

THE ITALIAN MISSION

SERVICE

ACTIVE 365 DAYS IN THE YEAR

CENTRAL CHAPEL AND SETTLEMENT HOUSE 505 FOREST AVE. KANSAS CITY, MO

“A Community Service Center For The Italians”

HISTORICAL

About 30 years ago Central Presbyterian Church started the Belmont Sunday School in the north end. The aim of the founders was to reach the American speaking people as well as the various groups of foreigners. Gradually, as always is the case, the older stock moved out, and our attention was directed as early as 1908 entirely to the Italians. Realizing that to serve the best interests of the Kingdom of God and avoid waste, it is best for one denomination to concentrate its efforts among the people of a certain nationality; and that the only way to reach the foreigners is through a native minister, the Rev. L. Moxedano was called in 1908, during whose pastorate our present building was erected. In 1910 the Rev. Sartorio took charge of the Mission. Then the Rev. Th. DePhanphilis was in charge for five years, to the fall of 1917, and in the spring of 1918 the present pastor, the Rev. J. B. Bisceglia, took charge of the work.

Throughout these years the Mission, in its varied ministry, has faithfully and diligently served the community, so that today we can safely say that almost every person of Italian extraction in Kansas City has at one time or another been connected in some way with the Italian Mission. The Mission today has an active membership of 125, with that many more on the rolls who have gone abroad or into various sections of our country and several churches in our city. Through our Nursery School, our Daily Vacation Bible School, our Saturday Afternoon School, our Music Classes, our Clubs and our Sunday School we are reaching a passing procession of children in whose hearts we are striving to plant the fear of the Lord and the law of the country. Through our preaching services, our Mutual Benefit Society, our Mothers' Club, our Clinic and other activities we are reaching the rest of the family and teach them the fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. From its inception, the founders felt the necessity of the two-fold function of our Institution, the Spiritual and Social, subordinating the latter to the former. The various Boards have been true and loyal to their Trust, and in the last few years we have made, as one visitor remarked not long ago “gigantic strides” toward that goal which the founders set for our Institution.

The aim of Central Chapel is to serve every Italian in Kansas City, regardless of his church affiliation or his political preferences, and in all humbleness we can say that the average Italian conquered by the good that the Mission has done in the Community, regardless of party or creed, has turned from an antagonistic to a friendly attitude, with very tender and affectionate feelings toward our Institution.

NURSERY SCHOOL

MISS E. HAREN, PRINCIPAL

We have here a place for the nurture of little children under public school age. We aim to provide for these little ones the environment that will aid in their physical, mental and spiritual development; a place where they may play and be happy, and where they may be helped in the formation of right habits. There are toys, big blocks and other kindergarten material, sand, clay and such handwork as little hands can do. There is a Playground where slides, swings and seesaw give exercise to little muscles, and here, each day, is provided a lunch of milk and

crackers. These, with a few simple songs, games, and often a story, fill the happy hours.

The Kindergarten in Central Chapel and Settlement House is now 15 years old, having been organized in 1908, to meet the needs of the little children under school age in that locality. Our school was small at first, our average attendance the first month being only 9. and the second month 12. The first month of the present year, September, 1923, our enrollment was 44,

The age limit for admission to the public school at that time was 6 and we admitted children of 3, but since the Public schools admitted children of 5 we have been developing the work into a Nursery School, taking care of that most important but much neglected early childhood, taking the children at 2 and 2 1/2 and keeping them until they are 5.

Now we are working out a definite plan to have every child examined by a competent physician assisted by a clinic nurse, at least once a month, and reports on the physical condition of the child made every month. We feel that it is time to open our eyes to the fact that human destinies are largely shaped during that much neglected period of early infancy. In a community like ours where the children are affected with rickets and anemia deformities, scabies, conjunctivis and skin diseases of many kinds it is nothing less than criminal to allow such conditions to go unchallenged and send into the world sickly, wrecked physical and moral specimens.

The Junior Italian Girls' Club of Central Chapel, as it has been known for the past two years, has been reorganized under a new name, "The Italian Girls' Service Club." Not only the name has been changed, but the program for the coming year is a new one never before having been tried with a group of Italian girls exactly on the scale upon which we expect to carry it. The program for the year is implied by the name Service Club. "A Service a Day" will be our motto. There are many instances where this club has been of real service, but this year we want to increase the number of instances.

Plans are under way at present of what the club can do in the way of service to our people at Thanksgiving time. We hope that whatever the plans, they will be carried out in the best way and extent. An outline for the program of the year has been made by the Executive Committee. Thanksgiving: Basket dinners to 30 families; clothes for needy children. Christmas: Christmas trees in 5 homes; toys and candy for children; clothes for needy children.

THE ITALIAN GIRLS' SERVICE CLUB

Flowers for the sick; service in the homes; community programs in connection with night school work at Karnes; layettes for expectant mothers; clothing, food and rent for needy families; help furnishing club room at Central Chapel, etc.

At graduation time in June, there have been cases of Italian boys and girls not being able to buy clothes or pay class dues. This has been paid by private persons heretofore. Our Service Club will arrange this year to look out for such cases and defray the expenses.

MISS E. GUZZARDO.

THE DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

For years the Daily Vacation Bible School has been one of the outstanding activities of the summer season. One can scarcely estimate its value, coming as it does during vacation days when boys and girls of the north end have only the busy unkept streets in which to play.

The Vacation School program is made up of Bible memory work, singing, health talks, sewing and fancy work for girls, manual training for boys, and good times in the playground and parks. Practically this same program is continued on Saturday afternoons while grade schools

are in session.

JANE T. FELTS.

Officers

President, Mrs. Charles R. Nisbet.

First Vice-President, Mrs. L. O. McIntire. Second Vice-President, Mrs. F. B. Jenkins, Eastminster.

Third Vice-President, Mrs. E. I. Harris. Secretary, Mrs. J. Howard Harbison. Treasurer, Mrs. S. J. Montgomery.

Auditor, Mrs. W. G. Ennis.

Board of Directors

Mrs. Augusta Barret Mrs. Wm. P. Borland Mrs. A. C. Bruner.

Mrs. G. M. Clark Mrs. George H. Davis Mrs. S. Dietzell Mrs. George D. Ford

Mrs. Wm. L. Gillmor, Mt. Washington Church.

Mrs. Fred Glover

Mrs. Robert Greenleaf, North Kansas City Church.

Mrs. Wm. H. Hayden Mrs. J. T. Hermansader Mrs. Jesse N. Johnson Mrs. Samuel C. Marty.

Mrs. E. T. McCarthy Mrs. Johnston Robertson, Eastminster Church.

Mrs. Graeme Ross

Mrs. William Smith, Mt. Washington Church Miss Adele Smith

Mrs. W. A. Souter, North Kansas City Church

Mrs. George S. Stroud Mrs. Clyde Switzer Mrs. Wm H. Wallace. Jr.

Mrs. J. Weimer, North Kansas City Church

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday School has an active enrollment of 250, and is organized into 8 Departments: 1. The Cradle Roll, 1, 2 and 3 years. 2. Beginners, 4 and 5 years. 3. Primary, 6, 7 and 8 years. 4. Juniors, 9, 10, 11 and 12 years. 5. Intermediates, 13, 14 15 and 16 years. 6, Seniors, 17, 18 and 19 years. 7. Home Department. 8. Teacher Training Class.

Officers and Teachers

Rev. J. B. Bisceglia, Acting Superintendent. Senior Department: Mrs. Hermansader and Mr. Miller.

Intermediate Department: Miss Jane T. Felts, Supt.; Miss Brown and Mr. Passiglia.

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL

Junior Department: Miss Ethel Weisz,

Supt.; Miss Mildred Tucker, Miss Grace Raffe, Miss Alta Odle.

Primary Department: Miss Adele Smith, Supt.; Mrs. Lovely, Mrs. Dickson, Miss Schilling, Mr. Victor Passiglia.

Beginners' Department: Miss E. Witherspoon, Supt.; Miss Smith, Mrs. Witherspoon.

Cradle Roll Department: Miss M. Cassatta, Supt.

Teachers' Training Class: Mrs. W. P. Borland.

Home Department: Mrs. J. B. Bisceglia.

Secretary: Miss Catherine Mangiaracina.

Treasurer: Miss A. Schilling.

The activities described in this folder will give the reader only an idea of the service of Central Chapel and Settlement House to the community and to the city, because results in social-religious work cannot always be expressed on paper in facts and figures. There are

hundreds of problems that the workers meet and help to solve during the year. There are individual problems, family problems, community problems, no two alike. You cannot handle human problems, even when the same facts are involved, with the same formula, because there is always the personal equation involved, which modifies the problem just enough to make it a different problem.

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WORKERS

Rev. J B. Bisceglia, Pastor-Superintendent.

Miss Jane T. Felts, Resident Worker.

Miss E. Haren, Nursery School Principal.

Miss E. Witherspoon, Assistant in the Nursery School and Social Worker.

Mr. Walter Passiglia, Boys' Work.

Mr. F. Bisceglia, Boys' Work

RELIGIOUS WORK

Religious Services: Almost all of our religious services are conducted in Italian for the benefit of those who came from Italy and have not been able to master the English language.

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ROBERT BROWNING MEMORIAL GARDEN

Perhaps no one of the many improvements made at the Italian Mission during the past 18 months has contributed more to the pleasure of the beauty-loving Italian people in little Italy than the garden on a terrace back of the playground, just south of the building. It has all the fine features of a formal Italian garden, such as one sees everywhere in Italy.

There are wide gravel walks, 10 beautiful urns, a bird bath, 6 bird houses, a handsome Roman seat, a glorious stone lion—the delight of all the children, a circular seat under the one large cottonwood tree near the center of the garden, where an open gravel square makes a lovely renting place for the Mothers' Club as they sit and sew, or for the Resident Workers at the Mission on hot, sultry, summer evenings. There are also 10 stately lombardy poplars, a great quantity of very beautiful shrubbery and glorious flowers, making altogether one of the most beautiful spots in Kansas City.

Situated in a desert of surrounding ugliness, it is an oasis of beauty which gives inspiration and joy to all who attend the Mission or pass by it.

This garden has been a great inspiration to the children attending the Mission to beautify their homes. For the past three years "The Woman's Board of Managers" for the Mission has given out seeds in the Spring and offered prizes to the children making the best flower gardens.

The gardens this year were by far the best ever made, and there were twice as many as last year. There were 92 gardens made and, of these, 14 were much above the average, while 9 were so beautiful that they were given prizes. The first, second and third prize gardens were wonderful in the variety of flowers, the arrangement, care and general beauty. The first prize garden at 1132 Pacific was beautiful enough to have been put on canvas and exhibited at the Kansas City Art Institute.

GARDEN

MRS. CHARLES R. NISBET.

The Playground at the Italian Mission has met a long-felt need. Here the little children, boys and girls of the neighborhood, find a specious ground well equipped for all sorts of play, and it is

having a fine effect on their health, giving them joy, and keeping them out of the dangers of the streets, where most of them would be forced, by lack of space at their homes, to play, but for this Playground. It is the only one in this section of the colony for Italian children.

Until it was made, the kindergarten children at the Mission could not be allowed out of the building at recess because there was so much danger of their getting too far toward the street and being run over by the automobiles rushing down the hill in front of the Mission. Now the fence protects them, and the teachers are perfectly at ease while the children play. It is a great sight to see the teachers showing these little children how to play, and training them to love the sunshine and fresh air, the birds and the flowers and to drink plenty of water at the new drinking fountain recently given for the Playground by the W. C. T. U. "We give them a chance for innocent sport, We give them a chance for fun—

Better a playground plot

Than a court and jail when the harm is done." MRS. CHARLES R. NISBET.

THE PLAYGROUND

THE NORTHEAST ITALIAN MISSION Corner Olive and Elma.

The Italian Mission, in the northeast district is the result of follow up work with many people who were connected in some way with the Settlement House and have moved in the last two or three years in that neighborhood.

BOYS WORK

W. Passiglia and P. Bisceglia. Advisory Committee: Mrs. G. D. Ford and Mrs. E. T. Mc Carthy. Our regular boys' work includes 3 groups of boys ranging from 7 to 14 years of age. The first group made up of Intermediate boys from the Karnes and Emerson school meets on Monday from 4 to 6. The second group of older boys who work after school, or work throughout the day meets on Friday at 7 p. m. And the third, a mixed group divided into several classes, meets on Saturday afternoon from 2 to 5.

Our aim in these boys activities is to build up character, and make a determinate effort to establish a social clinic for the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

The Forward Club made up of High School boys of Italian extraction was organized last year with Mr. Elio Monachesi, now a student at M. U., as its first president. This work will be resumed as soon as the students have had a chance to get a good start with their studies.

Help us to make our Institution a real nursery of good citizenship in the north end by enabling us to build a much needed gymnasium.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SOCIETIES

We have two Christian Endeavor Societies, one for the young people above 12 years of age and the other for children from 8 to 12. Both societies meet simultaneously on Sunday morning from 11 to 12, use the regular Senior and Junior C. E. Programs, respectively, teach, them members how to use the Bible how to speak in public, and prepares them for leadership both the church and in the Sunday School. Regular monthly business meetings are held either at the Mission or in the homes of the members.

BOY'S CLUB

MOTHERS' CLUB

This organization gives the mothers an outlet for their social instinct. These martyrs of the Italian home have known nothing else but the drudgeries of life, the burden of a large family with insufficient means, hard work and worries aplenty, from morning to evening, with the same

program repeated every day of the year. When this club was organized the mothers arranged their own program thus:

1. Instruction: Bible stories, Hygiene, Proper care of the child.

2. Work: Make garments for needy people and to hold an annual Bazar for the Benefit of the Mission.

3. Recreation. Music, Games, Refreshments.

TAMPA CAMPFIRE

The foundation of Camp Fire, is the Home, hence its program is particularly well adapted to the Italian girl of 'teen age, safeguarded as she ever is by her parents. Through her loyalty to the Law of the Fire, which is to Seek Beauty Give Service Pursue Knowledge Be Trustworthy Hold on to Health Glorify Work Be Happy she naturally grows into well-rounded young womanhood.

Tampa, the white birch, "holds itself fair and beautiful yet with strength to resist the crowding of other trees." Girls who take this symbol pledge themselves to be strong and true under any opposition.

JANE T. FELTS.

EVANGELICAL MUTUAL BENEFIT SOCIETY

The Evangelical Mutual Benefit Society was fostered by the members of the Italian Mission about a year ago and lately incorporated under the laws of the state of Missouri. The purpose of the society is of uniting into a Christian band all of the Italian protestants in Kansas City. Mo., for those spiritual, moral and material benefits which can be derived only from the union of those who are really striving to translate into action the principles of our Great Master; to promote fraternal love among its members, to instill the sentiment of Patriotism in the minds of its members, to aid and assist its members in their sickness, to help in burying its members, to purchase or receive by gifts, devise, bequeath, subscription or otherwise, and to hold, loan, invest, mortgage and convey such real and personal property as may be needed to carry out the purposes of this association and conduct its work which may be allowed by law to corporations of this kind. The Society has adopted as its emblem the shield of the crusaders with an open Bible, a Cross and a Crown.

CLINIC

A few centuries ago some individual released the propaganda that the phenomenon of reproduction was a normal process of nature. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for the truth to neutralize that bit of distorted fact. Prenatal care is the outstanding feature of the Italian Clinic, and through education, carried on by capable physicians and nurses, much has been done to dissipate the prejudice, ignorance and superstition surrounding the prospective mother.

In the case of the very poor, the mother, oftentimes surrounded by a considerable family, is not able to avail herself on the service of a capable physician and nurse, and as a result of indifferent care during her lying-in period, is left a semi-invalid, and she and the family become an added burden for society.

It might be stated that the Italian people do not readily acquire the English language and do not choose the ordinary clinic, but feel much more at home in an Italian atmosphere where the people understand their ways and language. For that reason it was deemed advisable to organize this clinic and to continue its maintenance.

ITALIAN CLINIC

DR. MINFORD ARMOUR HANNA DR. J. W. HALLBERG, Associate DR. E. S. CONNELL, Eye, Ear,
Nose and Throat

It may be happily said that the organization works in harmony and the duties are performed graciously and punctually without the hope of reward, except the sense of satisfaction that comes to the individual that profits most who serves best.