

April 27, 1945

Mr. Willard E. Givens, Executive Secretary
National Education Association of the United States
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington 6, D. C.

Dear Mr. Givens,

The attractive brochure EDUCATION -- a mighty force has been on my desk for some time and finally I have completed reading it between patients.

It seemed to me to be well written on a high-priority subject and filled with incontrovertible facts, but when I came to page 5 I wondered whether the analysis of education and its needs should not start at home. I refer to the still-perpetuated idea that physical education has anything to do with the avoidance of physical defects which result in selective service rejection. Analysis of the causes of selective service rejection reveal that less than 2% of the rejectees may have been improved by physical education. On the other hand, probably (I say probably because the complete breakdown of causes of rejections is not, so far as I can determine, available for public use) more than 2% have been rejected because of disabilities incurred in physical education activities, including competitive sports. In proof of this, witness the make-up of the present day college competition athletic teams.

Do not misunderstand me; physical education is important. But it is only one small, one lesser cog in the problem of good health and physical fitness. Basically the needs are, after healthy parentage, adequate food, decent living conditions, health education, therapeutic and prophylactic medical and dental care, and physical education as a means of improving physical skills and recreation.

The National Education Association is in a position to understand and lead in this health program, but it has always stressed the European school of thought: health through physical education. That is not the answer. It may have been in countries where there was no more to offer; but it is not the solution here.

Sincerely,

Ralph I. Canuteson, M.D.
Director

I may be alone in my crusade but there's nothing like a small crusade to keep up one's morale! I hope I can have your agreement, and K. U. can really have a program!
BIC:k
cc to Dr. F. C. Allen R.I.C.