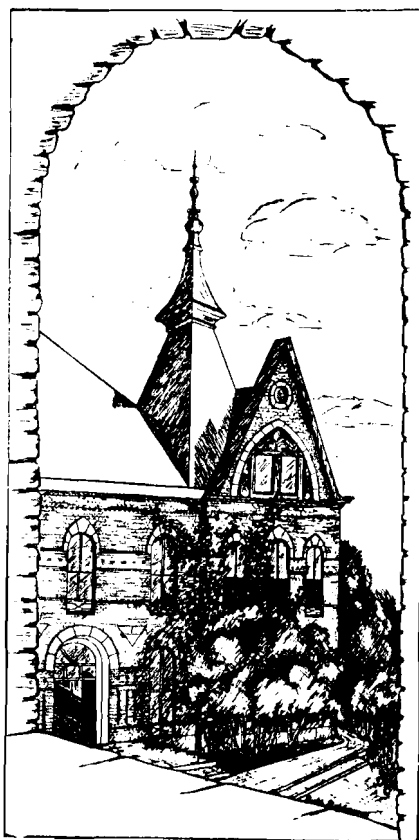


# Building Better School-Community Relations In Latin-American Communities



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Southwest Texas State Teachers College  
San Marcos, Texas—July, 1944

No. III

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This is No. III in a special series of bulletins in Inter-American Education bearing the following titles:

- I Health and Physical Education Activities for Latin-American Children in Elementary Grades.
- II Art Activities for Latin-American Children in Elementary Grades.
- III Building Better School-Community Relations in Latin-American Communities.
- IV Music Activities for Latin-American Children in Elementary Grades.

Until the present printing is exhausted, these booklets may be obtained free of charge by writing to the Director of Public Service, S.W.T.T.C., San Marcos, Texas.

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Willa Vaughn Tinsley  
Editor

## FOREWORD

This booklet is one of several, intended as aids to teachers, prepared at Southwest Texas State Teachers College through a special school-community project in Inter-American Affairs in an attempt to improve instruction and community organization for Spanish speaking children and adults. Special effort was made to produce materials in health and hygiene, art and music, foods and nutrition, and community organization, because these areas are receiving much less emphasis than their educational importance justifies.

For the most part, our public schools have access to adequate materials in sufficient quantity and variety to provide teachers and pupils with the necessary tools for effective mental development of the child. However, as we all know, a child is constantly developing also emotionally, socially, and physically, and unless carefully selected opportunities and materials are provided for guiding these phases of child growth, the outcome is often a maladjusted individual.

Sometimes we become so intent on a certain phase of child education that we blind ourselves to the possibilities which lie abundantly about us for total child growth.

For example, a teacher may say, "I have three grades together in this room; I do not have time for informal activity procedures in such areas as games, music, health testing, or craft-work and the like; after all, the parents send the children to school to learn to read and to write and I have all that I can do in accomplishing this!" Such defensive statements are the rule and not the exception when talking with teachers who are adhering rigidly and with sincere respect to the formal recitation methods of teaching the so-called fundamentals.

Let us not become so intent on teaching Juan how to read that we lose sight of the fact that Juan has to get along with his associates, that he has to maintain a fair degree of health, that he has to be reasonably stable in his emotional reactions if he is to grow into a normal person and assume his rightful place as a responsible member of any community.

The philosophy expressed in these booklets is based on the recognition of the importance of providing opportunities and materials for the total development of the child and the adult.

Besides the executive and advisory committees for the special project, acknowledgement is due many other individuals for their assistance. Particular acknowledgment is due Mrs. Katherine M. Cook, Chief of Special Problems, and Mr. W. H. Sininger, Field Consultant for Special Projects in Inter-American Affairs, both of the U. S. Office of Education, for their encouraging guidance; Dr. L. S. Tireman, Professor of Education, University of New Mexico, for his stimulating counsel and inspiration; Mrs. Mary G. Buchanan, Associate Professor of Music; Dr. Hiawatha Crosslin, Associate Professor of Physical Edu-

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### **Preface**

The fact that the director's specialized training and experience has been in the field of home and community relations made it possible for her to function more effectively in this particular area than in any other phase of the project.

This booklet, therefore, takes more or less the form of a narrative report of procedures actually taking place in one Latin-American school and community.

The activities instigated in the regular day-school program as a result of the special project in Inter-American Affairs had their influence in enriching the total educational program, thereby encouraging better school attendance and establishing better school-community relations. These activities are described in the special series of bulletins in Inter-American Education, the titles of which are listed on the fly-leaf.

It is not the intention of the director to imply that these procedures be considered as recommendations for use in all other Latin-American communities. The general philosophy, techniques, and courses of action, however, may give suggestions for a workable approach in varying situations, provided certain adaptations are made as the particular factors in each situation demand.

Willa Vaughn Tinsley  
Assistant Professor of Home Economics  
Director of Special Project

# **BUILDING BETTER SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN LATIN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

In contributing to the promotion of any type of community relations, one needs to be very well informed concerning the people in the community. Among Latin-American communities, we must not draw conclusions based on our knowledge and past experiences with Anglo-Americans and assume that our judgments will be applicable when applied to a group of Latin-Americans. It is obvious that we are dealing with a group of people whose socio-economic level is low, compared with our standards. This recognition, however, is an inadequate basis for full understanding of the complete problems facing these people—these problems which we must comprehend in order to be of assistance in the growth or development of the people.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY San Marcos, Texas**

### **Size**

San Marcos is normally a town of about six thousand. Of these, some two thousand are said to be Latin-Americans, representing about two hundred seventy-five families.

### **Survey**

In determining the home and living conditions of these people, the teachers made an investigation of forty families that were chosen from among those families represented in the public schools. No one lays any claim to the accuracy or the thoroughness of the investigation; however, the results have been carefully analyzed.

### **Interpretation of Community**

#### **Citizenship**

Nearly all of the children are U. S. citizens; 98% of them were born in the U. S. A., whereas about 37% of the parents were born here. An additional 7% of the parents have become citizens. The families have been in this country an average of 22 years.

#### **Stability**

The population is fairly stable; only 17% migrate, taking less than half their family members along and staying an average of 3 months out of the year.

#### **Employment**

There are few indigents. Types of employment vary widely, following no set pattern. Half the families have children who work. The average income is \$90.00 per month with an average of 7.2 persons per family.

#### **Housing**

Forty-seven per cent of these families own their own homes which are usually neat and well cared for, although small. The average size

house has 3.3 rooms. The average rent is \$6.83 per month.

### Health

The number of windows and outside doors show fairly good opportunity for healthful ventilation. All families reported some means of heating their houses in winter, usually by use of wood cook stoves. Over 70% of the families have to sleep more than two to a bed. It is evident that parents do not respect the value of regular sleep to the general well-being of children, as many children are kept up late at night for various sorts of community and religious meetings. Drainage is poor with little provision made for waste disposal. Inadequate toilets and improper lighting are evident. The water supply is largely city water piped into the houses. Communicable diseases, except flu and colds, do not appear particularly prevalent. No county health services or free clinics are available. During war-time conditions, doctors' services are difficult for anyone to secure. There is one Latin-American physician in the community; however, a patient may patronize any physician he chooses. The city hospital is well staffed, but limited in space. No race discrimination is practiced.

The most noticeable nutritional deficiencies lie among the foods supplying complete protein, and among the green and yellow vegetables and fruit. Only 15% of the families raise the vegetables they need, but about twice that number raise chickens and eggs. Very, very little food preservation is practiced. Their consumption of milk per family is far below nutritional needs. Less than half the families have any type of refrigeration. Facilities for cooking seem fairly adequate in the sense that all have stoves, the majority being wood or kerosene.

### Organization

The Latin-Americans have nine definitely organized groups with auxiliary divisions in some of them:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Catholic Church                             | 7. Boy Scout troop sponsored<br>by Catholics |
| 2. Presbyterian Church                         | 8. Woodmen of the World                      |
| 3. Baptist Church                              | 9. P. T. A.                                  |
| 4. Methodist Church                            |  |
| 5. Girl Scouts                                 |  |
| 6. Boy Scout troop sponsored<br>by Protestants |  |

There is little evidence of organized political or labor groups operating in this community. A "community center" made possible by the Methodist Mission Board employs a full-time deaconess who sponsors all types of community services. With this number of organized groups, opportunities for developing leadership are available.

A brief questionnaire to the president or leader of each of these organizations revealed the size of their membership, their purposes, and their interpretation of community needs.

## Recreation

Few opportunities for group recreation have existed here. Picture shows in the business district are crowded and require bought admission.

Although music is an art loved and practiced by the Latin-Americans in their home countries, there are no organized musical groups in this community. Tradition has discouraged the Latin-Americans from participating in the city recreational program.

The colorful "diez y seis" celebration is attended by old and young for a period of a week in September, but it only comes once a year.

## Education

The educational level (meaning school attendance) of the mothers and the fathers is about the same. Less than half have attended any school at all. Six parents stayed in school until the 5th or 7th grade was reached. One-fourth of the mothers speak English, while over one-half of the fathers have this ability, since they are in closer contact with the language and have to acquire it in making a living. Slightly over half the families have a radio, and less than one-third take a daily newspaper. Books and magazines are noticeably lacking in the homes.

The public school children are housed in three frame structures which are somewhat crowded. The buildings are not particularly attractive, and the grounds are inadequate in regard to space and drainage and equipment. This is a school attended only by Latin-American children through the 6th grade.

The teachers, ten in number, show a reasonably high degree of scholastic training; two have their master's degree, one gets hers this summer, and the others all have their bachelor's degree.

An interpretation of the instruction in the public school shows emphasis placed on fundamental operations necessary to the formal education. The areas of health and hygiene, social relations, creative and recreative arts receive far less emphasis than their educational importance justifies. The services of the school have been fairly well confined to the day-school instruction of the school-age children in attendance.

Although Southside School has a library fairly adequate for the use of the school children, there have been no library facilities available to the parents or out-of-school youth.

In considering the feasibility of improving our public schools in order that they may better meet the needs of the public, one realizes that most possibilities will be based on the assumption that when we sift down through the maze of administrative organizations necessary for a broad educational program until we reach the child himself for whom the program was planned, we find this child is a member of a school and of a family group with which we are more or less familiar.



We assume still further that through the administration of carefully trained teachers plus the coordination of all available resources, we can reach and influence the total growth of this child at least during his school age, and, through him, reach and influence, to an extent, his other family members and their home conditions. These assumptions are based on sound logic and experience; keep them in mind, but consider the difficulties if we should have to discard the assumption that we will find the child in school.

Latin-American children who speak English are allowed to enroll at any grade level in the campus elementary school which is a school representing the public school merged with the college demonstration school. This school is situated "on the hill" as a part of the college campus and across town from the location of the Latin-American homes. By far the majority of parents send their children to Southside school located in the center of their community.

Out of a scholastic census of about 900, there were 470 children enrolled in San Marcos Public Schools as of February 1, 1944. Of these, 397 children were in Southside Elementary School with over 300 of them in the first three grades. Seventeen were in the campus elementary school, and 56 were in junior and senior high school. One hundred and eight were in the parochial school, meaning some 250 were not in any school (almost one-third).

The purpose here, however, is not to imply an indictment against the work going on in the schools, but to point out that the problem of **poor attendance** is one that has to be solved before the facilities offered at school can have a chance to function.

There are many causes for poor attendance: low socio-economic level, poor health, migration, truancy, lack of interest on the part of the child; but more far-reaching than any of these other reasons is the lack of understanding on the part of the parent of the value of an education. Education carries with it, responsibilities. The Latin-Americans are said to be slow to assume responsibility.

In attempting to establish a plan of action to promote better school-community relations, much time will be saved if the approach can be made through an already organized agency in the community. Because of the nature of Parent-Teacher Associations, this seemed the logical organization for such a purpose. For years there has been a P.T.A. organization at Southside School. During W.P.A. days, the P.T.A. assumed some responsibility in sponsoring the school lunch program which closed in the spring of 1943 with the withdrawal of W.P.A. funds.

In the fall the paid membership in the P.T.A. was eighteen. A new president had to be elected, as the one in office resigned. The meetings were late in starting, not previously planned, slow in proceeding with business, and obviously lacking in purpose; therefore, poorly attended.

The administration, realizing the value of a better nutritional pro-

gram for the children, needed the support of the parents. The parents needed a definite goal to work toward in the interest of their children. By sending out notices in both Spanish and English, the next meeting was well attended. The parents were intensely interested in having the lunch room re-open, and agreed to try to pay the 20c per meal fee decided upon.

Later the P.T.A., in response to suggestion from the administration, put on a concerted drive to obtain greater participation in the lunch room program and, at the same time, lower the price to 12c per plate. The participation more than doubled.

In the spring, more leadership in promoting better school-community relations was made possible by a government project in Inter-American Affairs sponsored jointly by the Coordinator's Office and the U. S. Office of Education.

The director of this special school-community project, somewhat familiar with the problems involved, with the aid of others in a position to know the situation, made an analysis of the difficulties one could expect to encounter in promoting better school-community relations in this particular locality. These same difficulties might or might not be present in other similar communities, but in forming an action plan, those interested in promoting the project can save wasted time and effort by recognizing the problems, facing them frankly, and planning sensibly in light of the existing difficulties.

By following such a procedure, one is also more likely to view the project from a wider scope of understanding and to be in a better position to evaluate ideas in terms of their effect to an over-all or total program of development. Otherwise, we may become too intent on some one phase of development and promote it out of proportion to its relative importance to the fundamental total educational program.

## **DIFFICULTIES**

An analysis of this community situation revealed the following difficulties:

### **Difficulty in communication or exchange of ideas.**

Low socio-economic scale means low educational standards which in turn mean limited communication; it is difficult to make ourselves understood; it is more difficult still for us to become informed of the points of view of the Latin-Americans which are necessary to mutual understanding; hence, numerous misunderstandings, confused thinking, lack of unity of thought, retarded agreement, often disagreement, and slowness in action result.

Recognition should be made of the fact that there are various levels in the socio-economic scale among the Latin-Americans, just as there are among the Anglo-Americans, but the proportions in the several levels differ greatly. For instance, in general, we might say that among

Anglo-Americans in the same community we would find relatively few people in the high and in the low socio-economic levels and the great majority in the middle class, whereas, among the Latin-Americans, we would find very, very few in the high level, some in the middle class, and the majority in the low level, if we used the same standards for comparison in each race group.

### **Difficulty in imparting information.**

There is a big gap between conditions and circumstances as we would like to think of them, or as we hope to have them some day, and conditions and circumstances as they actually exist. For instance, some school and civic leaders object to sending notices out in Spanish, offering as their reason that we must encourage the use of English by using it. My contention is that if the people cannot read English, but can read Spanish, it is better to communicate with them in whatever way possible in order to get them interested and in the habit of coming to school where, in time, there can be a possibility of them learning English. They undoubtedly will not learn it isolated in their individual domiciles. Past experience has proved this to be true. Naturally, the fact that they begin to come to group meetings is no guarantee that they will also begin to speak English, but they are more likely to, for we will have an opportunity to stress its importance in the normal development of their children at school. We can provide classes for those who will come to a study course in the language, and just sitting in on meetings which are conducted both in English and in Spanish will expose them to an added opportunity for expression and understanding of the accepted language. This seems to be the only country where the people refuse to consider it necessary to know any other language but their native tongue!

### **Inexperience in group activities.**

Although there are many organized groups, investigation shows that the same few people are the accepted leaders year after year. Although mature in years, the majority of these mothers and fathers are child-like in experience with group action. The techniques of holding a meeting, presenting problems for discussion, of arriving at some common agreement, are major tasks of such magnitude to them that undue formality and seriousness persist out of all proportion to the importance of either the technique or the problem.

### **Illiteracy.**

Nearly one-third of the school-age children are not in attendance. Less than half the parents ever attended school.

### **Superstitions.**

Superstitions, particularly in regard to child care, sanitation, food habits, and boy-girl friendships need to be studied.

### **Seeming indifference to the importance of regular school attendance.**

Seeming indifference to the importance of regular school attendance is prevalent.

### **Calm, placid, indifference to poor conditions is accepted.**

## **FAVORABLE CONDITIONS**

Although many difficulties were evident, at the same time many conditions were noted which were favorable to the promotion of better school-community relations in this locality:

No open clashes between Latins and Anglos; no "axes to grind."  
Inherent love for their children.

Close family unit.

A number of organizations already in effect.

Majority live here permanently; less transients than in many Latin-American communities.

Time for more social life and more education.

Little or no indigence; no beggars.

Delinquency not prevalent, according to the opinion of the county judge.

Live near school.

Dress acceptably and well.

Little opportunity for unjust child-labor.

Economic level better than in many Latin-American communities.

Neat, attractive homes, many of them owned by families occupying them.

Abundance of flowers in the yards in spite of poor drainage.

Increasing number of home gardens.

General health good on casual observation.

## **STEPS IN ORGANIZATION**

A sort of pattern or basis for a sound course of action in promoting the development of better organized human relations is described below. These suggestions proved to be effective in establishing better school-community relations in Southside Latin-American community.

### **I. Establish Leadership**

Several types of leadership should be recognized. There is the **promotional** leadership which is represented by the administrator in highest authority, or a person delegated by him. In the instance of this special school-community project in Inter-American Affairs, the U. S. Office of Education in cooperation with the Coordinator's Office sponsored the promotional leadership. These

offices in turn delegated the president of the college receiving the grant to administer the program.

The leadership directly responsible for the development of the program will be the **organizer**, or in this case, the "director." In other situations it might be the superintendent, the principal, the supervisor, a special teacher, a P.T.A. officer, or any other capable leader who gets along well with people, who is sincerely interested in the welfare of the community, and, preferably, one who knows the resources.

The **executive committee** furnishes a third type of leadership necessary to the functioning of any program involving several organizations. Ordinarily the promoter or the organizer will be the chairman of such a committee.

Another very important group which furnishes leadership is represented by the classroom teachers, parents, and others working directly with the people involved in the program.

## II. **Establishing Working Relationships**

Key people whose position or interest would imply their willingness to cooperate in the program should be contacted, such as the superintendent, principal, supervisors, teachers, parents and leaders of community organizations.

## III. **Verify or Ascertain the Local Needs**

Such records as are available in the local school, in the county and state offices, should be examined. Survey the home, school, and community conditions. Surveys of whatever nature not only supply some tangible facts as a basis for determining needs, but also serve in establishing interest through contact with people and in helping them to become aware of conditions. The opinion and critical observation of capable people should not be overlooked. The findings from the study of local conditions in Southside school and community were interpreted by the executive committee. Needs were recognized in several areas, some of which were:

1. Recreation
2. Health and hygiene
3. Food practices, including gardening
4. School attendance
5. Music and art activities
6. Physical condition of the school buildings
7. Physical condition of the school grounds

## IV. **Bring together all key resource people** such as the executive committee, administrators, teachers, parents, and leaders from organized agencies. Present the needs based on the findings; ex-

change suggestions; consider resources, such as time, money, and human skills, interest, and energies. Make a cooperative plan for meeting the needs.

Narrow the scope of the program down to conform to time and money limits; broaden it to conform to human resources available. Study the outcomes which a development of the program may bring.

Delegate responsibilities.

In order to determine the interests of the parents, and in order to obtain their cooperation, it was necessary to secure a large attendance at a group meeting. This was done by sending out mimeographed notices in Spanish and English to the parents by the school children, and by asking the ministers to announce it at the various churches. Previous to the meeting, the director asked for a meeting of the P.T.A. officers, who would act as an executive committee, in order to acquaint them with the problems for discussion and to determine the points of view of these, the elected community leaders. At this preliminary meeting it was decided which ones of those present would present certain matters for discussion, who would make motions, etc. This was the first experience for these people in a meeting of this kind where details were settled previous to the general meeting in order to save time and to be sure of having all the business brought before the meeting. Several remarked how much better it was to have a "practice" meeting ahead of time! This custom has prevailed since then as a matter of course; thus, their leadership techniques are being developed.

A consideration of the time element was a matter for adjustment. School was to close in a few weeks; the project was to close in a few months; everyone had divided responsibilities.

An investigation of resources revealed that some funds for supplies, materials, and equipment were available immediately through money from the government grant, from the public school funds, and from the P.T.A. Financial assistance for future development may become available through a merging of this phase of the public school system with the college as a part of their laboratory or demonstration school. This could result in raising teachers' salaries, in providing for more adequate supervision, and in bringing about expansion of the physical plant, as well as the broadening and improving of instruction in all areas over a long-time program.

Besides the interest of the majority of the teachers and parents, investigation showed that interests and skills in some of the above mentioned areas were available in various departments at the college, such as health and physical education, art, music and homemaking departments; that services in other areas were avail-

able from such state and local agencies as extension service, health department, city recreation board, and county canning centers; that certain publications in Spanish were available from the Coordinator's Office, from the State P.T.A. Office, and from many commercial sources.

Plans for attacking the problems were made with the teachers, with the administration, and with the P.T.A., and coordinated, in this situation, by the director. In another situation, it might be done by the principal, the superintendent, a P.T.A. officer, or any other capable leader sincerely interested in the welfare of the community.

Through cooperative planning with the teachers, lists of supplies, materials, and equipment were made out, and the funds budgeted. Teachers also assisted in the selection of these materials, such as play equipment, books, puzzles, music, sewing supplies, and art materials.

Schedules, transportation, and units were worked out between the in-service teachers and directors of various college departments, and their pre-service teachers for cooperative projects in art, music, physical education, and homemaking. Plans were also made for beginning some school gardens.

A study of the outcomes which might result from a solution of the problems presented in the areas listed above convinced the teachers, the parents, the administrators, and the director that the over-all problem of promoting better school and community relations was definitely worthwhile and possible, and that such a development would be the fundamental background for future expansion in any or all of the other areas in which needs for improvement were recognized.

#### **V. Initiate a plan of action.**

The P.T.A. agreed to sponsor a community recreational program which would be held each Tuesday evening at Southside School, beginning one week from the night of this meeting. Chairmen for baseball, volley ball, for music, and for films were appointed.

At this stage in the development of this plan of action, the director would like to stress a technique of procedure which she feels has been invaluable to the success of the program. The technique referred to is that of purposely staying in the background, and of keeping aggressiveness from other sources from assuming initiative. This cannot be stressed too much in trying to develop leadership qualities in other people. Subtle suggestions and ready encouragement go a long way in giving less experienced leaders the confidence they lack in initiating leadership activities. Any success an individual in the community has achieved in this program can therefore serve as a source of genuine pride of accomplishment. Such pride breeds self-confidence and respect for others

which in turn broadens the scope of service that any one person can render.

The success of such a program is largely dependent in the beginning on acquainting everyone in the local community with the plans. Mimeographed notices in English and Spanish called "Southside News" or "Nuevas de Southside" were distributed by the school children to advertise the program.

In acquainting county, state, and federal offices with the plans for this program, the director wrote many letters of explanation, and visited such departments as were possible, including the State Health Department, State Homemaking Department, State Coordinator's Office, State and County Extension Offices, and consulted with such federal and regional agents as were available from time to time during the progress of the project. Invaluable suggestions and assistance have been the results of these contacts. Members of the Executive Committee of Southside P.T.A. visited the community project in progress in Austin, Texas, and participated in a large community meeting at Martindale, Texas.

Partly as a result of the publicity concerning this project in Southside community, many out-of-town visitors have been present at various times.

**VI. Evaluate cooperatively the progress of the project, and make recommendations for continued operation.**

The first meeting was attended by some 400 people of all ages. Results showed that nothing had been planned for several groups present, such as the mothers and the smaller children; the space for showing films was entirely too crowded for comfort or safety for the small children; not enough different activities were provided for to take care of the ones who were trying to participate in active games, such as baseball and volley ball.

An informal meeting of the various chairmen and interested teachers resulted in revised plans for the next meeting. These changes were publicized through the weekly mimeographed "Southside News" which became a regular practice. Small children were directed to the first grade rooms where musical activities were supervised by the primary teachers who alternated their services from one week to the next. Mothers were invited to go to another room where magazines (some in Spanish) were available and could be checked out and taken home. A sort of lending library soon developed.

Everyone felt as if this meeting was an improvement over the first. It was well attended. So far nothing had been done about the crowded condition when showing the films, which resulted in some confusion and disturbance that was natural. In time, the necessary equipment needed for showing the films outside was available. This solved the problem of crowded conditions, but



soon met with another problem: bad weather. One of the strong traits evidenced by the Latin-American people is patience. When plans failed to materialize or were thwarted, their patience and lack of complaint were quite soothing to the others working with them.

At the close-of-school exercises, attended by practically every person in Southside community, it was announced that the community night programs could continue through the summer. The continued program was made possible because of available leadership from three sources: some of the teachers expected to remain in the community during the summer and had expressed their interest and willingness to contribute their services; officially the project was not to close until later in the summer; therefore, the director could continue functioning; and most significant of all, the City Recreation Board had delegated the services of the assistant city recreational leader to Southside on Tuesday afternoon and evening of each week. Some members of the recreation board, who, through their interest and cooperation, had become aware of the needs in the Latin-American community and who were sympathetic with plans for improving community life at Southside, were instrumental in providing this leadership which had not been available in previous years.

The director, through her affiliation with the college workshop in Inter-American Affairs, had opportunity to investigate the possibility of additional assistance from interested students in the workshop who were experienced teachers, seeking an opportunity for further training to meet the needs in their own individual job-situations.

One of the consultants on the workshop staff, Dr. L. S. Tireman, who has had extensive experience in dealing with problems in Latin-American schools and communities, agreed to administer the participation of the workshop students in the community program at Southside. These workshop students furnished a rich source of leadership which was coordinated in this case by the city recreational leader who was assigned to Southside one afternoon and evening per week during the summer.

This additional assistance made possible an expanded program to include lending library facilities, story hour, music, games, art, etc.

Thus it is evident that through constant checking of results and cooperative evaluation of outcomes, an effective basis was established for making sound recommendations by those interested for continued action in the promotion of better school-community relations.

### **STIMULATING PROCEDURES**

At an early stage in the promotion of better school-community relations, a situation presented itself which proved instrumental as a

stimulus for closer cooperation between the parents and the school and for coordinated effort within the school itself.

### **CARROT PROJECT**

The school lunch room came into possession of a large quantity of fresh carrots which would not keep long enough to be used gradually. At a regular P.T.A. meeting the need was stressed for canning these carrots in order that this food might be available over a longer period of time.

The P.T.A. members obviously needed something tangible to do as a beginning force to bring them to the school, so that we might be more successful in getting them to return for participation in the proposed recreational program.

A government canning kitchen eight miles away at Kyle, Texas, was already operating, and those in charge agreed to do the canning if the carrots were brought to them prepared for processing. Volunteers were asked to come to the school grounds early the next morning, and to bring a clean wash tub and knife with them. A long table was placed under the trees near the lunch room kitchen so that water would be near.

Four mothers and two fathers came and worked steadily for about six hours. They were assisted by groups of older girls and boys who worked in relays. Some 1700 pounds of carrots were carefully prepared for canning. A member of the college faculty loaned the use of his truck to haul the carrots to Kyle, with older boys going along to unload them.

The parents ate noon lunch with the teachers at the lunch room. Prayers preceded the meal and speeches of appreciation followed the meal.

An ample supply of carrots was canned to furnish this food to the school lunch room all next year. However, having carrots available and getting the children to eat them is not the same problem!

The home survey showed that carrots were not a very popular food with the Latin-American families. A campaign was launched in the school and in the community to popularize carrots in order to get more people into the habit of eating them. After all, a food however wholesome can nourish only if it is eaten.

Because of the encouraging success of the plan used in this particular instance, it seems advisable to publish the procedure as an implied technique for use in other communities with possibly other foods that may be in abundance. The procedure used is self-explanatory from these suggestions which were mimeographed and given to the individual classroom teachers:

## PLANS FOR POPULARIZING CARROTS IN SOUTHSIDE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

San Marcos, Texas

March 1944

### Background Information

The large supply of carrots which the lunch rooms have on hand are of excellent quality and in good condition, but will not keep over a week or ten days without shriveling, losing some of their food value, and becoming tough and tasteless.

Carrots are nutritionally important, easy to raise, fairly cheap and available the year round; therefore they deserve our respect as a wholesome and accessible food.

Forty-eight per cent of all families interviewed in the school-community survey use them once a week; 18% use them twice a week, and 3% use them daily. Records of school-wide projects in which raw carrots were given to each child daily indicate favorable results in improved nutrition.

Because of the nutritional and economical aspects and the large amount we have on hand, we feel justified in doing everything possible to not only get as many carrots eaten as is practical, but to also teach more people to use and develop a liking for them.

### Specific Suggestions

It is hoped that the following suggestions for activities will be considered as such; that teachers will feel free to make additional suggestions; and most important of all, that teachers will put into practice such of these suggestions as seem practical in their individual situations.

Please save samples of work from your pupils.

#### **At All Grade Levels:**

1. Introduce this food into the daily diets of as many school children as can be encouraged to eat it.
  - a. Distribute clean, raw carrots as the children go out for the morning recess.
  - b. Encourage the eating of the food. **Teach no waste.**
  - c. Have a room committee to go to the kitchen and prepare (wash) the carrots and bring them to the room before morning recess.
  - d. Make some record of the percentage of children you can persuade to eat the raw carrots. Compare this with those who probably were not already in the habit.
  - e. Observe indications of increased participation in the project.
1. Use more carrots in the school lunch menus.
  - a. Increase variety of recipes.
  - b. Note the recipes which are most popular.
3. Have all children take recipes and carrots home (see explanation later).

**At the Primary Level:**

1. Mimeographed sheets can be supplied with an outline drawing of a carrot to be colored.
2. Mold carrots out of clay.
3. Read stories in which carrots are mentioned.
4. Make simple sentences about carrots.

**At the Intermediate Level:**

1. Let the students find the place of carrots in the seven basic food groups; show by posters the need for Vitamin A in the diet.
2. The 5th and 6th grade boys could learn how to plant and cultivate carrots, then plant some at home and in the school garden.
3. Science or reading classes could find out the food value of carrots.
4. Make posters emphasizing some fact about carrots.
5. Learn to spell, pronounce and use the word in sentences.
6. Write short papers about the use of carrots in the home.
7. Write reports of how the carrots were used which we plan to send to their homes.
8. Older boys and girls could assist in the preparation for canning.
9. Older boys and girls can sack the carrots to be taken home by all children with suggestive recipes in Spanish and English (paper sacks are available).

As school was dismissed in the afternoon, each child was given a sack of carrots to be taken home with the following sheet of suggestions:

**Suggestions for Using Carrots**

Our government urges us all to eat some yellow vegetables every day in order to be healthy and strong.

Carrots contain a certain food element (Vitamin A) that is necessary to good eyesight. Aviators are given large quantities of carrots for this reason. Carrots also help children to grow normally and help prevent colds. Carrots are good for pregnant or nursing mothers.

Carrots are easy to raise in home gardens. They should be planted  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in the ground, 2 or 3 inches apart. Carrots can be bought in stores the year round and are fairly cheap in price.

Nuestro gobierno urge a todos nosotros que comamos algo de vegetal cada día para vivir sanos y fuertes siempre.

Las zanahorias contienen determinados elementos (Vitamin A) que son necesarios para tener buena visibilidad. A los aviadores se les da en abundancia por esa razón. Las zanahorias también ayudan a los niños a crecer normalmente y los libra de los resfriados. Las zanahorias son muy buenas para las madres que están criando o están para dar a luz.

Las zanahorias son fáciles para cultivarse en los jardines de hogar. Se puede sembrar  $\frac{1}{2}$  pulgada de profundidad y de 2 a 3 pulgada aparte. Las zanahorias pueden comprarse en cualquier tienda todo el año y son muy baratos.

If you are not in the habit of using this food in your daily meals, try out some of the following suggestions. If you already use carrots, try to use them more often.

### Ways to use carrots:

Carrots are a wholesome food eaten either raw or cooked. To use raw, wash carefully and eat whole, or cut in narrow lengthwise strips. They may also be grated or shredded to use raw with mayonnaise in salads or sandwiches.

#### Boiled carrots.

Wash, scrape and cut off stem ends. Leave whole or cut crosswise and boil in salty water like potatoes are boiled until the carrots are tender.

For variety, one may change boiled carrots in several different ways:

1. Add fat for seasoning.
2. Add milk just before the cooking is finished.
3. Add sugar or molasses before the cooking is finished.

For salads mix grated, shredded or chopped raw carrots with other chopped foods such as prunes, raisins, peanuts, apples, or cabbage, then moisten with mayonnaise.

joyed by all—did I say all? Yes, Do not throw away the water the carrots are cooked in. Either use less water, or thicken or season it into a gravy or soup, and eat it because some of the food value of the carrot leaks out into the cooking water.

Carrots for babies.

Si usted no está acostumbrado a comer las zanahorias en comidas diarias, pruebe algunas de las siguientes sugerencias. Si ya está acostumbrado a usarlas, haga lo posible por usarlas más.

### *Diferentes maneras de usar las zanahorias:*

Las zanahorias se pueden comer crudas o cocidas. Para usarlas si la usa crudas lávelas muy bien y cómalas enteras o cortadas en pedazos. También se pueden moler o picar en pedacitos chicos y luego póngale mayonnaise y úselas en ensalada o sandwiches.

#### Zanahorias hervidas.

Lávelas, y límpielas, córtela la hierba. Pónganse a cocer hasta que estén blanditas.

Las zanahorias cocidas se pueden comer de las siguientes maneras:

1. Añade manteca para sazonar.
2. Añade leche antes de que se acaben de cocer.
3. Añade azúcar o melaza antes de que se acaben de cocer.

Para ensaladas revuelva las zanahorias cortadas en pedazos chicos o molidas con otras frutas como manzanas, ciruelas, pasas, cacahuates, o repollo, luego póngale mayonnaise.

No tire el agua en que coce las zanahorias. Use esa agua para sazonar o para hacer jugo o caldo y cómalo; porque algo de valor alimento está en el agua en que se han cocido.

Zanahorias para los niños.

Babies below two years of age should not be given raw carrots, because they will not chew them well. Carrots for babies under two years of age should be boiled until very tender, then mashed very soft. Same water they were cooked in or milk could be used to moisten the carrots for the baby.

A los niños menores de dos años no se les debe dar zanahorias crudas porque ellos no pueden masticar bien. A los niños con menos de dos años de edad se las darán las zanahorias muy bien cocidas, y muy bien batidas hasta que queden como atole, se les pone algo del agua con que se han cocinado o leche fría.

A check-up on what happened to the carrots that were taken home to each family is most interesting: a very small percentage of families are in the habit of using carrots often, with a few never using them at all; not a single child would admit that the carrots were taken home and allowed to waste; about half the carrots were used raw, while the remainder was cooked in various ways; in every instance the children said the family "liked" the carrots. Relatively few families have carrots planted in home gardens, but the children are planting some in the school garden.

The school gardens have been another activity that has served to promote better school-community relations, in addition to offering opportunity for an enriched school program to the pupils.

### **SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECT**

The interest of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade boys at Southside school in a school garden grew out of a talk on the government's need for those of us on the home front to raise all the food possible. Food from the school garden could be used in the hot-lunch program, and any surplus food canned to use next winter. Besides, it would be fun to make a garden at school.

Some topics for consideration:

1. What shall we look for in selecting a plot of ground for a school garden?
  - a. Nearness to school
  - b. Good soil
  - c. Possibility of securing its use
2. What preparation will the soil need?
  - a. Plowing
  - b. Ridding of grass roots and weeds
  - c. Bedding
3. What measurements will we need to make?
  - a. Over-all dimensions of the plot
  - b. Divisions into small unit gardens for various grades or groups
  - c. Provision for pathways between units
  - d. Determination of the number and lengths of rows in each unit

4. What shall we plant?
  - a. Consideration of the season
  - b. Condition of the climate
  - c. Time element involved
  - d. What vegetables grow well here?
  - e. What vegetables do we need for the lunch room?
5. How do we plant and cultivate vegetables?
  - a. How many seeds do we need to buy?
  - b. How deep to plant various seeds?
  - c. What plant food do we need to use?
  - d. What plants will be used instead of seeds?
6. What records do we need to keep?
  - a. The cost of hired labor (plowing)
  - b. Rental on the land
  - c. Money spent for seed and plants
  - d. Money spent for fertilizer
  - e. Money spent for insecticide
  - f. Amounts of food produced
  - g. Money value of food produced
  - h. Number of foods processed for winter use
7. What are our sources of information?
  - a. Government bulletins from Home Demonstration and Farm Agent's Office
  - b. Consultation with county agents
  - c. Consultation with parents and teachers

The above suggestions were merely indications of how a garden project might be developed. Opportunities for integrating the various activities connected with such a project should be carefully planned by the administrators and teachers in order to make the school garden a functional part of the daily school program, and not something added to an already full schedule.

### COMMENTS

An accurate evaluation of the over-all program in this specific locality for promoting better school-community relations is difficult to estimate because of the intangibles involved.

Any expression of evaluation will of necessity be the results of opinions of those who have guided the development, and those who have participated in the activities of the project. Opinions, however, where human relations are concerned, become very effective tools of measurement since they indicate attitudes and points of view.

It is the wholehearted consensus of opinion of all those who are acquainted with the results of this project that appreciable and evident progress has been made in establishing better school and community relations in Southside Latin-American Community, San Marcos, Texas.

The following evidences support these conclusions:

Administrators, teachers, parents, and pupils have had an opportunity to become acquainted in an informal, pleasant atmosphere.

Many individuals have had opportunities to assume responsibility with a certain amount of subtle guidance until they have acquired the necessary ability and confidence to become better leaders.

Size of the crowds has remained fairly constant in spite of occasional conflicting meetings; many of the same adults, youth, and children have been present at each successive meeting.

Group activities have been a means of affording opportunity to a large number of people to participate in wholesome recreation.

These people have shared in developing a feeling of group-consciousness which is fundamental to good democratic citizenship. Pride, joy, and a feeling of belonging to the group have been obvious outcomes.

Some out-of-school youth who ordinarily hang around town in their leisure time have had an opportunity to come and join in games under the kind supervision of stable citizens.

Indifferent and restless boys and girls in school have been stimulated to have a little more interest in attendance because of this out-of-school activity.

More skill is noticeable in organizing and planning a group meeting; in manipulating the techniques involved in holding a meeting; and in carrying to satisfactory completion any suggestions that may be injected into the meeting.

Greatly increased membership in the P.T.A.—from 18 paid members in the fall the number increased to 49 by the time school closed.

Worthwhile plans are in progress for conducting a summer round-up of the beginners before school opens in the fall.

Close cooperation exists between the services and activities sponsored by the community center, a church welfare organization, and the P.T.A. recreational program. One complements and adds to the other, instead of duplicating or competing with one another's program.

Evident better self-conduct is noted on the part of the children since they have had an opportunity to experience what is acceptable behavior in group activities.

Appointment of a Latin-American citizen from this community to the City Health Planning Committee is a forward step.

Assignment of the assistant city recreation leader to serve this community one afternoon and evening per week gives evidence of cooperation.



Psychologically, progress in promoting better school-community relations can be indicated by assuming either of two points of view; one, by analyzing the developments from a beginning situation up to a certain period, which the director has pointed to in the above comments; two, by calling attention to how far our developments are from the ultimate goal of satisfactory human relations based on Christian tolerance and the doctrine of the Four Freedoms.

A consideration of results from the first point of view is a source of encouragement and confidence with which to play for the more thorough promotion of better school-community relations in the future.

The assumptions which guided the director in developing this special school-community project were based on those expressed by Dr. Otto, Miss Drenckhahn, and others in their report of the Michigan Community Health Project:

- (1) communities have a variety of resources, human and physical, which, with appropriate stimulation and assistance, can be developed into effective forces for human betterment;
- (2) the strength and permanence of a program depend largely on the development of local resources rather than on the implantation of temporary services or facilities;
- (3) the more lasting contribution of assistance from an outside agency is the training or education of the people in the community;
- (4) the program develops from, with, and for the people in the community.

There was no attempt to promote any pre-conceived plan for the solution of local problems, but every effort was made to stimulate the people into natural activities that would develop leadership from within the group, and ultimately condition them for awareness of their needs and prepare them with confidence and interest to attack their problems in their own way.