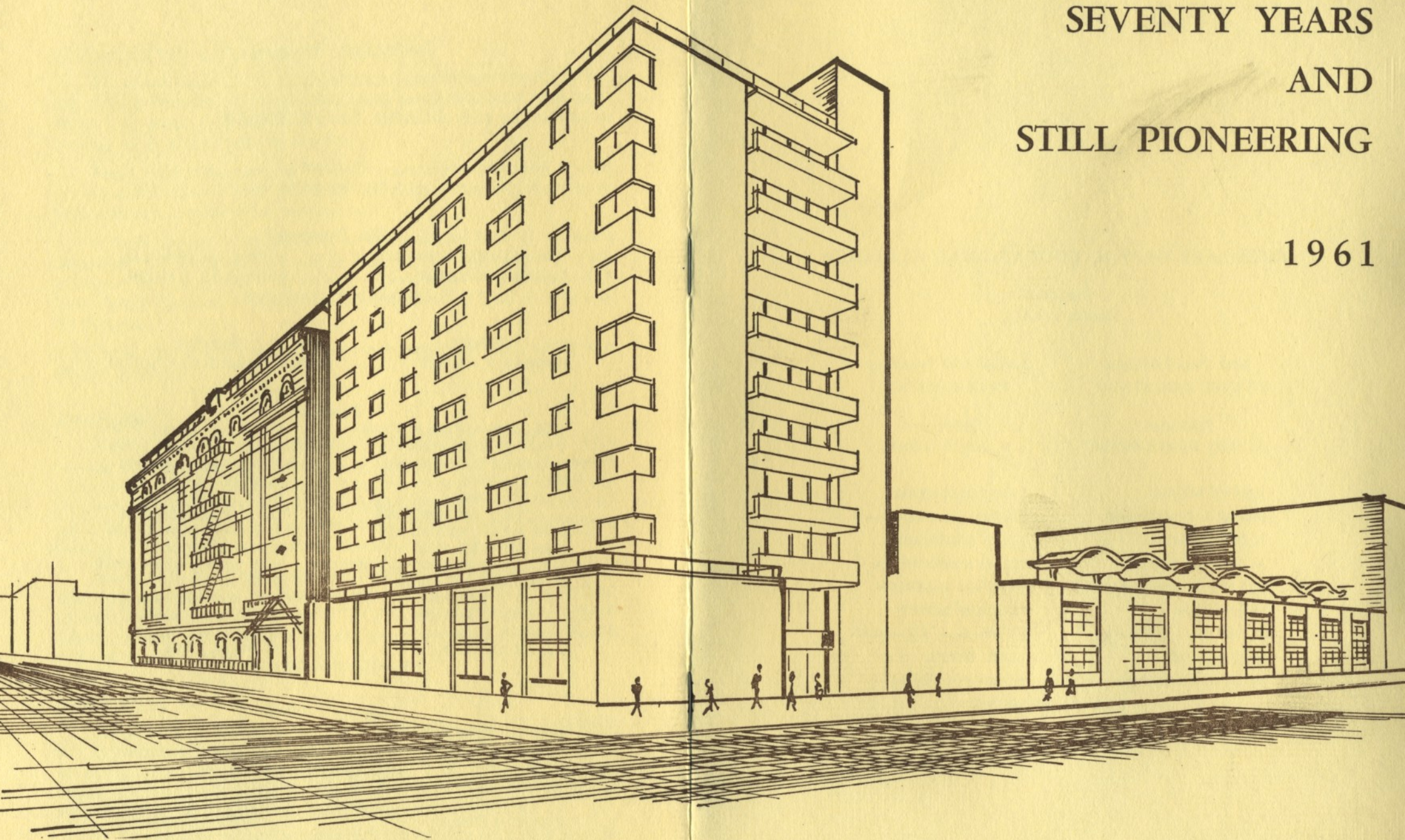


SEVENTY YEARS
AND
STILL PIONEERING

1961



REPORT OF THE
EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE

FOUNDERS OF THE EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE

President

ISIDOR STRAUS

First Vice President

SAMUEL GREENBAUM

Second Vice President

MYER S. ISAACS

Treasurer

ALBERT FRIEDLANDER

Secretary

F. SPIEGELBERG

HENRY BUDGE

LOUIS MARSHALL

PHILIP I. GOODHART

HENRY MORGENTHAU

L. N. HERSHFELD

JULIA RICHMAN

A. MINNIE HERTS

ISAAC ROSENWALD

ALBERT F. HOCHSTADTER

WILLIAM SALOMON

LEE KOHNS

JACOB H. SCHIFF

HENRY M. LEIPZIGER

EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN

MORRIS LOEB

LOUIS STERN

MARCUS M. MARKS

BENJAMIN TUSKA

FELIX M. WARBURG

A Re-Dedication to Continued Growth

By ROBERT WOLF

President

When I became President of The Educational Alliance in 1958, I hardly hoped for a continuance of the pace of the immediately preceding era. After all, The Alliance had just built a great new summer camp on the Cummings Camp Grounds at Brewster, New York; had acquired Camp Edalia-Cummings Village, a summer camp for girls and boys at Bear Mountain; had recently remodelled the facade of our East Broadway building, and had initiated a novel "Operation Street Corner" program with street workers meeting potential delinquents on their home grounds. But the fact is that, now when I am nearing the end of my three-year term of office and submitting this report, we have seen an even accelerated forward surge in our progress.

How do we measure growth? Whether it means increased size, added functions, expansion into new areas of endeavor, larger annual budgets or research into experimental programs, there is no doubt about the applicability of the word to us.

In a mere three years the population of our Golden Age camp has doubled; important new buildings have been added on the Cummings Camp Grounds; an entire new camp has now been acquired at Bear Mountain increasing our population there by about 50%; our day camp, summer play schools and day care activities have attained higher levels, both in numbers and program content, and we now accommodate about 35% more children in the summer on daily outings to Staten Island.

In the City our "Operation Street Corner" has experienced a 50% enlargement and has proved its worth by the low incidence of delinquency among the boys and girls with whom we have been working. We have the largest group of graduate students participating in our training program, not just in our own experience but in the history of any single agency in the entire United States. Our group work program, our art and religious schools, our psychiatric consulting service and our work with the physically and mentally handicapped have seen sharp expansion.

Now, over and beyond all this, we have embarked on the most exciting project of all, a more than \$1,000,000 program for a larger Educational Alliance to serve the exploding population of New York's lower East Side. The new buildings will be constructed directly to the south of our old building and will provide us with a new gymnasium and a new center for our entire adult program.

The Alliance has applied, under the Housing Act of 1959, for a Federal loan to construct a non-profit 48-unit dwelling for the aged. The new 10-story structure will be next to the Alliance on the corner of Henry and

Jefferson streets, and the first two floors will contain club rooms and other recreational facilities. This combination of old age housing with the program of the community center marks another pioneering step in meeting a serious community need.

As we go to press, there is every indication by government officials that the loan will be forthcoming.

When one looks back over the seventy years of history to the origins of The Educational Alliance, all this rapid growth of recent months is really not a bit surprising. It is precisely in the tradition established by our founders early in the 1890s. The initial emphasis was service to the freshly arrived immigrants, both Jewish and otherwise, who crowded into the poor tenements of the neighborhood. The Alliance helped to integrate these East Europeans into American life, while preserving their cultural contributions. There were very few American Jewish families of Eastern European origins who were not touched by the vitality of the message emanating from The Alliance. And always there was a readiness to meet new challenges, to experiment in meeting the changing problems of the community.

The past seventy years have brought revolutionary upheavals to New York's lower East Side, but in 1961 we still have fresh waves of immigrants. Today there are large numbers of low and middle income Jews, lower income Puerto Ricans, Negroes and other ethnic groups living within the same blocks and close to The Educational Alliance. Tenements, Title I Cooperatives, public low and middle income housing projects stand side by side within walking distance of our building. With the rapid influx of the new, mostly Jewish inhabitants of these housing projects, with the arrival of 5,500 of these 20th Century immigrants in the new apartment buildings directly across the street from us, we are once more faced with the task of integrating heterogeneous religious, economic and ethnic groups into a unified community.

While our sponsorship is mostly Jewish, our staff is largely Jewish and our program is strongly Jewish in flavor, we still must be ready to render important service to substantial numbers of Puerto Ricans, Negroes and white Protestants and Catholics. Without detracting from our vital interest in the welfare of the primary ethnic group, we must provide a setting where all can express their feelings of group identity and at the same time have a sense of healthy mutual interdependence. Only in this way can there be a sound and happy resolution of the community's problems.

On this, our Seventieth Anniversary, we re-dedicate ourselves to the continued pattern of growth set for us by our original sponsors. I know that our hard working Board of Trustees, our devoted staff, our faithful alumni and all of our friends will join together in the work that lies ahead to erect the new building and to fashion imaginative programs so that The Educational Alliance will be even more useful to society in the years ahead.

A Re-Dedication to Continued Service

By LOUIS BERKOWITZ

Executive Director

How is it that an institution organized to give service to immigrants seventy years ago continues to operate in the same community today?

One might ask what kinds of services the "Edgies," as the agency is affectionately known by the community, is rendering seven decades later; who is using them; and how are they tied to the past history of an institution which gave a start to such famous alumni as David Sarnoff, Sir Jacob Epstein, Chaim Gross, Philip Evergood, Jo Davidson, Isaac and Moses Soyer, Eddie Cantor, Arthur Murray, Peter Blume, David L. Podell, Simon Rifkind, Anna Kross, Morris R. Cohen, George Sokolsky, Eugene Lyons and many others.

This report will attempt some answers.

For the past three years, as throughout the 70 years of its existence, The Educational Alliance has been an important part of the teeming life of one of the fabled communities of the world: the ever-changing, ever-exciting New York City's lower East Side. The histories of the community and the community center are inextricably interwoven.

The lower East Side is a crowded, busy community, a mixture of very poor, plain poor, not so poor and somewhat comfortable; of many ethnic, racial and religious groups — Jews primarily, but Puerto Rican, Negro and Italian in large numbers, and Greek, Ukrainian and scores of others in smaller numbers; all living side by side in the traditional decades-old tenements and railroad flats, apartment dwellings, public projects and private cooperatives, some newly completed.

The Alliance has always been concerned with aiding the Jewish people in the area to meet their needs, to preserve and develop their cultural heritage, to equip them for full citizenship.

The approach: to enable Jews and other groupings to flourish by being and acting together for their common good, by offering all programs and activities to all groups in the community.

Now, as always, The Alliance helped many to live better, more fruitful lives and helped the entire community meet some of its most pressing needs.

The means: one of the most comprehensive programs of activities offered by any community center to meet a multitude of interests and needs for thousands ranging in age from three to ninety.

Ever since it first was formed to cope with the unprecedented influx of hundreds of thousands of immigrants into one community, The Alliance has

been coming up with new answers for new situations. Its spirit of pioneering, which is now a living tradition, has led to major contributions in promoting the well-being of people everywhere.

Today, continuing and developing a process begun in the 1890s, The Alliance program of activities operates through groups of people with the same interests, needs or ties meeting in clubs, lounges, classes, canteens, dances, committees, councils, even street gangs. The form most emphasized at The Alliance is known professionally as social group work and is directed by highly trained workers and various kinds of specialists. This is aimed at helping each person develop best as a responsible member of his own, small group.

Underlying the entire range of Alliance history and activity is the ideal of service and training in democratic citizenship.

DIRECT SERVICE TO ALL AGES

The Alliance activities for more than 5,000 members are carried out primarily through four major age divisions (Juniors, 3-10; Youth, to 17; Young Adults, to 35; Adults and Aged — all about equally divided); and also through general interest divisions.

Common to all, and often done together, are a wide range of activities, including the famed Art School and its large curriculum; extensive arts and crafts classes; wide range of hobby clubs; performing arts groups, including dancing, singing, dramatics, instruments; domestic arts with Jewish cooking, sewing and dressmaking, knitting and home nursing. There is also a full schedule of concerts, recitals, film offerings, forums and festivals at the Isidor Straus Theater.

There are day care programs for tots, and friendship clubs for the juniors as well as special school vacation trips to the circus and rodeo, and there are parents activities and all-family programs. There's the well-known Religious School for boys and girls (to 13), now in its 71st year of continuous operation. Attached to it are special Jewish educational and cultural programs for parents.

The Youth Division embraces a year-round program featuring social clubs, canteen-lounges, talent workshops, gymnasium and sports, dances, self-government councils as well as vocational guidance and tutoring service. The summer program includes "Fun Camp," beach parties, overnight trips, roof-garden dances.

The Young Adult Division program is designed to meet the varied needs of single young adults, young couples and young parents, while the Adult Division projects are aimed at those over 35, with special activities for the elderly citizens. Social groups, lounges, dances, group discussions, family activities, service projects are among the activities here. There are additionally a wide range of adult classes, including one for "English for Foreign-Born"

that may be the oldest class of its kind in continuous operation in the United States.

An average of more than 1,500 persons enter The Alliance building daily to take part in this over-all program.

CAMP PROGRAM

The Alliance's historically famous camping program reached new dimensions, both in concept and size, during the past three years. It marked the flowering of the Israel and Leah Cummings Camp Grounds at Brewster, New York, as well as a 50% increase in population at Camp Edalia-Cummings Village on Bear Mountain's Lake Tiorati.

The Cummings Camp Grounds have been the scene of new pioneering camping approaches. The site was chosen and the facilities built to meet the needs of older adults. At the same time the camp has emphasized three-generation camping and family camping, with the various age groups participating in activities both on their own and with the others, for the mutual enjoyment and benefit of all.

Last summer some 2,400 persons spent some two-to-three weeks each at these two camps.

The "camping" program extends into the city with a Day Camp and Fun Camp for 300 youngsters and teen-agers at the Henry Kaufmann Camp Grounds in Staten Island; a "Sun-n-Fun" program for teen-agers; and a full-day play school at The Alliance itself for the children.

DIRECT SERVICE TO THE HANDICAPPED

The Alliance offers many services to handicapped individuals, as members of the community who require special attention. A program for young adults recently discharged from mental hospitals is designed to help them resume or develop normal community activities; it is probably the first such program sponsored by a community agency in the country. A wide range of activities for mentally retarded children and young adults includes the first sleep-away summer camp program under the aegis of a non-profit agency. Other projects have assisted blind young adults and aged, cardiac children, senescent older adults. There is also tutoring and remedial reading for children and adolescents.

In all instances, the objective is to help the individual develop to his fullest potential, and to take his rightful part in the general community life. Wherever possible, the handicapped participate with their "normal" peers in programs for the mutual benefit of all.

Special grants from the Association for Help to Retarded Children, the Children's Welfare League and the National Institute of Mental Health have made some of these programs possible.

DIRECT SERVICE TO PREVENT DELINQUENCY

Especially noteworthy is The Alliance program for potential delinquents. The two most prevalent forms of juvenile misbehavior in the lower East Side have been gang conflicts and narcotics addiction.

Highly effective in helping to prevent, control and cure gang fighting has been our well-known Operation Street Corner program, now completing its fifth year. With this program, The Alliance works with 16 groups, dealing directly with some 300 youths, one of the largest agency programs of its kind in the country. This program, together with other community efforts, has weakened the influence of gangs today on the lower East Side, and has virtually eliminated local juvenile gang wars during the past two years.

Scores of youngsters reached by Operation Street Corner are moving, however slowly, towards training for healthy citizenship. One entire group became a musical band with some possibility of success in the field. Many are now on their way to careers; some are completing school. One girl even became a volunteer group leader in the program which once helped her.

From the earliest days of Operation Street Corner, The Alliance realized that working with youngsters, from 12 to 14, constituted one of the best ways of containing delinquency or even heading it off completely. Consequently, The Alliance has been devoting increasing time and effort to the younger groups, seeking to instill in them healthy interests, habits and outlooks.

The last few years have revealed an increase in the use of narcotics among the youth, and The Alliance is devoting special attention to this problem. Of course the longest and most difficult job imaginable is to prevent, control and cure narcotics addiction. It is easily the lowest level to which deprived and despairing youth sinks when help in time is not available.

Even in this darkness there have been rays of hope. Some remarkable individual successes offer The Alliance courage and insight to continue. Opportunity and guidance for employment, encouragement and tutoring in their schooling, meetings and associations with skilled workers who care; all these are among the essential elements, combined with community educational programs and law enforcement efforts against "pushers."

But much more remains to be discovered if teen-age narcotics addiction and teen-age gang conflict are to be eliminated from the community.

Financial sponsors of this program include the New York Fund for Children, Aaron E. Norman Fund, Charles and Ray Newman Foundation, Children's Welfare League and Hortense Libman Estate.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK

In one way or another all of our programs and services contribute to the mental health of the members and the community. Those administering these programs and services require considerable knowledge and understanding of

human behavior.

To secure the maximum gains from its activities, The Alliance has developed a Consultation Service, which is supported by the New York City Mental Health Board. So far as known, this is a pioneering project, the first of its kind undertaken by a voluntary, non-profit social group work agency.

Trained specialists in psychology and psychiatry work together with the social workers in drawing up what they regard as the best kind of activities for the various age and interest groups. The mental health staff members meet regularly with the group workers of all The Alliance divisions to talk over the problems relating to individuals, groups and the community at large. The results are believed to be the best possible activities and services for the membership of The Alliance.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Extreme poverty, crowded slums, economic discrimination and lack of medical care (especially for the aged and low-income families) are at the root of the many needs that The Alliance tries to meet.

The Alliance not only offers stop-gap measures, but also shares its knowledge of the effects of these social ills and suggests ameliorative programs.

The major instrument of lower East Side efforts for social improvement is the Lower Eastside Neighborhoods Association (LENA). It has proved to be a truly effective spokesman for the aspirations of the community, and has been copied elsewhere. The Alliance is happy to be a founder and active participant in this organization of citizens and agencies of the lower East Side.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Perhaps The Alliance's proudest tradition, dating from the time it first opened its doors, is its pioneering spirit in searching for new answers to meet new and complex problems. Its trail-blazing contributions to social work practice have brought world-wide renown to our center.

Its high standards, its willingness to venture into new pathways have made The Alliance the single largest training center for graduate social work students. The Alliance is now affiliated with the metropolitan area's seven graduate social work schools, and this year has had 22 graduate social work "internes." Almost 200 graduate group work students from all over the world have received their training at The Alliance during the past twelve years.

Additionally, a sizable program of undergraduate student training takes place with students interested in social work and other human relations professions.

A recent Professional Institute at The Alliance, commemorating our 70th anniversary, was attended by several hundred leading social group workers, including the deans of three graduate schools. Dr. Nathan E. Cohen of Western Reserve delivered the main report.

DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TRAINING

For several years now The Alliance has conducted a special youth leadership training program. It reaches many young people who were never associated with gangs or delinquency, but needed some form of guidance in growing up in a community in transition.

Those with the best potential for leadership are given year-round training courses at The Alliance itself, the camps and in the community, to bring out their abilities to develop and to assist others.

A large number of youth, many of whom started with The Alliance when they were youngsters, are well on their way to careers in social work, education, psychology and other endeavors useful to the community. Many have already "graduated", while several others have just been enrolled into the program.

Recently, this program was adapted and instituted for older adults with promising results.

FINANCES

Today our annual budget runs to about \$800,000 a year. As one of the 116 member agencies of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, we receive about half of our total operating costs from this source. Membership fees pay for about one-fourth of the budget; governmental agencies for one-eighth; and the balance is made up by income from our endowment funds, and donations from foundations, generous trustees and alumni.

Rising costs in recent years have required the institution of many operating economies and increased dependence on the gifts of individual trustees and friends of The Alliance. In this way, despite our continued growth, we have been able to reduce our annual operating deficits although they still remain sizeable.

FACILITIES

The population explosion on the lower East Side with the increase of new housing has put greater demands than ever upon the 70-year-old facilities of The Alliance. Our structure, although solidly built, is now neither large enough nor adequately set up to meet the increasing demands being placed upon it. Under these conditions, The Alliance program requires:

1. An additional wing to accommodate our growing older adult population, and to provide for the first time in our history an adequate gymnasium (which can also double as a dance hall) for our burgeoning teen-age program;
2. Re-modelling of the old structure; and
3. Additional facilities at the camps to meet the growing need.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President

ROBERT WOLF

Vice Presidents

MRS. MARTHA V. BARTOS
ISRAEL CUMMINGS

JOSEPH S. GERSHMAN
LEONARD J. HANKIN

GERARD OESTREICHER

Treasurer

GEORGE T. PALLEY

Secretary

MRS. J. HAROLD GARFUNKEL

Trustees

MRS. ALEXANDER ADERER
CHARLES BENENSON
LEONARD H. BERNHEIM
BEN C. BLOCH
JOHN S. BORG
WALTER J. BROWNSTONE
MRS. ISRAEL CUMMINGS
MRS. EDWARD FIRST
MRS. RANDOLPH GUGGENHEIMER
F. WARREN HELLMAN
JOSEPH S. ISEMAN
MURRAY L. JACOBS
HERMAN KATZ
RALPH LIPPMAN

MAURICE MAGID
LOUIS J. NAFTALISON
JOSEPH S. OETTINGER
ROBERT PILPEL
SAUL PRICE
ERNEST RUBENSTEIN
BENJAMIN RUBINSTEIN
HENRY N. SACHS
MRS. MORTON SCHIFFER
CARL M. SPERO
MRS. MANUEL STAPEN
SAMUEL H. STEIN
DONALD B. STRAUS
FRANK A. WEIL

CHARLES ZIMMERMAN

Honorary Trustees

MRS. JAMES H. ABRAHAM
EDDIE CANTOR

STANLEY M. ISAACS
STANLEY R. JACOBS

DAVID SARNOFF

Executive Director

LOUIS BERKOWITZ

Director Emeritus

HENRY FLEISCHMAN