

**Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction,  
at the ... Annual Session held in ...**

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PROCEEDINGS

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OF THE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

OF

Charities and Correction

AT THE

THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL SESSION HELD IN THE CITY  
OF PORTLAND, MAINE, JUNE 15-22, 1904.

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EDITED BY  
ISABEL C. BARROWS.

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First, organization does not mean doing things yourself, but getting other people to do them; I continually say to the eight agents of our charity organization society, your work is not to help the poor: your work is to get other people to help the poor. The motto of our society is this: "The aim of this society is to increase, to organize, and to educate the amount of unpaid, voluntary, personal service given to the poor of Buffalo." We subdivide the burden that must be carried. Of the churches of Buffalo, 143 have taken districts and they have greatly aided our work, but have also greatly increased it. We can no longer be satisfied with the work of our own agents; we now seek to keep in touch with all the charitable work of the city and in doing that we are permeating everywhere. Churches that were once hostile have become cordial. I hardly know any of the churches which criticised us severely not many years ago that would do it now. We find our chief task now is to transmute apathy into action. We do not try to control the charities of the churches; we do not wish to. But through this plan, which we believe in, though it takes the patience of Job, we are little by little getting a number of churches which supply volunteers who it seems to us, do pretty strong, fine work. They are willing to take suggestions. Our only difficulty is that agents are apt to think that when a family is referred to a church they are done with it. But their work is to tag along and to advise and suggest!

This district plan is also a way for acquiring volunteer visitors, and if the churches will send volunteer visitors we will train them. I can see how the plan has succeeded as we look back several years. It has been tried in Brooklyn for three years and in Cambridge for six years. It is not as yet orthodox, but it is an interesting experiment and we believe in it.

MRS. MINERVA PARKER NICHOLS, New York.—I want to speak of one form of social co-operation that seems to me so far has been overlooked. We have spoken of what we do for these people, but we have said nothing about what they do for themselves and we have entirely ignored all that they do for each other. No visitor ever does for her "case" what a woman in a tenement house does for her next door neighbor. I know of none of these women who are represented on any of our boards. I asked that they may come in to our day nursery, and into our free kindergarten committees. They should be in closer touch with the constructive work we are trying to do for the poor. I have heard the plea that women with children should be pensioned, that we should appeal to their relatives for help. I think if you work among these people you will find that after you have

appealed to every possible relative, and drained dry all of the purses of your friends for pensions, that then you have touched only a few isolated, particularly interesting cases. I am thinking of a woman who was left in need, a woman with such a disagreeable temper that she was very hard to get on with. She was one of the people who are "poor, but honest." She came to the day nursery with her two children every day that she went to her work. Last winter one of her neighbors from the same tenement house was sick and this woman brought her own children to the nursery and then went back and brought the sick neighbor's children to the day nursery each day for weeks before going to her day's work. At night she took them all home. And she was not overcome, she was not weaker for it. It was one of the fine examples of the things these people do for themselves and for each other. It is the kind of thing that makes it worth while for us to try to work for them.

MR. CHAS. F. WELLER, Washington, D. C.—In the matter of co-operation much turns upon personal acquaintance and personal fellowship. We have found that one good way to get people to work together is to invite them to eat together and a charities dinner has been found a useful means of developing co-operation. We have observed also that co-operation developed in proportion as people were convinced of our rightness of spirit. If we live in a social settlement or in one of the poorer quarters, it helped to convince the people that we really know what we talk about. We have found also that it is easier to get co-operation if we have some forward movement so that we can invite our colleagues to move forward together to a common end. It is not easy to stand still and get co-operation. Working for the improvement of housing conditions, for the prevention of consumption, for the promotion of compulsory education,—these are such forward movements as develop co-operation, for they enable us to say: "Come let us unite to achieve this social service" and we emphasize the idea of doing this together.

DR. L. DENNIS, Newark, New Jersey.—The Newark Bureau of Charities has been doing just what Mr. Weller has spoken of. We have had four conferences in Newark under the inspiration of our superintendent, Mr. McDougall. Mr. deForest, Mr. Devine and Mr. Homer Folks were among our speakers. We sent invitations to all the churches to send delegates to these conferences and we invited other philanthropic societies to attend. We had audiences of two and three hundred. The first one was on "True Co-operation." The second was on the subject of children in institutions, of which we have a large number in Newark. The third was on the child beginning to become wayward, the