in carrying out the work in the city.

He is especially indebted to Miss Hassie I. Sexson, who has been director of the girls' camp during the four-year period, for her help in the development of many phases of the work; and to Orlo R. Chamberlain, who has been director of the boys' camp for the last two years and has contributed many valuable suggestions.

To the officers of Life's Fresh Air Fund, the author is especially indebted for their counsel and help and for giving him freedom in working out the program.

Thanks are due Miss Mary Arnold and Dr. Alice M. Asserson of the Children's Welfare Federation, and Mrs. Edith Shatto King of the Charity Organization Society, for their many suggestions.

He is indebted to Miss A. Grace Adams for making the study of the camp dietary and to Dr. Mary Swartz Rose and Mrs. M. deG. Bryan for reading over that part of the manuscript.

More especially does the writer wish to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to the members of his dissertation committee: Professor J. F. Williams, chairman; and Professor E. K. Fretwell, Professor D. H. Kulp, II, and Professor F. G. Bonser, at Teachers College, Columbia University, for their valuable assistance.

The help of Miss Mildred Fogel in reading and preparing the manuscript has been most valuable.

Most deeply of all the writer is indebted to his wife, Alice W. Sharp. She has had charge of the dietary program of both camps and has given helpful study and criticism of the entire camp program. During the four-year period and in the final preparation of the manuscript, her encouragement and help have been unfailing and without them this study could not have been completed.

L. B. S.

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EDUCATION AND THE SUMMER CAMP AN EXPERIMENT

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 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 the following pages, 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 voluntary contributions from friends and readers of the magazine in all parts of the world, was organized in 1887.¹ 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 children, and the girls' camp for four hundred and twenty-five children.

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. In the beginning the work consisted mainly of getting the children off the hot streets,

¹ 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.