

(Lawrence, Kansas
April 6, 1940)

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND LIFE NEEDS

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When Dean Schwegler invited me to come here today, and Chairman O'Brien sent me the theme of the meeting, I was first pleased by the compliment, then appalled by the responsibility. If fifty were to be in attendance, some twenty-five collective hours of your conference time would be involved, time you couldn't afford to waste. That caused me misgivings. I am not a professional educator, even though my work seeks to influence life. And it is presumptuous to speak too confidently of life needs. Who knows all the needs of life? Who can say which are most important among those needs which he is sure he does identify?

My only reassurance was this. For over thirty years I have seen intimately, life forces in action, in a great American city. My department of the Chicago Park District is, I think, the best equipped recreation department in existence. We offer a wide variety of services to a participant attendance of over fifty million per year, not to mention uncounted casual strollers in our more than 130 parks. We operate in close to one hundred buildings, some of which cost a half million dollars. We invite people to consider those structures as centers for their community, social, and recreational life. Broadly speaking, the people of our city come to these parks to escape the monotony of work-a-day existence. Their coming testifies to their wishes. Apparently, they desire thrill and adventure. They wish to introduce challenge into life's humdrum. They seek novel experiences. They want kindred spirited companionship. They crave social status and recognition. They pursue sustained and sustaining interests, to lend life meaning and enthusiasm. They desire the sense of mastery, the joy of richer and more fruitful living, the satisfactions of creative accomplishment. They want