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CHILDREN'S YEAR

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PATRIOTIC PLAY WEEK

SUGGESTIONS TO LOCAL CHILD-
WELFARE COMMITTEES



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CHILDREN'S YEAR

SUGGESTIONS FOR PATRIOTIC PLAY WEEK

"To provide recreation for children and youth, abundant, decent, protected from any form of exploitation."

The primary purpose of the Recreation Drive, of which Patriotic Play Week is the culminating feature, is to increase physical vigor among the children of the United States. It is hoped to do this through the cooperation of organizations promoting wartime activities which require physical strength and skill, and other activities which are equally important in peace and war. Among these organizations are the War Gardens of the United States Bureau of Education, the Junior Red Cross, and the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of the Department of Agriculture, and various athletic organizations for children and youth.

The Recreation Drive aims to promote the games which increase physical adeptness and skill, which train the eye, and develop the ability to respond instantly not only to the direction of the leader but to the need of the game. One purpose of the Drive must be to implant in the minds of the children the idea that keeping themselves fit is patriotic, and that they are serving their country when they makes themselves stronger. Indiana has adopted for the Recreation Drive the slogan, "For a Stronger America."

ORGANIZATION

The committee's first work in getting ready for Patriotic Play Week is to discover all the organizations in the community which are already at work to protect children's leisure-time activities, and so to enlist their interest as to make the Patriotic Play Week truly a demonstration of all that the community is doing to provide for its children's activities.

The committee will wish to arrange especially for the participation of local recreational organizations. It will need to learn whether there are representatives who can be called upon to demonstrate the work of such organizations as the Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Girl

Scouts, The Junior Membership Bureau of the American Red Cross, The Drama League of America, The Amateur Athletic Union of the United States, Boys' and Girls' Clubs of the United States Department of Agriculture, The Community Chorus Movement, The War Gardens of the United States Bureau of Education, The Story Tellers' League, The Educational Drama League, The American Folk Dance Society, The Playground and Recreation Association of America. The addresses of these organizations are given on the last page of this leaflet.

An exhibit of the work of some of the organizations, such, for example, as the Boys' and Girls' Clubs, is an already well-established custom each year; and the members of the clubs plan their work throughout the summer with the purpose of showing it at the autumn exhibit.

If there are no suitable organizations already existing, games for the athletic badge tests may be developed under the leadership of individuals who are interested in seeing that the leisure time of the children in their community is protected.

DATE.

The first week in September has been suggested for Patriotic Play Week, but it may be more advantageous in some communities to select another date—for instance:

1. The week during which a county fair, grange, bush meeting, or other community gathering is to take place, that the Play Week's exhibit of what the community can do for its children's leisure time may be part of such a neighborhood meeting.

2. A single Saturday or series of Saturdays—possibly during October, when the schools are in session—with the purpose of enlisting the interest of the teachers.

In any event, the date should be chosen in accordance with the needs and convenience of each community.

If it is determined to hold the Week's celebration in connection with a county fair or other gathering, the manager of the fair should be consulted and arrangements for space and hours made for the Play Week exhibit. The exhibit would attract many mothers and fathers to the fair because of their desire to see what their children are doing. If the Week is not to be held in connection with any other community event, much the same plan for the Play Week may still be followed. The Week in any case will have to be varied to utilize the special resources of each locality. In some communities a briefer period than a week may be determined upon.

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS.

The Patriotic Play Week gives an opportunity for the children to show what games and other leisure-time activities have done or may do for them. Their exhibit may take several forms:

1. ATHLETIC BADGE TESTS OF PHYSICAL EFFICIENCY.

The athletic badge tests might be arranged as a simplified field meet would be. They are offered as a practicable way of testing the physical vigor of boys and girls. They might take place on a stated day during the Play Week. The boys and girls who pass them become eligible for a special certificate—the first in a series of three offered for successive and increasingly difficult tests, to be given at intervals of a year. Certificates may be secured free of charge from the Playground and Recreation Association of America for each child who passes the tests. Descriptions of the tests may be secured from the Child Welfare Department, Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense, Washington, D. C. Fuller directions for conducting them may be secured by writing to the Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y., for their pamphlets called "Badge Tests."

An excellent means of stimulating the children's interest in keeping strong and in increasing their physical vigor is to repeat these badge tests from time to time, giving an opportunity to the children who are unable to pass them at first to take the tests again 6 weeks or 90 days later. If it is possible to plan for such progressive tests, the children should be informed, and urged to play the games which will increase the likelihood of their passing the tests.

Directions for playing certain good games, which have direct value in promoting physical vigor, will be sent free on application to the Playground and Recreation Association of America.

There are many additional ways in which recreation may be utilized to cultivate physical vigor. The Boy Scouts, for example, do many things which increase the boys' health. Members of such athletic organizations, whether national or local, should have especially good chances of passing the physical tests; and their work should be promoted as part of the Recreation Drive.

2. EXHIBITS OF THE WORK OF THE BOY SCOUTS, CAMP FIRE GIRLS, AND GIRL SCOUTS.

The special drills, the first-aid demonstrations, and other characteristic requirements of these organizations enable their members to make peculiarly definite and attractive demonstrations of what the organizations mean. Demonstrations of their special war-time

activities would be especially appropriate. Preparation for these **exhibitions** should constitute a large part of the summer's play.

For further information consult: Boy Scouts of America, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Camp Fire Girls, 31 East Seventeenth Street, New York, N. Y.; and Girls Scouts of America, 527 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

3. EXHIBITS OF THINGS MADE AND RAISED.

(1) The Junior Red Cross auxiliaries may well be called upon to conduct a section of the exhibit in which they can show the things they make, knit, and sew for the soldiers, sailors, and refugees. Information about these auxiliaries can be obtained from local Red Cross Chapter School Committees.

(2) The Canning Clubs of the United States Department of Agriculture will undoubtedly have plans for special exhibits of goods they have preserved and dried in the Nation-wide effort to conserve food; and demonstrations of their methods, at some time during the autumn, are probably contemplated. In many places these exhibits may be planned for the same time as Play Week.

The Boys' and Girls' Clubs of the United States Department of Agriculture are represented on the Advisory Committee on the Recreation Drive, and their leaders are interested in securing better recreation for the club members and in seeing that provision is made for organized play and games such as those contemplated in preparation for Play Week. It is expected that many clubs will wish to hold their exhibits and demonstrations in connection with Play Week, thus making it possible to show the various ways in which the community is providing for the leisure time of the children. The great need of the work which these clubs are doing will make their exhibit particularly timely.

(3) Stock and Poultry Raising Clubs should be asked to enter their chickens, calves, and pigs in another exhibit.

Information about both the Canning Clubs and the Stock and Poultry Raising Clubs may be secured for the Northern and Western States from Mr. O. H. Benson, and for the Southern States from Mr. O. B. Martin, both to be addressed at the Extension Work, States Relation Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

4. PAGEANTRY, FOLK DANCES, AND MUSIC.

(1) A fitting climax of the entire summer's effort would be a pageant staged on the last day of Patriotic Play Week. This might be made doubly effective if staged at the county fair. It might begin with a procession or a moving exhibit of all results accomplished, from a given point to a position in front of the grand stand,

where, with symbolic characters participating and the real characters forming a background, a brief drama might be enacted, consecrating both effort and resources to Columbia and the cause of human freedom.

(2) Folk dances of different countries might be given to advantage in many communities, and the children would enjoy getting together to practice them. Assistance in planning folk dances may be secured from Miss Elizabeth Burchenal, American Folk Dance Society, 2790 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

(3) The patriotic appeal of the new songs is strong; and many singing or glee clubs and bands will, it is hoped, be started during the Recreation Drive. People like to get together and sing, and they should be urged to form definite groups to provide the music at the Play Week celebrations. In several States directors of community singing have been appointed under the State Councils of Defense, whose cooperation in Play Week will be valuable. It may be desirable to have a song contest among different choruses and glee clubs; between the boys and girls who have formed themselves into bands and orchestras. Perhaps original patriotic songs might be composed by some one in the clubs and rendered as the musical contribution to the exhibit. In one State an effort is being made to organize penny whistle clubs among the little boys who otherwise might be idling on the streets.

(4) At the 1918 State Fair in Washington there is planned an exhibit of simple toys suitable for children of different ages and of homemade play apparatus. Such an exhibit might well be made a feature of the Play Week. Demonstrations of certain games for young children might be given—for example, work in sand boxes, and floor games. In this connection, the sections on outdoor and indoor play in "Child Care" will be helpful.¹

Some clubs or organizations of women might be asked to take charge of serving meals at the exhibit if that seems desirable. It should be possible in this way to defray at least part of the expenses of the Week.

AWARDS.

Some places may wish to give awards for each one of the exhibits outlined above which they determine to hold. In that case a carefully selected committee of judges would, of course, have to be appointed. The ingenuity of local committees would determine the awards—possibly different colored ribbons might be used. In any case the prizes should not be elaborate nor expensive.

¹ Child Care, by Mrs. Max West, may be secured free of charge from the Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

When the Recreation Committee has surveyed the resources of its community for recreation it will be able to choose which of these exhibits it will wish to undertake. Local talent will doubtless be able to invent other demonstrations particularly adapted to the community's special abilities.

In each exhibit some one person should be made responsible for seeing that everything is made ready, and that the children are collected and prepared to do their parts on time. But above all, that person and every member of the committee should see that all the children who take part in the exhibit enjoy what they do; that they find real fun in getting ready; that they do outdoor things, and practice outdoors; that in every way the preparation itself counts as protection of their leisure time.

**LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS FROM WHOM ADVICE CAN
BE SECURED.**

- Amateur Athletic Union of the United States, 290 Broadway, New York, N. Y.
- American Folk Dance Society, 2790 Broadway, New York, N. Y.
- American Red Cross, Bureau of Junior Membership, Washington, D. C.
- Boy Scouts of America, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- Boys' and Girls' Clubs, Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.
- Camp Fire Girls, 31 East Seventeenth Street, New York, N. Y.
- Drama League of America, 306 Riggs Building, Washington, D. C.
- Educational Drama League, 105 West Fortieth Street, New York, N. Y.
- Girl Scouts of America, 527 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- National Story Tellers' League, 3 Kennedy Street, NW., Washington, D. C.
- New York Community Chorus—Mr. Harry Barnhart, 2410 Webb Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- Playground and Recreation Association of America, 1 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.
- United States School Garden Army, United States Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.

